The Relational Anatomy of Humiliation:
Perpetrator, Victim, and Third Party

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to map the conceptual space of the process of humiliation and illustrate it on the personal and group level. It describes humiliation in the framework of Kenneth Gergen's Vygotskian conceptualisation of emotions as elements within relational scenarios, and as actions that gain their intelligibility and necessity from patterns of interchange. It is shown that, in cases of humiliation, on one side there is the active party, the one who humiliates or is, at least, perceived as humiliating, and on the other side there is the party who feels humiliated, rightly or wrongly. The relationship between these two parties may vary in many ways. In some cases, the humiliator may humiliate intentionally, with a variety of possible objectives, and the targeted person may feel humiliated or, alternatively, may remain untouched. In other cases, someone may feel humiliated even though no-one has actually intended to bring about that effect. This may be seen, for example, in cases where help is given and this help is itself perceived as humiliating by the recipient. Finally, it is shown that third parties may perceive cases of humiliation in several ways and may make a range of different normative judgements.

This paper is part of a series of articles that aim at building a 'theory of humiliation' connecting social psychology with sociology, social anthropology, history and political science.

Introduction

There is a long-standing assumption that the Versailles Accords after World War I inflicted humiliation on Germany to an extent that it triggered World War II. Astonishingly, social psychology has not researched the issue of humiliation on a larger scale, although it seems to be extremely relevant, especially if humiliation really does have the capacity to trigger world wars. This paper is part of a series of texts written within a social-psychological research project on humiliation being carried out at the University of Oslo.[1]

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[1] Its title is *The Feeling of Being Humiliated: A Central Theme in Armed Conflicts. A Study of the Role of Humiliation in Somalia, and Rwanda/Burundi, Between the Warring Parties, and in Relation to*

Kenneth Gergen conceptualises emotions as elements within relational scenarios, actions that gain their intelligibility and necessity from patterns of interchange (Gergen, 1994). Gergen states that it is possible to view anger or depression not as a personal event, but as a constituent of a particular relational dance. Gergen's conceptualisation of emotions gives room for the topic of this paper, namely humiliation.

Western societies are typically characterised as individualistic societies while large parts of the rest of the world carry the label of 'collectivist societies.' Psychological research and psychological theory building are part of their respective environments. For example, hardly anybody would contest that American psychology is rather focused upon the individual, more at least than counterparts in other world regions. It is, for example, not surprising that Social Identity Theory was developed outside of the United States of America (see Tajfel and Turner, in Worchel and Austin, 1986; Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel, Fraser, and Jaspars, 1984).

But there is a growing interest, also in the United States, in, for example, the work of Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978) on cognitive development.[2] Kenneth Gergen writes (Gergen, 1995, 8): 'The significance of this work [Vygotskian] is largely owing to its dislodgment of psychology's longstanding investment in autonomous, or self-contained cognitive processes, and its replacement by a profoundly more socialized conception of self. For the Vygotskian, to paraphrase John Locke, there is nothing in thought that is not first in society. Or, to extend the implications, the concept of the autonomous agent is a myth; each of us is constituted by the other; we cannot deliberate or decide without implicate otherness.'

In *Technology and the Self: From the Essential to the Sublime* Gergen writes (9): 'It is from the soil of critical appraisal that new attempts now spring to life, attempts to reconstitute the psychological terrain as a social one. Such work in inspired in part by Vygotsky's thesis of higher mental processes, and in some degree by post-structural literary theory. In the former case Vygotsky makes a strong case for mental processes as being social processes simply re-located: One carries out a mental process we might call "thinking" in the terms of the community into which one is socialized. Thought, on this account, is more radically conceived as participation in relatedness - a view which Bruner, 1990, Wertsch, 1985 and many others are currently exploring.'

'The Humiliation Dynamic is a powerful factor in human affairs that has, for a variety of reasons, been overlooked by students of individual and collective behaviour. It is a pervasive and all too often destructive influence in the behavior of individuals, groups, organizations, and nations' (Klein, 1991).

'A good society is a *decent* society, and a society that is decent is one whose institutions don't humiliate people… Many people must have thought it, but no philosopher ever proposed it. Philosophers speak of justice instead, a very different ideal' (Schick, 1997, 131, italics in original about *The Decent Society,* Margalit, 1996).

The research project's aim is to examine how relevant humiliation is in hampering peace. Questions that inspire this research are: Can humiliation lead to war, to Holocaust, genocide and ethnic cleansing? Can humiliation lead to international terrorism? And, even more basic questions such as: What is humiliation? What happens when people feel humiliated? What is it that they experience as humiliating? Under what conditions are those particular experiences defined as 'humiliating'? What does humiliation lead to? Which particular perceptions of justice, honour, dignity, respect and self-respect are connected with the feeling of being humiliated? How is humiliation perceived and responded to in different cultures? What role does humiliation play in aggression? What can be done to overcome the violent consequences of humiliation?

216 qualitative interviews were carried out, from 1998 to 1999 in Africa (in Hargeisa, capital of 'Somaliland,' in Kigali and other places in Rwanda, in Bujumbura, capital of Burundi, in Nairobi in Kenya, and in Cairo in Egypt), and from 1997 to 2000 in Europe (in Oslo in Norway, in Germany, in Geneva, and in Brussels).[3] The topic has been discussed with about 400 researchers working in related fields.

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[3] The title of the project indicates that three groups had to be interviewed, namely both conflict parties in Somalia and Rwanda/Burundi, and representatives of third intervening parties. These three groups stand in a relationship that in its minimum version is triangular. In case of more than two opponents, as is the case in most conflicts, it acquires more than three corners.
Both in Somalia and Rwanda/Burundi representatives of the 'opponents' and the 'third party' were interviewed. The following categories of people have been interviewed:
- Survivors of genocide were interviewed, i.e. people belonging to the group, which was targeted for genocide. In Somalia this was the Issaq tribe, in Rwanda the Tutsis, in Burundi also the Hutus. The group of survivors consists of two parts, namely those who survived because they were not in the country when the genocide happened, some of them returned after the genocide, and those who survived the ongoing onslaught inside the country.
- Freedomfighters (only men) were interviewed. In Somalia these were the SNM (Somali National Movement) fighters who liberated the North of Somalia from the troops sent by the central government in Mogadishu; in Rwanda these were the former Tutsi refugees who formed an army

The results of this work are being presented in this and in several forthcoming articles.[4] This paper, which addresses the core notion of humiliation,[5] employs a Grounded Theory approach as developed by Glaser and Strauss, 1967 combined with the 'Psycho-Logic' approach employed by Smedslund (Smedslund, 1988; Smedslund, 1997), and places itself within a Vygotskian framework.

This paper is organised in three parts. The first part addresses the complexity of humiliation and the current state-of-the-art in literature and research. The second part examines possible methodological approaches to the analysis of the notion of humiliation and considers the actor's perspective in the process of humiliation. The third part incorporates the perspective of the humiliated party.

The complexity of humiliation and the current state-of-the-art

The issue of humiliation is complicated. At first sight a bewildering range of types and aspects of humiliation unfold. For example, Klein suggests that there is a 'Triangle of Humiliation' including the humiliator (who inflicts disparagement), the victim (those who experience it as disparagement), and the witness (those who observe what happens and agree that it is disparagement) (Klein, 1991, 101).

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and attacked Rwanda from Uganda in order to oust the Hutu government which carried out the genocide in Rwanda in 1994; in Burundi these were also Hutus.
- Many Somali warlords have their retreat in Kenya; the candidate got in touch with some of them there.
- Politicians, among them people who were in power already before the genocide and whom the survivors secretly suspected of having been collaborators or at least silent supporters of the perpetrators.
- Somali and Rwandese/Burundese academicians, who study the situation of their countries.
- Representatives of national non-governmental organisations who work locally with development, peace and reconciliation.
- Third parties, namely representatives of United Nations organisations and international non-governmental organisations who work with emergency relief, long-term development, peace, and reconciliation.
- Egyptian diplomats in the foreign ministry who deal with Somalia (Egypt is a heavy weight in the OAU).
- African psychiatrists in Kenya who deal with trauma, and forensic psychiatry. In Kenya many nationals from Somalia and Rwanda/Burundi sought refuge, both in refugee camps, but also privately.
- Those who have not yet been interviewed are masterminds of genocide in Rwanda, those who have planned the genocide. Many of them are in hiding in Kenya, and other parts of Africa, or in Brussels and other parts of Europe, or in the States and Canada. Some are in the prisons in Rwanda and in Arusha, Tanzania. They still have to be visited. Many efforts were made to find perpetrators in hiding, without success yet.

[4] See Lindner, 1999; Lindner, 2000b; Lindner, 2000c; Lindner, 2000d; Lindner, 2000e.
[5] The theory of the humiliation process will be developed further in a book I am currently writing in collaboration with Dennis Smith. Smith is professor of sociology at Loughborough University (UK), see his publications: Smith, 2000a; Smith, 2000b; Smith, 2000c; Smith, 1999 Smith 1997a; Smith 1997b; Smith, 1991; Smith, 1984a; Smith, 1984b; Smith, 1983; Smith, 1981.

This triangle suggests that a simple order exists, but in fact the order is not as simple as that. The 'humiliator' may not 'succeed' in his intentions. The targeted person may not feel humiliated but just laugh, turning the humiliator into a ridiculous fool. Or, at the other extreme, somebody may want to be helpful but find, unexpectedly, that this help is interpreted as being humiliating: is this person a philanthropist or a humiliator? Or, to take a third case, a husband may continually treat his submissive wife in such a way that a witnessing third-party may think that she must surely feel humiliated and rebel, and yet she does not; is in this case the witness the dupe? In some cases people in fact enjoy being humiliated, for example in so-called 'sado-maso' sex-practices or religious self-humiliation.

All these examples suggest that a perpetrator may want to commit humiliation but not succeed, that some people may wish to be humiliated rather than wish to avoid it, that a 'do-gooder' may cause humiliation while trying to do good, and that a third party may identify 'victims' who do not see themselves as such, - or fail to see victims in those cases where they do exist. A further complication is introduced by the question: Can a country, a clan or an ethnic group 'feel humiliated'? What about the case of humiliated leaders like a Hitler who incite their followers to believe in some more or less fabricated version of history that contains supposed humiliations that must be avenged with the leader's help?

Humiliation is a notion that has not been studied widely and explicitly, certainly not in a systematic way; the list of publications is short and in addition spread in very disparate thematic fields.[6] The *Journal of Primary Prevention* pioneered this work in 1991 (Klein, 1991), and 1992 (Barrett and Brooks, 1992; Smith, 1992). In 1997 the journal *Social Research* devoted a special issue to the topic of humiliation, stimulated by Margalit's *The Decent Society* (Margalit, 1996).

William Ian Miller wrote a book entitled *Humiliation and Other Essays on Honor, Social Discomfort, and Violence*,[7] where he links humiliation to honour as understood in the Iliad or Icelandic sagas and explains that these concepts are still very much alive today, despite a common assumption that they are no longer relevant. Cohen and Nisbett also examine an honour-based notion of humiliation (Nisbett and Cohen, 1996). The honour to which Cohen and Nisbett refer is the kind that operates in the more traditional branches of the Mafia or, more generally, in blood feuds, a scenario with which I was already familiar as a result of working for seven years as a psychological counsellor in Egypt. Within a blood feud culture it is honourable and perfectly legitimate to 'heal' humiliation by killing a targeted person. The opposite is true in a society where universal human rights are recognised; 'healing'

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[6] Some authors do not differentiate between humiliation and shame and use it exchangeably, for example Silvan S. Tomkins (1962–1992) whose work is carried further by Donald L. Nathanson who describes humiliation as a combination of three innate affects out of nine, namely as a combination of shame, disgust and dissmell (Nathanson told me that in a personal conversation, 1.10.1999. See Nathanson, 1992; Nathanson, 1987).

[7] The theme of this book is 'that we are more familiar with the culture of honor than we may like to admit. This familiarity partially explains why stories of revenge play so well, whether read as the *Iliad*, an Icelandic saga, *Hamlet*, many novels, or seen as so many gangland, intergalactic, horror, or Clint Eastwood movies. Honor is not our official ideology, but its ethic survives in pockets of most all our lives. In some ethnic (sub)cultures it still is the official ideology, or at least so we are told about the cultures of some urban black males, Mafiosi, Chicano barrios, and so on. And even among the suburban middle class the honor ethic is lived in high school or in the competitive rat race of certain professional cultures' (Miller, 1993, 9).

humiliation means restoring the victim's dignity by empathic dialogue, sincere apology, and finally reconciliation.

Humiliation has furthermore been addressed in such fields as international relations,[8] love, sex and social attractiveness,[9] depression,[10] society and identity formation,[11] sports,[12] serial murder,[13] war and violence.[14] A few examples from history, literature and film illustrate humiliation.[15] There is a significant literature in philosophy on 'the politics of recognition,' claiming that people who are not recognized suffer humiliation and that this leads to violence (see also Honneth, 1997 on related themes). Max Scheler set out these issues in his classic book *Ressentiment* (Scheler, 1961).

The following section addresses possible methodological approaches to the analysis of the notion of humiliation and examines the actor's perspective in a process of humiliation.

Scenarios of humiliation seen from the actor's perspective

The conceptual space of the term humiliation will be mapped in the following text by analysing 15 representative cases, each starting with a statement or 'utterance.' The aim is to achieve a preliminary systematisation of the field humiliation. These cases offer characteristic constellations or representative scenarios. The 15 utterances are arranged in such a way that the complexity of elements entailed in humiliation is illustrated.

The 15 utterances are condensed from 216 qualitative interviews that were collected during the period of March 1997 to December 1999 in Africa and Europe. Some interviews were taped, some lasted for 10 minutes, others for two hours, some text fragments stem from letters or electronic mails which I received long time after having opened the subject with a person, indicating that people had been thinking about it for a long time, keeping the subject at the back of their minds and wrestling with it.[16]

What became clear after having differentiated the elements of humiliation (following the strategy of Grounded Theory) was that these elements express 'common sense' categories as discussed in Smedslund's work.[17] A 'Psycho-Logic' approach may begin with looking that

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[8] see for example Cviic 1993, Luo 1993, Midiohouan 1991, Steinberg 1991, 1996, Urban et al. (Eds.)1990.

[9] see for example Baumeister et al. 1993, Baumeister 1997, Brossat 1995, Gilbert 1997, Proulx et al. 1994, Vogel et al. 1990.

[10] see for example Brown et al. 1995, Miller 1988.

[11] see for example Ignatieff 1997, Markus et al. 1996, Silver 1986, Wood et al. 1994.

[12] see for example Hardman et al. 1996.

[13] see for example Hale 1994, Lehmann 1995, Schlesinger 1998.

[14] see for example Masson 1996, Vachon 1993, Znakov 1989, 1990.

[15] see for example Peters 1993, Stadtwald 1992, Toles 1995, Zender 1994.

[16] 'Qualitative research is part of a debate, not fixed truth. Qualitative research is: a) an attempt to capture the sense that lies within, and that structures what we say about what we do; b) an exploration, elaboration and systematization of the significance of an identified phenomenon; c) the illuminative representation of the meaning of a delimited issue or problem' (Banister et al., 1994, 3).

[17] Smedslund asserts that human beings create 'meta-myths' that are explicable in terms of common-sense psychology or 'Psycho-Logic' (Smedslund, 1988). 'The key concepts in this system are given definitions, and the basic assumptions are presented in the form of axioms. A number of corollaries and theorems are formally proved. The text also contains numerous notes in which the formal

the word humiliation. It has its roots in the Latin word humus, earth. This entails a spatial orientation, a downward orientation, literally a 'de-gradation.' 'Ned-verdigelse' (Norwegian), 'Er-niedrig-ung' (German), 'a-baisse-ment' (French), all mean 'de-gradation.' All these words are built on the same spatial, *orientational* metaphor[18] that places itself within a Vygotskian framework of relations.

Each presentation starts with a person's utterance. This utterance is chosen to illustrate the character of the case. Following this, a more general description of the case is attempted, where the following signs will be used: a plus (+) sign symbolises 'present,' a minus (-) sign 'absent.' Then the inter-group level is looked at, in other words, it is asked whether the scenario in question could also be relevant between ethnic groups, or between nations. At the end of each scenario a third party evaluation and a normative evaluation will be discussed, meaning that it will be asked how a third person who observes the scenario as an independent observer would evaluate 'right' and 'wrong.'

Case 1.1
Utterance: 'I hate my wife, she treats me so badly; I now want to humiliate her; I want to see her suffer; I already have a plan of how to proceed.'

General description: This man has decided to proceed with acts of humiliation; he has the intention to humiliate and he will act; he wants to cause the suffering of his wife, and it is her suffering, he hopes, which will directly satisfy his urge for revenge. This means:
- Intention +,
- act +,
- the intended outcome is the suffering of the humiliated person,
- the satisfaction is entailed in the suffering of the humiliated person as direct compensation for the suffering of the humiliator.

Inter-group level: Many stories of ethnic groups or nations humiliating each other over centuries show similarities to the utterance just presented. A clan, who had the upper hand for a while and engaged in humiliating the weaker clans, may have to face revenge one day. Terrorists often justify their terrorist acts with the argument that they have no other choice but to humiliate the arrogant oppressor by acts of sabotage and disruption. Revolutions, when they succeed, may end in public humiliation of the former suppressor, as was the case in the French Revolution when the aristocracy was publicly executed at the guillotine.

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propositions and their broader implications are discussed. It is assumed that the relationship between psycho-logic and empirical psychology is analogous to that existing between geometry and geography. Psycho-logic and geometry both provide a formal system in terms of which one may describe and analyze respectively psychological phenomena and geographical terrains' (Book-cover text of *Psycho-logic*, Smedslund, 1988).

[18] Lakoff and Johnson (1980) describe orientational metaphors as up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, central-peripheral. Humiliation clearly is 'down.' 'These spatial orientations arise from the fact that we have bodies of the sort we have and that they function as they do in our physical environment. Orientational metaphors give a concept a spatial environment: for example, HAPPY IS UP' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 14, capitalisation in original). If 'up' is happy, then 'down' must be 'unhappy': 'being put down' makes unhappy. No empirical research should be necessary to find this, - Smedslund's argument seems perfectly correct, - the analysis of the utilised metaphors suffices. And since the same metaphors are used in many languages, perhaps in all languages, no research except linguistics is necessary to claim that 'being put down' makes unhappy in all cultures.

Somalia and Rwanda/Burundi, as well as Germany are other examples of these dynamics, the German humiliation through the Versailles treaties being the most widely known. In Somalia the dictator Siad Barre called the Issaq clan in the north of Somalia 'arrogant.'[19] When Siad Barre ordered his bureaucracy and army to harass, humiliate and destroy the Issaq clan in the 1980s, the Issaq responded by forming an underground army (the Somali National Movement, SNM), which finally contributed to the fall of the dictator. Today Issaq feel that they were humiliated to such an extent by their southern brothers that they do not want to be in one state with them anymore; they proclaimed their own republic 'Somaliland.' Thus northern behaviour was perceived as 'arrogant' and humiliating by southerners, who reacted with violent acts of counter-humiliation, which in turn were responded to with separation of the North.

In Rwanda and Burundi a Tutsi elite used to rule by maintaining an intricately woven hierarchy with mainly Hutu at the bottom. In Rwanda Hutu overthrew the Tutsi rule in a 'Hutu revolution' in 1961 (Des Forges, 1999), in Burundi Tutsi rule continued also after independence in the 1960s. Since independence both countries have been tormented regularly by small-scale and large-scale genocidal killings, each group targeting the other. A circle of humiliation and counter-humiliation is in motion.

The third party's evaluation of such cases is bound to be difficult. It is difficult for a third independent person to decide who deserves sympathy; is it the wife who is right in humiliating an abusive husband, or is it the poor husband who is terrorised by his hysterical wife? Does the husband suffer from an inflated narcissistic ego (Kohut, 1976), feeling hurt by even the slightest criticism, or is it his wife who is 'evil'?

On the inter-group level the situation is just as difficult. Talking to Hutu and Tutsi, or Somalis from different parts of Somalia during my fieldwork in 1998 and 1999, I seemed only to meet victims who felt humiliated by their counterparts and reckoned that any counter-humiliation was justified by the extent of the original humiliation. Nobody disclosed himself or herself as a perpetrator.

The normative evaluation of the strategy responding to humiliation with counter-humiliation is clear in a modern society that is built on the concept of human rights: War, violence, and killings are not regarded as viable means to solve circles of humiliation. In contrast, in a tradition honour-based society this may be evaluated completely differently and norms would suggest the opposite, namely that only killing that can purge humiliation.

It may be globalisation that is shifting the balance towards the human rights approach (Lindner, 2000a), so that the international community as a third party lends its voice to the human rights normative evaluation today.

Case 1.2
Utterance: 'My boss bullies me constantly; I have a thousand fantasies about how I could humiliate him; but since I depend on the job, I cannot do anything.'

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[19] Interview 30th November 1998 in Hargeisa: An interview partner recalls how she was able to meet the dictator and how she asked him why he hated the Issaq. He answered: 'You Issaq, you are so arrogant!'

General description: This man would like to humiliate his boss, he has the intention, but his dependency on his job will stop him from acting. His satisfaction would be the suffering of the boss. This means:

- Intention +,
- act -,
- the intended outcome is the suffering of the humiliated person,
- the satisfaction, if achieved, would be entailed in the suffering of the humiliated person. That would function as direct compensation for the suffering of the humiliator.

Inter-group level: On the inter-group level many examples seem to be relevant. All occupied people who are too weak to stand up against occupation, find themselves in a similar situation. Somalia provides an example. It is a country of proud nomads.[20] Among them live 'minorities' (preponderant in some regions) consisting of occupationally specialized caste-like groups (shoe makers, metal workers, etc.), members of which are attached to Somali lineages or clans. The major clan members routinely humiliate members of these minorities, their daughters cannot intermarry, they can be killed without requiring the traditional diya-compensation ('diya' means compensation for injuries), and they never lose their stigma, even if they are highly educated.

When I asked members of the major clan why these minorities do not retaliate for their suffering, for example by forming a guerrilla force, as the major clans did against dictator Siad Barre, they answer without exception, 'Because these minorities are scattered and cannot collect the necessary forces.' They continue, 'These minorities may have been too powerful and arrogant once in time, just look how intelligent they are! Many of us believe that we conquered them back in time, and that we, the victors, make sure that they do not come back by keeping them scattered and by treating them as outcasts.'[21]

My fieldwork in and about Somalia (58 interviews with Somalis, mainly in 'Somaliland' and Nairobi, 1998 and 1999) included a number of interviews with members of these minority groups, who related to me that they, for the first time in history, are able to gather and exchange experiences, even if it is only in a refugee camp in North Kenya. The fact that they are less scattered gives them force and motivates them to speak up. They try to convert their fate of helplessness (case 1.2) into a fate of agency, by calling upon the international community to acknowledge their fate and support their plight. I was urged to become a voice for them in the world.

The third party's evaluation seems to be clearer in this case than in case 1.1: A person or group who is in a position of power and abuses this position in order to hurt the weaker, will be condemned by a majority of third parties who observe this situation. The wish by the hurt person or group to retaliate will be widely understood; the victim's wish to retaliate will be seen as being more 'right' than the suppresser's actions.

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[20] The major branches of the Somali lineage system are four overwhelmingly pastoral nomadic clan-families (the Dir, Daarood, Issaq, and Hawiye, who are collectively denoted by the appellation of Samaal), and two agricultural ones (the Digil and Rahanwayn).

[21] It is difficult to get reliable information about historic facts in and about Somalia, since Somalia is a thoroughly oral society, with script only introduced in 1972. The hypotheses related here may be taken as psychological theory, not necessarily as historic truth.

This view will not be shared, though, by representatives of traditional hierarchical societies, who find it legitimate to 'teach' those lesser beings 'the lesson' that they have to 'understand' that their 'natural' place is at the bottom of the pyramid of power.

The normative evaluation within a framework of human rights indicates clearly that holding people down is illegitimate.

Case 1.3

Utterance: 'I am a gang leader; my followers are all about 16 years old. When a boy from another gang humiliates us, I have to humiliate them, not because I particularly hate them, but because I have to maintain my influence. The degree of their suffering is equal to the extent of my own power.'

General description: This boy does not humiliate out of hatred, but out of obligation to his reputation. He has the intention to humiliate, and he will act. This means:
- Intention +,
- act +,
- the intended outcome is the suffering of the humiliated persons,
- the satisfaction is the suffering of the humiliated persons which is a means to support the status of the humiliator.

Inter-group level: On the inter-group level we think of leaders of clans, ethnic groups, parties, and even of companies, who use 'weapons' like humiliation in order to secure their power position. This way of using humiliation has its place in traditional honour-based societies, where humiliation is a routine mechanism of maintaining and re-arranging the ranking order within hierarchical and mostly patriarchal structures. A gang-leader may not even get emotionally involved, or he may get into a ritual rage. Ritual rage is known from old times when warriors used to work themselves into fighting rage using all kinds of catalysts from songs to drugs; Vikings for example are said to have used poisonous mushrooms.

The third party's evaluation is dependent on the societal context. Clans in traditional honour-based social structures, who judge their honour as being a superior asset to be guarded, will believe that a leader is right in using humiliation as a weapon. After all, humiliation is the basic coinage in such systems. In contrast, a modern western person educated in human rights will argue that the use of humiliation is destructive to long-term social peace.

The normative evaluation within the context of a human rights framework is clear, humiliation is illegitimate under any circumstances. It is called 'bullying,' and not 'defending one's honour.' See Lindner, in Breines, Gierycz, and Reardon, 1999 for an analysis of the receding influence of macho culture in a globalising world.

Case 1.4

Utterance: 'I will try to humiliate my colleague at work; not that I hate him, no, but I would like to snatch some of his customers from him and I reckon that humiliating him will weaken him.'

General description: This man has the intention to humiliate and he will act; but the suffering of the humiliated person is not his actual objective, his aim is to weaken the humiliated person

in order to reach another goal, namely to take his customers from him; humiliation in this case is used as an instrument. This means that
- Intention +,
- act +,
- the intended outcome is the weakening of the humiliated person,
- the satisfaction is entailed in obtaining resources that may be freed after weakening the humiliated person.

Inter-group level: Examples abound where competitors try to seize resources by using humiliation. This applies to all kinds of groups, be it clans, ethnic groups, parties, or companies. The most gruesome example is rape in war. Rape in war has acquired a terrible reputation as a 'weapon.' Its 'efficiency' builds on its potential to humiliate thoroughly not only the raped victim, but also the family and the whole group to which the victim belongs. This humiliation is so devastating that it very 'efficiently' weakens the enemy. It may be deliberately used as a weapon to achieve this effect.

The third party's evaluation depends on the societal anchoring of this third party. A third party may consider pure utilitarian behaviour as justifiable, and/or may reckon that humiliation is legitimate. She may, however, believe the opposite, namely that human rights standards which de-legitimise humiliation should guide one's behaviour.

Normative evaluation: In a globalising world where human rights gain ground and creativity is seen as main resource, it is not only increasingly ostracized, but in fact also unproductive to try to increase one's power or influence by weakening others, be it by using humiliation or other means. This is because win-lose situations yield lower returns in the long run than win-win situations. And win-win situations can only be created through mutual respect (Ross and Nisbett, 1991; Ross and Samuels, 1993; Ross and Ward, 1995; Ross, in Arrow, Mnookin, Ross, Tversky, and Wilson, 1995; Ross and Ward, in Brown, Reed, and Turiel, 1996).

Case 1.5
Utterance: 'I want to become the leader of my party. I will weaken my opponents by telling each of them how the other is humiliating them.'

General description: This man is using the notion of humiliation as an instrument, he does not humiliate anybody himself. This means:
- Intention -,
- act -,
- the intended outcome is the weakening of the humiliated persons,
- the satisfaction sought is an increase in power and influence for the actor through the weakening of the humiliated persons.

Inter-group level: 'Divide and rule' is a well-known formula for leaders of all kinds of groups. Setting circles of humiliation in motion is the most potent and 'efficient' way of achieving divisions, since it entails strong emotions that make it difficult for those caught in them to sit together again and unite.

The goal of power elites to maintain their dominance may be embodied in social and societal institutions, social customs and tradition, and architecture. Lukes proposes the concept of 'ascriptive humiliation' (Lukes, 1997, 44): 'By this I intend a kind of maltreatment that

consists in domination that results in distinctive kinds of injustice. By "domination" I mean to refer to the systematic use of power in a social context of unequal power relations. In such a context ascriptive humiliation consists in mistreating people by means of ascription, in the classical sociological sense of the term: that is, by reference to statuses that are assigned to individuals, identifying what individuals are, not what they do, such as "attributes of sex, age, intelligence, physical characteristics, status in relational systems, e.g., collectivity memberships" (Parsons, 1951, 64).'

The third party's evaluation of this case will have the same result as in case 1.4. As will the *normative evaluation.*

Case 1.6

Utterance: 'I do not want to humiliate my wife, but sometimes I cannot control myself: I beat her, I shout at her, and I try everything to humiliate her.'

General description: This man is not conscious of any intention to humiliate, but he admits that there must be somewhere in him, beyond his conscious control, an intention to humiliate, one could call it an unconscious intention. The man does not consciously want to cause the suffering of his wife, and her suffering does not satisfy a conscious urge for revenge. This means:

- Conscious intention -,
- act +,
- the not consciously intended outcome is the suffering of the humiliated person,
- the not consciously sought satisfaction is the suffering of the humiliated person as direct compensation for the suffering of the humiliator which also may not be conscious.

Inter-group level: This case is relevant on the inter-group level in relation to people who are convinced they are open-minded and tolerant towards such groups as for example foreigners or drug-addicts, but, who can only maintain their tolerance as long as those groups are far away. They actually do discriminate against foreigners and drug-addicts as soon as they are actually confronted with those people in their daily lives.

Third party's evaluation: Both actor and third person will agree that the actor's behaviour is inconsistent.

Normative evaluation: Both actor and third person will agree that the actor's behaviour is also wrong.

Case 1.7

Utterance: 'I recognise that I inadvertently humiliated my best friend; I did not have the intention to do so, but obviously I must have done it.'

General description: This person did not have the intention to humiliate, but did so. This means:

- Intention -,
- act +,
- no intended outcome,

- no satisfaction.

Inter-group level: This case is very relevant on the inter-group level, because communication between groups, especially groups with different cultural backgrounds, is even more prone to produce uncertainties than communication between individuals with the same cultural background. A German or French citizen for example, may perceive it as extremely humiliating if s/he is addressed with 'Du' or 'tu' instead of 'Sie' or 'vous.' A foreigner with English background, who is used to a simple 'you,' will not be able to fathom the humiliation entailed in addressing somebody inappropriately with 'you.' A police officer in France or Germany for example, who intends to humiliate a criminal, uses 'Du' or 'tu' because of its strong humiliating potential. Thus a foreigner may humiliate a German or French citizen inadvertently just by being uninformed.

Third party's evaluation: Both actor and third party will agree that the actor is wrong, though this is excusable in a case of authentic ignorance. The third person will try to educate such actors and show them that they are blind to their ignorance. They will try to enlighten the perpetrators and show them that the humiliating effect and its aftermath - from hampered communication to open violence, - is perfectly understandable, though this may surprise the actors involved.

Normative evaluation: The actors' behaviour is evaluated as normatively wrong. However, authentic ignorance on the perpetrators' side may diminish the extent to which they are held accountable for their behaviour, because ignorance may be taken to lessen their ability to be responsible for their acts.

Case 1.8
Utterance: 'My husband beats me when he is drunk. I left him, although I love him. Now I have decided to go back to him. My friends are shocked and beg me not to humiliate myself. But I love my husband, I will swallow my pride, I will humiliate myself and go back to him.'

General description: This woman has the intention to bring about her own humiliation and she will do it. The special feature of this case is that she is both, the actor and perceiver of the humiliating act. This means:
- Intention +,
- act +,
- the intended outcome is the maintenance of a love relationship,
- the satisfaction stems from the maintenance of the love relationship.

Inter-group level: Wherever we find strong leaders who have followers who depend emotionally on them, for example in sects, many of these followers will be willing to humiliate themselves if this is necessary in order to stay with their leaders. Many religions build on self-humiliation, as we see for example in flagellants in medieval times who whipped themselves until their flesh was bloody and raw. This was seen as a service and proof of faith to God. Oksenberg Rorty writes, 'the deepest wound can be that of being so manipulated that one remains unaware of one's condition. Sometimes the very awareness, the outrage of experiencing the feeling of humiliation is the seed of self-respect' (Rorty, 1997, 113).

Third party's watching such situations from outside, will in most cases deplore such husbands or leaders of sects and accuse them of exploiting their followers. The case of religion is

complex, though, many may maintain that it is a person's own decision to humiliate herself for her beliefs.

Normative evaluation: In modern secular societies self-humiliation may be found in love relationships, and some sects, but not anymore to the larger extent to which it occurred in medieval times. When it happens in love relationships or sects it is not seen as socially acceptable and the person who humiliates herself may be offered therapeutic help.

The cases 1.1 to 1.8 will now be collected in Table I:

TABLE I

HUMILIATION SEEN FROM THE ACTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

	Case 1.1	Case 1.2	Case 1.3	Case 1.4	Case 1.5	Case 1.6	Case 1.7	Case 1.8
Intention to humiliate present (+) or not present (-)	+	+	+	+	-	conscious - not consciuos +	-	+
Humili-ating act present (+) or not present (-)	+	-	+	+	-	conscious - not consciuos +	+	+
Intended outcome of humiliating act	the humili-ated person shall suffer	the humili-ated person shall suffer	the humili-ated person shall suffer	the humili-ated person shall be wea-kened	the humili-ated persons shall be wea-kened	the humiliated persons shall be weakened	no intended effect, misunder-standing	main-taining dependen-ce
Satisfaction from humiliating act	compen-sation for hurt feelings of humili-ator	compen-sation for hurt feelings of humili-ator	gaining of advan-tages	gaining of advan-tages	gaining of advan-tages	compen-sation for hurt feelings, not conscious	No satisfac-tion, misunder-standing	main-taining dependen-ce
Human rights evaluation of humiliating act	actor could be right or wrong	actor is right	actor is wrong	actor is wrong	actor is wrong	actor is wrong	actor is wrong	actor neither right nor wrong, but weak

Table I: Humiliation and its elements seen from the actor's perspective

Scenarios of humiliation analysed from the humiliated party's perspective

In the following section the process of humiliation will be analysed by including the perspective of the party that is feeling humiliated, whether these feelings of humiliation are intended by an actor or caused by misunderstanding. It is difficult to find a word for the humiliated person: is it the victim, the perceiver, the re-actor, the object, or the targeted person? The situation is complicated, because the humiliated person may even be the actor. During my fieldwork in Somalia and with Somalis in other parts of Africa (1998-1999) I recorded interviews on video, produced a film and showed it later to other Somalis. Some of

them responded with fury because they felt that it was a rhetoric of humiliation that was used in the film to mislead and manipulate the interviewer in her capacity as a representative of the international community, believed to be naively open to accounts of feelings of humiliation. The angry commentators claimed that their northern Somalian compatriots more or less pretended to have felt humiliated during the quasi-genocide in the 1980s perpetrated against them by the dictatorial government based in the South. They angrily maintained that the northern 'Somalilanders' in the film were actually not victims, but actors, actors because they defined the situation in a way that stigmatised their southern brothers as perpetrators.

This section uses the term 'humiliated party' since this allows for the possibility that the humiliated party invents a story of humiliation and thus is not a victim but a perpetrator. Hitler provides a clear and the most horrific example, - he accused Jews of plotting to humiliate the entire world.

Case 2.1

Utterance: 'I feel humiliated by my neighbour, I feel he is looking down on me without having any right to do that; if I only knew why he does that and whether he does it intentionally. The whole thing could also be a misunderstanding.'

General description: This person is uncertain about the intentions of the neighbour, the neighbour may or may not have the intention to humiliate, the person is also uncertain whether her perception of a humiliating act from the neighbour is correct; she suffers, but is not sure whether she should actually suffer or not.

We do not know what is really happening on the actor's side:
- intention to humiliate + or -,
- humiliating act + or -,
- intended outcome is the neighbour's humiliation + or -,
- satisfaction stemming from neighbour's humiliating + or -.

From the humiliated party's perceptive the actor is difficult to judge:
- the actor's intention is indiscernible by the perceiver, intention + or -,
- it is uncertain whether there is an act of humiliation at all, act + or -
- the perceiver does not know whether s/he shall suffer or not, suffering + or -.

Inter-group level: Similar to above reported case 1.7 this case is very relevant on the inter-group level, because communication between with different cultural backgrounds is more prone to produce uncertainties than communication between individuals with the same cultural background.

The third party's evaluation is necessarily uncertain, since the situation is unknown. The same concerns the *normative evaluation* of the case. A process of mutual education and illumination is necessary. Globalisation, which brings cultures closer together, increases therefore the need for cross-cultural education.

Case 2.2

Utterance: 'My wife tries to humiliate me constantly; as far as I understand it, she feels justified in doing so because I was having an affair with another woman; but I think that her

behaviour is unjustified; she should accept me like I am, are not all men hunters by nature? All her attempts to humiliate me do not really touch me.'

General description: This man recognises the intention of his wife to humiliate him and he observes her acts of humiliation; but he does not feel humiliated, he does not suffer the pain that his wife intends to inflict on him.

We have reason to conclude on the actor's side:
- Humiliating intention +,
- humiliating act +,
- intended outcome is the suffering of the humiliated person.

On the humiliated party's side we find:
- Perception of humiliating intention on the actor's side +,
- perception of humiliating acts coming from the actor +,
- but perceiver's suffering -.

Inter-group level: On the inter-group level we see examples of groups who resist feeling humiliated by acts that are aimed at humiliating them. When slavery still was part of daily life, slaves may have tried to humiliate their abusive masters many times, but in vain.

The third party's evaluation can vary widely: An abusive husband, terrorising his wife, will be seen by most third parties as being very wrong in not letting his wife's protest touch him. The only exception will be thick-skinned authoritarians. On the other side torture victims who are humiliated by torturers will be regarded as heroic in not letting the torturer's humiliation touch them.

The normative evaluation will depend on whether the humiliating act is seen as justifiable retaliation for wrongs suffered, as in the case of a terrorised wife, or whether the humiliating act is seen as wrong in itself.

Case 2.3

Utterance: 'My mother is so dominating; she only wishes the best for me, but her patronising way of treating me humiliates me.'

General description: The daughter recognises that the mother does not actually have the intention to humiliate her, but she feels humiliated anyhow.

On the actor's side we find:
- Humiliating intention -,
- humiliating act -,
- intended outcome and satisfaction is helping the daughter.

On the humiliated party's side we find:
- Perception of humiliating intention -,
- perception of humiliating acts +,
- perceiver's suffering +.

Inter-group level: This case shows very clearly that humiliation is a term that carries the relation between at least two persons at its heart. It cannot be described by looking at just one individual. The question which poses itself explicitly in this case is: If I want to help another person, but my arrogant way of behaving humiliates the person I want to help, do I then commit a humiliating act? From my point of view I do not commit a humiliating act, from the perceiver's point of view I do commit such an act. Regarding the inter-group level this case is extremely relevant in all aid situations; humanitarian aid, peace keeping, peace enforcing, etc., all involved persons struggle with the possibility that their actions may humiliate those who shall be helped.[22]

The debate around 'double standards' is very relevant here, double standards concerning the west's human rights advocacy which often contradict its actual behaviour. During my fieldwork in Africa (1998, 1999) I was constantly confronted with this contradiction. The former first lady of Somalia, Edna Adan, says in an interview (December 1998) about the lack of western response to the quasi-genocide in the north of Somalia in the 1980s, 'I think the international world has different standards. It preaches human rights, and fairness, and so on, in literature, in Europe. But then when that humiliation, and that aggression, and that hurt, took place in a poor, remote, developing country like Somaliland, no one wants to be bothered, - let them stew in their own juice. And these are divided standard, and unfair standards...' She continues, 'It is a humiliation, of course. So, the international community is to blame and I hope you have very strong cupboards in which you can lock up your conscience.'

The third party's evaluation is very difficult to carry out: Who is wrong, the donor who gives unsuitable aid with good intentions, or the receiver who thinks that donors should have studied the situation better before designing their helping strategy? After many years of failed aid programmes, most observers will probably agree that it is primarily the donors' responsibility to ensure that their help really meets the needs of the recipients. The recipients will therefore be evaluated as being 'right' in feeling humiliated by ill-considered help.[23] On the other side it cannot be excluded that help may be well intentioned and well designed, but that it meets a receiver who shows insufficient appreciation for the effort of the helper. Then the receiver's reaction would be evaluated as 'wrong.'

The normative evaluation is delicate and hinges on the definition of the concept of responsibility. Is it the responsibility of the donor to do sufficient research on the recipients' needs? Where is the recipients' responsibility? What about empowerment of the recipients? Wherever I went during my fieldwork in Africa (1998 and 1999) the War-torn Societies Project in Somalia,[24] received a lot of praise for being different from the common run of NGOs or similar aid agencies. These NGOs were often described in terms of a parody (that contains elements of truth): 'These NGOs come along, build wells (or some other installations or services liable to be ecologically unsound or unmanageable in the longer run), create a few jobs for some chauffeurs, secretaries and security personnel, and then disappear again.'[25]

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[22] Kenneth Gergen and Mary Gergen write about the humiliating aspect of help-receiving in the mid-1970's, see their current work at http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/kgergen1/text7.html. I owe this reference to Michael Bond. See also Rosen, in DePaulo and et al., 1983. See also Lindner, 2000b.
[23] See the discussion at organisations as for example the World Bank, where 'empowerment' and 'good governance' currently become buzzwords after the failure of 'helping' developing countries with financial and/or technical assistance. See for example Stiglitz, 1998.
[24] See http://www.unicc.org/unrisd/wsp/index.htm.
[25] See also Maren, 1997.

The War-torn Societies Project, in contrast, concentrates on 'research' and attempts to develop an agenda for development together with the communities concerned; it thus tries to 'empower' people and turn them from 'recipients' into 'actors.' Empowerment means undoing humiliation; and 'research' means moving – intellectually and psychologically - more often and more carefully between, on one side, the 'incoming helper's perception or ideology of what people need as aid,' and the 'support that local people *really* need' on the other side. This tailor-made approach seems to be the one that has to be advocated as normatively right and responsible.

Case 2.4
Utterance: 'My neighbours try to humiliate me whenever they meet me; I am an alcoholic and I hit my wife when I am drunk, it is terrible; I know I am a bad person; they are right to look down on me, I deserve no better; their humiliation only adds to the guilt and shame I feel myself.'

General description: This man perceives the neighbours' humiliating intentions and their acts aiming at letting him suffer. He suffers, and accepts that as justified.

On the actors' side we find:
- Humiliating intention +,
- humiliating act +,
- intended outcome is the suffering of the targeted person,
- satisfaction is entailed in the compensation for the suffering of the wife. The last point shows that compensation of hurt feelings through humiliation can be differentiated further into hurt feelings of the humiliator or hurt feelings of a third person. In this case the neighbours want to let the beating husband compensate for the suffering of the beaten woman, not because the neighbours themselves are beaten, but because they regard it as unjust that she suffers. In all above reported cases the suffering of the humiliated person is meant to compensate for hurt feelings in the humiliating person herself, not in a third person.

On the humiliated party's side we find:
- Perception of humiliating intention +,
- perception of humiliating act +,
- suffering +.

Inter-group level: Germany may serve as an example on the inter-group level. Many self-critical Germans feel responsible for the atrocities Germany committed against its neighbours during World War II, even if they are born long after World War II. They therefore tend to show understanding if they find themselves in a situation where they are being humiliated by people from European neighbours who suffered under German occupation during World War II.

In many societies, offenders against social norms are publicly shamed and humiliated. Many feel that their wrongdoing requires this punishment. Nowadays lists of performance indices, for example of employees in a company, or universities in a country, may have a similar effect, intended or not. This 'prosocial humiliation' including its potential to become 'anti-social humiliation' is addressed by Klein (1991, 103): 'a series of humiliating degradations

…have as their final aim making a gung-ho Leatherneck out of an undisciplined, self-centered teenager. Finally, there are studies which document the fact that medical education abounds with instances of personal put-downs and ridicule used by faculty and supervisors in the teaching of medical students and residents.'

The third party's evaluation and also the normative evaluation are quite clear in the case, where even the targets of humiliation agree that it is 'right' to humiliate them. However, as Klein makes clear, there is a price to pay for using humiliation, even if it is meant to 'civilise' 'imperfect' beings, because after having been 'civilised' those 'beings' will have the need to look down on others, and will acquire a 'lifelong sense of vulnerability' (Klein, 1991, 103).

Case 2.5

Utterance: 'My mother is humiliating me by quarrelling with me in front of my friends; if she quarrels with me when we are alone, it does not affect me, but to do this in front of others, that is humiliating.'

General description: The presence of a third party leads to humiliation. It is possible that the mother does not want to humiliate her son; however, it is also possible that she actually wants to humiliate her son.

On the actor's side we find:
- Humiliating intention - or +,
- humiliating act - or +,
- no intended outcome, just lack of sensitivity on the actor's side,
- no satisfaction sought, just lack of sensitivity on the actor's side, or satisfaction from suffering of the humiliated person.

On the humiliated party's side we find:
- Perception of humiliating intention +,
- perception of humiliating act +,
- suffering +.

Inter-group level: At the inter-group level many examples come to mind. Negotiations between groups are often conducted secretly in order to avoid considering third parties too early in the process. The notion of 'face-saving' is widely known, and especially perceived as culturally relevant in Japan, China and other parts of South East Asia.

The third party's and normative evaluations depend on the evaluation of the actor's intentions. If the mother in the above cited example really wants to humiliate her son, then most observers will consider that as lack of love and as even normatively 'wrong,' suggesting that the mother should use alternative methods to express discontent with her son. If she is not aware of the fact that she humiliates her son, her actions may be evaluated as being beyond right and wrong, since she is not aware of the consequences of her actions.

Case 2.6

Utterance: 'My wife sometimes has a harsh way of talking to me; my friends tell me that her behaviour humiliates me, they ask me not to accept her behaviour, but I just do not feel humiliated, I love her.'

General description: This man does not feel humiliated, his friends feel humiliated in his place. It is possible that his wife does not want to humiliate him; it is also possible that she does want to humiliate him.

On the actor's side we find therefore:
- Humiliating intention - or +,
- humiliating act - or +,
- intended outcome -, or suffering of the humiliated person,
- satisfaction -, or suffering of the humiliated person.

On the humiliated party's side we find:
- Perception of humiliating intention -,
- perception of humiliating act -,
- suffering -,
- perception of humiliating intention and act only by third persons +, third persons suffer in the target person's place.

Inter-group level: On the inter-group level we find fanatical followers of sects and other extremist groups who impress non-believers with their willingness to accept humiliation and still stay loyal to the group.

A third party who is in favour of extremist groups will support their behaviour, while neutral third parties most probably will not. Most modern citizens of western countries will regard this kind of dependency as 'stupid' and also as *normatively* 'wrong.'

Case 2.7

Utterance: 'This teacher of ours, he is so arrogantly convinced that he knows everything. But in fact he tells us nonsense most of the time. He is completely blind to the fact that he is humiliating himself in our eyes.'

General description: The teacher himself does not feel humiliated, and this appears in this case to be a sign of his social inability; if he were a normally sensitive human being, he would feel humiliated. The teacher humiliates himself only in the eyes of third persons; the whole subject of humiliation is irrelevant for him. In the eyes of the others he humiliates himself through being blind to the fact that he has a bigger self-image than he can maintain. He humiliates himself passively through being blind.

On the actor's side we find therefore:
- Humiliating intention -,
- humiliating act -,
- intended outcome -,
- satisfaction -.

On the humiliated party's side we find blindness, lack of social abilities:
- Perception of humiliating intention -,
- perception of humiliating act -,
- suffering -.

Third persons feel the humiliation he should feel:
- Perception of humiliating intention by third persons +,
- perception of humiliating act by third person +,
- suffering by third person +.

Inter-group level: Michael Kimmel explained how privilege is invisible and how he understood that he had humiliated himself by naïve blindness: 'I got up one morning and looked into the mirror. Suddenly I understood that I was not just a "normal human being" but a "white middle class man"!'[26]

All privileged and powerful groups and nations live with the risk of not detecting their own faults, mistakes, or misperceptions out of arrogant blindness. 'Masters' often live in the false belief that they know all and that their underlings love them. At best they appear ridiculous in the eyes of their subordinates and are laughed about, but they run the risk to be pulled out of their naïve existence by more unpleasant reactions from their unimpressed underlings. 'A dictator has got that feeling that he is always right, what ever happens he is right. He is right and right' (Dr. Gaboose, personal physician of ousted and late Somali dictator Siad Barre in an interview 30th November 1998).

The third party will agree that it is not very wise to be blind to one's own weaknesses, though a *normative evaluation* of 'right' or 'wrong' cannot be applied.

The cases 2.1 to 2.7 will now be collected in Table II:

TABLE II

HUMILIATION SEEN FROM THE PERCEIVER'S PERSPECTIVE

		Case 2.1	Case 2.2	Case 2.3	Case 2.4	Case 2.5	Case 2.6	Case 2.7
Actor	Intention to humiliate	+ or -	+	-	+	- or +	- or +	-
	Humiliating act	+ or -	+	-	+	- or +	- or +	-
	Intended outcome of humiliating act	+ or -	suffering of the humiliated person	Helping	suffering of the humili-ated person	- or +	none, or suffering of humiliated person	-
	Satisfaction from humiliating act	+ or -	compen-sation for hurt feelings	Helping	compensation for hurt feelings of a third person	none, or any kind of wish to hurt	none, or any kind of motivation to hurt	-
Humili	Actor's	+	+	-	+	+	-	-

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[26] At the expert group meeting on 'Male Roles and Masculinities in the Perspective of a Culture of Peace,' Oslo, Norway, 24-28 September 1997. See also Kimmel, 1997 and Kimmel, 2000.

ated Party	intention to humiliate perceived	but not sure					third person +	third person +
	Humiliating act perceived	+ but not sure	+	+	+	+	- third person +	- third person +
	Suffering	+	-	+	+	+	- third person +	- third person +
Human rights evaluation of humiliating act		un-certain	perceiver can be right or wrong	per-ceiver mostly right	actor is right	Depending on actor's intention	perceiver is wrong	per-ceiver is right

Table II: Humiliation seen from the perceiver's perspective

Table I and Table II are clearly not exhaustive. However, they are intended to present the complexity of the subject in a systematic way. Further cases could be added and many other ways of differentiating the enumerated points further are possible.

Outlook

The systematisation of humiliation in this paper represents a preliminary mapping of its conceptual space. The aim is to contribute to a better understanding of its dynamics for future endeavours to prevent it. A summary of a definition of humiliation may be drawn from the above-presented systematisation as follows:

Humiliation means the enforced lowering of a person or group, a process of subjugation that damages or strips away their pride, honour or dignity. To be humiliated is to be placed, against your will, or in some cases also with your consent,[27] often in a deeply hurtful way, in a situation that is greatly inferior to what you feel you should expect. Humiliation entails demeaning treatment that transgresses established expectations. It may involve acts of force, including violent force. At its heart is the idea of pinning down, putting down or holding to the ground. Indeed, one of the defining characteristics of humiliation as a process is that the victim is forced into passivity, acted upon, made helpless. However, the role of the victim is not necessarily always unambiguous, - a victim may feel humiliated in absence of any humiliating act, - as result of a misunderstanding, or as result of personal and cultural differences concerning norms of what respectful treatment ought to entail, - or the 'victim' may even invent a story of humiliation in order to manoeuvre another party into the role of a loathsome perpetrator.[28]

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[27] See Stoller's work on sado-masochism (Stoller, 1991).
[28] Margalit defines humiliation as the 'rejection of persons of the Family of Man,' as injury of self-respect, or, more specific, as failure of respect, combined with loss of control (Margalit, 1996). His

It has been shown in this paper that, in cases of humiliation, on one side there is the active party, the one who humiliates or is, at least, perceived as humiliating, and on the other side there is the party who feels humiliated, rightly or wrongly. The relationship between these two parties may vary in many ways. In some cases, the humiliator may humiliate intentionally, with a variety of possible objectives, and the targeted person may feel humiliated or, alternatively, may remain untouched. In other cases, someone may feel humiliated even though no-one has actually intended to bring about that effect. This may be seen, for example, in cases where help is given and this help is itself perceived as humiliating by the intended recipient. Finally, it is shown that third parties may perceive cases of humiliation in several ways and may make a range of different normative judgements.

Humiliation as an act perpetrated by a humiliator, as well as humiliation felt as a feeling by a victim, neither can be explained by looking at the isolated individual only, it can only be understood in a Vygotskian framework of relations. It may be hypothesised that humiliation as a field of research has been overlooked in Western psychology precisely because of its intimate dependence on relations. 'Embarrassment,' 'shame,' even 'honour' may perhaps be analysed within the individual who feels it. But humiliation is unavoidably relational.

This paper is part of a series of articles that aims at building a 'theory of humiliation' that connects social psychology with sociology, social anthropology, history and political science. It contains one possible approach to the term humiliation; other approaches are necessary and have to be carried out in further analyses, for example the differentiation of the term humiliation from terms as guilt, shame, embarrassment, dishonour, suppression, degradation, exploitation, entrapment, contempt, disgust, being taken advantage of, or being looked down upon.

Furthermore, the patterns that people use for coping with humiliation have to be studied. Klein enumerates several approaches for coping with humiliation: 'psychological immunization, refusing the role of victim by redefining one's identity, participating in self-help and mutual support groups, using healing laughter, achieving a state of transcendent humility and responding with one's capacity for appreciation to the potential humiliations that come one's way' (Klein, 1992, 255).

It is not only individuals who would benefit from learning how to cope with humiliation. Society as a whole has to develop visions of societal structures that avoid humiliating their citizens. Avishai Margalit (1996) defines a *decent society* as a society in which institutions do not humiliate people, - meaning that they do not undermine a person's reasons for self-respect, - and a *civilised society* as one in which citizens do not humiliate each other. This suggests that respect needs to be introduced into debates about societal reforms. Pettit deplores the current lack of attention for the notion of respect, 'we are stuck with a way of thinking about freedom that knows and cares nothing, in itself, about whether liberty comes with respect' (Pettit, 1997, 74).

Ripstein discusses punishment in a decent society and concludes (Ripstein, 1997, 110) 'Forgiveness might be thought a more befitting attitude for a decent society than are punishment and denunciation. God is said to pray that His love of compassion will outweigh

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position is disputed, however, for example by Quinton, who argues that self-respect 'has nothing much to do with humiliation' (Quinton, 1997, 87). See also Lindner, 2000f and Lindner, 2000g.

His demand for strict justice… Compassion and forgiveness have their place. But it is up to those who have been humiliated to forgive, not up to others. If society, through its institutions, decides to forgive one person for humiliating another, it is joining in the humiliation, rather than answering it.'

This discussion is urgent in countries like Rwanda, where people walk in the street and point at a passer-by saying, 'this man killed my uncle.' Reconciliation is promoted by the current Rwandan government, led by those Tutsi forces that ended the genocidal onslaught on their brothers and sisters in 1994. However, genocide survivors feel that they may not be able to reconcile, 'I may perhaps be able to co-exist with those who let my grandmother parade naked in the streets before killing her, but I cannot achieve reconciliation with them. How can I speak for my grandmother? Those responsible have to be punished.'

As Edna Adan in 'Somaliland' says, 'So, the international community is to blame and I hope you have very strong cupboards in which you can lock up your conscience.' This opens the question: What is a decent global society? Further research is urgently needed.

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