



Spiritual development and meaningful work: a Habermasian critique

Shoaib Ul-Haq

To cite this article: Shoaib Ul-Haq (2019): Spiritual development and meaningful work: a Habermasian critique, Human Resource Development International, DOI: [10.1080/13678868.2019.1679570](https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2019.1679570)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2019.1679570>



Published online: 21 Oct 2019.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

ARTICLE



Spiritual development and meaningful work: a Habermasian critique

Shoaib Ul-Haq

Department of Management, Karachi School of Business & Leadership, Karachi, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

A dominant theme of the workplace spirituality discourse in HRD is its transformational nature which enables an organization to imbue work with purpose and meaning. Empirical studies have shown that providing meaningful work to employees enhances several indicators of organizational performance. However, this discourse ignores that such organizational interventions are shaped by capitalist power relations in which the organization is embedded. In this paper, I apply a critical theory perspective drawing from the work of Jurgen Habermas to show that workplace spirituality movement has emerged in response to the loss of meanings inherent in neoliberal capitalism. However, since this movement is operating on a logic of performativity and instrumental rationality, it represents an attempt to re-orient individual subjectivity and the spiritual realm of human experience to serve capitalism.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 25 February 2019
Accepted 8 October 2019

KEYWORDS

Workplace spirituality;
Habermas; colonization of
the lifeworld; capitalism;
meaningful work

Introduction

The search for meaning is central to human existence and living a meaningful life is essential for a healthy human being. People actively seek an experience of existential significance in their lives including their work lives (Aguinis and Glavas 2019; Chalofsky 2003). This has become all the more important in contemporary times as work is now a necessity for most people and its role in the socio-economic order is an important question. Empirical studies have established that meaningful work conditions are strongly linked to organizational commitment, job satisfaction and work engagement (Bailey et al. 2019; Fairlie 2011) as well as reduced alienation (Nair and Vohra 2010). Such results have led to a heightened corporate interest in meaningful work and its relationship to a worthy purpose. For example, Satya Nadella, Microsoft's CEO, aims to create a '100-year old company where people find deep meaning at work' (Nadella, Shaw, and Nichols 2017).

Within the human resource development (HRD) domain, there is lot of emphasis on nurturing an environment that promotes a sense of belonging and purpose. Indeed, one of the values of HRD professionals, as identified by Bates and Chen (2005) include enabling meaningful work. This implies that the guidelines provided by these professionals would help organizations create work with some higher purpose for their employees which can also energize their spirits (Gibb 2011, 88). One of the ways organizations

have attempted to make work meaningful is by introducing spirituality based programmes and interventions which assume that a focus on cultivating the spirit of employees will lead to a meaningful workplace (Ashmos and Duchon 2000; Dirks 2013). From the perspective of mainstream HRD, this Workplace Spirituality (herein referred to as WPS) movement is a welcome phenomenon in that it reinforces the holistic engagement of an increasingly sophisticated and evolved workforce. It is a transformative force impacting qualities of leadership (Thakadipuram 2010), motivation of employees by providing meaningful work (Chalofsky 2003) and facilitation of knowledge and learning at work (Gallagher, Rocco, and Landorf 2007).

Within this discourse, organizations are considered as sites where employees can explore deeper meanings of life through contemplative practices such as yoga, chakra meditation, Qigong exercises etc. These practices are not limited to small and medium organizations but corporate behemoths including Google, IBM, SAP, Intel, Apple, Monsanto and many others have institutionalized some form of these spiritual practices for their employees (Gelles 2015). Similarly, many top leaders, such as Aetna's CEO, Mark Bertolini, believe that such spiritual meditation is essential for managers to develop mental soundness and personal strength (Bertolini 2019).

By contrast, some scholars argue that WPS is a tool for organizational control (Elliott and Turnbull 2005). Contrary to popular belief, it actually serves as a dominating force which is governed by the principle of performativity geared towards generating maximum organizational efficiency (Bailey et al. 2016; Bell and Taylor 2003; Kamoche and Pinnington 2012). In short, they view WPS as 'a potentially repressive project' (Bell and Taylor 2004, 439) to enhance organization's performance (Willmott 2018) instead of employee well-being. However, this critical view of WPS has not been given its due share in HRD literature. This is surprising given the contemporary powerful rhetoric of spirituality as a tool for cultivating conditions of human flourishing and the moral imperative of HRD professionals to focus on genuine human development (Kuchinke 2010).

In this paper, I argue that workplace spirituality cannot be separated from the prevailing power relations in the economic sphere. I unfold a critique of WPS leading to meaningful work based on Habermasian concepts of the 'system', 'lifeworld', the 'colonization of the lifeworld' and 'communicative action'. These concepts would help to discursively deconstruct neoliberal capitalism's claim of a genuine 'spiritual turn' and to show that WPS to deliver meaningfulness is being misappropriated to gain performative dividends instead of making work morally worthy.

I want to point out at the outset, however, that this paper is focused on economic arrangements guided by capitalist logic and market-based reason. We need to recognize that there are diverse and fragmented alternative spaces of economic activity around the world including fair trade markets, cooperatives, alternative currencies, microfinance and many other community-based organizations (see Gibson-Graham 2006). In a global business environment, HRD needs to take into account these alternative socio-economic spaces which also claim to employ spirituality in order to generate meaningful work. This implies that spirituality has the power to transcend the boundaries of capitalism since it focuses on basic deep-rooted human values accepted at a global level. Therefore, this research is geographically and culturally limited to more Western centric capitalist organizations.

The paper is organized as follows. I will first present findings of a systematic literature review of selected HRD journals to establish that a dominant conceptual theme in this field is the link of WPS with meaningful work. I will then turn to Habermasian concepts to form a critical theoretical lens and will then use this lens to explore the WPS discourse in order to question its legitimacy as a tool of meaning. Towards the end of the paper, I will provide some suggestions on how to re-orient our understanding of spirituality.

Systematic review of workplace spirituality in HRD

I conducted a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to select theoretical and empirical studies that have investigated the role of spirituality in an HRD context. An SLR is characterized as a reproducible, scientific and transparent method to organize and examine relevant studies (Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart 2003). Some recent examples of these reviews in the field of HRD include Widmann, Messmann, and Mulder (2016) who explore how team learning can affect innovation capabilities and Nolan and Garavan (2016) who map out the importance of human development in small and medium enterprises.

I began the search process by listing the journals which are broadly associated with HRD research. Based on the recent examples of SLR in this domain, especially Nolan and Garavan (2016), I was able to narrow this list down to 21 journals. I used the terms ‘spirit’, ‘spiritual’ and ‘spirituality’ in order to identify relevant studies in these journals. Table 1 below lists the journals and the frequency of articles in each journal. I then read the abstract and the introduction section of each paper to determine its suitability. After removing those articles which mentioned spirituality in passing without any substantial engagement and also reading the reference section of papers to find out additional literature, I was able to finally narrow down my selection to 33 articles.

In order to structure the review, I adopted a concept-centric approach following Webster and Watson (2002). As I read each article, I identified one or two dominant concepts or themes associated with that article which recurred frequently. A description of these themes is presented in Table 2.

After an exhaustive reading of all the papers, I grouped and presented the key identified concepts/themes in the form of a concept matrix shown below in Table 3. In this manner, the literature review did not just result in a listing of papers but a thematic categorization of studies based on a comprehensive sampling of the landscape of spirituality in HRD.

A simple quantification of frequency with which a particular theme occur in this sample of 33 papers show that within conceptual papers, the dominant theme is to examine the relation between spirituality and meaningful work. In the next section of the paper, I will explore this theme in detail.

Meaningful work

In order to improve the prospects for work which is consistent with human dignity, autonomy and flourishing, HRD scholars have turned to the literature on ‘meaning in life’ to conceptualize meaningful work (Cartwright and Holmes 2006; Chalofsky 2003).

Some scholars treat meaningfulness, at an individual level, by drawing on the work of the famous psychiatrist, Viktor Frankl (see Lips-Wiersma, Wright, and Dik 2016). Frankl believed that the most fundamental human drive is the ‘will to meaning’ (Frankl 1984)

Table 1. List of journals used in the review.

S. No.	Journal Title	Article Count	% of the total	Authors & year of publication
1	Advances in Developing Human Resources	3	9%	Dirkx (2013) Kuchinke (2013) Walker (2009)
2	Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources	0	0	-
3	Career Development International	1	3%	Lips-Wiersma (2002a)
4	Education and Training	0	0	-
5	Employee Relations	2	6%	Pawar (2016) Osman-Gani, Hashim, and Ismail (2013)
6	European Journal of Training and Development	1	3%	Dimitrov (2012)
7	Human Resource Development International	4	12.1%	Thakadipuram (2010) Petchsawang and Duchon (2009) Elliott and Turnbull (2003) Chalofsky (2003)
8	Human Resource Development Quarterly	2	6%	Gallagher, Rocco, and Landorf (2007) Kahnweiler and Otte (1997)
9	Human Resource Development Review	2	6%	Bailey et al. (2019) Quatro (2004)
10	Human Resource Management Journal	0	0	-
11	Human Resource Management Review	1	3%	Bailey et al. (2016)
12	International Journal of Human Resource Management	1	3%	Joelle and Coelho (2019)
13	International Journal of Manpower	1	3%	Klenke (2005)
14	International Journal of Training and Development	0	0	-
15	Journal of Education and Work	0	0	-
16	Journal of Management Development	10	30.3%	Adawiyah and Pramuka (2017) Pardasani et al. (2014) Dsouli, Khan, and Kakabadse Nada (2012) Gümüşay (2012) Dhiman and Marques (2011) Daniel (2010) Malloch (2010) Marques (2006) Kale and Shrivastava (2003) Lips-Wiersma (2002b)
17	Journal of Vocational Education and Training	0	0	-
18	Journal of Workplace Learning	2	6%	Afsar and Badir (2017) Boozer (1998)
19	Learning Organization	2	6%	Rahman et al. (2015) Sorakraikitikul and Siengthai (2014)
20	New Technology, Work and Employment	0	0	-
21	Personnel Review	1	3%	Gotsis and Grimani (2017)
	Total	33		

against the terrifying threat of meaninglessness. He believed the human personality possesses three dimensions including physical, psychological and spiritual. The spiritual dimension is the one in which we encounter meanings and values while work is an important vehicle to generate these meanings. As articulated by Omar Aktouf,

‘the human being is, per definition and necessity, a being whose destiny is meaning, intentions and projects – thus, by nature, a person is involved in his or her being . . . a subject whose whole being is meaning and which has a need of meaning’ (Aktouf 1992, 415).

Table 2. Description of identified themes.

Concepts/ themes	Description	Empirical/ conceptual	Frequency
1	Workplace spirituality as a determinant of organizational level outcomes (such as work engagement, innovative work behaviour, employee well-being etc.)	E	9
2	Workplace spirituality as a source of meaningful work	C	8
3	Scale development to measure spirituality	E	3
4	Spirituality is grounded in religious values	C	6
5	Identification of antecedents of workplace spirituality	E	1
6	Importance of spirituality for individual employee	C	2
7	Workplace spirituality leads to holistic leadership	C	3
8	Workplace spirituality is simply a means to achieve organizational ends	C	1
9	Teaching spirituality	C	2
10	Practical interventions to enhance workplace spirituality	C	1

Table 3. Conceptual matrix.

Article	Concepts/Themes									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Joelle and Coelho (2019)	✓	✓	✓							
Bailey et al. (2019)		✓								
Bailey et al. (2016)		✓								
Adawiyah and Pramuka (2017)			✓	✓						
Afsar and Badir (2017)	✓									
Gotsis and Grimani (2017)	✓									
Pawar (2016)	✓									
Rahman et al. (2015)	✓									
Pardasani et al. (2014)				✓						
Sorakraikitikul and Siengthai (2014)					✓					
Dirkx (2013)		✓								
Kuchinke (2013)		✓								
Osman-Gani, Hashim, and Ismail (2013)	✓									
Dimitrov (2012)		✓								
Dsouli, Khan, and Kakabadse Nada (2012)				✓						
Gümüşay (2012)				✓						
Dhiman and Marques (2011)									✓	
Thakadipuram (2010)							✓			
Daniel (2010)	✓									
Malloch (2010)				✓						
Walker (2009)							✓			
Petchsawang and Duchon (2009)			✓							
Gallagher, Rocco, and Landorf (2007)		✓								
Marques (2006)						✓				
Klenke (2005)							✓			
Quatro (2004)				✓						
Kale and Shrivastava (2003)										✓
Elliott and Turnbull (2003)								✓		
Chalofsky (2003)		✓								
Lips-Wiersma (2002a)	✓									
Lips-Wiersma (2002b)	✓									
Boozier (1998)									✓	
Kahnweiler and Otte (1997)						✓				

The inability to find meaning in life leads to a condition that Frankl called ‘existential vacuum’ (Frankl 1984) in which an individual may feel that his life is empty and without any larger-than-life purpose. In order to fill an individual’s existential vacuum, firms and

organizations can imbue work with transcendental meanings in order to make it more enriching. The empirical studies inform us that this has several positive benefits for organizations including organizational commitment (Fairlie 2011), work engagement (Fletcher, Bailey, and Gilman 2018), employee performance (Shuck, Reio, and Rocco 2011), behavioural involvement (Montani, Boudrias, and Pigeon 2017) and lower absenteeism (Soane et al. 2013) etc. On the other hand, it has also been argued that work which fails to provide a morally significant purpose is unworthy of employee's cognitive and emotional involvement and create a sense of meaninglessness (Bailey et al. 2016).

In order to cultivate deeper values, connectedness and meaning in work, organizations have resorted to workplace spirituality. As explained by Christine Bailey and her colleagues,

‘... meaningfulness is a fundamental component of workplace spirituality . which stresses the importance of acknowledging the inner self and soul at work’ (Bailey et al. 2019, 84).

Hence, organizations can define for their employees how engaging in spiritual practices would lead to a meaningful life where they would be able to develop their own capabilities, pursue valuable ends and flourish through self-realization (Chalofsky 2003). This is equivalent to providing them freedom to strive for a life worth living. Nevertheless, it is also expected that this freedom will somehow also be consistent with organizational objectives thereby assuming that meaningful work will enhance productivity and efficiency (Petchsawang and Duchon 2012). If employees consider these organizational efforts to be authentic, they will respond in a manner which will be positive for the firm (Bailey et al. 2016).

However, it is interesting to note that this research, first and foremost, has not touched upon the question of why is there meaninglessness in the workplace. An exclusive focus on work as a source of self-transcendence and human flourishing ignores the other perspective where work, especially in its modern & post-modern forms, is conceptualized as oppressively degrading. Moreover, employees might bring their own subjective spiritual values to work which can conflict with the organizational values (Elliott and Turnbull 2003). Finally but most importantly, the literature ignores that organizational interventions and behaviour are shaped by larger social structures, cultural institutions and capitalist power relations in which it is embedded. Hence, the problem with the existing HRD literature linking WPS and meaningfulness is its relative inattention to the underpinnings of the power of capitalism which severely limits its capacity of radical critique. The intent of this literature is performative in nature (Fournier and Grey 2000) and does not go beyond mere instrumentalism.

In order to further explore the above contention, I resort to the critical social theory of Jurgen Habermas. Nevertheless, before attempting to appropriate Habermas into the problematic of WPS, it is important to understand his terminology of ‘system’, ‘lifeworld’ and ‘colonization of the lifeworld’ which are elaborated in the next section.

Habermas’s critical theory of society

Habermas (1929) is one of the most prominent philosopher of our time and the most complex representative of critical theory (Hammer 2019). His comprehensive and wide-ranging yet intricate philosophical ideas have captured the interests of many social theorists. His critique of the existing social and economic structures is still relevant and

can be used to understand the intricacies of these structures with an objective of radical transformation. In order to illuminate his contribution to WPS, it is important to understand the critical tradition in which he developed his ideas. His work falls under the Frankfurt school of critical theory (Henning 2018) which is an interdisciplinary body of knowledge with a philosophical orientation.

At this juncture, one might question the relevance of philosophy to the HRD community. As pointed out by Ruona and Lynham (2004), the need to know human nature as well as the question of human development has been a preoccupation of HRD scholars. However, any plausible theoretical explanation of these phenomena is based on deeper presuppositions such as implicit epistemological assumptions about how we can know with some degree of certainty about human nature, ontological assumptions about the structure of organizational reality and axiological assumptions about the norms of how HRD should be practiced (Lynham 2000; Ruona and Lynham 2004). In this way, HRD theory is inevitably linked with philosophical questions about the nature of the central concepts that explain its subject matter. A better understanding of these concepts is achieved not by avoiding alternative meta-theoretical commitments but carefully exploring their implications to unearth any unquestioned presumptions undergirding mainstream views. For example, we might realize that our cultural background, racial and/or gender based identities, the language(s) we speak and our institutional configurations greatly affect the ‘universal’ validity of our key concepts. This realization will help us take the field forward by clarifying our conceptual apparatus, verifying the limits of our theories, asking unsettling questions and providing a way to reconcile apparent paradoxes or contradictions. Hence, it is desirable that HRD scholars open themselves up to the possibility of alternative philosophical viewpoints and engage in critical reflection on existing theoretical understandings prevalent in their specific domain. As a prominent HRD scholar pointed out,

‘Social and human questions and problems, and this includes the majority of issues faced by HRD practitioners and researchers, are rarely technical in nature, but require, **with Habermas**, hermeneutic and emancipatory approaches aimed at understanding and balancing rights and values. Traditional social science research, however, is not able to capture these dimensions and consequently rarely answers the deep and perennial questions related to people and organizations that managers and HRD practitioners face everyday’ (Kuchinke 2004, 538).

Critical theory’s philosophy of society can be used to clarify HRD’s normative motifs as it is oriented towards reform of social institutions in order to emancipate people from the totalizing effects of dominating structures. In other words, it is focused on emancipatory social action instead of a simple deconstruction of the social world and this focus on action and change is what distinguishes it from other theoretical perspectives (such as a simple psycho-social understanding). Therefore this critical philosophical approach is useful in an HRD context since this emancipation is supposed to provide conditions where people can fully explore their self-actualization. Habermas is an important theorist in this critical tradition as he developed a communication oriented theory to analyse social realities and by diagnosing social pathologies as ‘colonization of the lifeworld’.

Habermas explains the evolution of modern capitalist societies at two conceptual levels: that is, at the system and the lifeworld level (Habermas 1984). The ‘system’ for Habermas comprises organized areas of life controlled by the state such as the economy

which is characterized by its distinct focus on material reproduction. In the economic subsystem, the pursuit of money reflected in markets and the pursuit of power reflected in bureaucracy are two inherent mechanisms which 'cut deep channels into the surface of social life' (Finlayson 2005, 54). As these mechanisms work on functional interconnections, rather than agreements achieved through consensus, they play an important role in separating the subsystem from societal norms and values. Imagine if every time one has to buy something, one needs to debate with the seller not only on the exchange value of that commodity but also on its moral usefulness. Since it would be very difficult to achieve consensus in such situations, money provides a medium through which economic transactions can occur even without communication.

The 'system' works on instrumental rationality and can also be thought of as a tool to achieve functionalist ends. However, it remains silent on the question of meanings and ultimate ends. Gradually, however, the system begins to take on a life of its own, ceasing to be a vehicle or medium and becoming an end in itself, increasingly intruding into areas of everyday life or the 'lifeworld'.

The 'lifeworld' refers to the shared sphere of people's everyday life. It consists of all the taken-for-granted 'stock of convictions' that a community creates and shares, such as values or language. Such convictions shape the context of everyday practices including our actions and its justifications (Habermas 1984). The lifeworld is also the locale of social integration where individuals interact based on their subjective understanding of cultural socialization. Most of these interactions happen as part of a daily routine without conscious deliberation. As explained by Andrew Edgar:

'Lifeworld is the stock of skills, competences and knowledge that ordinary members of society use, in order to negotiate their way through everyday life, to interact with other people, and ultimately to create and maintain social relationships' (Edgar 2006, 89).

All of this happens via the mechanism of 'communicative action' in which people are encouraged to debate, present their views and justify their arguments through appeals to reason. In other words, the system is constituted by way of a more impersonal and instrumental exchange of power and money while the lifeworld is constituted through direct communication between people with an objective of mutual understanding. Both system and lifeworld perform essential functions for society as both are necessary for its 'reproduction' or how it maintains itself over time. Hence, the system provides resources necessary for material reproduction while the lifeworld provides legitimate norms and values necessary for symbolic reproduction.

In traditional or pre-modern societies, all kinds of activities including economic and political were subsumed within the lifeworld. These activities were regulated by tradition and religion which provided a normative framework. One did not trade freely with the highest bidder in one's economic transactions, for example. Goods tended to be passed around in accordance with tradition and obligation. In the modern society, however, there has been an uncoupling of economic & political activities from tradition such that each is now governed by instrumentalism and performativity. In other words, Habermas saw that in the modern world the 'system' had become separated, or 'uncoupled' from the 'lifeworld' (Habermas 1987). In pre-modern times both spheres were united through kinship relations in particular, but with the development of market and capitalist ownership relations, the family and community as such ceased to be a productive unit.

Although the system is now independent of the lifeworld, it re-enters to colonize the lifeworld. In other words, Habermas characterizes the central fault-line to be the encroachment of system elements into the lifeworld. For example, markets and bureaucracy increasingly intrude into social life and take root by displacing existing normative frameworks with instrumental rationality (Layder 1997). In his magnum opus, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, he characterized this conflict as the ‘colonization’ of the lifeworld by the system.

By using the term ‘colonization’, Habermas wants to depict the situation when the informally organized, communicatively structured domain of the lifeworld is disrupted by the imposition of scientific-technological rationality which overshadows aesthetic and moral reasoning. Hence, when the system starts ‘colonizing’ those arenas which were proper to the ‘lifeworld’, it renders them dysfunctional or ‘pathological’, producing (a) meaninglessness; (b) anomie; (c) deterioration of social capital; (d) deprivation of morale and (f) cultural impoverishment (Bauman 1989; Finlayson 2005; Putnam 2000). In short, colonization leads to the commodification or reification (means/ends rationality) of private life.

In other words, people would realize that capitalism is not able to provide the cultural resources through which they can make their life meaningful and worthwhile. This may result in a widespread questioning of its legitimacy and may give rise to new resistance movements demanding radical economic or social reorganization. However, in order to ward off discontent and public resistance against the pernicious effects of these interventions, the system utilizes certain protective mechanisms. For example, the social welfare system in many European states is meant to offset the unequal wealth distribution and exploitation of workers which accompany market-based interventions in the lifeworld. The welfare system, however, do not threaten the interventions which caused the crisis in the first place and actually reduce already meagre chances of public resistance.

Now that I have explained, in sufficient detail, Habermas’s theoretical explanation of modern society, let me return to the empirical context of workplace spirituality and meaningful work. I would attempt to show how the colonization of the lifeworld concept plays out in this arena and how WPS is also a tool of the colonizer. In order to achieve this, I need to first situate WPS within the system and lifeworld perspective in order to analyse the contention that WPS is a response of the system to the crisis of meanings. The next section examines this argument in detail.

Spiritual crisis in capitalism

The critics of capitalism see it as a system that generates arbitrary inequalities and poverty, is unsustainable, results in anomie & alienation and usurps human rights (see Feldner and Vighi 2015; Harvey 2011). However, for the purposes of this paper, I am interested in Paul Tillich’s cultural-spiritual critique which is more holistic in its nature (Tillich 1956) and is more relevant. Tillich asserts that capitalism de-spiritualized the natural world in order to commodify everything within it. The capitalist system, he says,

‘seeks to arouse and to satisfy ever increasing demands without raising the question as to the meaning of the process which claims the service of all the spiritual and physical human abilities’ (Tillich 1956, 19–20).

In other words, capitalism works on a logic which destroys human spirituality and generates the 'feeling of absolute meaninglessness' (Tillich as reported in Yip 2010, 23). This meaninglessness is felt by people because this subsystem has destroyed the possibility of the spiritual. In his own words,

'In all of this, there is no trace of self-transcendence, of the hallowing of existence. The forms of the life-process have become completely independent of the source of life and its meaning' (Tillich 1956, 20).

This is exactly why many individuals appear to be searching for greater meaning as the commodification of work under capitalism is both destructive and alienating. They are swiftly being bereaved of the traditional cultural and social resources that provided a sense of discernment, rationale, and consistency in their lives (Morin 1995). This implies that employees are increasingly looking for something meaningful to frame their existence. Weber realized these limitations long ago and for him it meant,

'a renunciation, a departure from an age of full and beautiful humanity, which can no more be repeated in the course of our cultural development than can the flower of the Athenian culture of antiquity' (Weber 1930, 181).

The age of a beautiful humanity was replaced by a disembedded economic subsystem which gave birth to the 'market' as the major organizing principle along with the rise of 'dark satanic mills' (Blake 1976) to which the lifeworld now must adjust. This, for Karl Polanyi, was a great historical transformation as the free market principles heralded the transition to a 'market society' (Polanyi 1944). Arguing along the same lines as Habermas, Polanyi thinks that before this transformation, economic life was embedded in the lifeworld and was determined by communal, religious or kinship relations (Polanyi 1971). Markets have always existed, he argued, but the exchange relationship was based on redistribution or reciprocity or any other value based system. It is only in the market society that exchange relationships became autonomous from social relations and are based instead on the price mechanism.

As the market mechanism achieved hegemonic status as the 'only' mode of organizing exchange, it demanded full potential and effort from the workers/labourers. This ultimately resulted in a significant change not only in the nature of work but also the labour process (Braverman 1974). A new rational automation of the labour process emerged which divided complex tasks into sets of simpler sub-tasks according to the principle of 'division of labour'. However, this particular work design acted as a control mechanism to enforce greater discipline over workers. This super-fragmentation, especially in the form of an assembly line, degraded work to the extent that it is reduced to mindless, repetitive motions.

In other words, this fragmentation represents an antithesis of meaningful work. Indeed, rather than a meaningful workplace, the contemporary organizations represent sites that cause various socio-pathologies including hypertension and burnout (Fleming 2017). Especially in the last decades, capitalism has shifted into overdrive expanding the profit motive and the economic logic into new social arenas and further institutionalizing its power. Its global reach, powered by latest advances in technology such as artificial intelligence, cryptocurrencies and blockchain, reflects the ethos of a new digital age of automation powered by its unstoppable drive to make further incursions into the lifeworld while remaining a soul-less leviathan (Elder-Vass 2017). In other words, the

technical and material fetishism associated with the arrival of techno-capitalism is still unable to bequeath any meaning, value or purpose to employees.

The above discussion demonstrates that there is degeneration of purpose and meaning within the economic subsystem which treats workers as mere expendable cogs in a corporate machine which is strictly focused on generating higher forms of efficiency and material wealth (Gull and Doh 2004) instead of human flourishing and moral development. This situation creates a 'spiritual crisis' in the system leading to a severe form of alienation (Despain 2012). Weber described this ethos of instrumental rationality as constituting an 'iron cage' of economic determinism and rational calculus (Weber 1930) from which, he thought, there is no escape.

Spiritual turn in capitalism as a response

Nevertheless, neoliberal capitalism ('system') responded to this crisis by transforming its narrative from efficiency, productivity and wealth maximization to a popular cosmology of spiritual or metaphysical concerns, thus giving rise to the so-called 'spiritual turn' of capitalism (Driver 2007; Heelas 2008). Now workplace spirituality is supposed to fill the existential vacuum that exists in the economic system and society at large (de Klerk 2005). This new discourse attempts to:

'demonstrate the spiritual nature of organizations by introducing transcendent notions of authenticity, meaning, higher consciousness and purpose' (Bell, Taylor and Driscoll, 2012, 426).

The discursive and linguistic focus shifted from understanding individual elements to comprehending the whole, from the language of exactness to the language of aesthetics, poetry & spirituality and from simplicity to complexity (Gonzalez 2012). Such social and contingent constructions of spirituality are then utilized by the social institutions of neoliberal capitalism to embed this discourse into new patterns of thought which gradually took on the form of a social movement (Calás and Smircich 2003). Interest in this spiritual movement started in the United States (Hicks 2003) but later became more international. Important institutions include International Centre for Spirit at Work, Global Business Network, Faith at Work, Spiritual Unfoldment Society (World Bank), World Business Academy, and Spiritual Business Network etc. The ultimate expression of this movement, as far as the corporate world is concerned, is the workplace spirituality (WPS) oriented programs, workshops, seminars aimed at promoting spiritual practices in the organization. Corporate behemoths including Apple, General Mills, Xerox, Shell, Google, Nike, Monsanto, McDonalds and many others have all embraced WPS in order to nurture not only the body and mind of their employees but also their spirit (Gelles 2015). Organizations now treat employees as spiritual beings with spiritual needs (Dehler and Welsh 2010) who are on a spiritual journey which can be furthered if their work lives are integrated with their spiritual lives (Fry 2003). This is done in various ways including mindfulness training, chakra meditation, yoga exercises and by modifying certain organizational practices such as providing a prayer room or financing spiritual retreats etc. As commented by Louis Fry,

'Companies as diverse as Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, BioGenex, Aetna International, big six accounting's Deloitte and Touche, and law firms such as New York's Kaye, Scholer, Fierman, Hayes and Handler are extolling lessons usually doled out in churches, temples and mosques' (Fry 2003, 702).

Firms are increasingly using these techniques in order to deepen their employees thinking to make them more creative, reduce their stress levels and enhance their performance (Zaidman, Goldstein-Gidoni, and Nehemya 2009). Hence, capitalism was able to abstract itself and transform, like a chameleon, to assume more humane colourings that enable unprecedented penetration into the lifeworld, remaking worker identities in accordance with its own performative desires.

This transformation also affected academia as the Academy of Management (AoM) in 2000 formally approved the creation of a special-interest group by the name of '*Management, Spirituality and Religion*' (MSR). This helped in legitimizing the work of a diverse group of academicians and practitioners who are teaching and doing research on WPS. Leading luminaries in the world of management including Peter Senge, Margaret Wheatley, Andre Delbecq, Fry Louis, Judith Neal, Jeffrey Pfeffer, Robert Greenleaf and many others argued that the spiritual turn is not a fad but a quantum leap in the evolution of capitalism itself. In other words, the seeds of spirituality were actually located within capitalism and were just waiting for the right time to germinate.

These institutional efforts resulted in a flood of academic and practitioner oriented publications by management gurus and scholars (Houghton, Neck, and Krishnakumar 2016). Since much new managerial discourse portrays workers as people in search of fulfilment, meaning and development, one would expect that the scholarly bodies of HRD would be at the forefront of WPS discourse. However, the Academy of HRD (AHRD) is still to form a special interest group on spirituality despite its central role in dealing with issues facing human beings in the contemporary organization. This relative lack of attention of HRD scholars towards WPS is surprising since this phenomenon is supposed to directly impact the development of workers.

Hence, we can understand WPS as a broader response of the system to assuage the feelings of spiritual emptiness in employees. However, since WPS is system-generated, therefore, it is totally cut off from its roots in the lifeworld in the form of lived traditions and religions. This estrangement has caused deep ambivalence and bewilderment about what spirituality actually means. For example, there is confusion in the literature about WPS, from its definition to its purposes, as the sublime experiences and ultimate realities of the lifeworld associated with spirituality fail to match the performative intentions and instrumental rationality of WPS. The next section provides some details of this confusion.

Definitional problems of WPS

Although one cannot find a clear and universally agreed upon definition of either spirituality or WPS (Gotsis and Kortezi 2008; Tourish and Tourish 2010), there are some common elements of the most prominent conceptualizations. Spirituality delineates a domain where 'the thrust is towards a transcendent, but not necessarily supernatural, point of reference' (Bell and Taylor 2003, 331) that aims to understand and integrate the needs of a whole person. It is interesting to note that nowhere is spirituality defined in terms of a human 'spirit' as the spirit is totally absent from discussion. Although this is quite counterintuitive that 'spirituality' as an academic discipline does not even talk about its object, the 'human spirit', but this is the present condition of this discipline. Even in the above definition, there is no description of a 'transcendent point of reference' which is not supernatural. The authors do not tell us about the human and

non-human ‘connection’ which supposedly takes place and who makes that connection. Hence, there is no clear conceptual or empirical definition of spirituality and it holds such divergent interpretations that there is ambiguity as to what it actually means.

Similarly, a famous definition of ‘workplace spirituality’ is the ‘framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees’ experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected in a way that provides feelings of compassion and joy’ (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz 2003, 13). Again, the authors do not inform us how the culture, focused on promoting job related material tasks in order to maximize organizational efficiency, will promote something which is immaterial and mystical, namely experience of transcendence. Hence, the term ‘spirituality’ has become a hollow container as there is no precise meaning which can be attached to this term. It adds to confusion rather than clarify the phenomena it purports to describe.

Adding to this complexity is the ‘New Age movement’ which arose in the 1970s (Melton 1988) as an alternative to conventional religion and spirituality. This movement produced a disposition to search for a meaningful and greater context as a matter of choice for many people. Most participants in this movement combined theosophic ideas of multiple religions and Eastern traditions simultaneously in order to create an eclectic mixture for themselves (Lau 2000). Some manifestations of this synthesis include crystal healing, spiritual mantras, shamanic voyages, harmonic convergences, pagan rituals and natural medicine etc. A part of this discourse was introduced in organizations by ‘New Age Professionals’ who claimed to bring back soul into the world of economics and business (Heelas 1992). As explained by Nigel Thrift,

‘In the United States \$4 billion per year is spent by corporations on New Age consultants, according to Naisbitt & Aburdene. For example, the New Age think tank, Global Business Network, is underwritten by major companies like AT&T, Volvo, Nissan, and Inland Steel. Some companies like Pacific Bell, Proctor & Gamble, Du Pont and IBM, offer, or have offered, their employees ‘personal growth experiences’ in-house. Thus IBM provides ‘Fit for the Future’ seminars which introduce employees to the *I-Ching*. It is claimed that this links internal intuitions with external events’ (Thrift 1997, 47).

The above discussion establishes that WPS is a reactive response to the colonization of the lifeworld that has resulted in mass alienation (Parboteeah and Cullen 2010). The colonization caused a reaction from society which threatens to overthrow the existing system. In order to avoid this negative reaction, capitalism attempts to provide the cultural resources which, at least theoretically, can provide personal freedom to people and a life worth living. The phenomenon of WPS can be understood as one such cultural resource to stop the meaninglessness inherent in capitalist logic (Dirkx 2013). WPS is a mechanism to control employee apprehensions over the increasing ‘technicization’ in all the minutiae of their lifeworld (Feenberg 1996). In short, the expansion of the state and economic subsystems into the lifeworld account for the structural origins of WPS. This is due to the fact that colonization and crises are at root structural phenomenon and WPS is a protective strategy of the system to lessen its negative impact on the lifeworld. Another indication of the difference between WPS as ‘employee development’ and WPS as ‘a tool of the system’ is reflected in the practices of organizations implementing WPS. The next section shows that these practices are driven by instrumental rationality which shifts their analytical focus from nurturing the spirit to organizational performance.

Instrumental rationality of the WPS discourse

When we view the phenomenon of WPS from the Habermasian angle, it seems to be working on an inner logic of instrumental rationality. However, the instrumentalization of social relations becomes a problem as the ends of everyday actions have to be ‘rationally’ selected instead of this choice being driven by values emanating from the lifeworld. At this stage, society develops into a ‘nexus of behavioural modes’ (Lakowski 1997), which means that it is governed by an orientation that conceptualizes everything, including people, as an object to be governed and manipulated by technical rules. There are many such specific technocratic techniques which are used by organizations to increase their control of employee behaviour in order to align the thought processes of employees with organizational objectives. Over time, however, we see organizations changing the forms of these techniques. For example, due to discursive shifts of neoliberal capitalism, WPS has now become the new standard of reasonableness and wisdom in the hyper-competitive business world (Wheatley 2006). As the ethnographer, Goldschmidt-Salamon explains,

‘During the so-called ‘new-economy’, a romantic vocabulary of ‘genius’, ‘holism’, ‘spirit’, ‘belief’ and ‘deep values’ was re-employed in a celebration of frantic workaholism, megalomaniac self-promotion, economically promising boundary transgressions, mad genius innovators and poly-semantic, anti-rational forces. As day-to-day management continued to turn ever more functional, centralized, instrumentalist and concerned with precise measurements and accounting . . . management rhetoric became romantically possessed by free innovation and eccentricity’ (Goldschmidt-Salamon 2005, 53).

Such rhetoric, however, imposes a particular ideology on workers in order to legitimize existing economic inequalities while preventing a sustained critique of the conditions of workers (Driver 2007; Nadesan 1999) in order to prevent the making of an alternative consciousness.

On similar lines, WPS is supposed to generate loyalty and cohesion among workers and managers and promote an atmosphere of trust and care which, management consultants and gurus argued, is the ultimate source of productivity and organizational success (Gull and Doh 2004). However, since the organizations are trying to use WPS as a ‘variable’ which can be managed and put to use, rather than being genuinely interested in the development of an employee’s spirit, it is primarily another technique of normative control and exploitation (Willmott 2018). Organizations are introducing new managerial techniques and approaches in order to engage, retain and motivate its employees and reinforce positive work behaviours such as learning, commitment, creativity and enhanced organizational identification. WPS is one of these new ways where employees are encouraged to draw on their spirit and do wonders for the benefit of the organization (Kinjerski and Skrypnek 2004). What is experienced by workers as alienation, anomie or displacement can be explained away as bumps in the spiritual voyage of humanity.

Another paradox one finds in WPS discourse is its positivist focus on measurement of employee spirituality by using ‘valid and reliable’ survey questionnaires (see Afsar and Badir 2017; Joelle and Coelho 2019; Petchsawang and Duchon 2009). However, the scholars never describe how a transcendent object or its intensely personal and subjective experience can be studied or even described by using scientific procedures designed to study the objective world. After reading this part of the literature, it seems that the

questionnaires, instruments, correlations and quantitative modelling have assumed a life of their own and the researchers embedded in this radical empiricism start even thinking in terms of these instruments.

The appeals in the WPS literature about individual freedom are also dubious since one of the defining characteristics of freedom implies non-domination. This can be considered a necessary pre-condition for enjoying self-realization and self-determination (Breen 2019). However, since this pre-condition is not met due to a focus on performativity, freedom and meaningfulness are only harnessed as ideologies to legitimize exploitative conditions instead of a genuine attempt at individual's self-realization.

The above discussion provides evidence that WPS is causing further colonization of the lifeworld by subjecting individual subjectivity and a fundamentally non-rational aspect of human experience to instrumental rationality. This is the reason why WPS is unable to provide real meaning in an employee's life. It is rather a tool which is being misappropriated by the economic subsystem to increasingly encroach into organizational life.

Conclusion

Workplace spirituality is being used as a façade that aspires to transform the life of an employee by developing his/her spirit while providing meaningful work, but in reality reproduces the integrity of the existing economic order. The intent of WPS is performative in nature which implies that it is focused on improving the financial bottom line of the organization with little actual interest in employee development.

The review of HRD literature shows that the perceived positive organizational interventions have been intellectually restrained by working within instead of against the market logics and discourses of capitalism. Hence, the spiritual turn in capitalist-inspired organizations is simply a discursive variation in order to obscure the underlying meaninglessness of the soul-less work. The institutionalization of meditative practices in organizations is aimed at improving the mental instead of spiritual capabilities of employees. In short, WPS is being misunderstood as a panacea and is actually being colonized by the system as a protective mechanism.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that 'spirituality' per se is bad. One significant consequence of spirituality research is that it has highlighted the importance of the non-economic part of human life (Driver 2007). As the Canadian philosopher, Charles Taylor, points out, spirituality is the most central aspect of human experience and represent a higher form of human development. In his own words,

'... I believe that a powerful constitutive strand of modern Western spirituality is involved in an affirmation of life. It is perhaps evident in the contemporary concern to preserve life, to bring prosperity, to reduce suffering worldwide, which is I believe without precedent in history' (Taylor 2011, 18).

This affirmation of life and resistance to the dominant system is only possible if we take the 'turn to spirituality' seriously without cutting it from its religious roots (Hicks 2003). Viktor Frankl (2000) argues for two levels of meaning in an individual's life: meaning of the moment and ultimate meanings which exist in the suprahuman dimension. Similarly, Paul Tillich (1957) has pointed out that humans sometimes create conditional meanings for their life, i.e. false gods or idols such as success at all costs in this material world or

unfettered capitalist competition or the corporation instead of unconditional meanings in the realm of the spirit. The inevitability and centrality of these unconditional meanings and the question of God has been reintroduced by intellectuals such as Jacques Derrida and Alvin Plantinga (see Derrida and Vattimo 1998; Plantinga 1967). As pointed out by Arthur Leff, it is impossible for us to draw any meaning or value without a metaphysical grounding (Leff 1979). Hence, what we need to focus on is discursive reframing from performativity to transcendent non-performative ends keeping in view God, our relationship with Him and the etiquette of this relationship. Exposure to this alternative metaphysics will enable HRD scholars to critically reflect on the perspectival, incomplete and partial truth claims that are conveniently located in a peculiar, mainly Western, discursive space.

Since all the ‘modern’ normative or evaluative frameworks are human constructions, they are all contested and hence cannot provide us the validity criteria to judge interventions such as WPS. Hence, we need to engage with the larger questions of life in order to come up with a radical imaginary (Castoriadis 1987) which can allow us to reverse the colonization process of the lifeworld. This is only possible when we draw from the wells of ancient wisdom available to us in the form of traditional religion and spirituality (Ul-Haq and Khan 2017).

The task of researchers interested in workplace spirituality is to actively pursue a radical imaginary that will resist the loss of meaning in everyday social life. However, we need to first imagine relations where value is exchanged in ways that do not mimic the capitalist commodity, and through this to develop a religious signifier that recognizes features of these non-commodity forms. The challenge is to build an alternative economic system which provides a space where the possibility of employee development can be realized by using values from the lifeworld. This space can then be used to liberate ourselves from the totalitarianism imposed by the golem of capitalism.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

References

- Adawiyah, W. R., and B. A. Pramuka. 2017. “Scaling the Notion of Islamic Spirituality in the Workplace.” *Journal of Management Development* 36 (7): 877–898. doi:10.1108/JMD-11-2014-0153.
- Afsar, B., and Y. Badir. 2017. “Workplace Spirituality, Perceived Organizational Support and Innovative Work Behavior: The Mediating Effects of Person-Organization Fit.” *Journal of Workplace Learning* 29 (2): 95–109. doi:10.1108/JWL-11-2015-0086.
- Aguinis, H., and A. Glavas. 2019. “On Corporate Social Responsibility, Sensemaking, and the Search for Meaningfulness through Work.” *Journal of Management* 45 (3): 1057–1086. doi:10.1177/0149206317691575.
- Aktouf, O. 1992. “Management and Theories of Organizations in the 1990s: Toward a Critical Radical Humanism?” *Academy of Management Review* 17 (3): 407–431. doi:10.5465/amr.1992.4281975.
- Ashmos, D. P., and D. Duchon. 2000. “Spirituality at Work: A Conceptualization and Measure.” *Journal of Management Inquiry* 9 (2): 134–145. doi:10.1177/1056492600092008.
- Bailey, C., A. Madden, K. Alfes, A. Shantz, and E. Soane. 2016. “The Mismanaged Soul: Existential Labor and the Erosion of Meaningful Work.” *Human Resource Management Review* 27 (3): 416–430. doi:10.1016/j.hrmr.2016.11.001.

- Bailey, C., R. Yeoman, A. Madden, M. Thompson, and G. Kerridge. 2019. "A Review of the Empirical Literature on Meaningful Work: Progress and Research Agenda." *Human Resource Development Review* 18 (1): 83–113. doi:[10.1177/1534484318804653](https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484318804653).
- Bates, R., and H.-C. Chen. 2005. "Value Priorities of Human Resource Development Professionals." *Human Resource Development Quarterly* 16 (3): 345–368. doi:[10.1002/\(ISSN\)1532-1096](https://doi.org/10.1002/(ISSN)1532-1096).
- Bauman, Z. 1989. *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Bell, E. 2012. "Varieties of Organizational Soul: The Ethics of Belief in Organizations." *Organization* 19 (4): 425–439.
- Bell, E., and S. N. Taylor. 2003. "The Elevation of Work: Pastoral Power and the New Age Work Ethic." *Organization* 10 (2): 329–349. doi:[10.1177/1350508403010002009](https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508403010002009).
- Bell, E., and S. N. Taylor. 2004. "'from Outward Bound to Inward Bound': The Prophetic Voices and Discursive Practices of Spiritual Management Development." *Human Relations* 57 (4): 439–466. doi:[10.1177/0018726704043895](https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726704043895).
- Bertolini, M. 2019. *Mission-Driven Leadership*. New York: Crown Publishing.
- Blake, W. 1976. "Milton." In *The Portable Blake*, edited by A. Kazin, 411–444. New York: Penguin.
- Boozar, R. W. 1998. "Spirituality in Management Education." *Journal of Workplace Learning* 10 (6/7): 345–347. doi:[10.1108/13665629810236417](https://doi.org/10.1108/13665629810236417).
- Braverman, H. 1974. *Labor and Monopoly Capital*. London: Monthly Review Press.
- Breen, K. 2019. "Meaningful Work and Freedom: Self-Realization, Autonomy, and Non-domination in Work." In *The Oxford Handbook of Meaningful Work*, edited by R. Yeoman, C. Bailey, A. Madden, and M. Thompson, 51–72. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Calás, M., and L. Smircich. 2003. "Introduction: Spirituality, Management and Organization." *Organization* 10 (2): 327–328. doi:[10.1177/1350508403010002008](https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508403010002008).
- Cartwright, S., and N. Holmes. 2006. "The Meaning of Work: The Challenge of Regaining Employee Engagement and Reducing Cynicism." *Human Resource Management Review* 16 (2): 199–208. doi:[10.1016/j.hrmr.2006.03.012](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2006.03.012).
- Castoriadis, C. 1987. *The Imaginary Institution of Society*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Chalofsky, N. 2003. "An Emerging Construct for Meaningful Work." *Human Resource Development International* 6 (1): 69–83. doi:[10.1080/1367886022000016785](https://doi.org/10.1080/1367886022000016785).
- Daniel, J. L. 2010. "The Effect of Workplace Spirituality on Team Effectiveness." *Journal of Management Development* 29 (5): 442–456. doi:[10.1108/02621711011039213](https://doi.org/10.1108/02621711011039213).
- de Klerk, J. J. 2005. "Spirituality, Meaning in Life and Work Wellness." *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* 13 (1): 64–88. doi:[10.1108/eb028998](https://doi.org/10.1108/eb028998).
- Dehler, G. E., and M. A. Welsh. 2010. "The Experience of Work: Spirituality and the New Workplace." In *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, edited by R. A. Giacalone and C. L. Jurkiewicz, 59–72. NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Derrida, J., and G. Vattimo. 1998. *Religion: Cultural Memory in the Present*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Despain, H. G. 2012. "The Pulse of Freedom and the Existential Dilemma of Alienation." In *Critical Realism and Spirituality*, edited by M. Hartwig and J. Morgan, 300–316. London: Routledge.
- Dhiman, S., and J. F. Marques. 2011. "The Role and Need of Offering Workshops and Courses on Workplace Spirituality." *Journal of Management Development* 30 (9): 816–835. doi:[10.1108/02621711111164312](https://doi.org/10.1108/02621711111164312).
- Dimitrov, D. 2012. "Sources of Meaningfulness in the Workplace: A Study in the US Hospitality Sector." *European Journal of Training and Development* 36 (2/3): 351–371. doi:[10.1108/03090591211204788](https://doi.org/10.1108/03090591211204788).
- Dirkx, J. M. 2013. "Leaning in and Leaning Back at the Same Time: Toward a Spirituality of Work-Related Learning." *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 15 (4): 356–369. doi:[10.1177/1523422313498562](https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422313498562).
- Driver, M. 2007. "A 'spiritual Turn' in Organizational Studies: Meaning Making or Meaningless?" *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion* 4 (1): 56–86. doi:[10.1080/14766080709518646](https://doi.org/10.1080/14766080709518646).

- Dsouli, O., N. Khan, and K. Kakabadse Nada. 2012. "Spiritual Capital: The Co-evolution of an Ethical Framework Based on Abrahamic Religious Values in the Islamic Tradition." *Journal of Management Development* 31 (10): 1058–1076. doi:10.1108/02621711211281843.
- Edgar, A. 2006. *Habermas: The Key Concepts*. London: Routledge.
- Elder-Vass, D. 2017. "Lifeworld and Systems in the Digital Economy." *European Journal of Social Theory* 21 (2): 227–244. doi:10.1177/1368431017709703.
- Elliott, C., and S. Turnbull. 2005. "Critical Thinking in Human Resource Development: An Introduction." In *Critical Thinking in Human Resource Development*, edited by C. Elliott and S. Turnbull, 1–8. London: Routledge.
- Elliott, C. J., and S. Turnbull. 2003. "Reconciling Autonomy and Community: The Paradoxical Role of HRD." *Human Resource Development International* 6 (4): 457–474. doi:10.1080/13678860210155395.
- Fairlie, P. 2011. "Meaningful Work, Employee Engagement, and Other Key Employee Outcomes: Implications for Human Resource Development." *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 13 (4): 508–525. doi:10.1177/1523422311431679.
- Feenberg, A. 1996. "Marcuse or Habermas: Two Critiques of Technology." *Inquiry* 39 (1): 45–70. doi:10.1080/00201749608602407.
- Feldner, H., and F. Vighi. 2015. *Critical Theory and the Crisis of Contemporary Capitalism*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Finlayson, J. G. 2005. *Habermas: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fleming, P. 2017. "The Human Capital Hoax: Work, Debt and Insecurity in the Era of Uberization." *Organization Studies* 38 (5): 691–709. doi:10.1177/0170840616686129.
- Fletcher, L., C. Bailey, and M. W. Gilman. 2018. "Fluctuating Levels of Personal Role Engagement within the Working Day: a Multilevel Study." *Human Resource Management Journal* 28 (1): 128–47. doi:10.1111/hrmj.v28.1.
- Fournier, V., and C. Grey. 2000. "At the Critical Moment: Conditions and Prospects for Critical Management Studies." *Human Relations* 53 (1): 7–32. doi:10.1177/0018726700531002.
- Frankl, V. E. 1984. *Man's Search for Meaning*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Frankl, V. E. 2000. *Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning*. New York: Basic Books.
- Fry, L. W. 2003. "Towards a Theory of Spiritual Leadership." *The Leadership Quarterly* 14 (6): 693–727. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2003.09.001.
- Gallagher, S. J., T. S. Rocco, and H. Landorf. 2007. "A Phenomenological Study of Spirituality and Learning Processes at Work." *Human Resource Development Quarterly* 18 (4): 457–480. doi:10.1002/hrdq.1215.
- Gelles, D. 2015. *Mindful Work: How Meditation Is Changing Business from the inside Out*. Wilmington, MA: Mariner Books.
- Giacalone, R. A., and C. L. Jurkiewicz. 2003. "Toward a Science of Workplace Spirituality." In *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, edited by R. A. Giacalone and C. L. Jurkiewicz, 3–28. NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Gibb, S. 2011. *Human Resource Development: Foundations, Process, Context*. 3rd ed. London: Red Globe Press.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. 2006. *A Postcapitalist Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Goldschmidt-Salamon, K. L. 2005. "Possessed by Enterprise: Values and Value-Creation in Mandrake Management." In *Magic, Culture and the New Economy*, edited by O. Lofgren and R. Willim, 47–56. Oxford: Berg.
- Gonzalez, G. 2012. "Shape Shifting Capital: New Management and the Bodily Metaphors of Spiritual Capitalism." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 42 (3): 325–344. doi:10.1111/j.1468-5914.2012.00494.x.
- Gotsis, G., and K. Grimani. 2017. "The Role of Spiritual Leadership in Fostering Inclusive Workplaces." *Personnel Review* 46 (5): 908–935. doi:10.1108/PR-11-2015-0286.
- Gotsis, G. N., and Z. Kortezi. 2008. "Philosophical Foundations of Workplace Spirituality: A Critical Approach." *Journal of Business Ethics* 78 (4): 575–600. doi:10.1007/s10551-007-9369-5.

- Gull, G. A., and J. P. Doh. 2004. "The "transmutation" of the Organization: Toward a More Spiritual Workplace." *Journal of Management Inquiry* 13 (2): 128–139. doi:10.1177/1056492604265218.
- Gümüşay, A. A. 2012. "Boundaries and Knowledge in a Sufi Dhikr Circle." *Journal of Management Development* 31 (10): 1077–1089. doi:10.1108/02621711211281861.
- Habermas, J. 1984. *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Translated by Thomas McCarthy. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Habermas, J. 1987. *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 2: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*. Translated by Thomas McCarthy. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Hammer, E. 2019. "Habermas and Ordinary Language Philosophy." In *The Routledge Companion to the Frankfurt School*, edited by P. E. Gordon, A. Honneth, and E. Hammer, 336–348. London: Routledge.
- Harvey, D. 2011. *The Enigma of Capital and the Crises of Capitalism*. London: Profile.
- Heelas, P. 1992. "The Sacralisation of Self and New Age Capitalism." In *Social Change in Contemporary Britain*, edited by N. Abercrombie and A. Warde, 139–166. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Heelas, P. 2008. *Spiritualities of Life*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Henning, C. 2018. "Jürgen Habermas: Against Obstacles to Public Debates." In *The SAGE Handbook of Frankfurt School Critical Theory, Volume 1*, edited by B. Best, W. Bonefeld, and C. O’Kane, 402–416. London: Sage.
- Hicks, D. A. 2003. *Religion and the Workplace*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Houghton, J. D., C. P. Neck, and S. Krishnakumar. 2016. "The What, Why, and How of Spirituality in the Workplace Revisited: A 14-year Update and Extension." *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion* 13 (3): 177–205. doi:10.1080/14766086.2016.1185292.
- Joelle, M., and A. M. Coelho. 2019. "The Impact of Spirituality at Work on Workers’ Attitudes and Individual Performance." *International Journal of Human Resource Management* 30 (7): 1111–1135. doi:10.1080/09585192.2017.1314312.
- Kahnweiler, W. M., and F. L. Otte. 1997. "In Search of the Soul of HRD." *Human Resource Development Quarterly* 8 (2): 171–181. doi:10.1002/(ISSN)1532-1096.
- Kale, S. H., and S. Shrivastava. 2003. "The Enneagram System for Enhancing Workplace Spirituality." *Journal of Management Development* 22 (4): 308–328. doi:10.1108/02621710310467596.
- Kamoche, K., and A. H. Pinnington. 2012. "Managing People ‘Spiritually’: A Bourdieusian Critique." *Work, Employment & Society* 26 (3): 497–513. doi:10.1177/0950017012438573.
- Kinnerski, V., and B. J. Skrypnik. 2004. "Defining Spirit at Work: Finding Common Ground." *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 17 (3): 165–182. doi:10.1108/09534810410511288.
- Klenke, K. 2005. "Corporate Values as Multi-Level, Multi-Domain Antecedents of Leader Behaviors." *International Journal of Manpower* 26 (1): 50–66. doi:10.1108/01437720510587271.
- Kuchinke, K. P. 2004. "Theorizing and Practicing HRD: Extending the Dialogue over the Roles of Scholarship and Practice in the Field." *Human Resource Development International* 7 (4): 535–539. doi:10.1080/1367886042000299825.
- Kuchinke, K. P. 2010. "Human Development as a Central Goal for Human Resource Development." *Human Resource Development International* 13 (5): 575–585. doi:10.1080/13678868.2010.520482.
- Kuchinke, K. P. 2013. "Human Agency and HRD: Returning Meaning, Spirituality, and Purpose to HRD Theory and Practice." *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 15 (4): 370–381. doi:10.1177/1523422313498563.
- Lakomski, G. 1997. "Critical Theory and Education." In *Educational Research, Methodology, and Measurement: An International Handbook*, edited by J. P. Keeves, 168–173. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lau, K. J. 2000. *New Age Capitalism*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Layder, D. 1997. *Modern Social Theory: Key Debates and New Directions*. London: UCL Press.
- Leff, A. A. 1979. "Unspeakable Ethics, Unnatural Law." *Duke Law Journal* 6: 1229–1249. doi:10.2307/1372118.

- Lips-Wiersma, M. 2002a. "Analysing the Career Concerns of Spiritually Oriented People: Lessons for Contemporary Organizations." *Career Development International* 7 (7): 385–397. doi:[10.1108/13620430210449911](https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430210449911).
- Lips-Wiersma, M. 2002b. "The Influence of Spiritual "meaning-making" on Career Behavior." *Journal of Management Development* 21 (7): 497–520. doi:[10.1108/02621710210434638](https://doi.org/10.1108/02621710210434638).
- Lips-Wiersma, M., S. Wright, and B. J. Dik. 2016. "Meaningful Work: Differences among Blue-, Pink-, and White-Collar Occupations." *Career Development International* 21 (5): 534–551. doi:[10.1108/CDI-04-2016-0052](https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-04-2016-0052).
- Lynham, S. A. 2000. "Theory Building in the Human Resource Development Profession." *Human Resource Development Quarterly* 11 (2): 159–178. doi:[10.1002/\(ISSN\)1532-1096](https://doi.org/10.1002/(ISSN)1532-1096).
- Malloch, T. R. 2010. "Spiritual Capital and Practical Wisdom." *Journal of Management Development* 29 (7/8): 755–759. doi:[10.1108/02621711011059194](https://doi.org/10.1108/02621711011059194).
- Marques, J. F. 2006. "The Spiritual Worker: An Examination of the Ripple Effect that Enhances Quality of Life In- and outside the Work Environment." *Journal of Management Development* 25 (9): 884–895. doi:[10.1108/02621710610692089](https://doi.org/10.1108/02621710610692089).
- Melton, J. G. 1988. "A history of the new age movement." In *Not Necessarily the New Age: Critical Essays*, edited by Robert Basil, 35–53. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books.
- Montani, F., J.-S. Boudrias, and M. Pigeon. 2017. "Employee Recognition, Meaningfulness and Behavioural Involvement: Test of a Moderated Mediation Model." *International Journal of Human Resource Management* 1–29. doi:[10.1080/09585192.2017.1288153](https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2017.1288153).
- Morin, E. M. 1995. "Organizational Effectiveness and the Meaning of Work." In *In Search of Meaning*, edited by T. C. Pauchant, 29–64. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Nadella, S., G. Shaw, and J. T. Nichols. 2017. *Hit Refresh: The Quest to Rediscover Microsoft's Soul and Imagine a Better Future for Everyone*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Nadesan, M. H. 1999. "The Discourses of Corporate Spiritualism and Evangelical Capitalism." *Management Communication Quarterly* 13 (1): 3–42. doi:[10.1177/0893318999131001](https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318999131001).
- Nair, N., and N. Vohra. 2010. "An Exploration of Factors Predicting Work Alienation of Knowledge Workers." *Management Decision* 48 (4): 600–615. doi:[10.1108/00251741011041373](https://doi.org/10.1108/00251741011041373).
- Nolan, C. T., and T. N. Garavan. 2016. "Human Resource Development in SMEs: A Systematic Review of the Literature." *International Journal of Management Reviews* 18 (1): 85–107. doi:[10.1111/ijmr.2016.18.issue-1](https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.2016.18.issue-1).
- Osman-Gani, A. M., J. Hashim, and Y. Ismail. 2013. "Establishing Linkages between Religiosity and Spirituality on Employee Performance." *Employee Relations* 35 (4): 360–376. doi:[10.1108/ER-04-2012-0030](https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-04-2012-0030).
- Parboteeah, K. P., and J. B. Cullen. 2010. "Ethical Climates and Spirituality." In *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, edited by R. A. Giacalone and C. L. Jurkiewicz, 99–113. NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Pardasani, R., R. R. Sharma, P. K. Bindlish, K. Sirodom, C. R. Loza Adai, A. Habisch, G. Lenssen, and T. Roosevelt Malloch. 2014. "Facilitating Workplace Spirituality: Lessons from Indian Spiritual Traditions." *Journal of Management Development* 33 (8/9): 847–859. doi:[10.1108/JMD-07-2013-0096](https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-07-2013-0096).
- Pawar, B. S. 2016. "Workplace Spirituality and Employee Well-Being: An Empirical Examination." *Employee Relations* 38 (6): 975–994. doi:[10.1108/ER-11-2015-0215](https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-11-2015-0215).
- Petchsawang, P., and D. Duchon. 2009. "Measuring Workplace Spirituality in an Asian Context." *Human Resource Development International* 12 (4): 459–468. doi:[10.1080/13678860903135912](https://doi.org/10.1080/13678860903135912).
- Petchsawang, P., and D. Duchon. 2012. "Workplace Spirituality, Meditation, and Work Performance." *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion* 9 (2): 189–208. doi:[10.1080/14766086.2012.688623](https://doi.org/10.1080/14766086.2012.688623).
- Plantinga, A. 1967. *God and Other Minds*. NY: Cornell University Press.
- Polanyi, K. 1944. *The Great Transformation*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Polanyi, K. 1971. *The Livelihood of Man*. New York: Academic Press.
- Putnam, R. D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. NY: Simon & Schuster.

- Quatro, S. A. 2004. "New Age or Age Old: Classical Management Theory and Traditional Organized Religion as Underpinnings of the Contemporary Organizational Spirituality Movement." *Human Resource Development Review* 3 (3): 228–249. doi:[10.1177/1534484304267830](https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484304267830).
- Rahman, M. S., A. M. Osman-Gani, N. M. Daud, A. H. Chowdhury, and H. Hassan. 2015. "Trust and Work Place Spirituality on Knowledge Sharing Behaviour." *The Learning Organization* 22 (6): 317–332. doi:[10.1108/TLO-05-2015-0032](https://doi.org/10.1108/TLO-05-2015-0032).
- Ruona, W. E., and S. A. Lynham. 2004. "A Philosophical Framework for Thought and Practice in Human Resource Development." *Human Resource Development International* 7 (2): 151–164. doi:[10.1080/13678860310001630665](https://doi.org/10.1080/13678860310001630665).
- Shuck, B., T. G. Reio, and T. S. Rocco. 2011. "Employee Engagement: An Examination of Antecedent and Outcome Variables." *Human Resource Development International* 14 (4): 427–445. doi:[10.1080/13678868.2011.601587](https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2011.601587).
- Soane, E., A. Shantz, K. Alfes, C. Truss, C. Rees, and M. Gatenby. 2013. "The Association of Meaningfulness, Well-Being, and Engagement with Absenteeism: A Moderated Mediation Model." *Human Resource Management* 52 (3): 441–456. doi:[10.1002/hrm.v52.3](https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.v52.3).
- Sorakraikitikul, M., and S. Siengthai. 2014. "Organizational Learning Culture and Workplace Spirituality." *The Learning Organization* 21 (3): 175–192. doi:[10.1108/TLO-08-2011-0046](https://doi.org/10.1108/TLO-08-2011-0046).
- Taylor, C. 2011. *Dilemmas and Connections*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Thakadipuram, T. 2010. "Leadership Wholeness: A Human Resource Development Model." *Human Resource Development International* 13 (4): 463–475. doi:[10.1080/13678868.2010.501993](https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2010.501993).
- Thrift, N. 1997. "The Rise of Soft Capitalism." *Cultural Values* 1 (2): 21–57. doi:[10.1080/14797589709367133](https://doi.org/10.1080/14797589709367133).
- Tillich, P. 1956. *The Religious Situation*. New York: Meridian Books.
- Tillich, P. 1957. *The Protestant Era*. Translated by James Luther Adams. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tourish, D., and N. Tourish. 2010. "Spirituality at Work, and Its Implications for Leadership and Followership: A Post-Structuralist Perspective." *Leadership* 6 (2): 207–224. doi:[10.1177/1742715010363210](https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715010363210).
- Tranfield, D., D. Denyer, and P. Smart. 2003. "Towards a Methodology for Developing Evidence-Informed Management Knowledge by Means of Systematic Review." *British Journal of Management* 14 (3): 207–222. doi:[10.1111/bjom.2003.14.issue-3](https://doi.org/10.1111/bjom.2003.14.issue-3).
- Ul-Haq, S., and F. R. Khan. 2017. "A Sufi View of Human Transformation and Its Organizational Implications." In *Handbook of Personal and Organizational Transformation*, edited by J. Neal, 1–33. NY: Springer.
- Walker, S. A. 2009. "Reflections on Leadership from the Perspective of an African American Woman of Faith." *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 11 (5): 646–656. doi:[10.1177/1523422309352439](https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422309352439).
- Weber, M. 1930. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Webster, J., and R. T. Watson. 2002. "Analyzing the past to Prepare for the Future: Writing a Literature Review." *MIS Quarterly* 26 (2): xiii–xxiii.
- Wheatley, M. J. 2006. *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Widmann, A., G. Messmann, and R. H. Mulder. 2016. "The Impact of Team Learning Behaviors on Team Innovative Work Behavior: A Systematic Review." *Human Resource Development Review* 15 (4): 429–458. doi:[10.1177/1534484316673713](https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484316673713).
- Willmott, H. C. 2018. "Madness and Mindfulness: How the 'personal' Is 'political'." In *Handbook of Ethical Foundations of Mindfulness*, edited by S. Stanley, R. E. Purser, and N. N. Singh, 259–283. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Yip, F. C.-W. 2010. *Capitalism as Religion? A Study of Paul Tillich's Interpretation of Modernity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Zaidman, N., O. Goldstein-Gidoni, and I. Nehemya. 2009. "From Temples to Organizations: The Introduction and Packaging of Spirituality." *Organization* 16 (4): 597–621. doi:[10.1177/1350508409104510](https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508409104510).