

Bridging Urban Divides and Breaking the Cycle of Humiliation: Adaptive Leadership Approach

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This abstract has been prepared as a proposal for a dignilogue/discussion or a presentation at the 27th Annual Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies Conference: “Cities at Risk – From Humiliation to Dignity”, Sunday 18th – Sunday 25th September 2016
Dubrovnik, Croatia at the Inter-University Centre
www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/annualmeeting/27.php

The *urban divide* is closely related to the concepts of vulnerability, humiliation and deprivation, which are critical in understanding urban problems. *Vulnerability and humiliation*, defined as states of dependency, point to various social, economic, and physical forms of enslavement; the system creating this kind of power relationships cannot be used to improve one’s own situation. *Deprivation* is multi-faceted and concerns the access to meeting one’s fundamental needs, from individual spatial-physical to a broader neighborhood related, and up to regional and global levels. This indicates multidimensionality of urban divide as well as cycle of humiliation within urban context.

A diagnostic work in recognizing adaptive nature of the challenge – *Bridging urban divides as well as Breaking the cycle of humiliation within* – involves deep understanding of the human dimensions of change. This challenge is bound to stir up intense emotions because it is anchored in the intricacy of beliefs, values, and the cultural and political allegiances, contrary to the technical complexity elements which can be resolved by unemotional analysis. Bridging urban divides as well as breaking the related cycle of humiliation requires people to change their ways, to shift their perspectives. Therefore we recognize them as adaptive challenges with no simple technical solutions. Unlike so called technical problem solving for which past ways of thinking and managing are sufficient, adaptive challenges require (1) figuring out what to support from past practices, (2) finding out what to discard from past practices, and (3) inventing new necessary ways of coexisting.

Our analysis of *bridging urban divides adaptive challenge* must consider the human dimensions of the required changes – the sense of loss, tolerance for conflict, uncertainty, and risks, and the resilience of the existing culture and power relationships (authority) and lateral relationships necessary for carrying on through the discomfort of change. The complexity of this challenge requires functioning in a way different from the existing one; the solution requires new learning and shifting the authority and responsibility to the people who are actually affected; some sacrifice of the past ways of doing things, working/living; and it requires some experimenting before we are sure it will work. A core of constructive dialogs/dignilogs for solving this adaptive challenge comprises *perspective sharing, perspective taking and perspective shift*. We posit that there are certain relational criteria that are necessary conditions for such constructive dignilog and adaptive work. They include *active listening, dialectic flow of thinking, intercultural sensitivity, critical co-reflection, conscientization, and bodymindfulness*. In our presentation we will elaborate how these conditions are relevant for *the adaptive leadership* in the processes of Bridging urban divides and Breaking the cycle of humiliation.