

The Norwegian Nobel Committee  
Henrik Ibsens gate 51  
0255 Oslo, Norway

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## **Nomination of Evelin Lindner for the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize**

Through her pioneering work to avoid humiliation of nations and secure or safeguard human dignity. Dr Evelin Lindner is making a unique contribution to realizing the idea of Alfred Nobel's will, that of co-operation and understanding between all nations or peoples as the key to enabling them to free the world of military weapons and wars.

As described in the attachment and below, the original and pioneering work of Lindner, her approach and methodology are of academic relevance, but more notably of particular practical value and relevance in today's world. I refer here, among other things, to the resurging Cold War climate between Russia and the North Atlantic world and the humiliation experienced by Muslims in many countries, through several wars that has come to a head with the recent massacre of French journalists.

Lindner's work takes as its starting point that we face species-wide threats and need to downplay our internal divisions so that we can come together and use our scientific-technical insights to protect and replenish the only known home of life in the universe. None of the founders of religions, philosophies, or empires had access to the vast amount of knowledge about the universe and our place in it that we possess today. The image of the Blue Planet stands for a historically unprecedented call to re-evaluate everything that history has taught humankind so far, so that we can harvest the best of what helps create a dignified future, and leave behind what stands in the way.

Lindner asks: Why do we, as humankind at large, seem to overlook the historical opportunity that is open to us, a window that may not stay open for much longer? Why do we overlook that we can co-create a decent world for future generations, a future without war in any of its forms? Why are military budgets still so big? Human rights promise equality in dignity, why is inequality on the rise? Why do so few people grasp the fact that global interconnectedness makes a world without war more feasible than ever? Why do so many people, when asked to escape from the maelstrom of war, remain caught in the past, thus re-creating it and effectively closing down the very window of opportunity? Why do the world's citizens allow a global government/corporate nexus to be stuck in out-of-date games of competition for domination, games that fuel war and violence?

During the past millennia of human history, the world was much less interconnected than today. In a compartmentalized world the *security dilemma* reigned. The term *security dilemma* is used in political science to describe how mutual distrust can bring parties that have no intention of harming one another into



bloody war. The security dilemma is tragic because its “logic of mistrust and fear” is inescapable: “I have to amass weapons, because I am scared. When I amass weapons, you get scared. You amass weapons, I get more scared.” A recent example may be the dynamic between

NATO and Russia, where NATO declares that its motives are harmless, simply defensive, while Russia feels threatened, and vice-versa.

In the context of the security dilemma, out-group relations follow the motto of Vegetius, “if you want peace, prepare for war,” and that of Carl von Clausewitz, “the best defense is a good offense.” In such a context, it appears to be prudent to build empires that define peace in terms of stability and control, for which dignity can be sold out. Currently, corporations have grown to a size where they can virtually capture states, and when national interests are defended, then economic interests and security interests coincide and fuel the so-called military-industrial complex.

At present, systemic pressures are such that individually, people are beholden to the status-quo of hyper-armament, wittingly or unwittingly, and this includes politicians at all levels, national and international, together with multilateral organizations that were created to free the world from war. All activities which at the surface promise to render world peace – activities such as conflict resolution, education, poverty reduction, human rights activism, or peace work – are vulnerable to being co-opted into this status quo. Widely accepted buzzwords such as investor confidence, economic growth, or job-creation are sign-posts of a world that is bound up in systemic constraints that produce ecological overshoot – the planet’s carrying capacity is increasingly being overstretched – including a burgeoning military- industrial-media-academic complex.

Lindner, together with Linda Hartling, has spent the past decades studying the effects of acts, structures, and feelings of humiliation and how they hamper the necessary transition. For instance, when human rights ideals promise equality in dignity and this proves to be empty rhetoric, humiliation is intensified. To recognize shared humanity hypocritically and betray the promise, humiliates in the most devastating ways by denying the humanity professed. Humiliation awareness is therefore one crucial element needed on the path to decency.

A global citizens movement is the only force that is large enough to face the global scope of present-day challenges and to co-create a world of unity in diversity rather than maintaining a world of division without unity. Lindner therefore mobilizes a global dignity movement that grasps the historically unprecedented window of opportunity that is open just now. She does this in an inclusive way that manifests dignity not just in terms of *what* it aims for, but also in *how* it must be realized. And, crucially, her work is fully compatible with the original intentions of the Nobel Peace Prize, as described in Alfred Nobel's will.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas Hylland Eriksen  
Professor of Social Anthropology University of Oslo

## *Attachment to nomination of Evelin Gerda Lindner for the Nobel Peace Prize*

### **Evelin G. Lindner**

Born 13 May 1954 in Hameln, Germany

**Evelin Lindner** has a dual education as a Medical Doctor and a Psychologist and carries two Ph. Ds. She obtained her doctorate in Medicine (Dr. med.) in Hamburg, Germany, in 1994, and her doctorate in Psychology (Dr. psychol.) at the University of Oslo in Norway in 2001. She has been affiliated with the University of Oslo since 1997, with Columbia University in New York City since 2001 (with the Advanced Consortium on Cooperation, Conflict, and Complexity, AC4), and with the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme in Paris since 2003.

In a unique way Lindner is a global citizen who has made the world her home, she is constantly on the move and for periods of weeks or months every year lives, teaches, and does research in different locations all over the globe.

Lindner's innovative ideas around humiliation as a conflict-generating factor in international relations (as in human and societal relations more generally), is a vital contribution to our understanding of the conditions for a global peace system. The foundation stone of this work is Lindner's book *Making Enemies: Humiliation and International Conflict*, which was designated an "Outstanding Academic Title" by the journal *Choice* for 2007 in the USA. Her chapter on emotion and conflict in the second edition of the *Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*, edited by Morton Deutsch, Peter T. Coleman, and Eric C. Marcus in 2006 was expanded to a book in 2009. Her third book, *Gender, Humiliation, and Global Security: Dignifying Relationships from Love, Sex, and Parenthood to World Affairs*, came out in 2010, and her fourth book, *A Dignity Economy: Creating an Economy that Serves Human Dignity and Preserves Our Planet* in 2012.

In addition to academic research and published work Lindner is also a dedicated and successful organizer who has created a global network, the Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies, to disseminate her ideas. The network (HumanDHS) is a global transdisciplinary fellowship of concerned academics, practitioners, activists, artists, and others, who collaborate in a spirit of mutual support to understand the complex dynamics of dignity and humiliation ([humiliationstudies.org](http://humiliationstudies.org)). The idea was born in 2001, and the founding conferences took place in 2003. The aim is to stimulate systemic change, both globally and locally, to open space for dignity, for mutual respect and esteem to take root and grow, thus ending humiliating practices and breaking cycles of humiliation throughout the world.

In addition to being the Founding President of the network (HumanDHS, [www.humiliationstudies.org](http://www.humiliationstudies.org)), Lindner is Co-founder of the World Dignity University initiative (WDU, [www.worlddignityuniversity.org](http://www.worlddignityuniversity.org)), which includes a publishing arm, the Dignity Press ([dignitypress.org](http://dignitypress.org)).

**In relation to a Nobel award it is particularly important to note that a call to abolish military armament of all types is central to Lindner's message, since in her view only a world free of military armament can truly manifest the human right tenet that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."**

In the past ten years, the global dignity movement has grown and currently has around 1,000 personally invited members from all continents. I have been informed that the website is being accessed by between

20,000 and 40,000 people from more than 180 countries per year since its inception in 2003. In 2011, the World Dignity University initiative ([worlddignityuniversity.org](http://worlddignityuniversity.org)) was launched, together with the publishing house Dignity Press ([dignitypress.org](http://dignitypress.org)). Two conferences are being conducted every year, with more than 20 conferences having been held all around the world since 2003

([www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/annualmeetings.php](http://www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/annualmeetings.php)). At first, one global conference takes place every year, and so far these conferences have been held in Europe (Paris, Berlin, and Oslo), San José in Costa Rica, Hangzhou in China, Honolulu in Hawai'i, Istanbul in Turkey, Dunedin in New Zealand, Stellenbosch in South Africa, Chiang Mai in Northern Thailand, and in 2015, the next conference will be held in Kigali, Rwanda. The second annual conference takes place each December at Columbia University in New York City, with Morton Deutsch as honorary convener, titled "Workshop on Transforming Humiliation and Violent Conflict."

To realize this huge program in addition to continuing research is a daunting challenge. To run the network, Lindner works with Linda Hartling, Uli Spalthoff and Michael Britton. The backgrounds of Lindner and the people involved in the network are found at

<http://www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/whoweare.php>