

# **Summary of the Special Meetings of the Dignity and Humiliation Mapping and Assessment Team at the 11th Annual Conference of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies in Norway, June 2008**

**July 2008**

**Vegar Jordanger**

The Humiliation & Human Dignity Assessment Team had several small meetings during the conference in Oslo, June 2008. The meetings focused on presenting and further developing a research project on humiliation and human dignity in conflict areas that will be part of my PhD. Exploring further the meaning of the humiliation concept and links to other related phenomena like attitudes towards violence/nonviolence and health in major conflict areas like the Caucasus and the Middle East is of great importance in this project. Of equal importance is the study of how people in such areas succeed in responding (usefully, creatively) to potentially humiliating situations in a way that resists humiliation and/or preserves the dignity of all potential victims. In other words, these are the largely unknown "Mandelas" who represent the paradox of humanity within the sea of violence, fear, distrust and evil.

For studying these phenomena a new questionnaire is being developed. A pilot study has already been carried out and based on the analysis of these data the questionnaire will be further developed and revised. When a new version of the questionnaire is prepared, probably during the autumn 2008, researchers interested in this project will be invited to give further feedback on the questionnaire and to use it to carry out research in other areas than those mentioned above. In this way we can form an international research team that will be able to study humiliation and human dignity globally. The international research team will probably most of the time be connected through the World Wide Web, but will also have the opportunity to meet at international conferences and the annual meetings and conferences of the Humiliation and Human Dignity Studies Network. If you are interested in contributing in this project you can contact me or Linda Hartling directly.

Let me share some of the working research hypotheses that has informed the construction of the questionnaire I have started to develop with the help of people such as Professor Emeritus Finn Tschudi, Kyrre Svarva, Professor Torbjørn Rundmo, Professor Rudmin Floyd, clinical psychology students at the Department of Psychology, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, and many others:

## **The Humiliation, Dignity, and Political Ideologies Questionnaire**

(Jordanger, 2007- first pilot study conducted in October 2007)

Working Research Hypothesis (some preliminary thoughts):

Section on: responses to humiliation (question 12.1 -12.65)

1) It will be possible to **identify** the *types of situations in which humiliation occurs* - including what emotions are triggered in these cases

it will be possible to **identify** the *types of situations in which humiliation occurs on the behalf of close family members or close friends*- including what emotions are triggered in these cases

it will be possible to **identify** the *types of situations in which humiliation attempts are avoided* - including what emotions are triggered in these cases

it will be possible to **identify** the *types of situations in which humiliation occurs when the intention is to help* - including what emotions are triggered in these cases

2) a) on this basis it will be possible to study whether there are systematic differences between the types of situations in which these four forms of humiliation occurs, and

b) It will be possible to **compare the emotions experienced** in situations where a person: a) *is truly humiliated*, b) *avoids humiliation in a humiliation attempt*, and c) *is humiliated when the intention is to help*, and d) *is humiliated on the behalf of close family members or close friends*

It will be possible to **identify how** people respond in situations in which they succeed in mobilising resistance and avoid humiliation attempts (what strategies they use, in what types of situations)