

Title	Human Dignity and Meaning-Making in Spiritual Leadership
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Abstract

The concept of human dignity is widely accepted as a core social construct and expression of human value. While its meaning and validity are disputed in some circles, the acceptance of human dignity is essentially ubiquitous in the social sciences. Despite its ubiquity, human dignity has not been widely explored as an aspect of contemporary leadership theory and research. This paper will provide an introductory framework to the metaphysical, cultural, and theological underpinnings of human dignity and will explore its connections to the field of leadership studies, with attention to Louis Fry's theory of spiritual leadership. (Fry, 2003) Having established a set of preliminary connections between human dignity and spiritual leadership, the paper will explore the role of human dignity as a foundation of and motivation for leader meaning-making. The primary aim of this paper, and the current research of the authors in general, is to advance the theory of spiritual leadership by establishing a philosophical foundation upon the concept of human dignity.

The theory of spiritual leadership rests on a model of intrinsic motivation, intermediate outcomes of spiritual well-being of leaders and followers, and ultimate outcomes measured by the triple bottom-line. There is a distinct "human" thread running through the theory of spiritual leadership that suggests societal flourishing increases when followers and leaders in organizations experience a sense of calling and membership in the workplace that results from doing work that 1) they believe in, 2) is substantially and positively impacted by their efforts, and 3) involves benefits for others. This paper will explore this thread by considering human dignity as an implied, philosophical construct of human value by which leaders engage in their own altruistic meaning-making in the workplace.