



Dignity and development: a review of the literature on its application, definition and measurement

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Abstract: Dignity is much discussed in development, but only rarely investigated in any depth. This narrative literature review is divided into four sections. The first section examines dignity in practice, exploring the ways in which it manifests itself in the literature of development and its adjacent fields, and demonstrating the centrality of this concept to development. The second section explores the philosophical literature on dignity, respect and their definitions, in the Western and non-Western philosophical literature. The third section highlights the lack of attempts in the literature to operationalise and measure this crucial concept. The fourth section offers some conclusions from this review, and makes the link to the definitional and measurement work that will follow.

Keywords: dignity, respect, measurement, narrative review.

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1. Dignity in practice¹

“Over the last ten years, I have witnessed first hand the suffering of the most vulnerable people on earth. I have visited war zones and refugee camps, where one might legitimately ask, ‘what has happened to the dignity and worth of the human person?’ - the dignity and worth of human persons referred [to] in our charter...And all this makes me feel the acute responsibility to make human dignity the core of my work, and I trust, the core of our common work.” - Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General, 2016 (UN News, 2016).

Dignity is discussed all the time. The literature on dignity is vast; one paper estimates that 1200 books and 11,000 articles were published on dignity in English from 1970-2003 (Witte, 2003, cited in Jacobson, 2007). It is often announced as an objective and outcome in aid and development programs. It underpins narratives of rights and egalitarianism, and many of the associated domestic and international political projects. For researchers, it is implicit in most approaches to research ethics. There is some initial evidence that there is public support for more focus on dignity in development. It sits alongside, but is distinct from, a number of crucial concepts in development discourse, such as capabilities, wellbeing, and empowerment.

1.1 Dignity in aid and development

Dignity is much discussed in development and elsewhere. Reports and headlines often invoke dignity. Claims are often made that particular initiatives or programs respect people’s dignity – or fail to do so. Individuals are often described as dignified – or undignified. Communication by development actors is often described as respectful, or disrespectful.

1.1.1 Discussion of dignity

To offer just a few examples, Amnesty International ran a campaign from 2009 ran a campaign to ‘Demand Dignity’, encompassing a wide range of rights issues, from sanitation to corporate accountability (Amnesty International, 2010). Particularly often linked to dignity are cash transfer programs (see for instance Kavuma, 2016; Hochfeld & Plagerson, 2011; Shapiro, 2019). Antonio Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, has repeatedly emphasised dignity (UN News, 2016) - as did his predecessor, Ban Ki Moon, including in a report titled ‘The Road to Dignity by 2030’ (UN News, 2014). UNDP’s 2002 Human Development Report frequently mentions dignity, and a special contribution to that report by Aung San Suu Kyi is

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entitled 'Human development and human dignity' (Fukuda-Parr et al, 2002). The 2016 New York Declaration on refugees mentions dignity, and states "We are committed to protecting the safety, dignity and human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants" (UN General Assembly, 2016). Refugee camps have been described as both a tool to respect dignity, and an unambiguous sign of the failure to respect dignity (by the Norwegian Refugee Council and by Abdi, 2005, respectively; in Holloway & Grandi, 2018). World Vision, in the page on their website that discusses their values, say "We act in ways that respect the dignity, uniqueness and intrinsic worth of every person" (World Vision International, n.d.). In his 2020 'State of the Nation' speech, Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta took as his main theme poverty and dignity. Jonathan Glennie has argued in the Guardian newspaper that "Development is dignity or it is nothing" (Glennie, 2015).

Many NGOs have taken dignity as part of their name. A surely incomplete list includes the Dignity Foundation; Dignity for Children Foundation; Children's Dignity Forum; Global Dignity; the Ota Benga Alliance for Peace, Dignity and Healing; Human Dignity Foundation; Human Dignity Trust; Dignity Period; Project Dignity; as well as several simply called Dignity, and one called DIGNITY. There are several more such charities working within rich countries, not explicitly on international development issues. (The author's own initiative is called The Dignity Project). In doing so, such organisations presumably indicate that dignity is at the core of how they view their organisations and their work.

Yet there have been few substantive attempts in either the peer-reviewed or non-academic *development* literature to discuss dignity in development directly, or to offer definitions of this broad term. Several authors note that dignity is rarely defined (see for example Holloway & Grandi, 2018). Abbott et al (2011) write in their study of 'dignity kits' that "When asked to clarify or operationalize dignity...many UNFPA key informants were unclear about or unable to specify the meaning of dignity."

There are some exceptions in the international development literature - work that has offered a deeper investigation of the concept of dignity and its practical application. Dignity and economics has been approached by Banerjee and Duflo (2019), and a number of others. A project by the Overseas Development Institute examines 'Dignity and Displacement' (Holloway & Grandi, 2018, and succeeding papers). There is work on dignity and conflict, primarily treated in Düwell et al (2014), and further work on dignity and gender, and dignity and displacement. Pekka Himanen, a Finnish philosopher, has argued that we should place dignity at the heart of development (Himanen, 2014). A number of partial investigations of dignity's application to development in general are also worth noting.

1.1.2 Dignity and economics

In their recent book, 'Good Economics for Hard Times', Abijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo write that "Restoring human dignity to its central place, we argue in this book, sets off a profound rethinking of economic priorities and the ways in which societies care for their members". Lamenting the disrespect that many experience when interacting with bureaucracies, they go on to discuss several themes that they imply are related to dignity: work, purpose, autonomy and individuality, suggesting that changes are needed to policies of welfare, work and social protection. A central case study for their work is the charity ATD



Fourth World, with its slogan “All Together in Dignity to Overcome Poverty” (Banerjee & Duflo, 2019). Putting these ideas into practice, Catherine Thomas and colleagues have shown that simply changing the narratives that accompany aid delivery can help recipients believe in themselves, and make them more likely to invest in their skills (Thomas et al, 2020).²

As part of the remarkable sustained investigation of dignity by Düwell et al (2014), three chapters offer remarks that put dignity in conversation with poverty reduction and global inequality. The first of these is by Steigleder, who argues that an ethic of dignity requires the institution of state welfare programmes, in order to ensure that people are provided for (Steigleder; Düwell et al, 2014). This might be especially important, since the distribution and processes of state welfare programmes can equally be sources of disrespect. Similarly, Thomas Pogge argues that global justice can only be achieved if we alter our global institutions, reduce inequality and poverty, alter trade and intellectual property rules, and remove the privileges of oppressive rulers to assign property rights. This project he identifies with an ethic of global dignity (Pogge; Düwell et al, 2014), and indeed he is one of many scholars highlighting inequality as an important source of disrespect. The third chapter is by Elizabeth Anderson. She highlights that dignity has a central role to play in the economy - via the economic rights outlined in the UDHR (Anderson; Düwell et al, 2014). We can see how ideas of respect and dignity in the economy are present in common discourse, through ideas such as ‘dignity of work’ and through the abuses that many experience in their workplaces (Sperling, 2020).

Indrajit Roy’s work examines local politics and labour relations in Bihar. One theme through his work (2013; 2014) has been mentions of dignity; his 2013 article takes as its title ‘Development as Dignity’. He states that “This paper makes an analytical case for the understanding of development as a process that enables people to reclaim their dignity and interrogate inegalitarian social relations” (Roy, 2013). He notes that Lalu Prasad Yadav, a charismatic leader of the ‘other backward caste’ movement, declared that the basic question facing these communities was one of “social dignity”. “Lalu allowed us to raise our voice”, his participants say. Within the paper he ranges across a range of topics associated with dignity, including rights, equality, empowerment, social justice, identity and its recognition. He does not offer a direct examination of dignity as a term, but he does make one important theoretical contribution, in his assessment of the evolution of the Musahar’s activism: he categorizes them as campaigning against local powerful leaders’ “right to deny them rights”, but notes that they are not yet campaigning for the “right to have rights”, which he terms “a hallmark of citizenship.” Dignity is said by several philosophers (e.g. Debes, 2017) to be the characteristic that animates our ‘right to have rights’ and which forbids others from trespassing against those rights. In detailing this empirical case study of contested development, Roy therefore closely approaches some of the philosophical literature, without directly naming it as dignity.

² Connectedly, Lamberton has sought to articulate dignity in marketplaces, and examined how companies can be more respectful (Lamberton et al, 2019).



1.1.3 Dignity and displacement

The most sustained engagement with dignity in international development is the ‘Dignity and Displacement’ project by the Overseas Development Institute’s Humanitarian Policy Group (ODI; HPG). Over five papers, they directly examine dignity as a theoretical concept (Holloway & Grandi, 2018), and then explore those concepts through primary research among Rohingya (Holloway & Fan, 2018), Syrian refugees (Grandi et al 2018), in Afghanistan, the Philippines, South Sudan and Colombia (Holloway, 2019), before concluding with a summary paper (Mosel & Holloway, 2019). Though I briefly summarise their work here, these are essential complementary texts for this paper, and they are cited throughout this literature review.

Taking a similar approach to this work, the ODI literature review (Holloway & Grandi, 2018) argues that dignity is much discussed but rarely defined. They gather together a host of definitions and usages from humanitarian work, medicine and law. They stop short of picking any single one of these definitions, with later papers exploring conceptualisations among different groups. They identify three main areas in which dignity is vital in humanitarian aid: in standards and guidelines; in displacement interventions; and in humanitarian publicity.

With regard to standards and guidelines, they cite Hugo Slim (2015), who “labels the six additional principles of the IFRC and ICRC’s Code of Conduct (1994) – following the four fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence – the ‘dignity principles’” (Holloway & Grandi, 2018). These six additional principles are, in Holloway & Grandi’s phrasing, “respecting the culture of affected and host communities; building on local capacities; involving beneficiaries in programme design, implementation and management; reducing future vulnerabilities alongside meeting basic needs; being accountable to donors, partners and affected communities; and, finally, recognising affected populations in publicity and advertising as dignified human beings rather than hopeless objects.” This appearance of dignity in humanitarian standards is also described by Abbott et al (2011), who note that the SPHERE Project’s humanitarian charter asserts that “Dignity entails more than physical well-being; it demands respect for the whole person, including the values and beliefs of individuals and affected communities, and respect for their human rights, including liberty, freedom of conscience and religious observance.” Holloway & Grandi (2018) note further that donors often include mentions of dignity in requests for proposals, and cite examples from DfID, USAID, SIDA, the Canadian Feminist International Assistance Policy, King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, and UAE Policy for Foreign Assistance.

With regard to displacement interventions, Holloway & Grandi (2018) explain that “Dignity is referred to in all phases of internal and external forced displacement – from living conditions in camps to resettlement and return operations.” They cite dignity as integral to at least the first four of the topics covered by NRC and the Camp Management Project’s guidelines on managing refugee camps: “food and nonfood items; water, sanitation and hygiene; shelter; livelihoods; education; and healthcare and health education.” They cite seven categories of humanitarian activity that are frequently associated with dignity: food and cash-based aid; livelihood opportunities; education; health and hygiene; shelter; protection and psychosocial support; and repatriation (Holloway & Grandi, 2018).



With regard to humanitarian publicity, Holloway & Grandi chart the risks of objectification and treating people as instruments to an end, as part of a long history of demeaning and emotive photography, often used for fundraising appeals. They note that debates around this have resulted in a written code of conduct for humanitarian images, and that the 2006 'CONCORD' version of the code says that images should be based on three principles: "respect for the dignity of the people concerned; belief in the equality of all people and acceptance of the need to promote fairness; solidarity and justice" (Holloway & Grandi, 2018).

In a succeeding paper, the ODI project investigates dignity among Syrian refugees in Lebanon (Grandi et al 2018). Through interviews with 126 refugees and 39 humanitarian workers, they explore the Arabic concept *karama*, which "has various connotations, such as honour and pride, and is used in a wide range of societal, cultural, religious, philosophical and literary contexts." They note that "Since the 2011 uprising, it has become central to Syrian slogans, narratives, literature and artwork, and political and social discourse". Interviewees discussed three pillars of dignity: legal rights and rights to services; respect through avoidance of stereotypes, humiliation and harassment; and independence through self-reliance - especially through work appropriate to their education, and provision for their families. They did not focus on religion, though some did mention culture and traditions. They stressed the current indignities of their experience of refugees. This was to them an important topic; the authors report that interviewees were excited to discuss "a topic they described as timely, crucial, sensitive, the 'core suffering of all Syrians' and one that 'touched their wounds and triggered their sorrows'." Many said "dignity is everything." Humanitarian workers also put emphasis on dignity, and shared a similar definition to Syrian refugees, albeit with slightly more emphasis on safety. Cash transfers, they suggested, are central to dignity-sensitive programming, because they promote choice; Syrian respondents agreed, if the distribution is fair. Those workers were aware of failures to be respectful, noting that "there is not enough monitoring" of staff. One UN worker noted that a dignity focus might be in conflict with other objectives: "Is it more important to reach a larger number of people or to do it in a dignified way?"

Whereas in Lebanon, humanitarians and Syrians largely shared a definition of dignity, that was not the case in the paper studying Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh (Holloway & Fan, 2018). The researchers conducted 75 interviews and 11 focus groups with Rohingya, and 17 interviews with humanitarian actors. The main word used for dignity is *ijjot*, a term which was defined by participants as encompassing mutual recognition within a communal social identity, which included polite speech and equal treatment; religious practices, especially freedom to worship and the purdah practices regarding female behaviour; and economic self-reliance, "which combines with and enables the first two conceptualisations". Rohingya respondents recalled the conflicting dignity-related emotions of first crossing the border into Bangladesh, as a moment in which they were recognised and seen to matter, and simultaneously as a moment in which they realised their dependency on aid. Rohingya respondents doubted the possibility of dignified repatriation, and said it would need to be accompanied by promises of citizenship and rights. Meanwhile humanitarian workers believed that dignity is important to their response. They variously suggested that dignity



means meeting basic needs, communicating with communities, protecting them from rights violations (especially from sexual exploitation), and promoting agency. No humanitarian workers were aware of Rohingya conceptions of or terms for dignity (Holloway & Fan, 2018).

The next paper in this ODI series (Holloway, 2019) collects evidence on dignity in displacement from four cases: Afghanistan, Colombia, the Philippines and South Sudan. Once again, in each case, dignity was regarded as an important feature of aid and a valuable prism for understanding the quality of the humanitarian response - with many respondents saying that they feel they are often treated disrespectfully. In Afghanistan and Colombia, dignity has been enshrined in national declarations of principles for how refugees should be treated, and in Colombia, 'carta de dignificación' - letters of dignity - are issued by the government to registered IDPs, recognising their survival and resilience - something that seems insufficient to many refugees, who see it as being a general and not individualised response, which does not do enough to restore their good name and establish the truth of their particular story. The ways in which dignity was discussed and defined in each of these cases is discussed in detail in a later section on non-Western and popular ideas of dignity; here it suffices to note that in all these four diverse contexts, dignity was regarded as important.

In the final summary paper (Mosel & Holloway, 2019), the ODI team concludes that dignity varies widely across contexts. Place seems to be more important than variation in age or gender. Across cases, *how* aid is given seems to be a greater factor in determining respectfulness than *what* aid is given; especially important here was transparency in targeting, face to face communication and cash-based aid (something also endorsed by Shapiro, 2019). Respect and self-reliance seem to be important associated concepts everywhere, while there is no automatic preference for a more 'local' response as a means of boosting respectfulness.

The ODI project is naturally only one of many examinations of dignity and displacement. Collste explains that immigrants and refugees are especially vulnerable to violations against their dignity, since many view them as outsiders not deserving of the same protections as full citizens (Collste; Düwell et al, 2014). Hannah Arendt has placed the exclusion of one group from a political community as the essential right, in her discussions of dignity - examined in the later section on philosophy (Menke; Düwell et al, 2014). Dignity is a central topic in our understanding of migration, displacement and humanitarian action.

1.1.4 Dignity and conflict

A number of writers have said that an ethic of dignity requires peace; violence may be the ultimate affront to dignity, just as the right to life is sometimes said to be the most basic of rights. Andreas Hasenclever for instance has attempted to integrate dignity into the just war tradition. He suggests that an ethic of dignity should make us more sceptical of armed interventions, even when they are carried out to defend human rights (Hasenclever; Düwell et al, 2014). Others have argued that an ethic of dignity might make intervention more likely. The doctrine of Responsibility to Protect has often been justified as requiring that the rights of individuals, bearing dignity, should take precedence over the sovereignty rights of states. In 1998, as Serb forces began a wave of ethnic cleansing in Congo, Kofi Annan gave a



speech that called for intervention, saying “The Charter, after all, was issued in the name of ‘the peoples’, not the governments, of the United Nations. Its aim is not only to preserve international peace - vitally important though that is - but also ‘to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person’. The Charter protects the sovereignty of peoples. It was never meant as a license for governments to trample on human rights and human dignity” (Bellamy, 2009).

Experiencing violence results in several consequences that are best understood through the lens of dignity. Trauma has sometimes been described as an effect of having one’s dignity violated, and many trauma healing programs focus on repairing that damage (Giacaman et al, 2007; Uribe, 2012). Specific restrictions on the use of torture, and of cruel treatment of prisoners, are best understood as being rooted in dignity. Luban argues that such cruel practices “assault basic aspects of the human personality”. In its most extreme form, this manifested itself in the concentration camps of the Holocaust, in which “humiliating the victims as a sign of their expulsion from the human race was an essential, not accidental, part”. Primo Levi has written that the moral degradation of the prisoners was part of the daily operation of the camps (Luban; Düwell et al, 2014).

This process of dehumanisation, of the construction of Others as being without dignity, is a common feature of mass killings and genocides (Savage, 2012; Kronfeldner, 2020). This has been shown in relation to Darfur, where the Sudanese government “aggregated and concentrated racial epithets in a collective process of dehumanization and organized terror, which amplified the severity of genocidal victimization” (Hagan & Rymond-Richmond, 2008). It has similarly been shown in relation to colonial empires and slavery, Nazism, and immigration (Kronfeldner, 2020), as well as Rwanda (Fuji, 2006). Indeed, it was in specific response to the Holocaust that the modern construction of dignity was popularised (Debes, 2017). Dignity is a central topic in our understanding of conflict and peace.

1.1.5 Dignity and gender

The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women says that “discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity”. The 1995 Beijing declaration similarly makes extensive reference to dignity and women’s rights. Annika Thiem has argued that dignity can be productive in deepening our understanding of feminist struggles, since it implies full equality between all humans (Thiem; Düwell et al, 2014). Dignity, and narratives of bodily integrity, have often been used as important parts of the rhetoric for preventing and addressing violence against women. It has been used as an argument for providing fair access to menstrual products (Abbott et al, 2011), and for improving disrespectful maternity care (discussed in the section on medicine below). Equally, Thiem notes that dignity is often used as an argument for restricting women’s choices - it is often invoked as a reason for preventing abortion, or restricting sexual behaviours (Campagna; Düwell et al, 2014), and can “inadvertently abet...traditional gender regimes” (Thiem; Düwell et al, 2014). Similarly, dignity was cited in some of the discussions above from the ODI case studies as requiring that women uphold certain ‘honour’ codes.



1.1.6 Dignity and disability

Discussions of dignity and disability have often focused on whether and which disabled people have dignity (Nussbaum, 2006; Düwell et al, 2014). This unpleasant debate has obscured - or perhaps highlighted - the fact that disabled people are especially vulnerable to violations against their dignity. Sigrid Graumann presents the following summary of concerns of disability activists: “involuntary institutionalization, medical treatment without consent, exclusion from education, work and social life, lack of assistance and care, risk of poverty, absence of respect for privacy, home and family, as well as the experience of disregard, disrespect and humiliation. Particularly, in the field of biomedicine and bioethics, disabled persons feel their dignity is violated due to selective abortion and end-of-life decisions based on an understanding of disability as ‘wrongful life’.” The 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities makes extensive use of dignity as a founding issue in protecting the rights of disabled people around the world (Graumann; Düwell et al, 2014).

1.1.7 Global Dignity and the global development sector

Beginning from an assertion that new ethical goals are needed in the Global Information Age, Pekka Himanen’s 2014 chapter lays out an argument for dignity as the core aim of development. This is notable, because (like this paper), he calls for dignity as a concept to be applied across all parts of international development - not only in relation to displacement, conflict, gender, or one of the other specific sectors mentioned so far in this section.

Himanen draws on Rawls, Sen, and ideas about wellbeing, and argues that dignity underpins each of them, and that dignity implies a “culture of freedom, justice and life” that encompasses the goals of those scholars. He goes further, and suggests that dignity is intimately related to reciprocity and empathy, and is therefore a universal value. He suggests that dignity can serve as an underpinning ethical rationale for all development, and argues that dignity should be at least a component of the Sustainable Development Goals, noting that such aims and indicators are often determined without a clear underlying philosophical rationale. From this, he widens out to argue that dignity in development must encompass informational, human and cultural development, and thereby argues that dignity implies an extremely wide range of development aims. He manifests this in a tentative measure, a Dignity Index, which is discussed in detail in the section of this review on measurement.

Drawing on these views, Himanen has helped found Global Dignity, an organisation that campaigns for the centrality of dignity in human affairs. Since 2008, they have run an annual Global Dignity Day (on 16 October). In 2017, they helped conduct lessons and events on dignity for more than 680,000 young people, across more than 70 countries. Global Dignity’s honorary board includes Desmond Tutu, Amartya Sen, and Richard Branson (Global Dignity, n.d.). Global Dignity represents the largest and most significant effort to put a philosophically precise definition of dignity into the centre of debates about development.

Himanen is not the only discussion of dignity and development as a *sector*, though it is one of the more developed. Two others are worth noting.



The Aspen Institute book 'Development as Dignity' (Oyewole et al, 2018) exemplifies and echoes many of the same themes. In its introduction, Oyewole asserts "the inextricable links between development and dignity." Yet many of its contributors (Rewane, Mbaya, Onigbinde, Jarhum, and arguably others) mention dignity only fleetingly, employing it as a catch-all term for positive outcomes. A wide range of definitions are implied. Sarker links dignity to "love, care, empathy and respect", while Puskur suggests agency is key. Both worry that the constraints of (quantitative) measurement limit the respectfulness of development and research. Aniebo agrees, and places emphasis on research ethics and research partnerships as fields in which development must strive to be more respectful. Puskur, D'Silva and Jarhum each explore the disrespectfulness met by women in daily life, in work and in politics. In two of the collection's most moving contributions Sekkide and Sando discuss dignity in healthcare. Sando focuses on maternal health, and the many ways in which disrespect is shown during childbirth, while Sekkide focuses on the recognition and proper response to pain. Anchoring dignity simultaneously in recognition, autonomy, and inherent humanity, he writes, "A person in pain is a person whose dignity is in peril. The basic right to be comfortable in your own body is under attack, and you are reliant on others to help you feel better. Understandably, this loss of autonomy can be debilitating and dehumanizing." Though health is undoubtedly a key part of development, I discuss it more fully in a later section dedicated to dignity in medicine. The book thus ranges across topics, making similar points to those in the ODI work.

The final partial example of discussion of dignity in development, is that by Knight et al (2018). This is a non-academic report, of which the authors say "we are trying to stimulate a conversation about this rather than to be definitive". It is rare in its direct attempt to investigate dignity as a concept, and to do so through some empirical methods. It is even rarer in its attempt to offer recommendations for how to put dignity at the heart of development. However, both its methods and its conclusions might be challenged. Data was gathered from three webinars, in which a total of 14 PSJP members and grantees contributed to reflections on dignity. This was supplemented by a quantitative self-assessment of dignity in the work of 61 grantee organisations. The authors note that all contributors believed that dignity is important in their work. Beyond that, however, they agree on little. A range of concepts are suggested as important corollaries to dignity, including power, voice, control, choice, compassion and mutual respect. Recent scandals around sexual misconduct by NGO workers are discussed as an essential case study in disrespectful behaviour in development. This document therefore represents a useful discussion of some of the ways in which dignity features in the discourse in international development, and a welcome attempt at self-examination through the lens of dignity, but does not necessarily add much of novelty to the work of definition or measurement.

Many scholars of development mention dignity, and many more investigate topics that we might consider adjacent to dignity, from Sen to Scott - a topic discussed in the section below on adjacent concepts. Yet only these few have so far been identified as substantively engaging with dignity in development.



1.2 Dignity, law and rights

As well as being frequently discussed in aid and development, dignity is also a major concept in legal philosophy, and is often cited as the concept that underpins human rights law (see for instance Brundtland, 2003). Mattson & Clark (2011) have argued that “Human rights are both justified through human dignity and ‘a means to the end of realizing human dignity’”. Paust has said that human rights law is “the law of human dignity”, while Hailer & Ritschl describe human rights law as “a judicial concretization of the more general concept of human dignity” (Paust, 1984, and Hailer & Ritschl, 1996, both cited in Jacobson, 2007).

That centrality is manifested in its frequent use as a standard and reference point in legal documents across the world. Debes (2009) notes that the importance of dignity is asserted in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, as well as the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference (1975). Holloway and Grandi (2018) find that “every foundational UN document and other major international legal instrument, as well as many national constitutions and judicial texts, have enshrined the notion of human dignity”; they count 152 national constitutions that make mention of it. In a series of chapters in Düwell et al (2014), contributors discuss dignity’s role in French, German, US, South American, South African, Islamic, Chinese, Japanese and Indian legal frameworks. Scholars have argued that dignity is the hidden underpinning of the American constitution (Jacobson, 2007), and an analysis of the divergent meanings of dignity used in two constitutions - the German and Kenyan - is provided by Ebert & Odour (2012). It has been mobilised to make both conservative and liberal political arguments (Brownsword; Düwell et al, 2014).

Darwall (in Debes, 2017) extends this argument to say that dignity is often treated as a foundational concept for egalitarianism – if we believe that all humans have a basic relationship of equality, it is because we believe they all share some basic quality or status - what we call here “dignity”. In this he follows Meeks (1984, quoted in Jacobson, 2007) who writes that “To be able to say what dignity is would be to describe the fundamental meaning of being human.” Several scholars have put dignity at the heart of wider codes of social ethics and theories of justice (Jacobson, 2007).

There is vast debate about the proper definitions and conceptual value of dignity, in legal scholarship as elsewhere. As Coundouriotis (2006) points out, dignity “rarely elicits a critical examination. As a result, dignity is pushed to the margins; it is seen either as synonymous with humanity and hence a starting point for elaborating a theory of rights, or as the ultimate expression of rights realized. Occupying this place at the beginning or the end of the human rights narrative, dignity is rarely part of a discussion of process.” Schacter (1983) has written that “We do not find an explicit definition of the expression ‘dignity of the human person’ in international instruments, or (as far as I know) in national law. Its intrinsic meaning has been left to intuitive understanding, conditioned in large measure on cultural factors.” That confusion about definitions is discussed below, in the section on philosophical definitions of dignity. This section shows only that in legal philosophy, in human rights law, in constitutional law and in the idea of egalitarianism which underpins many of these approaches, dignity is central.



One exception to Coundouriotis' critique is the work on dignity in Ghanaian politics by Jeffrey Paller (2019). He charts the operation of dignity in a "public, relational, and action-oriented process" of claim-making by citizens on their representatives, guided by pre-colonial norms of leadership and association. His description of a two-way interchange of mutual recognition respect between constituent and representative is a rare study that examines dignity's role in the daily operation of theorised rights.

1.3 Dignity and medicine

In addition to development and law, there is one other major field that discusses dignity: medicine. There have been extensive debates that use dignity to frame questions around abortion, euthanasia and other contested issues of bioethics; UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights in 2005 makes many reference to the concept (Brownsword; Düwell et al, 2014). Jonathan Mann and Sofia Gruskin have written that:

"Several lines of evidence suggest that regular and severe violations of individual or collective dignity have severe adverse effects on health. Yet, until or unless these impacts on well-being are manifested in biomedical recognized forms..., their existence as a health problem remains unclear and unvalidated. A major pioneering effort is needed to identify and link the full range of these assaults on well-being, particularly mental and social, with violations of human rights and dignity." (Mann & Gruskin, 1995).

Neuhäuser and Stoecker have helpfully provided a summary of three main ways in which dignity is said to be offended against in medical care: "First, the patients' privacy is endangered by the way hospital wards are constructed and organized as well as by irresponsible behaviour of the nurses, who put the patient in his or her weakness, nakedness and plight on display to other people. Second, there is a tendency, in the special asymmetric bedside situation, to ignore the rules of normal civilized interaction and to switch either to a patronizing or a parade-ground attitude towards the patients, or simply to act upon them instead of interacting with them. Third, the patients' weaknesses and disabilities easily lead to a paternalistic tendency on the side of the nurses to take over control instead of supporting self-control, and hence deprive the patients of their means of leading their lives despite being ill." They note three areas where these interactions are especially likely to go wrong: in psychiatric treatment and in end of life care, as well as in several non-medical scenarios (Neuhäuser & Stoecker; Düwell et al, 2014).

The most sustained investigation of dignity in medicine is by Nora Jacobson. In her 2007 review, she shows that dignity is widely discussed in medicine, linking the work to wider debates in human rights, law, social justice, bioethics, and clinical care. In a later 2009 article, she develops this into a typology of the ways in which each medical interaction can promote or violate dignity, drawing on 64 interviews with healthcare providers and people from marginalised groups in Toronto, Canada. She identifies a range of actions that might do so, listed in the table below. In a third article, she summarises her work, and diagnoses some causes of these disrespectful interactions: "The conditions that promote these



processes reside in the positions of the actors involved; asymmetrical relationships between the actors; in the health care setting itself, which is characterized by multiple tensions—including those between needs and resources, crisis and routine, experience and expertise, and rhetoric and reality; and in the embeddedness of health care in a broader social order of inequality” (Jacobson, 2009b).



Table 1: Jacobson's (2009) Grounded theory

Violate dignity	Promote dignity
Rudeness, Indifference, Condescension, Dismissal, Diminishment, Disregard, Contempt, Dependence, Intrusion, Objectification, Restriction, Trickery, Grouping, Labeling, Vilification, Suspicion, Discrimination, Exploitation, Exclusion, Revulsion, Deprivation, Bullying, Assault and Abjection.	Contribution, Discipline, Independence, Accomplishment, Authenticity, Creativity, Enrichment, Transcendence, Restraint, Control, Perseverance, Preparation, Avoidance, Concealment, Resistance, Recognition, Acceptance, Presence, Leveling, Advocacy, Empowerment, Courtesy, and Love.

There have been several efforts to examine what should be done about this. In a pair of papers, Leape et al (2012a & 2012b) reflect on what it would take to build a culture of respect within medical care providers, albeit without much theoretical or empirical grounding. Similar work is done by Cohen & Ezer (2013), who see in dignity and a human right to receive care an alternative to what they regard as the consumerist discourse of patient rights. There have been two attempts to develop measures of respectful care that have broad applicability to many domains of medicine - the Patient Dignity Inventory (Chochinov et al, 2008), and ICU-RESPECT (Geller et al, 2016) - these are discussed in more detail in the section on measurement below.

In addition to these broad efforts to discuss dignity in healthcare, there have been several attempts to examine dignity within specific areas of medicine. The most developed of these is maternal health. Substantive investigations of the definitional issues of applying dignity in maternal health are provided by Bowser & Hill (2010) and Freedman et al (2014). In addition, there have been multiple attempts to measure respectful maternal care (Hameed & Avan, 2018; Azhar et al, 2018; Kruk et al, 2018; Sando et al, 2016) - these are discussed in detail in the section on measurement below. Beyond maternal health, there have been discussions of dignity as it relates to end of life care (Chochinov, 2006; Gawande, 2015) and pain (Sekide in Oyewole et al, 2018).

Discussions of dignity in medicine also intersect with those in development, of course. This is perhaps most obvious in humanitarian aid. Holloway & Grandi (2018) believe that there are three areas of overlap: "right to privacy and autonomy in emergency healthcare provision; how they protect patients' cultural practices and religious beliefs; and how they preserve their dignity after death." They find dignity in guidelines provided by the ICRC on burial, and in a field manual provided by ICRC and WHO (Grant, 2016 and Cordner et al, 2016, both cited in Holloway & Grandi, 2018).

1.4 Dignity in psychology

Dignity has been approached by psychologists in four main ways. First, cultural psychologists have classified different cultures by their relative emphasis on 'dignity' or 'face' (Kim & Cohen, 2010; Leung & Cohen, 2011). Second, humanistic psychologists have put



dignity at the heart of their response to Skinner's behaviorism (Harcum, 1994; Iuculano & Burkum, 1996; Lingis, 2010; see also Vitz, 1996 for a discussion of these debates). Third, various authors have looked at the emotional resonances of dignity, including Badcott (2003), de Melo-Martín & Salles (2011) on disgust, and Fierke (2015) on conflict. Also looking at emotions connected to dignity (but with a much more developed empiric base) is the extensive field of humiliation studies, recently reviewed by McCauley (2017) and Hartling & Lindner (2017), as well as the work of Simon Laham (Laham et al, 2010a; Laham et al, 2010b).

Perhaps the most productive line of research has been the fourth, examining respect. Psychologists looking at respect have used empirical strategies to distinguish it from related ideas and to describe its operation as a group norm (Huo et al, 2009; Dunning et al, 2016; Lalljee et al, 2007; van Quaquebeke et al, 2007; Pagliaro et al, 2011; Ellemers et al, 2004; Tyler & Smith, 1999; Simon & Stürmer, 2003; Smith & Tyler, 1997).

Those same scholars have then examined what their definitions mean for major social challenges such as political tribalism (Veltmer & Lalljee, 2007; Lalljee et al, 2013), ethnic pluralism (Huo & Molina, 2006), cooperation (de Cremer, 2002; Sleebos et al, 2006) and theories of justice (Miller, 2001).

1.5 Public support for respectful development

Dignity is a topic that seems to garner instant recognition. As sections above have described, it is debated across development and across many academic fields. The organisation Global Dignity helped ensure that 680,000 young people received a lesson on dignity in 2017. Survey and experimental evidence, described below, suggests that dignity and respectfulness are desired by the wider public.

There is a perceived deficit in respectfulness in at least one developing country. In a poll of 1,680 Kenyans, just 33% of Kenyans say yes, their leaders do put enough effort into being respectful towards them (author's own analysis, based on Sauti za Wananchi, 2018).

This finding is complemented by a recent experimental study, conducted by The Dignity Project and the author, and presented at the African Social and Behavioral Change conference 2019 (Wein, 2019), which indicated that a surveyed public value dignity.

The study, conducted on Amazon Mturk, asked 660 people how their donations would change in response to various efforts by a charity to be respectful. Participants were willing to donate more if the charity mentions investing in efforts to recognise individuality, equality or autonomy ($p=0.07$). A treatment in which a charity was said to recognize individuality by addressing beneficiaries by name drives greater donations compared to control ($p=0.02$); participants donated a mean of \$31 extra when a charity mentions efforts to recognise individuality, a relative increase of 60%.

These were hypothetical donations in a quick online study. There are many and clear limitations to the study, and we can hold this conclusion only tentatively. However, the



results are suggestive evidence that dignity may attract support from the public, and that charities may receive additional support if they emphasize dignity. It adds yet another motivation for studying dignity.

1.6 Adjacent concepts to dignity

There are a host of interrelated concepts in international development, which dignity sits alongside, even if those literatures do not often use the language of dignity and respect. These may be regarded as the wider academic hinterland for this idea. These include: wellbeing and happiness; capabilities; listening, participation and community-driven development; and empowerment.

Dignity is distinct from each of these, and measurement of respect will not necessarily correlate with attempts to measure them. To properly illustrate the distinctiveness of dignity, it is necessary to fix ourselves to a specific definition - a task undertaken in a future section. Here, we simply note these concepts as being important adjacent ideas.

Strong arguments have been made that the ultimate aim of international development (indeed of all human activity) ought to be the maximising of human happiness, life satisfaction or wellbeing (Diener et al, 2018). Pekka Himanen (2014) has argued for wellbeing as being a part of dignity, without particularly explaining their relationship. George Kateb (2011) has attempted to gel the two, arguing that pain is not merely a negative happiness quotient, but actually impedes the capability to pursue happiness. By removing offences against dignity, we enlarge the capabilities of people to pursue happiness. Kateb further notes that we have a special duty to look to the experiences of those who are worst off, not just the median experience; we must have regard to how that pleasure is secured and distributed. So to the extent that an ethic of dignity is about removing harms, it may be possible to integrate it with the study and pursuit of happiness. Such slightly convoluted arguments are necessary, in part because dignity is generally regarded as a deontological theory, descending from Kant and specifically rejecting the sorts of trade-offs that are inherent to utilitarianism. We need not completely unravel this knot here.

The second adjacent idea is capabilities. After Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum is the most prominent articulator of the capabilities approach. She has increasingly used dignity as a foundation for capabilities - because we have dignity, it is a good thing to promote people's capabilities, and especially her list of ten 'fundamental capabilities' (Claasen; Düwell et al, 2014) - something discussed more in the later section on philosophical approaches to dignity. The huge reach of the capabilities approach makes it essential for a study of dignity and development to engage with it. The capabilities approach has also inspired one of the most comprehensive and convincing efforts to advance and widen the measurement of poverty and of development's progress, the multidimensional poverty approach (Alkire & Foster, 2011). Since the Dignity Project also aims to develop measures, the multidimensional approach may serve as a source of inspiration.

A third cluster of important ideas in international development can be brought together under the general heading of listening, participation and community-driven development. These



ideas have been advanced by many thinkers, though perhaps most prominently by Robert Chambers (see for instance Chambers, 2017). A major project called 'Time to Listen' calls for exactly that in international development. The authors write that "We heard from people who felt that they were treated without much respect or consideration. Such treatment was an insult to their dignity" (Anderson et al, 2012). In their landmark study on localisation and participation focused interventions, Mansuri and Rao (2012) argue that there is a link between participation and dignity. Such work has been bolstered by theoretical work that charts the disrespectful nature of encountering bureaucracies, by James C Scott (Scott, 2020). This broad category of thinking might best be described as the types of interventions that might be tested, in an investigation of which development practices are more respectful.

The final broad idea that is related to dignity, but does not necessarily use the same language, is empowerment. Many scholars have related dignity to equality, and argued that political processes are required to realise and claim respectful treatment. In her fluent memoir of the promulgation of empowerment as a term in international development, Srilantha Batliwala offers a useful warning of the ways in which new concepts can be introduced to development, and can soon lose their radical content - becoming buzzwords, without changing practice (Batliwala; Cornwall & Eade, 2010). Empowerment thus might also provide a cautionary tale for this project.

We are not certain yet how all these ideas fit together. Lots of definitional work remains. Dignity might be a reason for doing these things. Respectful treatment might be a way of increasing them, simply correlated with them, or a separate concept altogether. For now we note only that dignity is in some way related to them - and, no doubt, to other prominent ideas in international development.

2. Philosophical approaches to dignity

There are many definitions of dignity, and we sometimes invoke several of them simultaneously, which is why it has been termed "multivocal" (LaVaque-Manty; Debes, 2017). Ideas of dignity draw on a whole host of intellectual traditions: Confucian, Buddhist, Islamic, Homeric, Augustinian and Patristic, Catholic and Lutheran, Socialist, Stoic, Rousseauian, and Kantian (Debes, 2017; see also Düwell et al, 2014).³ It is what Block (1995) has termed a 'mongrel concept', and it has been espoused by people in support of radically incompatible causes (Rosen, 2012). That may help confirm its importance as a topic of study. Sensitive attempts have been made to preserve multiple definitions within a single account (Rosen, 2012, and especially Waldron 2012). In pursuit of this project of measurement, we need to at least identify overlapping elements in the different definitions, and perhaps fix ourselves to a single approach. As Rodriguez (2015) has shown, dignity will be better able to do the work we want it to, if its theoretical basis is properly established.

In this section, I trace the various definitions of dignity that have been proposed by different schools of philosophy. I first examine dignity in Twentieth Century Western philosophy,

³ There is an extensive literature discussing the historical evolution of dignity through these variations traditions. We do not deal with that literature in detail here - for more, see Debes, 2017.



before discussing non-Western and popular traditions of dignity, and variation in how people think about dignity across the world.

2.1 Dignity in modern Western philosophy

2.1.1 Merit-based and moralized dignity

A sharp distinction is made in much of the modern Western (mostly secular) philosophical literature between 'merit-based' and 'moralized' conceptions of dignity (Debes, 2017). The Dignity Project is mainly concerned with the moralized conception.

Moralized dignity is described by Debes and others as a universal, characteristic, inalienable quality of persons,⁴ and entitles its holders to 'recognition respect'. In this sense, 'human dignity' refers to the inherent or unearned moral worth or status, which all humans enjoy equally (Debes, 2017). It is universal in that everyone has it, all of the time. It is characteristic, in that it is one of the things that defines someone as a person (this draws on the definition offered by Sensen; Debes, 2017). Dignity is inalienable. Your dignity can be offended against, but it cannot be lowered or taken away, no matter how badly you are treated (Debes, 2017). Dignity is also, argues Kateb (2014), existential, since it is the recognition of your personhood.

In this philosophical tradition, that a person has dignity has implications for how they should be treated by others. It is argued that simply because each person has dignity, they should be treated with respect. This respect is called 'recognition respect'. It is the sort of respect due simply because you recognize a person's dignity, and people do not need to do anything extra to earn that respect (Dillon, 2018). Recognition respect is thus a kind of deliberative deference. For example, I show you 'recognition respect' as a person when I give appropriate consideration to you in deciding what to do. That is, I appropriately circumscribe or revise my choices if they would affect you, and I do this precisely because of your dignity (Darwall; Debes, 2017). Darwall explains that having dignity means that you can make a claim on others that you be treated with respect. You have the standing to make claims upon another. In that sense, it is 'second-personal'. If they default on those claims by failing to treat you with respect, you can make an appeal to society to provide redress (Darwall; Debes, 2017).

This differs, in this philosophical tradition, from the merit-based idea of dignity. Merit-based dignity can be earned, forfeited or stripped away, and which gives rise to 'appraisal respect' (Debes, 2017). Whereas moralized dignity is a concept of a universal, intrinsic and characteristic dignity, which entails the ability to claim recognition respect, by contrast, merit-based dignity is not considered universal. It is described as the honor or status one achieves or earns by actions, as for example, in the case of a medal-winning sportswoman - or the respect demanded by a person of power. This kind of dignity is not the object of direct

⁴ To have dignity is to be admitted to the community of those who may demand respect. There remains scholarly dispute about which agents have dignity (Nussbaum, 2006; Rosen, 2012), but we do not attempt to resolve it here. Anyone who can take part in our research will be assumed to have dignity.



deliberative deference (i.e. 'recognition respect') but instead it is the object of a positive or fear-motivated attitude or appraisal, and gives rise to appraisal respect. This encompasses both dignity earned through status and through bearing or actions (Rosen, 2012). It is not universal, because it can be increased, decreased or stripped away entirely by certain experiences or actions (Debes, 2017).

It is worth noting that in this dual approach, moralized and merit based dignity could very well operate simultaneously. Recognition respect is the basic minimum of respect that is owed to everybody; we may very well decide to accord additional respect beyond that minimum to certain people, based on our appraisal of them (Debes, 2017).

2.1.2 Other Western philosophical approaches

In addition to the work cited above, there are several other especially important modern Western contributions to our understanding of dignity - by George Kateb, Jeremy Waldron, Hannah Arendt, and Martha Nussbaum. These have been highlighted because they are widely cited in philosophical discussions, and because their work is pertinent to this paper's concern with international development. In addition to these, a huge range of other thinkers have made contributions to the dignity literature. We outline their thinking here.

They are helped along by several taxonomists of dignity. For instance, Doris Schroeder (2008), and later Michael Rosen (2012) have argued not for the two concepts of dignity described above, but rather for four: Kantian, Aristocratic, comportment and meritorious dignity.⁵ Five are proposed by Marcus Düwell, all similar to those outlined here (Düwell; Düwell et al, 2014).

Kateb (2011) aligns with many of the broad strokes of the Debesian philosophy described above. He argues that human dignity is derived from two precepts. First the unique stature of humans, apart from the rest of nature, and second the equal status of individual humans. This uniqueness, he says, need not flow from a religious endowment, but rather from human's language, ability to think, and the other potentialities that flow from these abilities. On this basis, he makes a strong secular case that humans have a duty to act as stewards of nature. Kateb places individual humans at the centre of his argument, and asserts that dignity must be about respecting individuals, and does not lead to a unique role for group identities and group rights. Through an overview of the twentieth century's atrocities, he responds to utilitarian challenges to dignity (for instance by Peter Singer), arguing that dignity prevents harm, and that the pains of harm cannot be held to be equivalent to, or on a continuum with, happiness and pleasure. Applying these concepts to politics, he offers up dignity as a defence against tyranny, and licenses rebellion against powers that offend against dignity. In this, he includes the apparently painless oppression of 'Brave New World', arguing that something is infringed even if the victim has no conception of another life. He allows that a dignity ethic will allow some inequality, but notes that it allows us to at least put guardrails on the human pursuit of ambition, to protect those who are otherwise trampled by overweening ends.

⁵ In a later paper, Schroeder (2009) added a fifth type, Traditional Christian Dignity, before collapsing the types into two categories, which she termed Inviolable and Aspirational dignity - thereby bringing her thinking roughly into line with the two concepts described in the preceding section.



A somewhat different perspective is offered by Jeremy Waldron's 'Dignity, Rank and Rights' (2012). He roots dignity in "the high and equal rank of every human person." In doing so, he ties himself more closely to the tradition of merit-based dignity described above, and argues that as we transformed into a more egalitarian, world every person was eventually promoted into a high and equal rank, and was granted the extensive rights that had once been the preserve of an aristocracy. This, he asserts, is still capable of underwriting a dignity for all. (This is echoed by Habermas [2010], who notes that this status is only awarded to democratic citizens). A related case is made by Neuhäuser & Stoecker (in Düwell et al, 2014).

In making this argument, Waldron begins not with moral philosophy (Kantian or otherwise), but rather with how the term dignity has been mainly used. He does so by examining its use in the law, though his approach might also lend support to other examinations of daily usage. As the introduction by Meir Dan-Cohen asserts, by rooting his conception in changing social dynamics - rather than unchanging moral philosophy - he offers a vision that is simultaneously more historically grounded, and more vulnerable, since social dynamics might alter once more, and strip away the high and equal rank he supports. A similar historically grounded argument is made by Hans Joas (Hubenthal; Düwell et al, 2014).

Hannah Arendt mentioned dignity only in passing in her work, but some scholars have claimed to see in her ideas a concept of dignity - even as she critiqued the modern humanist rights tradition as a set of soft-hearted declarations disconnected from the reality of our actual political settlements within the specific communities to which we belong. When Twentieth Century totalitarians announced that many individuals were no longer members of the political community and no longer deserving of respect, Arendt argues that liberal defenders of those groups abandoned the field. Rather than responding that these victims were in fact part of the same specific political community and equals under that nation's law, liberals offered only an appeal that all humans deserve good treatment. This cosmopolitan view, she suggests, was simply too vague to overcome totalitarian bigotry. She therefore argues that there is only a single human right: the right to have rights, via the right to membership of a community. Dignity is for Arendt nearly interchangeable with membership of a community (Menke; Düwell et al, 2014).

Martha Nussbaum is the other contemporary Western philosopher to have made a significant contribution to our understanding of dignity. Her work on capabilities has evolved over time, and dignity has come to occupy an increasingly central place - described in most detail in her 2008 contribution to the President's Council on Bioethics. She argues that dignity arises from our wonder at human potential (even if that potential is often not fulfilled). Out of dignity, Nussbaum extracts three major consequences, or related notions: respect, agency and equality. In examining the complex interplay between dignity and these notions, she argues that we can generate a list of fundamental capabilities that all humans are entitled to, and that societies should guarantee through human rights.⁶ (In this she differs

⁶ Nussbaum's list of 10 fundamental capabilities is as follows: Life; Bodily Health; Bodily Integrity; Senses, Imagination, and Thought; Emotions; Practical Reason; Affiliation; Other Species; Play; Control over one's Environment (Nussbaum; Schulman, 2008).



from Amartya Sen, who has always refused to offer such a list, arguing that it is down to individuals to define human flourishing according to their own preferences). She notes that there is a moral commandment not to thwart efforts to achieve those capabilities. Second, she uses it to argue that in some cases societies ought to provide not just a capability - the option to take up a functioning - but to directly provide the functioning itself, regardless of the preferences of the individual.⁷ In particular, she suggests we should prohibit people from debasing themselves. Therefore dignity for her is simultaneously a ground for capability in general, a generator of a specific list of capabilities, and a reason in some cases to deny those capabilities (Claasen; Düwell et al, 2014). Since the capabilities approach has such reach in international development, this thinking is of especial importance for this project, even if it is a little difficult to harmonise the three purposes to which she sets dignity.

A wide range of other writers have made attempts to deepen our understanding of dignity - so many that it is almost impossible to capture them all. In the next paragraphs, we describe the attempts to describe the content of dignity, including whether it is individual or collective, discussions of whether and which rights proceed from dignity, and investigations of non-rights implications of dignity.

Examining the content and grounding of dignity, Jacques Maritain roots dignity in ideas of natural law, and argues that dignity is both inherent in people and in their connections to others (Valadier; Düwell et al, 2014). McDougal, Lasswell and Chen (as summarised by Chilton, 2006) provide a list of eight values that underlie dignity.⁸ Michael Ignatieff (2000) has argued that dignity is inherently individualistic - whereas Jeremy Waldron (2008) has contradicted this, saying we cannot rule out the possibility of groups holding dignity. Himanen - as referenced in an earlier section - describes an idea of human dignity mainly based on reciprocal empathy. Scheler argues that dignity is not foundational, but must further be grounded in something; he argues that we have this worth, because we experience and receive love in our singular ways, rather than because we are rational, as Kant argued (Davis; Düwell et al, 2014). Levinas makes a somewhat idiosyncratic case that dignity lies in our pre-rational experience of the Other (Atterton; Düwell et al, 2014).

Most essays on dignity in the Western philosophical tradition focus on the dignity of individuals, and the idea of group rights is very heavily contested. However, some Western writers have discussed the dignity of collectives. This is important because - as discussed below - there is a much more prominent non-Western tradition of dignity of groups, and ideas of individualism and collectivism may be one of the major axes along which ideas of dignity vary. Micha Werner begins his discussion with two hypotheticals: if we believe that collective rights are possible, and we think that dignity may be the ground of rights, then perhaps there is collective dignity? And if we believe that agency is interrelated with dignity, and we believe that groups can have agency, then that may also lead us to conclude that collective dignity exists. Often, Werner explains, we talk of the collective dignity of political entities enacting their duties, or of groups battling to claim their rights. The dignity of minority

⁷ Nussbaum also makes a third argument: that dignity is also inherent in animals, since they provoke a sense of wonder in humans. We do not address that here.

⁸ These are: Respect, Power, Wealth, Enlightenment, Well-being, Skills, Affection, and Rectitude (McDougal et al, 1980, cited in Chilton, 2006).



may be offended against by direct, symbolic, and representative group humiliation, according to work by Christian Neuhäuser. Meanwhile, certain reprehensible acts may offend against the common dignity of the whole human species - the implication of the term 'crimes against humanity' (Werner; Düwell et al, 2014).

For many, the most interesting question of dignity is in whether it is a suitable grounding for rights. Schroeder (2008) puzzles over the way dignity has been mobilised on both sides of debates around assisted suicide, and whether dignity is a suitable justification for human rights (2012). Schaber (2014) replies that dignity works well enough as a ground for rights, while den Hartogh suggests that dignity is related to, but not exactly a foundation for, rights (den Hartogh; Düwell et al, 2014). Both Schaber and Schachter (1983) have argued for dignity to be seen as a normative concept that lays down principles of behaviour. Schachter develops this into a list of twelve affronts to dignity - in a move which parallels work by Jacobson (2009) and other medical approaches to outlining respectful treatment. McDougal, Lasswell and Chen associate their eight values with specific rights in the UDHR (Chilton, 2006). Like Nussbaum, Gewirth has tried to articulate a hierarchy of rights implied by dignity (Gewirth; Meyer & Parent, 1992), under what he terms the Principle of Generic Consistency (Beyleveld; Düwell et al, 2014). James Griffin (2009) argues that the key to dignity is the human capacity to "be that which he wills" as "normative agents", and it is because of this that we have rights. Habermas (2010) makes a similar point, noting that our articulation of universal rights came in response to offences against human dignity; in the particular historical moment after World War Two, dignity became the conceptual hinge that brought together Kantian morality and worldly state power. Düwell explains that dignity, a deontological idea, can be a grounding for rights - what Hannah Arendt called a 'right to have rights' - but the exact relationship between the two depends on whether we view dignity as a right, a norm or a principle (Düwell; Düwell et al, 2014). He goes on to argue that dignity could justify both 'interest' and 'will' rights, and both positive and negative rights, offering a useful list of outstanding philosophical research questions in the study of dignity. Joseph Raz has argued that "respecting human dignity entails treating humans as persons capable of planning and plotting their future. Thus, respecting people's dignity includes respecting their autonomy, their right to control their future" (cited in Brownsword; Düwell et al, 2014). Much of this writing intersects with the work cited in the earlier section of this work on 'dignity in practice'. Brownsword (in Düwell et al, 2014) summarises that "each human has a view, a voice and a value" - while noting that there are highly politicised interpretations of what that means.

Table 2: Schachter's (1983) 12 affronts to dignity

- | |
|--|
| <p>(1) Statements that demean and humiliate individuals or groups because of their origins, status or beliefs.</p> <p>(2) Vilification or derision of beliefs that people hold in reverence. Teaching that particular races, ethnic groups or religions hold "ridiculous" or dangerous views, or otherwise belittling cherished beliefs.</p> <p>(3) Denial of the capacity of a person to assert claims to basic rights.</p> <p>(4) Punishment of detained persons by psychological or physical means that are meant to humiliate or ridicule their beliefs, origins or way of life.</p> <p>(5) Dissemination of negative stereotypes of groups (ethnic, religious, social) and implications that members of such groups are inferior.</p> <p>(6) Psychiatric treatment that involves coercive means to change beliefs or choices that are lawful.</p> |
|--|



- (7) Restrictions on opportunities and means to maintain family life as, for example, by denying access to family members or requiring members of families to inform authorities of the acts or beliefs of others.
- (8) Denial of educational or employment opportunities to persons on ground of their membership in groups or their beliefs.
- (9) Restrictions on equal participation in political processes because of beliefs, status or origin.
- (10) Degrading living conditions and deprivation of basic needs.
- (11) Abuse and insolence by officials, especially to persons suffering from infirmities or social opprobrium.
- (12) Medical treatment or hospital care insensitive to individual choice or the requirements of human personality.

Finally, a disparate set of contributions describe implications of dignity other than rights. Scheler argues that the primary implication of dignity is that we are thereby called upon to act in solidarity with others (Davis; Düwell et al, 2014). In a singular essay, Aurel Kolnai (1976) seeks to trace the emotional response we have to perceiving dignity, in work which intersects with the psychological work discussed earlier. Kelman (1977) has dignity as something to be achieved through the recognition of individuals and communities, via international peace, and says that such a value is transnational in nature (even if it is mainly fulfilled within nations). Kleinig and Evans (2013), complementing discussion of capabilities and dignity, argue that human flourishing is an expression of our human dignity, and that the interchange between these concepts provides a foundation for human rights. Rosen (2012) investigates a thicket of behaviours - such as how we treat the dead - that are not about our respect for other people, but which still get associated with ideas of dignity. Ricoeur looks at its relevance for criminal justice, disabilities, and memories of violence (Juncker-Kenny; Düwell et al, 2014). Neuhäuser & Stoecker (in Düwell et al, 2014) note that dignity has implications for punishment, discrimination, living conditions, torture and daily life, as well as for the medical interactions described earlier. Some have wondered about the implications for dignity of coming trans- and post-humanism (Weiss; Düwell et al, 2014). One author reflects that dignity need not always be action-guiding in itself, but rather a universally agreed moral principle, the recognition of which provides an opportunity for reflection and debate (Brownsword; Düwell et al, 2014).

2.1.3 Relationship to Kant

Kant has played a major historical role in shaping modern conceptions of dignity. His discussion in *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals* has generally been read as insisting that humans have an inherent worth, which requires us to accord respect (Rosen, 2012). This is a development on which most secular philosophy on dignity has relied since.

However, his specific arguments are not directly those of the twentieth century approaches described above. Rosen (2012) and Sensen (Debes, 2017) highlight several important ways in which our thinking has developed. Kant's explorations of dignity can be somewhat inconsistent and hard to parse. At times Kant argued that dignity was inalienable, but at other times he did not. Kant's conception is therefore more merit-based than is commonly understood (Sensen, 2017), with dignity sometimes only conferred upon those who follow the moral law (Rosen, 2012). Rosen clarifies that Kant believed that it is really morality, rather than humans, that bears dignity, with the quality carrying over to those humans who follow the moral law - and not to others (Rosen, 2012). In addition, though Kant's famous



Formula of Humanity - that a person is “an end in itself...that may not be used merely as a means” - holds an attractively pithy quality, it is exceptionally difficult to derive practical moral implications from it (Rosen, 2012). Thus, for this project, Kant is important primarily as an intellectual forebear rather than as a live articulator of the ideas of dignity.

2.2 Non-Western and popular ideas of dignity

2.2.1 Dignity is important everywhere

Dignity does not live only in philosophical texts. It is an idea that has force in development, and in people’s lives, as the opening section of this review made clear. It has always been subjective (Chilton, 2006), and it has always been contested: in formulating the UDHR, Eleanor Roosevelt removed language implying particular positions on dignity, to end a robust cross-cultural debate on definitions (Holloway & Grandi, 2018). This section accordingly reviews the literature on everyday definitions of dignity across cultures, and especially beyond the familiar Western ideas that dominate the philosophical section.

There is a long history of discussions of dignity across many cultures. Donnelly (1982) argues forcefully that equivalent concepts are observable across virtually all human cultures. Rosen (2012) notes that similar terminology connoting apparently similar concepts can be observed in many ancient languages. Debes (2017) collects essays on the forerunners of dignity from the Confucian, Buddhist, Islamic, Homeric, Stoic, Augustinian and Patristic, and Renaissance philosophical traditions. Himanen (2014) says that dignity is intimately linked to reciprocal recognition and empathy, and consequently argues that it is a universal value, manifested in the recognition of personhood inherent in the Golden Rule, something he notes has appeared in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Kantian philosophy. A modern European history can be traced through von Pufendorf, Diderot and Kant (Debes, 2018). Yet Debes (2018) also notes that the modern version of dignity is a “concept with remarkably shallow historical roots”; the idea really got going in the Twentieth Century - with the UDHR as a watershed moment. There it was endorsed by 48 countries, from Afghanistan to Venezuela. Since then, it has had a remarkable global history; it is mentioned in 152 national constitutions (Holloway & Grandi, 2018). Yet Doris Schroeder (2009) reminds us that the concept of dignity only has force in the context in which it is being deployed.

2.2.2 Dignity varies across the world

Yet each of these places may interpret dignity slightly differently. As we have already seen, Rohingya use *ijjat* to mean social identity, religious practice and economic self-reliance (Holloway & Fan, 2018). Syrians use *karama* to mean rights, respect and independence through self-reliance (Grandi et al, 2018). Donnelly (1982) argues that while many cultures have a conception of dignity, the implications of this vary; whereas Western ideas of dignity have yielded the entitlements we call human rights, he believes that Islamic, African, Chinese, Indian and Soviet conceptions of dignity yield lists of duties to others in a communitarian society.



Holloway (2019) draws definitional comparisons between dignity among displaced populations in Afghanistan, Colombia, the Philippines and South Sudan. These diverse contexts yielded some similarities in definitions of dignity, including a consistent focus on autonomy, a desire to be treated as equals, and a desire to be recognised as individuals. Yet there were also many differences. In South Sudan, with its myriad ethnic, tribal and linguistic groups, Moro reports that there is no one definition of dignity, though there is a consistent feeling that being counted and then not provided for is disrespectful. In Afghanistan, dignity was closely intertwined with honour, with the ability to provide proper conditions for women being important. In Colombia, Angel identifies six ideas of dignity: no discrimination or stigma; removing dishonor by speaking the truth; treating aid recipients like adults; control over the future; disrespectful social distance from international aid workers and bias from local aid workers; and the practical dignity emphasized by women vs the more moral claims made by men. Among those displaced in Mindanao in the Philippines, the main translation preferred by participants was *maratabat*, connoting the respect accorded to a particular rank, status, or way of life, and the pursuit of those things. Fernandez reports that “Saber et al. (1975) argue *maratabat* manifests in four ways: an ideology, an expression of one’s social position, as a relationship maintained and enforced by families through social cohesion and not a matter of individual choice and as a legal concept under traditional and customary law, which accepts the use of force as a valid means of defending *maratabat*.” It is both an individual and communal concept, with both being equally important (all from Holloway 2019).

These popular ideas draw on many different philosophical traditions. For instance, in Islamic religious law (*Sharia*), angels are said to have honoured and venerated humans, and provided them with “a life of ease” and freedom from harm, on account of human’s privileged position in creation as the only beings with free will. All humans are to receive such honour, but some receive it in additional degree, if they are more righteous or pious (with considerable debate among Islamic scholars as to the relative application of dignity for different groups of non-Muslims). Summarising this view, Izzeddeen al-Khateeb al-Tameemi, a contemporary Jordanian judge and scholar, wrote, “So, human dignity originates from Divine Will and the immortal law of God. Hence, human dignity is inseparable from a human being whether a male or female, irrespective of colour, time, place, social position, prestige among people, age, even if still a foetus, or dead lying in his grave”. He later added that “Human esteem does not emanate from universal declarations, international resolutions, regional agreements or inter-state conferences. Commitment to it from an Islamic standpoint is based on doctrine, not on accidental interest or temporal benefits.” Dignity is upheld, for al-Tameemi, through following the whole law. By fulfilling these obligations, humans maintain their rights to a good, secure life. This philosophical approach has largely been extended by secular political declarations in the Islamic world, such as the 1990 Nineteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (Maróth; Düwell et al, 2014).

Meanwhile, the Jewish tradition parallels many aspects of the Islamic one. It focuses on the idea that humans are made in the image of God (*Tzelem Elohim*); in Talmudic writings, humans are therefore signifiers of the presence of God, and must procreate and not be killed by rulers or courts. Later, Maimonides suggested that humans have dignity when they perfect their intellect, while the Kabbalist Nahmanides argued that humans are in themselves



quasi-divine - though present day ideas of dignity are strongly influenced by the Twentieth Century Western traditions described above (Lorberbaum; Düwell et al, 2014).

An indigenous American tradition of dignity can also be identified, argues Lars Kirkhusmo Pharo. As well as concepts of dignity-as-rank, held by Aztec, Maya and Inca peoples, many indigenous Americans had a philosophical understanding of the fundamental equality of peoples. Many groups also accorded recognition of a stable identity to communities around them, and by extension to members thereof. Among the Haudenosaunee confederacy,⁹ the 'Great Binding Law of Peace' may be likened to a moral law, "in which foreign nations and individuals enjoy liberty, respect and worthiness protected by the rule of law." This text is universalist and egalitarian. It decrees that rights must be protected, and does so via a democratic, consensus-based political system. It also accords dignity to other aspects of creation, including animals. Tecumseh, a leader of the Lenape/Shawnee, spoke of the necessity of offering respect to all people. Aztec moral texts (*'huehuetlahtolli'* or 'words of the elders') called for self-control, respect and tolerance for all other people. And the philosopher Ignacio Ortiz Castro has described a philosophy of the Mixtec peoples in which dignity is acknowledged by showing hospitality, solidarity and communality. In contemporary Mexico, dignity is strongly related to health and to non-discrimination, especially against groups (Ligouri, 1995). Still other indigenous American groups have related ideas (Pharo; Düwell et al, 2014).

In Hindu philosophy, writes Jens Braarvig (in Düwell et al, 2014), the *Upanisads* describe the relationship between the self and the whole, or the individual, the gods and all other living things. Perhaps traces of dignity can be found here? A more tangible dignity-as-rank concept is visible in the ascription of distinct social classes in the later *Manavadharmasastra* texts. And in the *Bhagavadgita*, dignity is something to be achieved through dutiful religiosity and selflessness, regardless of social degree. In classical Buddhist traditions, the self is not regarded as permanent or reliable, and so dignity cannot be an unchanging kernel, as it is in Western ideas. However, a radical individualism means that each person has the freedom to act morally; it is through these actions that they earn respect. Those actions are only really open to monastic orders, creating an inequality of rank between laypeople and monks (Braarvig; Düwell et al, 2014). In *Mahayana* Buddhism, practiced in northern Asia, dignity is attributed to all things that participate in the world - humans, gods, animals, and spirits. People of all ranks respect that dignity by showing compassion and practicing related values. This was apparently given practical force under the reign of Emperor Asoka, who sought to bring positive religious liberty and wellbeing to all his subjects, eliminating humiliating treatment, as part of his Buddhist practice (Braarvig; Düwell et al, 2014).

In China, *zūnyán* has several meanings. It can be used to signify the specifically Western idea of dignity of the UDHR. Second, Holloway & Grandi (2018) cite Fitzgerald (2006a; 2006b) to write that "dignity (尊严, or *zūnyán*) is conceptualised as a social value, embodied in the idea of national dignity, which has historically both supported and contradicted individual dignity". This interweaving may draw on the ideas of Chinese Daoism, in which only *Dao* ('the way', the whole world) has dignity, but each individual aspect of the world has

⁹ The largest power in North America. Known to outsiders as the Iroquois.



a unique value, and humans are touched by dignity since they are *De*, one of the places in which Dao resides. Humans can accumulate more *De* through passive virtues of forsaking worldly pleasures, and not acting in their own interest. Becoming dignified is therefore achieved by minimising goal-seeking actions, and letting oneself move along in harmony with the world (Qing-Ju; Düwell et al, 2014). Another Chinese philosopher, Peng Chuan Chang, remarked during the drafting of the UDHR that the Confucian notion of humanity (*ren*) would also serve as a translation (Düwell et al, 2014). In Confucianism, all humans are required to choose to live their lives with benevolence, showing care for others; those who fail to do so no longer lead lives worth living, or to put it another way, are without dignity. This life of integrity and righteous personal conduct is seen as open to those of all social degrees, and they must be steadfast in preserving their dignity against temptation and opposition. Respect may be shown by offering charity with due concern for a person's dignity (An'xian; Düwell et al, 2014).

Several writers have argued that there is a further distinctive (Southern) African conception of dignity. Molefe (2017) writes that he proceeds “from a position of intellectual suspicion with regard to values born out of the Western enlightenment project”, and consequently proffers the idea of personhood, which “represents an African approach to secure a life of dignity.” Metz has argued that dignity in African thought is defined relationally, as “a person is a person through other persons’ or, alternatively, ‘I am because we are’”, which he says is expressed in “the Nguni word for humanness (*ubuntu*) and its synonyms botho in Sotho-Tswana, *hunhu* in Shona and *utu* in Swahili” (Metz, 2010; for more, see Hoffman & Metz, 2017).¹⁰ Metz has also argued that an African approach to dignity is inherently communitarian, in that the flourishing of a community is what is damaged by dignity violations, as opposed to individual autonomy being damaged in Western, Kantian conceptions of dignity (Metz, 2011); in this, Molefe concurs (Molefe, 2017). That debate about the communitarian vs individualist view is also present in the work of Coundouriotis (2006). She argues that the South African popular, literary and political definitions of dignity are about self-realisation in pursuit of self-fulfillment - not an inherent quality of all humans. She shows that Bessie Head felt that dignity was anti-political, individualistic and pastoral, while other South African writers tend to emphasize that dignity is affirmed through communal identity and political action, in pursuit of equality. Coundouriotis thereby critiques the processes of South Africa's Truth & Reconciliation Commission, which set itself up as a body able to restore dignity to all South Africans collectively - victims and repenting perpetrators alike. Ikuenobe (2016) combines Metz and Coundouriotis' approaches, arguing that dignity is communitarian, but that the capacity for dignity must be realised through individual agency. Depending on the specific African tradition, we might develop our humanness and achieve that self-realisation by communing with Gods, ancestors, with the life force inherent in all objects and beings, and with other humans in our communities (Metz; Düwell et al, 2014). Overall, explains Augustine Shutte, “our deepest moral obligation is to become more fully human. And this means entering more and more deeply into community

¹⁰ That ‘ubuntu’ is a uniquely African idea of personhood has also been endorsed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who said “The spirit of Ubuntu is very difficult to render into Western language. It speaks of the very essence of being human. You are generous, caring and compassionate. It means that my humanity is bound up in yours,” and embodies the ideas of community, connection, caring and kindness.” (Global Dignity, n.d.)



with others. So although the goal is personal fulfilment, selfishness is excluded” (Metz; Düwell et al, 2014).

In my own study in Kenya, residents of Mathare, an informal settlement of Nairobi, offered a distinctive definition of dignity. They phrased it as follows: “We all have dignity. That is why we show respect to those in our groups. We communicate well and work together. There is a purpose to this: it lets us discharge our God-given duty to care for one another. But fully respecting people isn’t something everyone can do. Some stuff we can all do, like being polite in our speech and observing social codes. We may win recognition by showing our unique qualities. But to be truly respectful, you need more: self-respect, a firm foundation, and autonomy. To get that, you need a lot of things - many of which are denied by a government and society is abusive and sometimes murderous. In that situation, you get derailed. You find other ways of winning respect: money, power, and violence.” This definition is echoed in the Kenyan constitution, which uses dignity somewhat loosely, but several times links it to social justice, equity and positive protection for individuals, in repudiation of the older Independence constitution which allowed considerable abuse of power (Ebert & Odour, 2012). The Mathare definition is quite similar to that of Syrian refugees and South Africans, but differs sharply from the Rohingya idea of *ijjot*. It is fairly similar to how Western philosophers talk about dignity, with two major differences: Western philosophers do not discuss a purpose to dignity, which they generally say is intrinsically good, and they do not suggest that only some people have the capability to be respectful.

All these debates mean that dignity can accordingly be difficult to translate. Abbott et al (2011), who conducted research in Colombia, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan and Mozambique, write that “among beneficiaries, the concept of dignity was difficult to convey as there was often no direct translation of the term; thus, proxies had to be used such as: sense of self, sense of worth, feelings of esteem, etc. Defining the notion of dignity thus proved to be a major challenge.” Grandi et al (2018) write that “various Arabic words were used to describe *karama*, including *al-eḥteram* (الاحترام), *al-ḥokouk* (الحقوق), *al-sharaf* (الشرف), *al-‘onfwan* (العنفوان), *al-isteklaliyya* (الاستقلالية), *al-fakhr* (الفخر), *al-e‘temad ‘ala al-nafs* (النفس على الاعتماد), *taḥqeeq al-dhat* (الذات تحقيق) and *qeemet al-dhat* (الذات قيمة), which translate as respect, rights, honour, pride with strength, independence, pride, self-reliance, self-realisation and self-worth, respectively”. Translations can also be politically contested; among Rohingya, there is a preference for the Arabic-derived *ijjot* over the technically valid, but Sanskrit-derived (and hence Buddhist-associated) term *maan-shomman* (Mosel & Holloway, 2019).

The medical context provides a side-by-side comparison of different efforts to operationalise the same concepts. The Patient Dignity Inventory is an attempt to measure dignity in palliative medical care. Developed by Chochinov et al (2008) through work in Canadian hospitals, the Patient Dignity Inventory (PDI) has since been adapted and validated in six other countries, providing a valuable source of data on how those countries interpret dignity in medical care. Chochinov et al’s original (Canadian) measure has five main components: symptom distress, existential distress, dependency, peace of mind, and social support. (For further discussion, see the section on measurement later in this literature review). As the table below suggests, fairly similar factors are relevant for dignity in medical care in Italy, Spain, Germany, Czech Republic, Iran and Taiwan. A few differences emerge. For instance,



peace of mind appears only in the Canadian measure. Social support does not appear as a separate category in the German, Iranian or Taiwanese measures. Life purpose or meaning appear only in the Czech, Taiwanese, and German measures, and not in the Iranian, Spanish or Canadian measures. Dependency, autonomy or independence appears consistently throughout. The Italian measure seems to be an anomaly, since it yielded only a single-factor model, without separable components of dignity. Although studies cited above suggest that there may be distinctive Chinese or Arabic conceptions of dignity, in these medical measures, we do not observe sharp differences between the Western or European countries on the one hand, and Iran and Taiwan on the other hand. It may be that this is because all the measures are adapted from the same Canadian starting point, or because there is greater global homogeneity in views of dignity within medical care than there is in other fields.

Country	Paper	Factors
Canada	Chochinov et al, 2008	Symptom distress, existential distress, dependency, peace of mind, social support
Italy	Ripamonti et al, 2012	One factor: 'dignity'
Spain	Rullan et al, 2015	Psychological and existential distress, physical symptoms and dependency, social support
Germany	Sautier et al, 2014	Loss of sense of worth and meaning, anxiety and uncertainty, physical symptom distress and body image, loss of autonomy
Czech Republic	Kisvetrová et al, 2018	Loss of purpose of life; loss of autonomy; loss of confidence; and loss of social support (1 item dropped: 'Not feeling supported by my healthcare providers')
Iran	Abbaszadeh et al, 2015	Loss of human dignity, emotional distress and uncertainty, changes in ability and mental image, and loss of independence
Taiwan	Li et al, 2018	Existential distress, loss of support and sense of meaning, symptom distress, and loss of autonomy

Four separate measures have also been developed to examine dignity during childbirth: two measures in Tanzania and two in Pakistan. All four have been developed based on a model suggested by Bowser & Hill (2010). Though there are minor differences in naming conventions, all use the same basic categories, with the partial exception of Kruk et al (2018), which explicitly includes inappropriate demands for payment. As for the Patient Dignity Inventory, in these quantitative studies in the medical field, there is considerable implied similarity in the main factors that constitute across cultures - perhaps because of the similarities of the medical context across cultures, or perhaps because they are all derived from the same theoretical model.



Country	Paper	Factors
Draws on literature from 18 countries	Bowser & Hill, 2010	Physical abuse, non-consented care, non-confidential care, non-dignified care, discrimination, abandonment of care, detention in facilities
Pakistan	Hameed & Avan, 2018	Physical abuse, verbal abuse, right to information, non-consented care, non-confidential care, discrimination and abandonment of care
	Azhar et al, 2018	Non-consented care, right to information, non-confidential care, non-dignified care, abandonment of care, physical abuse, discriminatory care, detention in facility
Tanzania	Kruk et al, 2018	Non-confidential care, non-dignified care, neglect, non-consented care, physical abuse and inappropriate demands for payment
	Sando et al, 2016	Physical abuse, non-dignified care, non-consented care, non-confidential care, lack of privacy, abandonment, detention

A similar side-by-side comparison can be undertaken by looking at the ways dignity has been interpreted in different legal systems around the world. In French law, dignity has been embraced only spasmodically; most famously, to prevent a ‘dwarf tossing’ event, implying a conservative idea of dignity as preventing demeaning treatment of bodies (Hennette-Vauchez; Düwell et al, 2014). In German law, dignity has had a more central place, as the supreme principle in the Basic Law; for German legal scholars, dignity is usually intended as something truly inviolable that can never be weighed against other consequences, as evidenced in a famous case that banned shooting down hijacked airliners even if it would prevent a higher number of casualties. Though originally intended as a way to prevent the worst totalitarian excesses, dignity in German law has come to be seen as applying to all aspects of life (Dreier; Düwell et al, 2014). It has been widely used in US law - usually invoked rhetorically to bolster appeals to liberty, equality, and due process that have a firmer textual basis in US legislation, as well as being frequently related to cases of bioethics (Snead; Düwell et al, 2014). In South American legal orders, dignity has been much used as an “inspirational norm”, but often with a very loose understanding of the concept, such that its normative content has been weakened (Marques & Lixinski; Düwell et al, 2014). In South Africa, dignity is a legal principle with at least as much importance as it holds in the German system. It has been used in a mostly Kantian tradition, though the courts have held that human dignity may be limited for some reasons, and there is debate about whether dignity merely grounds constitutional rights, or should guide decisions beyond those rights (Fagan; Düwell et al, 2014). In the Organization of Islamic Cooperation’s 1990 Cairo Declaration on Human Rights, dignity is not the foundation of rights, as it had been in the UDHR, but another value, subject to Islamic jurisprudence. It has been taken to embrace a model of dignity-as-rank, rather than egalitarian moralized dignity, with enhanced dignity open to men, Muslims, and prophets (Mayer; Düwell et al, 2014). In Chinese law, dignity is extensively mentioned, often alongside familiar language of human rights. Given that in practice Chinese law often endorses grave violations against dignity as defined in Western



terms, it is difficult to ascertain whether dignity in Chinese law should primarily be seen as a separate concept (in line with the Chinese philosophical ideas discussed above), or as a hypocritical gap between legal principles and actual behaviour (Keller; Düwell et al, 2014). In Japan's legal culture, dignity is much discussed, with implications for an increasing respect for individual autonomy in a historically conformist culture, as well as for pacifism. Meanwhile, private contracts are not particularly subject to ideas of dignity, and disrespectful treatment has often been tolerated when it is notionally consensually entered into (Matsui; Düwell et al, 2014). In India, dignity sits alongside justice, liberty, and equality as a fundamental legal value. Legal understandings of dignity there have been progressively expanded by decades of activism, increasingly removing it from its former strictures of social morality and state paternalism. Dignity in Indian jurisprudence has increasingly come to be a response to suffering, in which the proper remedy is to increase autonomy (Baxi; Düwell et al, 2014). Finally, in Kenyan law, dignity is one of the values that underlie an open and democratic society, and each person has dignity that must be respected and protected. It also employs a dignity-as-rank concept, discussing the dignity of various offices of state (Ebert & Oduour, 2012).

These brief summaries naturally cannot fully capture the complex role that dignity plays in constitutions, common law, myriad individual judgments, and the rhetorical appeals of legal actors. However, the flavour of them continues to show that place matters, and might extend our investigation of popular concepts of dignity above.

Lalljee et al (2008) examine unconditional respect for persons across several cultures. They used an unadapted version of the UK-developed measure of Respect for Persons in Dubai, Kolkata and Northern Ireland. They make no mention of translation, so I infer that they conducted all three studies using the same English-language questionnaire. In Dubai, the measure yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .74; in Kolkata of .66; and in Northern Ireland of .79. In developing the questionnaire in England, they administered it to 10 samples, yielding a median alpha coefficient of .75, and a range of .62 - .85 (Lalljee et al, 2007). Since the alphas in Dubai, Kolkata and Northern Ireland are all in the middle of that English range, it seems that conceptions of respect for persons do not differ significantly between England, UAE, India and Northern Ireland, at least when examined through this research method.

2.2.3 Sources of variation other than place

We might imagine that there are other sources of variation than by nation or language. This section discusses possible cleavages by gender, age, individualism-collectivism, Global North-Global South, popular vs philosophical ideas, and by research method.

Mosel & Holloway (2019) find little evidence in their case studies, or in the wider literature, of variation by gender or by age. Grandi et al (2018) and Holloway and Fan (2018) each find only limited and inconsistent variation by age and gender. Angel has suggested (in Holloway, 2019) that in Colombia, women focus on practical aspects of self-support, while men are more likely to define dignity as social purpose and status, but there is not much convincing evidence that this is a sharp divide across contexts. Respondents from both Afghanistan and Rohingya in Bangladesh discussed the ability to observe purdah rules as an important aspect of dignity (Mosel & Holloway, 2019).



There is a case to be made that one major cleavage is by whether dignity is conceptualised as individual or collective. Borrowing from Durkheim, Gesa Lindemann makes a sociological case that individual dignity is an assumption that is only required when societies require individuals to occupy multiple different functions requiring different moral codes to be navigated, and when those functions cannot themselves serve as all-encompassing identities. She elucidates three possibilities: a society in which individual identity is wholly swallowed by a clan or functional identity, giving rise to a collectivist view of dignity; a society in which individual identity is wholly swallowed by social caste, giving rise to dignity-as-rank; and a society in which individuals move from one function to another, requiring a universal, individual ascription of dignity (Lindemann; Düwell et al, 2014). Mattson & Clark (2011) have offered a theoretical version of the individualism-collectivism, and Mosel & Holloway (2019) suggest it is a major source of variation among their cases. Micha Werner has explored this in Western countries (in Düwell et al, 2014). That topic is also central to the argument that there is a distinctive Southern African idea of dignity.

Another cleavage may be between the Global North and the Global South. Oyewole (in Oyewole et al, 2018) asserts that a proper understanding of dignity is only possible by including voices from the Global South. Mosel & Holloway (2019) find that humanitarians (which we tentatively take to hold views associated with the Global North) have concepts of dignity that sometimes overlap with, and sometimes diverge from, local ideas of dignity. Humanitarians (who may be regarded as being a distinct community of practice; Fechter & Hindman, 2011, Autesserre, 2014) tend to talk about dignity in three main ways: as a matter of rights and protection; respect and communication; and agency and independence. Where the need is very acute, they also talk about dignity as a matter of providing for basic needs (Mosel & Holloway, 2019). In these qualitative case studies, whether humanitarian and local ideas of dignity overlapped did not seem to be a particularly strong predictor of whether the response was felt to be respectful (Mosel & Holloway, 2019). Indeed, respondents mostly could not distinguish between local and international NGOs, and generally did not feel that localism was an important factor in whether they were respectful. To the extent that they could be distinguished, local organisations were sometimes described as being more sensitive to local practices, including religious festivals, but also more susceptible to favoritism and bias, and more corrupt, while INGOs were considered to be more distant, overpaid, sometimes an irritating 'parade of vests', but also fairer (Mosel & Holloway, 2019). It is worth noting also that 'local' staff often meant those from the host community, not people recruited from the displaced community they were trying to serve.

Different methods also tend to yield different ideas of dignity. Quantitative studies have tended to suggest a degree of consistency in global conceptions of dignity: India, UAE, Northern Ireland and England share similar ideas of Respect for Persons (Lalljee et al, 2008). In medical measurement efforts, Italy, Spain, Germany, Czech Republic, Iran and Taiwan share at least somewhat similar conceptions of dignity in medicine (Chochinov et al, 2008, and succeeding papers); so too do Tanzania and Pakistan. Yet qualitative studies have tended to highlight variation, with distinctive ideas of dignity and respect appearing among Rohingya, Syrian, Mexican, Chinese, Filipino, South Sudanese, Afghan, Colombian and Southern African cultures and languages - albeit with similarities emerging too.



There are overlaps, but no clear continuity between the indigenous American ideas of dignity (Pharo; Düwell et al, 2014), and the ideas in Colombia described by, for instance Angel (in Holloway, 2019). Similarly, there is no simple path from the Islamic ideas described by Miklós Maróth (in Düwell et al, 2014), and those expressed by contemporary Syrians (Grandi et al, 2018). Modern Western philosophers use dignity differently to the general public (Debes, 2017). This might testify to the different results offered by different research methods, to the way in which the idea of dignity has evolved over time (especially when interrupted by colonialism), or to enduring differences between philosophical and popular uses of the term.

2.3 Criticisms of dignity

A number of thinkers argue that dignity is not a useful concept. Bagaric & Allan (2006) call it “vacuous”. Macklin (2003) calls it “useless”. The main criticism of dignity is that it is too vague, or too widely applied. Ronald Dworkin (2011) wrote that “the idea of dignity has been stained by overuse and misuse”. Mattson & Clark (2011) hold that the concept “is in such disarray that it does not provide even a minimally stable frame for global discourse and action”. They write that “Dignity is variously viewed as an antecedent, a consequence, a value, a principle, and an experience, from philosophical, legal, pragmatic, psychological, behavioral, and cultural perspectives” (Mattson & Clark, 2011). There is no question that the idea of dignity has been extremely widely applied, as the preceding sections of this review have shown. No concept could usefully mean *all* of the things that dignity has been suggested to mean. Nonetheless, I contest that it is possible to arrive at a useful definition of dignity, which is both recognisable to many parties and which meets the tests of conceptual ‘goodness’ (Gerring, 1999).

2.4 Definitional conclusions

The Debesian moralized account of dignity is most productive for our uses. It offers a metaphysical grounding for this project - ‘we all have dignity’, and an immediate consequence - ‘therefore we ought to show one another recognition respect’. It also provides a second consequence - where this respect is not given, people have a right to claim it. In tying ourselves to one tradition, we provide clarity, and respond to the criticisms above that dignity fails in part because it is insufficiently defined.

Debes also offers a flexibility which allows us to draw together many of the other approaches - including non-Western ones. Debes does not offer a detailed account of what constitutes recognition respect. We have seen that traditions and experiences of respect vary by place, and perhaps by gender, age, individualism-collectivism, Global North-Global South and by research method. In articulating respect, we can follow Waldron’s approach, and trace the actual usage of dignity, preserving the subjectivity of the person we are asking. Perhaps, as Kateb argues, we will often hear about a link to environmental stewardship. Or perhaps we will hear often - as Molefe argues - that relationships to others are essential. In maternity wards, it seems perfectly plausible that we will hear some of the ideas offered by Hameed & Avan, Azhar et al, Kruk et al, and Sando et al - and though they differ, they may all be right,



for the contexts they studied. The same goes for the students of medical care described above. It seems likely we will find common concerns - representation, agency and equality seem to recur often in different approaches - but at the heart of our work can be a simple question: did this person *feel* respected.

To approach this in Gerring's (1999) terms, the concepts of dignity and respect as outlined with Debes are fairly familiar, clearly resonate with many fields, since they have been widely used, offer parsimony in the brevity of their definition, and have a metaphysical coherence. They are undoubtedly hard to differentiate from other competing interpretations of dignity, so care must be taken. Since they allow us to link together many approaches, they have what Gerring terms depth, and their immediate implications for how we study it means Debes' approach offers both theoretical and field utility.

Mattson & Clark (2011) use the concept of sufficiency to unfold an elegant summary of the aim of my project: to develop "a concept of dignity that allowed for broad participation and contextual sensitivity in application, yet was specific enough, transcending local contexts, to allow for a productive global conversation." That in turn implies that some fusion of qualitative and quantitative methods is essential to the resolution of these research questions, a point which will be taken up in future work.

3. Measurement of respect

"You're counting the wrong things. You're not counting dignity of people. You're counting exploited people." – Winnie Byanyima (Oxfam International, 2019)

There have been many initiatives to expand the range of things that we discuss and measure as social aims. All of these begin from the starting point that we miss something essential about human flourishing when we attempt only to increase wealth or health, or only to meet 'basic' needs. Some of the most prominent of these lines of research are capabilities, desire satisfaction, and happiness (see for instance, Alkire, 2015; Hills & Argyle, 2002).

3.1 Measurement in international development

So far there have been only a handful of attempts to measure respectfulness in international development. Knight et al (2018) write that "There is broad agreement about the critical importance of dignity in development but participants concede that dignity is very difficult to measure...Nevertheless they recognize the need to measure it because 'what gets measured gets done'."

Two academic studies explicitly to do this have been identified. The first is Shapiro (2019), a working paper studying the value of incorporating recipient preferences in the effectiveness of different aid programs. This contains a weighted, standardized index of survey questions (some suggested by the author) on autonomy, dignity, and trust. The list of questions is detailed in the accompanying Table 5. Shapiro finds "no appreciable impact of incorporating respondent preferences in aid allocation. There is no discernible relationship between



whether a recipient receives their preferred intervention (a program or cash) and components of well-being including consumption, food security, assets, psychological well-being and feelings of autonomy.” He does however find that “cash transfers increase feelings of autonomy and produce more favorable views of the implementing organization than non-cash interventions.”

Table 5: Autonomy, dignity, trust index (Shapiro, 2019)
(a) “I feel that I am autonomous - I make the important decisions in my life for myself”* (1-4 scale)
(b) “Other people and organizations enable me to live with dignity”* (1-4 scale)
(c) “NGOs and organizations that try to lift people from poverty trust the people they seek to help”* (1-4 scale)
(d) “I would rather have little money and make my own decisions than have more money and let others make my decisions” (1-4 scale)
(e) “The organization and people from whom I received the aid treated me as an equal” (1-4 scale)
(f) “The organization and people from whom I received the aid treated me with contempt” (1-4 scale)
(g) “The organization and people from whom I received the aid behaved arrogantly” (1-4 scale)
(h) “The aid I received was tailored for my benefit and to solve my problems” (1-4 scale)
(i) “The organization providing the aid treated me as an individual, not just another one of the masses” (1-4 scale)
(j) “Did anyone from the organization from whom you received the aid ridicule you?” (0-1)
(k) “Did you feel that you could ask the person who gave you the aid for what you needed, and make demands upon them?” (0-1)
(l) “Did the organization and people from whom you received the aid do anything to reduce your sense that you could control your own life?” (0-1)
(m) “Did the organization and people from whom you received the aid try to persuade you to make a particular decision?” (0-1)
(n) “Did the organization and people from whom you received the aid do anything to help you feel in control of your life?” (0-1)

The second attempt to directly measure dignity in international development is that by Pekka Himanen (2014). He sites this work as an attempt to advance on current measures of human development, as well as measures of happiness, by incorporating items such as the advance of information and ecological sustainability. This ‘dignity index’ differs from the others discussed in this section, in that it does not attempt to measure individual perceptions, but rather to measure an entire country’s progress towards sustainable development. It does so by folding a wide range of existing indexes into its three overall categories of informational, human and cultural development. Though many of its philosophical foundations are similar to other measures described in this section, it ends up measuring an array of quite different things, compared to the more limited measures of respectfulness offered by Shapiro (2019) or Lalljee et al (2007). Each continuous measure is translated into an ordinal one (from very high to very low). Himanen is careful to note that he regards this index as preliminary and illustrative, rather than as a final measure.



Table 6: Dignity Index (Himanen, 2014)

Category	Sub-category	Measure
Informational development	a) Economy (Economic Development)	GDP per capita (purchasing power parity)
		GDP growth (annual real growth average)
		Productivity (output per input working hour)
	b) Innovation (Innovation Development)	Competitiveness index (the World Economic Forum measure)
		Productivity growth (percentage)
		Receipts of royalties and license fees (per capita in USD)
	c) Technology (Technological Development)	Internet users (percentage of population)
		Research and development investment (percentage of GDP)
		Patents per capita (per million)
Human development	a) Health (Health Development)	Physical health: life expectancy (at birth in years)
		Health gender equality: maternal mortality rate (per 100,000)
		Psychological health: happiness (life satisfaction)
	b) Education (Educational Development)	Quantity of education: expected years of education (years of schooling)
		Quality of education: student performance (OECD PISA score for secondary level students)
		University level: scientific publications (citations Hirsch index)
	c) Social (Social Development)	Income inclusion: income inequality (Atkinson index)
		Health inclusion: social health differences (life expectancy inequality)
		Social belonging (youth unemployment)
Cultural development	a) Life (Culture of Life)	Natural life: sustainability by ecological footprint (CO2 emissions)
		Physical life: peace (Global Peace Index)
		Social life: trust (trust of other people in society)
	b) Freedom (Culture of Creativity)	Autonomy: basic freedom of expression (Freedom House)
		Creativity: entrepreneurialism (GEM start-up entrepreneurship percentage)
		Openness: to others (percentage of foreign-born population)
	c) Justice (Culture of Caring)	Basic justice: rule of law (Freedom House)
		Gender justice: equality (representation of women in parliament)
		Global justice: foreign aid (percentage of GDP)

Three further non-peer reviewed attempts to measure respectfulness, respectedness or dignity in international development have been identified. The most comprehensive is by AfroBarometer (Bratton et al, 2019). Their study covers 34 African countries, with 45,823 interviews conducted from September 2016-September 2018. They find that 19% say treatment is not at all respectful, 24% that it is a little bit respectful, 29% that it is somewhat respectful and 23% that it is a lot respectful. They also find no significant association between assessments of respectfulness and assessments of state performance. The least



respectful public officials were in Cameroon, Gabon, Mali, Malawi, South Africa and Togo. The most respectful were in: Cabo Verde, Mauritius, São Tomé and Príncipe, Madagascar and Tanzania.

The second study (again, with a question suggested by the author) was conducted by the NGO Twaweza in a poll of 1,680 Kenyans. They found that 26% of Kenyans say no, their leaders do not put in enough effort into being respectful towards them, 33% of Kenyans say yes, their leaders do put enough effort into being respectful towards them, with 35% answering 'somewhat'. (Sauti za Wananchi, 2018).

Finally, Integrity Action's 'SindhupalCheck' programme monitors post-earthquake house reconstruction in Nepal. They found that 98% of those involved felt respected throughout the process (Integrity Action, accessed 6 December 2018), though they note a concern that respondents may not have believed that the community monitors who conducted the survey were fully independent and social desirability bias may therefore be at play (author's personal communication).

The specific questions used in these attempts at measurement are displayed in Table 7 below. In each case, these are single-item direct measures of respectfulness, which may have been understood in a range of ways, which have received at most limited piloting, and which may not capture the full range of ideas that go to make up respectfulness.

Table 7: Other international development measures
AfroBarometer: "In general, when dealing with public officials, how much do you feel that they treat you with respect?"
Twaweza: "In your opinion, do leaders in your community put enough effort into being respectful towards the people?"
Integrity Action: "I have felt respected throughout this process" (1-5)

Finally, in the run-up to the World Humanitarian Summit, an attempt was made by the WHS Regional Steering Group for the MENA region to measure the "average degree to which affected people feel that they and their community are treated with respect and dignity by aid groups (on a 10-point scale where 10=high and 1=low)" (WHS, 2015). 327 respondents were drawn from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen. Detailed results are not available, but scores ranged from 5.6/10 among male respondents from Palestine to just 2/10 among women in Lebanon.

3.2 Measurement in social psychology

Perhaps the most comprehensive attempt to offer quantitative measurement of respectfulness is that by Mansur Lalljee and co-authors (2007). Their approach is rooted in social psychology, rather than international development studies, and specifically looks at whether an individual is inclined to show respect for another person. In this regard, they attempt something slightly different from this project, which focuses its measurement on the perceptions and expectations of the recipient. However, the project - both the 2007 paper and its succeeding papers (Lalljee et al, 2009; Laham et al, 2010a; Laham et al, 2010b;



Lalljee et al, 2013) - represents the most sustained attempt to measure respectfulness, and the only one which also contains a substantive attempt to explicitly root those measures in philosophical theory.

Lalljee et al (2007) note that other attempts have been made in psychology to examine and measure respect (Tyler & Smith, 1999), but these have generally not focused on unconditional respect for persons rooted in dignity, and have ranged across definitions including politeness (Tyler & Smith, 1999), non-arbitrariness (Simon & Stürmer, 2003),¹¹ 'achieved respect' (or what this piece calls merit-based dignity) (Smith & Tyler, 1997), and simple 'liking' (DeCremer, 2002; Ellemers et al., 2004; Smith & Tyler, 1997). That said, Lalljee et al (2007) conclude that "taken together their studies provide evidence for the positive consequences of being treated in ways which may broadly be called respectful."

Over 10 studies with >900 participants across different countries, Lalljee et al conclude that their scale has a median alpha of .75. They demonstrate that unconditional respect for persons is distinct from other concepts. It overlaps only partially with agreeableness, social dominance orientation, and is more weakly correlated with right wing authoritarianism, and empathy (Lalljee et al, 2007). They demonstrate (along with Chopra, 2006) that their respect for persons index is significantly correlated with self-reported respectful and disrespectful actions, even when controlling for these other related concepts.

1. Being considerate of other people's wishes is a vital part of social relationships.
2. Someone who has committed an awful crime no longer has the right to be treated decently. (reverse coded)
3. I look down upon the weaknesses and inadequacies of other people. (reverse coded)
4. People who are stupid deserve our contempt. (reverse coded)
5. I don't think there is any need to be tolerant of people I dislike. (reverse coded)
6. Showing up a person's shortcomings in front of others is necessary if they are not up to the mark. (reverse coded)
7. It is sometimes necessary to inflict serious pain when interrogating someone who is suspected of having committed a terrible crime. (reverse coded)
8. Treating all people with respect is a vital part of our relationships with others.
9. I try to be understanding towards people even if I do not like them.
10. I find it hard to respect people who have very different views from my own. (reverse coded)
11. It is really okay to be impatient with people I do not like. (reverse coded)
12. Because we are all human, everyone should be treated with respect.

Lalljee and co-authors have used this measure in several succeeding papers. They show that unconditional respect for persons predicts action tendencies in the United Arab Emirates, in India, and in Northern Ireland (Lalljee et al, 2009). They further show that those with high respect for persons were less negative to those who trespassed against

¹¹ A single-item measure of whether participants felt they had been treated respectfully was used by Simon & Stürmer (2003), but they do not provide the wording of the question.



community norms, but equally angry towards those who violated the autonomy of individuals (Laham et al, 2010a). The next study (Laham et al, 2010b) shows that the association between respect for persons remains even as intergroup conflict increases. In a practical application of these ideas, Voltmer & Lalljee (2007) show that respect for persons among political actors is related to levels of education and to communication across party lines, while Lalljee et al (2013) show that for both UK Labour and Conservative voters, respect predicts voting behaviour, party political activity, satisfaction with democracy, belief that voting makes a difference, and a lack of political apathy. (In the 2013 study, they use a single item to measure political respectfulness: “It is important to treat supporters of parties I oppose with respect.”)

A somewhat similar non-academic attempt was made by Knight et al (2018), this time applied to organisations instead of individuals. They asked 61 NGOs to score their own mission, methods and values in terms of the extent to which they are concerned with dignity. Like Laljee, this is a self-evaluation of respectfulness, although based on a more limited evidentiary base.

Table 9: PSJP Measure (Knight et al, 2018)
Mission: Being a catalyst so that people can make the changes in their societies that they want
Mission: Encouraging the idea that people are competent and can do things for themselves
Mission: Providing an enabling environment where people can flourish
Methods: Helping people participate in society so that they can advocate for a better life for themselves and their families
Values: We ensure that all our actions enable the autonomy of other people so that they can make their own decisions
Values: We provide support ‘from below’ so that people who are helped have the power to use the resources provided as they see fit

3.3 Measurement in medicine

The other principal area in which attempts have been made to measure dignity and respectfulness is in medicine. Dignity is of course widely discussed in the healthcare field, especially in relation to end of life care and death (see for instance Quill, 1991, and Chochinov, 2006). There have been attempts to measure respectfulness in palliative care, respectfulness in childbirth, and respectfulness as it relates to stress.

3.3.1 Measurement in palliative care

Of the attempts to measure respectfulness in palliative care, the most prominent is the Patient Dignity Inventory (Chochinov et al, 2008), which has since been validated for use across many countries (Li et al, 2018, Kisvetrová et al, 2018, Abbaszadeh et al, 2015, Rullan et al, 2015, Sautier et al, 2014, Ripamonti et al, 2012). The other principal attempt is ICU-RESPECT (Geller et al, 2016).

Informed by the Model of Dignity in the Terminally Ill (Chochinov et al, 2002), Chochinov et al (2008) measure 25 items related to “dignity-related distress among patients nearing the



end of life”, which they group through factor analysis into five categories: Symptom Distress, Existential Distress, Dependency, Peace of Mind, and Social Support. Among 253 US, Canadian and Australian patients, mainly older and mainly suffering from cancer, they report a Cronbach’s coefficient alpha for the PDI was 0.93; the test–retest reliability was $r = 0.85$. Meanwhile, Geller et al administered 57 questionnaires in 5 intensive care units in the John Hopkins hospital network. From an initial bank of 44 questions, they identified a 10-item index with an alpha of .85. A later validation with 142 respondents returned an alpha of .9 (Geller et al, 2018).

The two indexes are presented in the comparison table below. Chochinov et al (2008) cover a broad range of topics, including things like direct measures of respectfulness, and social and medical measures of autonomy. They also cover topics that are not often discussed by philosophers of dignity, such as depression, anxiety and the ability to think clearly. Geller et al (2016)’s measure similarly draws together ideas of recognition, privacy, politeness and comfort in a single index.

Patient Dignity Inventory (Chochinov et al, 2008)	ICU-RESPECT (Geller et al, 2016)
1. Not being able to carry out tasks associated with daily living (e.g. washing myself, getting dressed)	Introductions: Members of the care team introduced themselves when they first met [me/my loved one]
2. Not being able to attend to my bodily functions independently (e.g. needing assistance with toileting-related activities)	Courtesy: Members of the care team treated [me/my loved one] with courtesy
3. Experiencing physically distressing symptoms (such as pain, shortness of breath, nausea)	Understanding: Members of the care team made an effort to understand what matters to [me/my loved one] most
4. Feeling that how I look to others has changed significantly	Responsiveness: Members of the care team were attentive to [my/my loved one’s] requests
5. Feeling depressed	Engagement: [I/My loved one] felt that the care team really listened to [me/him or her]
6. Feeling anxious	Selfhood: Members of the care team made efforts to know [me/my loved one] as a unique individual
7. Feeling uncertain about my illness and treatment	Privacy: Members of the care team kept [my/my loved one’s] body covered as best they could.
8. Worrying about my future	Equal: Members of the care team treated [me/my loved one] as their equal.
9. Not being able to think clearly	Comfort: Members of the care team did everything they could to manage [my/my loved one’s] pain.
10. Not being able to continue with my usual routines	Treated as Human Being: Members of the care team treated [me/ my loved one] the way they would like to be treated if they were the patient
11. Feeling like I am no longer who I was	
12. Not feeling worthwhile or valued	



13. Not being able to carry out important roles (e.g. spouse, parent)	
14. Feeling like life no longer has meaning or purpose	
15. Feeling that I have not made a meaningful and lasting contribution during my lifetime	
16. Feeling I have 'unfinished business' (e.g. things left unsaid or incomplete)	
17. Concern that my spiritual life is not meaningful	
18. Feeling that I am a burden to others	
19. Feeling that I don't have control over my life	
20. Feeling that my illness and care needs have reduced my privacy	
21. Not feeling supported by my community of friends and family	
22. Not feeling supported by my health care providers	
23. Feeling like I am no longer able to mentally 'fight' the challenges of my illness	
24. Not being able to accept the way things are	
25. Not being treated with respect or understanding by others	

3.3.2 Measurement in maternal health

Several measures of respectfulness in childbirth were identified. Two papers from Pakistan - Hameed & Avan (2018) and Azhar et al (2018) - each cite multiple investigations into dignity and respectfulness in relation to childbirth in East Africa and South Asia. Citing the World Health Organisation's pronouncement that "every woman has the right to the highest attainable standard of health, which includes the right to dignified, respectful health care", Hameed & Avan describe a range of severe consequences associated with disrespect during childbirth, including pain and suffering, a range of psychological problems, and the dangers of avoiding future healthcare. Interviewing 1,334 Pakistani women, they find that 97% experienced at least some disrespectful behaviour. Meanwhile, Azhar et al found in a survey of 360 women that 99.7% had experienced some behaviour. The Hameed & Avan measure uses 24 indicators grouped in seven categories: physical abuse, verbal abuse, right to information, non-consented care, non-confidential care, discrimination and abandonment of care. Azhar et al use 25 indicators in similar but not identical categories, as displayed in the comparison table below. Though there are clear similarities, what is most striking is the differences in selection, phrasing and grouping, between the two measures, given that they were developed at the same time to examine the same interaction in the same country.



Table 11: Respectfulness in Childbirth Measures from Pakistan
(All sic)

Categories	Women's experiences of mistreatment during childbirth (Hameed & Avan, 2018)	Disrespect and abuse during childbirth (Azhar et al, 2018)
Non-consented care	Perform procedure without consent	Provider did not introduce herself
	Didn't explain about the procedure to be used for childbirth	Provider did not encourage to ask questions
	Didn't offer choices regarding childbirth	Provider didn't responded politely, truthfully and promptly
	Coercion to undergo caesarian section	Provider didn't explained procedure and explained expectations
	--	Provider didn't give the periodic updates on status and progress
	--	Provider didn't allow to move during delivery
	--	Provider didn't allow to assume position of choice
	--	Provider didn't obtain consent prior to procedure
Right to information	Didn't share results/diagnosis of medical reports	<i>Not measured</i>
	Didn't encourage to ask questions	
	Didn't regularly share progress of childbirth	
Non-confidential care	Didn't maintain privacy during examination	Curtains and physical barriers were not used
	Didn't cover woman while taking to and from birthing area	Drape or body covering was not used
	Didn't assure woman about confidentiality of information	The number of staff members around were not logical
	Women-provider conversation overheard by others (stranger, other patients, or non-medical staff)	--
Verbal abuse (in Azhar et al, 'non-dignified care')	Pass insulting or degrading comments	Provider didn't speak politely
	Harsh tone or shouting	Provider made insults, threats, etc
	Abusive language	Provider used abusive language
	Threaten for poor outcomes	--
Abandonment of care	Abandon women during childbirth or afterwards	Provider didn't encourage to call if needed
	Ignore while asking for pain relief/medication	Provider made patient feel alone or unattended
	Delay birthing after deciding for operative procedure	Provider didn't come quickly when needed



Physical abuse	Beating	Provider used physical force, slapped or hit the woman
	Slapping	Woman was physically restrained
	Push badly to change position	Baby was separated without medical indication
	Pinch irritably	Didn't receive comfort, pain relief as necessary
	--	Provider didn't demonstrated in culturally appropriate way
Discrimination (in Azhar et al, 'discriminatory care')	Denial of service due to ethnicity	Provider used language difficult to understand
	Denial of service due to lack of money	Provider showed disrespect based on specific attribute
Detention in facility	<i>Not measured</i>	Detention in facility

Meanwhile, two more developed measures of disrespect in childbirth have been identified from Tanzania. Kruk et al, in another measurement effort published in 2018, used a 14-item Disrespect and Abuse scale to survey 1779 women in Northeast Tanzania. They used six categories, adapted for the local context from the theoretical outline by Bowser & Hill (2010): non-confidential care, non-dignified care, neglect, non-consented care, physical abuse and inappropriate demands for payment. In at-health centre interviews, 19% reported some disrespect and abuse, rising to 28% in the 593 follow-up interviews several weeks later.

Table 12: Disrespect and Abuse scale (Kruk et al, 2018)
Body seen by others
Shouting/scolding
Request or suggestion for bribes or informal payments for better care
Threatening to withhold treatment
Threatening comments or negative or discouraging comments
Ignoring or abandoning patient when in need
Non-consent for tubal ligation
Non-consent for hysterectomy
Non-consent for Caesarean section
Hitting, slapping, pushing, pinching or otherwise beating the patient
Sexual harassment
Rape
Detention due to failure to pay

Taking a similar approach, Sando et al (2016) interviewed 1914 women, and conducted 64 follow-up interviews and 197 observations. While at the healthcare centre, 15% of women reported disrespect and abuse. This rose dramatically among the small number of follow-up interviews, suggesting that context and immediate power dynamics may matter a great deal in measurement; 3 weeks after birth, 70% of the 64 women reported such maltreatment.



Table 13: Sando et al, 2016

Category of disrespect and abuse	Sub-components measured
Physical abuse	Kicked, pinched, slapped, episiotomy without anesthesia, pushed, raped, other
Non-dignified care	Shouted at, scolded, threatened to withhold services, laughed at or scorned, other
Non-consented care	Tubal ligation, hysterectomy, abdominal palpation, vaginal examination, episiotomy, other
Non-confidential care	HIV status shown to others, other health information shown to others, HIV status shown to non-health staff, health information discussed with non-health staff, personal issues discussed in earshot of others, other
Lack of privacy	Uncovered during delivery or examination, no screens blocking view during delivery or examination
Abandonment	While in labor, while delivering, while experiencing a complication, after delivery, other
Detention	Any

Though individual items vary, the general measurement approach is similar across the various maternal health measures. Similar topics are covered, and in each case the researchers attempt to define a series of unambiguous, observable experiences, and calculate a score as a simple sum of the number of items experienced.

3.3.3 Measurement and stress

Chilton (2006) combines human rights, capabilities and ecosocial approaches to develop a measure of violations of dignity and relates them to chronic stress as a mechanism through which they affect health outcomes. She defines dignity as a “dynamic sense of worth that is socially and politically mediated.” She suggests discrimination, violence, gender inequality, substandard education and substandard housing as a standard list of violations of dignity. These, she suggests, can lead to high risk behaviour, stress/anxiety and depression, which in turn can lead to further physical health challenges. In this respect, she examines the *embodiment* of dignity violations.

3.4 Measurement conclusions

In development studies, there have been fewer attempts at measurement. The one academic paper provides a valuable bank of questions, but little link to theory or definitions. Attempts in medicine are more developed, with several measures emanating from theoretical discussion. Yet even among these, there is significant variation in topics covered even when measuring identical interactions in similar contexts. Among the medical indexes, only the Patient Dignity Inventory (Chochinov et al, 2008) has been extensively validated. The most comprehensive attempt to measure respectfulness is that put forward by Mansur Lalljee and colleagues, which is a developed and well-validated measure rooted in theory and deployed across cultures. This index, developed for use in social psychology, measures



unconditional respect for persons as a trait. It is an important inspiration for this project, which seeks to ask aid recipients whether they felt they were treated respectfully. As yet, all the identified measures have been in the form of surveys, and there has been no attempt to develop incentive compatible measures.

4. Literature conclusions and moving forward

To conclude: dignity is much discussed, and there are strong reasons to believe it should be studied. It is an important concept in international development and aid; it underpins wider ideas of social relations such as egalitarianism and rights; and it is also key to research ethics. There is public support for a more respectful development, and it sits alongside and interacts with many major concepts in international development. There are a whole range of philosophical examinations of dignity, of which the most major are those by Debes and colleagues, Kateb, Waldron, Arendt and Nussbaum. All of these philosophical essays rest on a wider (and sometimes surprising) historical evolution of the concept, but few take into account popular accounts of dignity and how it may vary across cultures. There have been some attempts to develop measures of various kinds, but none in international development that involve a substantive engagement with the philosophical literature.

Drawing on the previous literature review, we can identify five research questions: (1) How is dignity to be defined? (2) How can respectfulness be measured? (3) How does dignity and respect operate? (4) What acts increase perceptions of respectfulness, and what are the consequences of that? (5) How does international development regard dignity, and what actions will increase support for a dignity agenda?

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