

HUMILIATION: A NUCLEAR BOMB OF EMOTIONS?

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RESUMEN

Este artículo es una visión general de los fundamentos iniciales y los nuevos desarrollos en el estudio de la humillación. En él se esbozan las condiciones del mundo actual que ponen las dinámicas de la humillación a la vanguardia. En él se examinan los supuestos subyacentes de la psicología occidental que han limitado nuestra comprensión de la humillación. A partir de esto, se describe un camino teórico que une la dinámica de la humillación a la violencia y resume la investigación desarrollada que nos lleva a alegar que la humillación es la bomba nuclear global-social de las emociones.

ABSTRACT

This article is an overview of past foundations and recent developments in the study of humiliation. It outlines the conditions of today's world that bring the dynamics of humiliation to the forefront. It examines the underlying assumptions of Western psychology that have limited our understanding of humiliation. Building on this, it describes a theoretical pathway linking the dynamics of humiliation to violence and summarizes developing research that leads us to allege that humiliation is the global-social nuclear bomb of emotions.

Key words: dignidad, humillación, conflicto, violencia, seguridad, psicología, geopolítica [dignity, humiliation, conflict, violence, security, psychology, geopolitics]

Humiliation: A Nuclear Bomb of Emotions?

A decade ago, who would have thought a crude, 14-minute YouTube video would be at the center of an international firestorm of violent protests throughout the Middle East, Northern Africa, Asia, and Europe (Hudson, 2012; Kirkpatrick, 2011, 2012). This (so-called) promotional preview of a movie entitled *Innocence of Muslims* presented profoundly disturbing and degrading images of Islamic culture, sparking violent outrage in more than 20 nations around the world (Kirkpatrick, 2011). The wildfire reaction to this video illustrates the dire consequences of a powerful dynamic that has been largely overlooked in the literature. In recent years, a growing number of scholars and researchers are implicating this dynamic as a root cause of violent aggression (Deutsch, Coleman, & Marcus, 2006; Elison & Harter, 2007; Hartling, 2007; Lindner, 2006, 2009a, 2010c; Pick, Speckhard, and

Jacuch, 2009; Stern, 2010; Torres and Bergner, 2010; Walker and Knauer, 2011). The deadly ramifications of this dynamic fill our newspaper headlines daily, sparked by events such as burning sacred texts (Whitlock, 2012), desecrating corpses (Biesecker, 2013; Bowley and Rosenberg, 2012), self-serving military interventions (Fontan, 2008), and terrorist attacks (Wright, 2007).

What do these events have in common? They illustrate the perilous impact of humiliation. Kofi Annan, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and former Secretary-General of the United Nations, recently observed: “All the cruel and brutal things, even genocide, starts with the humiliation of one individual” (Whack, 2013). *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman declared, “If I’ve learned one thing covering world affairs, it’s this: The single most underappreciated force in international relations is humiliation” (2003, para. 1). This article asserts that humiliation is not only the most underappreciated force in international relations, it may be the *missing link* in the search for root causes of political instability and violent conflict. Based on a growing body of evidence, we suggest that it is time to fully acknowledge the “radioactive” potential of humiliation that poisons human relationships and obstructs constructive political engagement, both locally and globally. In essence, we contend that humiliation is “a nuclear bomb of emotions” (Lindner, 2006, p. 32), perhaps the most toxic social dynamic of our age.

We believe that humiliation is a universal human experience; however, the particularities of this experience can only be understood within the social, cultural, and historical context in which these events occur. Humiliation appears in countless forms. It can be (1) an internal experience (e.g., a feeling, an emotion), (2) an external event (e.g., a degrading interpersonal interaction, bullying, abuse, violent conflict, even genocide), or (3) systemic social conditions (e.g., intractable poverty, discrimination, forced displacement). Because of the enormity and complexity of this experience, we have a responsibility to build a body of knowledge that avoids the errors of the past that led to *faulty generalizations* (Minnich, 2005). It is crucial to recognize that we are always working with *partial knowledge* and this knowledge will grow clearer as more people—from all realms of society, from all backgrounds and experience—contribute to the conversation (Lindner, Hartling, and Spalthoff, 2012).

This article is part of an ongoing global conversation with individuals and communities of people who are deeply concerned about the link between humiliation and violence. Our discussion has four goals that build on each other. First, we will pinpoint the unique conditions in today’s world

that move the dynamics of humiliation to the forefront of concern. Second, we will describe a crucial shift in psychological thinking needed to understand human experience in these new conditions, especially the experience of humiliation. Third, building on these foundations, we will explore how humiliation can trigger acts of violence. And finally, we will describe the research and events that lead us to allege that humiliation is a nuclear bomb of emotions that must be addressed urgently if humanity is to survive on this planet.

Welcome to a New World

We live in extraordinary times. Never before in history have we, as a human species, been able to see pictures of our Blue Planet from the perspective of an astronaut and *see* how we humans are *one* species living on *one* little planet. During the past millennia, human interaction and activity were compartmentalized by the limits of geography and communication. Activity was organized into socially, culturally, ideologically, religiously, or politically confined spheres of existence (Lindner, 2006). Whenever these spheres began to grow and collide, fear of being attacked and subjugated or annihilated became pervasive. The need to fight for *independence* to avoid *dependence* became crucial. Individuals and groups developed their ability to overpower others in an effort to avoid being overpowered. This strategy of survival led humans into what political scientists call the *security dilemma* (Herz, 1951, 1957). The security dilemma—arms races motivated by mutual fear, which often bring about the insecurity they are designed to prevent—grew out of the perceived need to fight for independent and expanding control over land and resources. In this fight, the route to security seemed to necessitate more and more elaborate strategies of domination and separation.

Today we are living in a new world with new conditions. This age of human rights ideals and global information sharing is leading us to a whole new landscape of social arrangements. Our world has “shrunk” to the point that we, as humans, must comprehend and act upon the fact that we live on *one single interconnected* planet. The world is too small for the walls of the past. Strategies designed to achieve national security through domination and separation are no longer effective in the long term. The ever-escalating accumulation of sophisticated weaponry to enforce separate geopolitical spheres has not made communities or nations more secure. It is quite the opposite. Moreover, these strategies inflict and intensify irrevocable feelings of humiliation (Giacaman, Abu-Rmeileh, Hussein, Sasb, and Boyce, 2007; Lacy, 2011). Today no nation, no community, no social group, no

individual is absolutely secure from the impact of aggression or the cross-fire of retaliation. Whether we are on the streets of Chicago, in the jungles of the Congo, in the virtual world, or in the world of Wall Street, in these new conditions of all-encompassing interconnection we are all impacted by countless forms of aggression (e.g., cyber, social, political, or economic acts of aggression). The toxic legacy of humiliation left in the wake of these strategies are exemplified in the lives of those who are still suffering from generations of domination, including the first peoples of North America (Wasilewski, 2009, December), the indigenous citizens of Hawaii (Princess Lehu'anani, 2009, August 29), and the Maoris of New Zealand (Brenner, Hetaraka, Hartling, and Lindner, 2011).

It is crucial for us to come to terms with our new conditions of *global interconnectedness*. It's possible that we will eventually feel more at home in this new world; we have always been a planetary ecosphere interconnected by default. Yet, this fact has been obscured by lack of knowledge and by the dynamics of the security dilemma. Our greatest challenge ahead is to cocreate a path for all to survive the turbulent transition to these new conditions. As we awaken to the inevitable reality of greater global interconnectedness, we must come to appreciate one fundamental point: building healthy relationships at all levels of human experience is no longer a nicety; it is a necessity. Rather than separation and domination, mutually beneficial connection is the currency of sustainable security. But why haven't we realized this sooner?

Getting Past the Politics of Psychology: From Independence to Interconnectedness

Everyday the field of psychology brings us new and valuable understandings of human behavior and experience. Yet, like all disciplines, it can be a covert carrier of outdated assumptions, assumptions that shape ideas and actions that influence all realms of society. For decades, Western psychology carried the assumption that personal *independence* is the ultimate outcome of healthy development of an individual, that development involves the process of separating from relationships to become self-sufficient, to pull oneself up by one's bootstraps (Hartling, 2003). Within this individualistic frame, the primary unit of study has been the internal/individual experience of a bounded, separate *self*. Philip Cushman (1995), in his book *Constructing the Self, Constructing America*, describes how this highly individualistic, separate-self paradigm not only dominated the field of (Western) psychology, it influenced social, institutional, and economic practices throughout the world. Cushman argues that idolizing

independence has silently served the interests of a rapacious market economy that both breeds *and* exploits human insecurity, perpetuating insatiable and unsustainable consumerism in order to ensure one's mastery, self-sufficiency, or self-esteem. From a global security perspective, individualism drives groups and nations to amass more and more sophisticated weapons and fortifications, thus intensifying an ever-escalating drama of the security dilemma (Mehta, 2012).

More than 30 years ago, legendary psychiatrist Jean Baker Miller (1976) began challenging the field of psychology's tradition of idealizing individualism and independence: "While it is obvious that all of living and all of development takes place only within relationships, our theories of development seem to rest at bottom on a notion of development as a process of separating from others" (p. xxi). Miller asserted that individualistic, separate-self models of human development invisibilized vital relational activity, the very activity necessary for the health and wellbeing of all humans and for society as a whole. Miller and her colleagues observed that humans are not (and have never been) independent beings; they are relational beings engaged in the ever-changing matrix of relationships (Jordan and Hartling, 2002; Jordan, Hartling, and Walker, 2004). Western psychology's overemphasis on independence and individualism blinded the field of psychology to the necessity of building healthy human relationships throughout our lives, not just in early childhood, not just in the home, but also throughout the world.

Miller called for a relational rethinking of human experience—a paradigm shift in psychology—that puts relationships at the center of study. A relational perspective should not be viewed as dismissal of individualism or an affirmation of its opposite, collectivism. One can identify constructive functions of both individualism (e.g., innovative entrepreneurial endeavors) *and* collectivism (e.g., sustaining the commons). A relational psychology transcends this dichotomy. It offers a third way of understanding human experience that recognizes the necessity of connection in everyone's life. This view is perhaps best expressed in the word *ubuntu*, which Nelson Mandela (2007) describes as "that profound African sense that we are human only through the humanity of other human beings" (para. 14) {Mandela, 2007, July 18 #33958;Mandela, 2007, July 18 #33958}.

Empirical support for a relational shift in psychology is growing everyday (Baumeister, Leary, Higgins, and Kruglanski, 2000; Fiske, Fiske, Kitayama, and Cohen, 2007; Hartling and Ly, 2000; Hartling, Ly, Nassery, and Califa, 2003; Uchino, 2004; Uchino et al., 2007). Robert Putnam (2001) concluded, even within the highly individualistic culture of the

United States, "...studies have established beyond reasonable doubt that social connectedness is one of the most powerful determinants of our well-being" (p. 326). In another example, a meta-analysis of 148 studies exploring social connectedness and mortality, found that those who had *strong connections* -regardless of age, gender, or health status- were 50% more likely to be alive over a seven-year period (Holt-Lunstad, Smith, and Layton, 2010). Other scholars and researchers suggest that we are hardwired to connect (Banks and Jordan, 2007), that "...social connection is a need as basic as air, water, or food..." (Eisenberger, Lieberman, Williams, Forgas, and Hippel, 2005, p. 110).

Western psychology has paid a high price for an individualistic bias. This bias has largely blinded researchers to perhaps the most powerful force breaking down human relationships in the world today: the experience of humiliation (Lindner, 2006). Humiliation clearly occurs in a context of relationships-interpersonal, social, and international relationships. Its relational nature may explain why the field overlooked, underestimated, and neglected to study the dynamics of humiliation throughout most of the 20th century. Today, we know that humiliation is a profound, and sometimes unspeakable, relational violation that draws into doubt one's worth as a human being (Hartling and Lindner, 2013). We also know that humiliation is a powerful weapon of war. Lindner (2006) observed: "By taking down the World Trade Center's Twin Towers, symbols of Western power, Osama bin Laden attempted to send a cruel message of humiliation to the entire Western world" (p. 168). From bin Laden's perspective, to "die dignified in wars, honourable death is better...than life in humiliation!" (Pick et al., 2009, p. 235). It wasn't until earthshaking acts of humiliation-triggered violence literally exploded before our eyes that we could see the urgency of understanding this profoundly destructive force.

We can no longer afford to blindly rely on individualistic assumptions that have limited research on this experience. It is dangerous to continue with "psychology or politics as usual" as both fields grew out of exalting idealistic notions of independence and seeking security through domination and separation. However, shifting to a relational paradigm does not mean demonizing past practices nor thoughtlessly degrading our predecessors. Our energy is better focused on generating a relational geopolitical lens to understand that we live in new conditions of interdependence and interconnectedness to which we must adapt if we are to survive as a species. To the degree that we can accept that we live in an inextricably interconnected world, both socially and ecologically, to the degree that we can work from a relational paradigm to build a global climate of healthy interconnected-

ness is the degree to which we can begin to find effective ways to defuse and disarm the dynamics of humiliation.

The Evolution of Humiliation into a Ticking Time Bomb

Until about 250 years ago, humiliation was not necessarily seen as anti-social. Humbling, shaming, and humiliating those deemed less worthy was regarded as normal and necessary in many contexts and most often as pro-social. Although humiliating disrespect among equals might be addressed through a contest between the parties involved (e.g., aristocrats engaging in a duel), humans believed that masters were entitled to be treated as higher beings and underlings deserved to be shown where they belonged. Underlings did not question the social arrangements that privileged the elite members of society and they didn't question their degraded status because it was seen as a legitimate arrangement of relationships. William Ian Miller (1993) informs us that "the earliest recorded use of to humiliate, meaning to mortify or to lower or to depress the dignity or self-respect of someone, does not occur until 1757" (p. 175). In other words, around 250 to 300 years ago, humiliation began to shift meaning.

The transformation of the meaning of "to humiliate" in the English language away from a social norm into a human violation coincided with historic revolutionary events, a revolution leading to the American Declaration of Independence (July 4, 1776) and the French Revolution (August 4, 1789). During these times, the human rights ideals began to emerge and the concept of humiliation began to transmute into undue, illegitimate, and coercive violation that should not be perpetrated. Revolutions and the evolution of human rights began to draw into question the arrangement of social relationships that normalize the actions of masters inflicting indignities on subordinates.

Today, our contemporary definition of humiliation is informed by the human rights ideal of equal dignity for all. The first paragraph of Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948, reads: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood" (United Nations, 2007, p. 5). In a context of human rights, humiliation is any form of forced denigration of any person or group that damages their equality in dignity. To humiliate is to transgress the rightful expectation of every human being that basic human rights will be respected.

Although Western psychology has been slow to note this, it is important to appreciate that humiliation is *not another name for shame* (Jackson, 1999). Perhaps the confusion surrounding these two experiences can be traced to the fact that shame—a word that literally means to hide and cover oneself—is a common response to being humiliated. Crippling a target by triggering their self-protective sense of shame is precisely what perpetrators of humiliation attempt to utilize, often successfully, even though there is no reason for the target to feel ashamed. Although many attempted to shame Rosa Parks, the American civil rights leader, she refused to feel shamed by the humiliation of being denied the right to ride at the front of the bus because she was black (Parks and Haskins, 1992). She refused to be shamed by humiliation.

To further clarify the distinction between shame and humiliation, Donald C. Klein (1991), a pioneer in the study of humiliation, observed that people who feel shame tend to believe that they brought their experience upon themselves (self-blame). In contrast, humiliation is unjustified mistreatment that violates one's dignity and diminishes one's sense of worth as a human being; thus, there is no cause for self-blame (although the humiliator might like the victim to think so). Nelson Mandela (1994) was humiliated during his 27 years in prison; he indeed felt humiliated, however he was not ashamed. The secret of his resistance was precisely that he was able to maintain his dignified self-respect and sense of worth. If he had allowed humiliation to diminish his sense of dignity, he would have felt shame. Mandela refused to be shamed by the humiliating actions of others.

Breaking ground on a focused study of humiliation, Klein (1991) edited a special edition of the *Journal of Primary Prevention* that brought together a group of scholars to explore the link between humiliation and many forms of human experience, including gender issues (Swift, 1991), racism (Griffin, 1991), ageism (Secouler, 1992), disabilities (Kirshbaum, 1991), criminal justice (J. S. Smith, 1992), and homeless and displaced persons (Duhl, 1992). Klein (1991) coined the term "humiliation dynamic" to refer to the relational nature of humiliation that he described as involving the interaction of (1) a humiliator, (2) a victim, and (3) a witness. He defined humiliation as the experience of being devalued, put down, or disparaged for *who one is*, rather than what one does:

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 behavior. It is a pervasive and all too often destructive influence in the behavior of individuals, groups, organizations, and nations.... Moreover, the dynamics of humiliation, both that which is experienced and that

which is feared, play an important part in perpetuating international tensions and violence. (p. 93)

Linda Hartling (1996), working under the supervision of Don Klein, applied a relational lens to examine the dynamics of humiliation. Integrating an emergent relational-cultural theory (Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, and Surrey, 1991) and Karen Horney's (1945) model of personality development, Hartling (1996; Hartling and Luchetta, 1999) described how humiliation might trigger withdrawal (moving away, e.g., social disconnection, avoidance, isolation), aggression (moving against, e.g., retaliation, violence), or harmful affiliations (moving toward, e.g., joining a gang, joining extremist group). Later, Hartling (2007) proposed a conceptual pathway from humiliation to violence that incorporates new neurobiological research on social pain and social exclusion (Eisenberger, 2011, 2012; Eisenberger, Lieberman, and Williams, 2003; Eisenberger et al., 2005). She posited that social pain triggered by humiliating exclusion leads people to withdraw into a *deconstructed state* characterized by numbness or an inability to empathize with others (Twenge, Catanese, and Baumeister, 2003). In a state of social pain and psychological numbness, people will take greater risks and engage in more self-defeating behavior, reducing their inhibitions to engage in violence (Twenge, Catanese, and Baumeister, 2002). Further, these conditions foment diminished self-regulation (Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, and Twenge, 2005), decreasing one's capacity to reject violence in reaction to feelings of humiliation, essentially creating a ticking human time bomb (Figure 1):

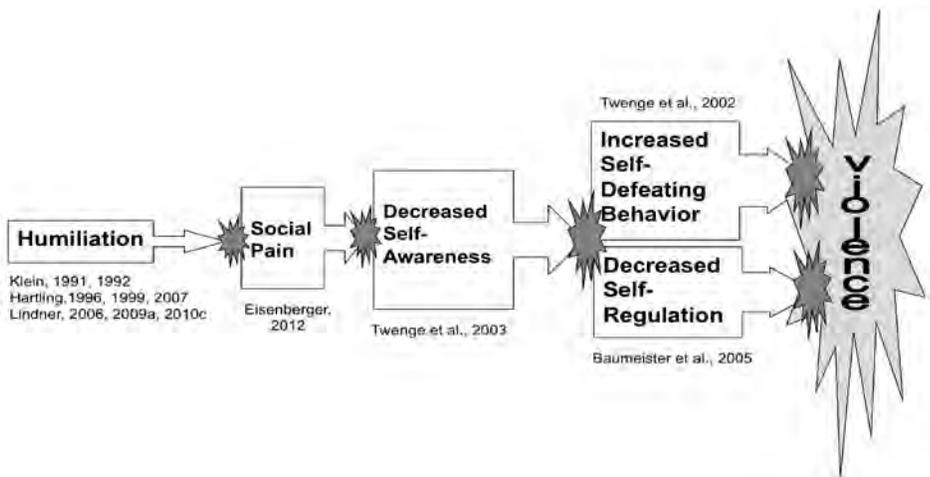


Figure 1: A theoretical pathway from humiliation to social pain to violence

This pathway may be particularly relevant to understanding mass shootings, as have occurred in Norway (Mala and Goodman, 2011) and in the United States—most recently the shooting of 26 children and adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut (*New York Times*, 2012). Jeff Elison and Susan Harter (2007) conducted studies of school students that showed that “adolescents who report high levels of aggressive anger in response to humiliation are more likely to have thoughts of killing others” (p. 317). Julian Walker and Victoria Knauer (Walker and Knauer, 2011) agree with Elison and Harter’s research, “...humiliation is a more common trigger for violence than other self-conscious emotions” (p. 737), including shame, embarrassment, and guilt. Several researchers draw into question whether or not humiliation leads to violence. In studies of Palestinians living in Gaza and the West Bank, Jeremy Ginges and Scott Atran (2008) found that humiliation leads to an “inertia effect” (p. 281), which suppresses violent action. Research by Bernhard Leidner, Hammad Sheikh, and Jeremy Ginges (2012) indicates that humiliation is accompanied by feelings of powerlessness, which implies that victims are less likely to engage in violence. Perhaps powerlessness or inertia induced by humiliation is the depressogenic effect of humiliation that Kendler et al. (2003) described in their study of over 7000 twins. Harter and her colleagues (2003) note the history and signs of depression in the school shooters they studied. Perhaps, given certain conditions, humiliation inhibits violent action, at least in the short term. Perhaps it is the chronic or the cumulative effect of humiliation that erupts into violence in the long term. These questions need to be explored by further research.

While scholars continue to investigate how humiliation may have the power to transmute individuals into ticking time bombs (Harter et al., 2003; Torres and Bergner, 2010), we must also explore what happens when the fuse of humiliation is lit in the minds of political leaders, terrorist leaders, or entire nations (Fattah, 2013).

Humiliation Becomes a Social Nuclear Bomb of Our Times

Although humiliation has a long history of triggering violence, recent events thrust the topic of humiliation into the glaring spotlight of geopolitical scrutiny and public awareness. The *Innocence of Muslims* video was already mentioned at the outset of this paper. Terrorism has become a method of humiliating one’s adversaries, as illustrated in the 2001 bombing of the Twin Towers in New York City, the 2002 nightclub bombings in Bali, the 2004 train bombings in Madrid, and the 2005 underground train

bombings in London (Lindner, 2007a). Yet, efforts to counteract terrorism can also inflict humiliation.

In 2004, the whole world awoke to horrific images of the humiliating abuse of Iraqi prisoners by American soldiers in the Abu Ghraib prison (Hersh, 2004). Broadcast through multiple forms of modern media, the dehumanizing brutality of these images horrified people around the world in a matter of minutes. This “H” bomb of humiliation became an incalculable disgrace for America. Beyond the traumatic damage to human beings, this pictorial psychosocial bomb horrified the American people and tarnished all positive perceptions of U.S. actions around the world. Moreover, these images provided the adversaries of the United States and its allies with concrete justification for retaliation that will live on the Internet *forever*.

Abu Ghraib illustrates the shockwaves that follow in the aftermath of international incidents of humiliation. This is one reason why social scientist Evelin Lindner (2006) describes humiliation as “the strongest force that creates rifts between people and breaks down relationships” (p. 171) and “as a weapon of war and a tactic of torture, the power of humiliation to destroy everyone and everything in its path makes it ‘the nuclear bomb of the emotions’” (p. xiii). Is this metaphor a colorful exaggeration or a necessary realization in and of our times? Evidence suggests the latter. As we move toward an interconnected world shaped by human rights ideals, some will perceive changes in dominant-subordinate relationships as an insult to their honor, their dignity, or their way of life (Lindner, 2007b). Others will feel humiliated by the growing number of unjust social conditions that appear to be the outcome of these developments. There is the widening gap between rich and poor, the widening gap between those who have access to education and those who don’t, the widening gap between those who can get health care and those without, and the widening gap between those who have a chance for a decent life and those who don’t (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010). Still others will be imbued with indignation when they detect signs of international hypocrisy, for example, when nations espouse human rights ideals and peace while allowing their corporations to pillage natural resources and exploit vulnerable people. When nations engage in self-serving military actions or self-enriching humanitarian interventions, double standards become obscene (V. Fontan, 2006; Fontan, 2008, 2012). These are a few of the acute and cumulative conditions that breed toxic levels of humiliation in our global-social biosphere. For many, these conditions lead to silence when the struggle for survival becomes overwhelmingly difficult. For some, these conditions translate into a justification for escalating ag-

gression. For a few, these conditions provide a malignant path to power (i.e., humiliation entrepreneurship; see Lindner, 2002).

More than anyone in the world today, Evelin Lindner, who holds degrees in medicine and psychology, has sought to map the minefield of humiliation. She began her research with a monumental inquiry into the role of humiliation in conflict by documenting the stories of people in Somalia, Rwanda/Burundi, and Nazi Germany (Lindner, 2000a). Lindner conducted 216 qualitative interviews of parties involved with conflict and interventions 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 in Europe (in Norway, Germany, Switzerland, France, and Belgium). This research provided the empirical foundation that not only led her to identify humiliation as a root cause of violent conflict, it motivated her to dedicate her life to the study of this experience. Her efforts have generated a wealth of papers, chapters, and books on the destructive power of humiliation *and* the healing potential of its opposite, dignity.

Although Lindner's trailblazing contributions to the study of humiliation are prodigious, she would be the first to emphasize that her scholarly efforts should not be viewed as the achievement of one individual. She is a global collaborator and participatory researcher. Her prolific writing is dedicated to understanding the stories and experiences of the richly diverse people she meets around the world. Her papers are a tribute to the global connections she has cultivated over the last four decades. From world-class experts to people on the streets, she *listens others into voice*. This is at the core of her collaborative global approach.

Lindner's research examines the link between humiliation and some of the most urgent global issues of our time, including the transition toward human rights ideals (2002b), the advancement of equal dignity in the world (2008a), the intersection of gender and global security (2002c, 2010d), the need for new economic models (2012); health and illness (2008c), emotions and conflict (2009a), education (2008b), the impact of globalization (2007b), the threat of international terrorism and conflict (2000b, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2007a, 2008d, 2009b, 2009d), the need for sustainable disaster recovery (2010b), and the need for new methods of peace building (2003, January, 2009c, 2010a).

What makes Lindner's efforts remarkable is her determination to study humiliation in close collaboration with a global community of scholars, researchers, practitioners, survivors, and others (Lindner et al., 2012). She recognized that the complexity of humiliation requires one to think outside the traditional academic box:

[Lindner] was encouraged by philanthropist Alan Slifka to establish an organization that is independent of any religious or political agenda to advance the study of humiliation. Subsequently, Morton Deutsch, one of the world's most respected scholars of conflict resolution and co-editor of the *Handbook on Conflict Resolution* (Deutsch et al., 2006), organized, together with Evelin G. Lindner, the first workshop in July 2003 of what then became the series of "Workshops on Transforming Humiliation and Violent Conflict," through Columbia University's Conflict Resolution Network. This meeting was followed by the first international conference of the newly formed HumanDHS [Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies] network convened at the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme in Paris in September 2003. (pp. 391–392)

Lindner (2003) brought together a core group of colleagues—including the Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss, together with Don Klein, Linda Hartling, Victoria Fontan, Rebecca Klein, Eric van Grasdorff, and others—who facilitated the birth of HumanDHS that describes itself as: ... a global transdisciplinary network and fellowship of concerned academics and practitioners. We wish to stimulate systemic change, globally and locally, to open space for dignity and mutual respect and esteem to take root and grow, thus ending humiliating practices and breaking cycles of humiliation throughout the world. (Lindner, 2013a)

Today, HumanDHS has nearly 300 distinguished scholars and practitioners on its Global Advisory Board, more than 1,000 personally invited members, and more than 5,000 supporters. It hosts two conferences a year, one at Columbia University in New York City (Workshop on Humiliation and Violent Conflict), and an annual conference at a different global location every year. So far, conferences have taken place in Paris, Berlin, Oslo, Costa Rica, Hawaii, China, New Zealand, and South Africa. Each meeting is designed to maximize the group's opportunity to engage in dialogue, to share research, to describe various projects, and discuss papers. But most of all it is about developing human-to-human connections that strengthen global understanding of the dynamics of humiliation and dignity.

Beyond these efforts, the topic of humiliation has made its way into the halls of the most prestigious institutions. Daniel Shapiro, director of the *Harvard International Negotiation Program*, and Suzan El-Rayess, of the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard Kennedy School of Government, are developing a Global Dignity Project to explore dignity and humiliation in the world (International Negotiations Project, 2008). Building on her experience in international conflict resolution, Donna Hicks (Hicks, 2011), an associate with Harvard's Weatherhead School

of International Affairs, has developed an approach that helps people understand the importance of dignity in resolving conflicts and repairing relationships. Jessica Stern (2004; see also Stern and Wiener, 2006), a lecturer in public policy at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, describes the “cauldron” of humiliation and terrorism: “Although the terrorists have described a variety of individual grievances, there was one common thread: their overwhelming feelings of humiliation” (para. 3).

For more than a decade, Columbia University has been an institutional partner in the work of HumanDHS. Morton Deutsch, director emeritus, and Claudia Cohen, associate director of the International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution (ICCCR, 2013), along with Peter Coleman and Beth Fischer-Yoshida, also codirectors of the Advanced Consortium on Cooperation, Conflict, and Complexity (AC4, 2013) have co-sponsored and contributed to annual workshops on transforming humiliation and violent conflict since 2003. Deutsch (1994, 2006; Deutsch et al., 2006) in particular, provided the members of HumanDHS network with formative concepts that illuminate the disruptive power of humiliation as it relates to cooperation, competition, social justice, and constructive and destructive conflict (Lindner, 2013b). Peter Coleman, Jennifer Goldman, and Katharina Kugler (Coleman, Goldman, and Kugler, 2009) conducted a first-of-its-kind empirical study of the nature of the relationship between humiliation and intractable conflict, observing: ...participants were found to be more likely to respond to humiliating encounters aggressively when the emotional role of the humiliated victim was perceived by them as allowing for aggressive reactions against the humiliator...Furthermore, people were more likely to ruminate about the encounter, and therefore maintain anger and aggressive intentions when they perceived the situation to privilege aggressive acts... (p. 126)

Beyond these institutional efforts, scholars around the world are contributing to the study of humiliation as a root cause of violence by examining the link between humiliation and terrorism, torture, and genocide (Danchev, 2006; Ginzburg and Neria, 2011; Held, 2004; Saurette, 2005; Varvin, 2005); by describing the role of humiliation in social revolutions and intractable conflicts (Fahmy, 2012; Fattah and Fierke, 2009; Victoria Fontan, 2006; Giacaman et al., 2007; Ginges and Atran, 2008; Tschudi, 2008); and by assessing the impact of humiliation in times of transition and globalization (Kaufmann and Kuch, 2011; Moïsi, 2009; Oravecz, Hárđi, and Lajtai, 2004; Saurette, 2006; D. Smith, 2008; Stark and Fan, 2011). These are a few examples of the recent developments in research on humiliation; much, much more must be done.

A Nuclear Bomb That We Can All Disarm

This article is a contribution to efforts to explain how humiliation has come to the forefront of concern in the world today. But we, the authors, fully recognize that we are working with only partial knowledge. To free ourselves from the incendiary powers of humiliation, we need an “all hands on deck” approach to changing the global-social biosphere. Indeed, everyone can strive to disarm the dangerous dynamics of humiliation in every aspect of their lives. More than anything else, humiliation is a problem in relationships that needs mutually dignifying relational solutions. Rather than solving the “H” bomb with more bullets and bombs, in the face of interpersonal and international violence, we need to ask the challenging question posed by Arun Gandhi (2013, February): “Where did we go wrong in our relationships?” Perhaps we need to revise the meaning of peace as Nobel Peace Prize recipient Elie Wiesel (CBS, 2013, December 25) urges: What does peace mean? The end of humiliation. That is exactly what we need. The first step should be the end of humiliation. Humiliation should be one thing that should be discarded immediately... Now let’s talk.

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