Call for contributions

The walk of shame

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A book edited by Dr. Mira Moshe* and Dr. Nicoleta Corbu**

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* Dr. Mira Moshe is a senior lecturer in the Sociology and Anthropology Department and the School of Communications at the Ariel University Center of Samaria. In 1999 she won the Keren Schnitzer Prize for Excellence. In 2000 she won a research grant from the Burda Research Center for Innovative Communications. In 1998 and 2005 she won a research grant from Israel's Second Authority for Television and Radio. In 2007 and 2009 she won a research grant from R & D Center - Samaria & Jordan Rift. Her academic work has mainly focused on the media, politics, culture and society. Her most recently published articles appeared in *Policy Studies*, the *Journal of Language and Politics*, *Television & New Media*, and a chapter under her authorship was included in *Minority Groups: Coercion, Discrimination, Exclusion, Deviance and the Quest for Equality* (Nova Science Publishers).
E-mail: moshe.corbu@gmail.com

** Dr. Nicoleta Corbu is a Senior Lecturer and Vice-Dean for Research at the Faculty of Communications and Public Relations, National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania. She is currently the Executive Director of the Center for Research in Communications. She has published books in the area of theories of communications (*History of communications studies*, 2007), political communications (co-author of *Telepresidents: An inquiry into an election campaign*, 2011) and semiotics of advertising (*Global brands: A cross-cultural perspective*, 2009). Her research interests are currently focused on European identity, the European public sphere and framing analysis.
E-mail: moshe.corbu@gmail.com

Argument

The term "walk of shame" is deeply rooted in the idea that shame is a difficult emotion stemming from a feeling of inferiority or social discomfort, which causes a person to wish to disappear, become invisible, be "swallowed up by the earth". However, sometimes exactly at such a moment of disgrace, individuals are publicly exposed to the full extent of their misery and must walk "the walk of shame" witnessed by family, friends and acquaintances. Shame, considered by some to have genetic origins, is an integral part of social circumstances and settings in accordance with a set of values, patterns of thought and the individual's physiological makeup. Shame is the result of familial, social and media processes. Thus the walk of shame does not take place privately behind closed doors, but on city sidewalks, in the workplace, in newspaper columns and on television and computer screens. It is not surprising, then, to discover that the tremendous power of shame has expropriated it from the individual's control in the private sphere to the public sector, creating a collective punishing mechanism whose goal is to warn against undesirable behavior. Indeed, a person's public humiliation is a form of punishment, a negative sanction leading to disgrace, debasement and mortification. Such an act has a physical dimension as well as a media-based one. The physical damage involves negating a person's degree of freedom. The media-based damage involves widely publicizing the individual's disgrace. In both dimensions this damage creates a social imbalance in which individuals lose their former standing, i.e., their place in the public sphere prior to being subjected to the sanction of shame. Thus the person finds himself/herself in thrall to an external force (whether physical or media-based) whose goal is to further specific interests. It is not surprising, then, that in ancient Greece Zeus dispatched Hermes to apportion to all human beings an equal amount of justice and shame, in order to facilitate their organization into societies and nations. In the thousands of years that have passed since then, people have transformed their sense of morality and shame into a tool with which to repress others and gather ever greater power (as is evident from Michel Foucault's writings on this topic in his book *The history of sexuality*).

However, in recent years we are witness to yet another phenomenon: the disgraced individual's attempt to change "the walk of shame" into the "walk of fame", from an act of humiliation to an act of glorification, from downgrade to upgrade. No longer a shameful crawl through back alleys, we now have a well-planned, carefully

timed and rehearsed parade along the main thoroughfare of popular media. The marcher is transformed from a victim thrown to the lions to entertain the masses into a gladiator fighting for his life, placing his fate in the hands of readers and viewers.

As a result, the blurring of boundaries between the private and public spheres, following the expansion of celebrity culture and the proliferation of reality TV refugees, as well as the phenomenon of politicians chasing television screen time, has become multicultural and international. IT societies, as well as traditional cultures around the globe, are witness to well-known private and public figures, CEOs of financial organizations and companies side by side with high ranking political leaders, MPs and heads of state walking the walk of shame through newspapers headlines, paparazzi shots and of course prime-time television. Past struggles to achieve privacy, most commonly the morning after a night out at a bar, nightclub or party, have been replaced by a mass targeting of the public eye, while the victim simultaneously blames the media, and the public, for contributing to his or her degradation. Hence, this call for papers is targeted at original texts portraying current permutations (both qualitative and quantitative) of the walk of shame. These could include a wide range of multi-dimensional media phenomena focusing on political aspects, national discourse, financial crises, security leaks, sex scandals, embezzlement, treason and other kinds of cultural configurations.

Target Audience

The target audience of this book would include professionals and researchers working in the field of social sciences, encompassing education, political science, information and communications sciences, etc.

Submission procedure

General guidelines: All entries must be written in American English and typed in double-spaced Microsoft Word format (Times New Roman 12 pt. font). Texts in PDF format will not be accepted.

Proposals: Researchers and practitioners are invited to submit a 700-word chapter proposal which clearly outlines the mission and concerns of his/her proposed chapter. Each proposal should address one of the topics mentioned above. Proposals should be sent directly to the editors (moshe.corbu@gmail.com) by January 31st, 2012. A separate cover sheet should be provided stating the name(s), institutional affiliation(s) and e-mail address(es) of the author(s). Authors whose proposals are accepted will be notified by March 15th, 2012.

Completed chapters: These should be submitted on or before June 15th, 2012. They should constitute high-quality original papers of a theoretical or empirical nature that shed light upon and engage with the topic of "The Walk of Shame". The submitted chapters should elaborate on the ideas and topics that were presented in contributors' proposals. Manuscripts should be prepared in strict accordance with the guidelines of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th Edition). They should be a maximum of 9,000 words in length (including references, tables, figures, appendices and endnotes).

Contributors whose articles are accepted for publication will be obliged to sign a document specifying the publisher's terms and conditions, as well as a copyright agreement.

The fact that an abstract is accepted does not guarantee publication of the final manuscript. All chapters submitted will be judged on the basis of a double-blind reviewing process.

Timetable

January 31st, 2012: Deadline for proposal submission
March 31st, 2012: Notification of acceptance
June 30th, 2012: Full chapter submission
September 30th, 2012: Return of review results
October 31st, 2012: Submission of completed chapters