

DIGNITY INHERENT AND EARNED: THE EXPERIENCE OF DIGNITY AT WORK

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Few concepts are more poignant than dignity at this point in history due to the confluence of several profound phenomena that detract from dignity—the pandemic, racial inequality, and technological dehumanization. Scholars have argued that dignity can be experienced at work, and prior research has highlighted the means for doing so, including work that is connected and inspired, respected and embedded, and valued and infused with meaning. Yet to our knowledge, no systematic review of scholarship on dignity at work has been published. There is a dire need to develop a science of dignity at work, as well as a framework that guides research. Our review helps to develop a thorough understanding of the experience of dignity and of the key means by which dignity is established at, and through, work.

Dignity encompasses an individual's sense of worth, value, or esteem (Hodson, 2001; Lee, 2008). Few concepts are more poignant. In the past decade, we have witnessed the confluence of several profound phenomena that detract from dignity—the experience of disaffection and alienation accompanying job loss and being forced to work remotely necessitated by the worldwide pandemic (Gibson, 2020; Sikali, 2020); the inequality and exclusion brought to our attention through social movements for racial equality and social justice (Szetela, 2020; Tillery, 2019); and the dehumanization resulting from the technological shifts toward automation, artificial intelligence, and robotics (Bankins & Formosa, 2020; Ivanov, Kuyumdzhev, & Webster, 2020).

We extend our sincere appreciation to our associate editor, Gary Ballinger, for his insightful comments and suggestions. We also thank our colleagues and students at Pepperdine Graziadio Business School for inspiring our thinking on this manuscript and the Research Incubator group for helping to create our collaborative culture. We extend special appreciation to Quinn Webster for her extensive assistance in retrieving and cataloging articles and to Stan Fischer for his expert copy editing. We are also grateful for the research retreat funds provided by the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects at Pepperdine University.

The experience of work provides a path forward. Specifically, our review suggests that in the face of disaffection and alienation, dignity is experienced when we are *connected and inspired* during our work (Cleveland, Byrne, & Cavanagh, 2015; Griesinger, 1990; Hodson, 1996; Lucas, 2015; Melé, 2012). As for addressing inequality and exclusion, dignity is experienced when we are *respected and embedded* in the workplace (Hodson & Roscigno, 2004; Lucas, Manikas, Mattingly, & Crider, 2017; Shapiro, 2016; Verhezen, 2010). Finally, when confronted with feeling disposable or expendable, dignity occurs when we experience *work as valued and infused with meaning* (Ashforth, Kreiner, Clark, & Fugate, 2007; Noronha, Chakraborty, & D'Cruz, 2020; Thomas & Lucas, 2019; Vogt, 2005; Yeoman, 2014). Indeed, some organizations have responded to recent crises in ways that increase dignity at work: teams have tried to maintain productivity and positive cultures while working remotely, leaders have worked to craft organizations in which all employees can experience a sense of belonging and achieve leadership roles regardless of race or ethnicity, and workers have dealt with global collaboration and competition in ways that humanize and make work feel valued irrespective of status or power (Gibson, 2020).

Yet surprisingly, our review of the research on dignity at work indicated that although many articles in our field and across related disciplines mentioned

dignity as an ancillary interest, the concept has seldom held center court in the management literature. Despite its potential to address many basic societal challenges, we lack a sense of the science of dignity at work. More specifically, we do not yet have a theoretical framework that maps the phenomena that detract from dignity that are so commonplace onto features of work through which dignity is experienced. Hence, to continue to support the experience of dignity, we must develop an integrated and holistic understanding of the specific actions that both detract from and activate human dignity at work.

In addressing these goals, our review makes four key contributions. First, we bring both clarity and synthesis to the conceptualization of dignity at work. Drawing on related literature from numerous religious and philosophical traditions as well as management, psychology, and sociology, we establish an integrated, interdisciplinary approach applicable to numerous occupations, contexts, and geographic locations. We also include research at four levels of analysis—societal, organizational, interpersonal, and individual—noting that many approaches to dignity focus on only one of these. Furthermore, we identify connections across levels as well as the possibility of understanding intrapersonal and relational approaches as embedded in contexts.

Second, we integrate two forms of dignity that previously have been contrasted in the literature: inherent and earned (Lucas, 2015). Inherent dignity is the belief in an unconditional dignity whereby all people have intrinsic and equal value by virtue of being human (Brennan & Lo, 2007). This is sometimes simply called “human dignity” and implies human value is absolute and accorded to all. In contrast, earned dignity emphasizes differential qualities, abilities, and efforts, thus acknowledging that some individuals gain greater dignity than others (Brennan & Lo, 2007). In this sense, dignity is meritocratic and self-generated. Prior research has argued that inherent and earned dignity offer different routes to experiencing dignity as well as different detractors to its pursuit. Scholars examining the absence of dignity have largely focused on inherent dignity, while earned dignity has been the focus of most workplace phenomena designed to activate dignity (Goodstein, 2019; Lucas, 2015; Rogers, Corley, & Ashforth, 2017). Ours is a fresh perspective, integrating both forms. As illustrated by our review, each of the indicators of an absence of dignity—alienation, exclusion, and dehumanization—entail *both* inherent and earned dignity. At the same time, prior research that has captured features of work that indicate the presence of dignity—connectedness,

respect, and meaning at work—also invokes *both* inherent and earned dignity.

Third, much of the prior research has focused on either the absence of dignity or on the means of establishing it. Rarely has a single study incorporated both. Yet, a natural response after identifying workplace phenomena that detract from dignity is to ask what can be done either to proactively avoid the indignity or through restorative practices that reestablish it. Because our framework identifies specific characteristics and features of work that address certain indicators of the absence of dignity, we inform both theoretical and practical applications. We allow for a theorization of an extended causal chain and sequence of events and for the development of mitigation strategies. Hence, we contribute an understanding of the experience of dignity at work, including how and why it is often compromised, as well as the key means through which society and the global business community can cope with each detractor to establish dignity at, and through, work.

Finally, our analysis of the literature will shape future research by addressing fundamental challenges at work that are driven by the megatrends facing our society, organizations, and workers. As organizations foresee a post-pandemic hybrid of in-person and virtual work, our review informs scholarship that explores the ways in which a “new normal” of increased virtual work (Gibson, 2020; Gibson & Gibbs, 2006) may confer dignity. Coinciding with social movements and United Nations initiatives to address inequalities (Chotiner, 2020), our review encourages researchers to explore the fundamental question: how does enabling employee voice activate dignity across races, genders, socioeconomic status, and other identity classifications that influence the experience of dignity? The impact of technology and automation has reached a fever pitch with the onset of Industry 4.0 (Murray, Rhymer, & Sirmon, 2021; Raisch & Krakowski, 2021; Schneider & Sting, 2020). Our integrated framework suggests it will be critical to investigate questions such as how can technological and increasingly dehumanized work be infused with value and meaning? More generally, our review encourages future research on how workplace phenomena that activate the experience of dignity can motivate individuals and organizations to champion dignity more broadly in society, government, and the global business community. Our integration and illumination of insights into the experience of dignity at work can guide exploration of these critical domains.

REVIEW SCOPE AND PROCESS

We applied best practice standards to conduct a systematic literature review (Siddaway, Wood, & Hedges, 2019; Snyder, 2019). The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) is widely used across disciplines and includes a 27-item checklist as part of its guidance (Siddaway et al., 2019). Research has shown that articles that explicitly adopt PRISMA are likelier to have reporting completeness indexed in PsychINFO (Leclercq, Beaudart, Ajamieh, Rabenda, Tirelli, & Bruyere, 2019). We focused on PRISMA standards dealing with defining research questions, data collection/search strategy, eligibility/screening criteria, selection strategy, data extraction, critical appraisal, and synthesis.

Our research asked: How has dignity been defined and addressed in the workplace? We applied the search terms “dignity” AND “workplace” across databases, including JSTOR and SCOPUS. Our search included 101 journals ranked highest across six journal quality reports (see [Appendix A](#) in the online supplement for details regarding journals in the search). No date range was specified. Our initial search returned 1,241 articles in the 101 journals. Next, we applied a series of eligibility criteria (see [Appendix B](#) in the online supplement). Two screeners used these criteria to determine the eligibility of all the initially discovered articles. After they reviewed the first third (119 articles), we examined their eligibility decisions and found they agreed on 103 (87%). Discrepancies were resolved against the eight criteria before the screeners reviewed the remaining articles.

Our screening indicated 523 articles (42% of those first identified) met the eligibility criteria (all of these are listed in [Appendix C](#) in the online supplement). Of the 101 journals originally specified, 58 included one of these articles. Table 1 shows the final number retained after our eligibility screening. We also ascertained whether each article in the final set of 523 was a review, conceptual, or empirical article. Next, we categorized the research methods used in the empirical articles as either quantitative, qualitative, or mixed. Fifty-three articles (10%) were reviews or meta-analyses, and 176 (34%) were conceptual. Of the 295 (56%) empirical articles, 179 (34%) were quantitative, 89 (17%) were qualitative, and 26 (5%) were mixed.

Our search did not find any previous systematic reviews specifically on the topic of dignity. Nevertheless, several previous reviews did inform our

focus. Two articles integrated knowledge regarding dignity. Pless, Maak, and Harris (2017: 223) provided an overview of dignity through “the lens of artistic expression and explores how arts may promote human dignity in organizational life.” Their essay was written as an introduction to a symposium on human dignity from the viewpoint of the visual and performing arts. In a second review, Zawadzki (2018) analyzed theoretical approaches to dignity with the goal of using Western management discourse to inform the field of Polish management sciences and identify how work can be humanized. Neither article claimed to be a systematic review. Numerous reviews are also available on topics that influence dignity or are influenced by it. Table 2 highlights the type, focus, and elements of each review, all of which informed our analysis of dignity. However, none of them placed dignity front and center.

Next, we used an abductive approach to develop a framework that integrated the 523 articles we reviewed. Abductive processes involve reasoning from observation of phenomena to creation of an initial model to arrive at explanations that serve as plausible starting points rather than tests of a theory (Behfar & Okhuysen, 2018; Dunne & Dougherty, 2016; Shepherd & Sutcliffe, 2011). The conceptual articles uncovered in our review were instrumental in this process, as they helped to clarify a unifying conceptualization of dignity and integrate extant empirical work.

We thus arrived at the framework depicted in Figure 1, consisting of six categories. Three of these categories indicate an absence of dignity at work, and we refer to these as *dignity detractors*. Thirty-eight percent of the articles in our review addressed these experiences. The reality in organizations is that these experiences are increasingly routine and ubiquitous, which suggests the features of work that detract from dignity are critical elements of understanding dignity at work. Three of the categories in our framework indicate the presence of dignity at work, and we refer to these as *dignity activators*. Sixty-two percent of the articles in our review addressed these experiences.

Although prior research has addressed either the absence or presence of dignity, it is very rare for a given article to focus on both phenomena that comprise an absence of dignity and those that comprise the presence of dignity. Thus, our framework integrates knowledge across multiple literatures by stipulating, in the same model, the phenomena that constitute an absence of dignity at work and then

TABLE 1
Number of Articles Identified and Retained in Systematic Search by Journal

Abbreviated Journal Title	Retained	Abbreviated Journal Title	Retained
<i>Acad. Manag. Ann.</i>	6	<i>J. Exp. Psychol. Gen.</i>	0
<i>Acad. Manag. Discov.</i>	1	<i>J. Exp. Psychol. Hum. Percept. Perform.</i>	0
<i>Acad. Manag. J.</i>	16	<i>J. Exp. Psychol. Learn. Mem. Cogn.</i>	0
<i>Acad. Manag. Learn. Educ.</i>	0	<i>J. Exp. Soc. Psychol.</i>	6
<i>Acad. Manag. Perspect.</i>	3	<i>J. Ind. Ecol.</i>	0
<i>Acad. Manag. Rev.</i>	10	<i>J. Ind. Relat.</i>	1
<i>ACM Trans. Database Syst.</i>	0	<i>J. Int. Bus. Stud.</i>	1
<i>ACM Trans. Math. Softw.</i>	0	<i>J. Int. Manag.</i>	0
<i>Adm. Sci. Q.</i>	8	<i>J. Manage.</i>	2
<i>Adv. Exp. Soc. Psych.</i>	0	<i>J. Manag. Stud.</i>	2
<i>Am. J. Public Health</i>	0	<i>J. Occup. Organ. Psychol.</i>	0
<i>Am. J. Sociol.</i>	8	<i>J. Organ. Behav.</i>	16
<i>Am. Psychol.</i>	16	<i>J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.</i>	6
<i>Am. Sociol. Rev.</i>	11	<i>J. Prod. Innov. Manage.</i>	4
<i>Annu. Rev. Organ. Psychol. Organ. Behav.</i>	7	<i>J. Vocat. Behav.</i>	20
<i>Annu. Rev. Psychol.</i>	1	<i>J. World Bus.</i>	6
<i>Annu. Rev. Sociol.</i>	3	<i>Leadersh. Q.</i>	19
<i>Appl. Psychol.</i>	0	<i>Manag. Organ. Rev.</i>	6
<i>Br. J. Ind. Relat.</i>	3	<i>MIS Q.</i>	0
<i>Bus. Ethics Q.</i>	3	<i>Manag. Int. Rev.</i>	0
<i>Bus. Soc.</i>	0	<i>Manage. Sci.</i>	0
<i>Calif. Manage. Rev.</i>	0	<i>Math. Program.</i>	0
<i>Cogn. Psychol.</i>	0	<i>Med. Decis. Making</i>	0
<i>Commun. Monogr.</i>	4	<i>MIT Sloan Manag. Rev.</i>	1
<i>Commun. Res.</i>	0	<i>Oper. Res.</i>	0
<i>Commun. Theory</i>	0	<i>Organ. Sci.</i>	5
<i>Decis. Sci.</i>	0	<i>Organ. Stud.</i>	3
<i>Discret. Appl. Math.</i>	0	<i>Organ. Behav. Hum. Decis. Process.</i>	0
<i>Entrep. Theory Pract.</i>	2	<i>Organ. Dyn.</i>	2
<i>Eur. J. Soc. Psychol.</i>	3	<i>Organ. Res. Methods</i>	4
<i>Gov.</i>	1	<i>Pers. Soc. Psychol. Bull.</i>	4
<i>Group Organ. Manag.</i>	1	<i>Pers. Soc. Psychol. Rev.</i>	0
<i>Harv. Bus. Rev.</i>	1	<i>Pers. Psychol.</i>	0
<i>Health Care Manage. Rev.</i>	0	<i>Int. Conf. Inf. Syst.</i>	0
<i>Hum. Perform.</i>	0	<i>Psychol. Bull.</i>	1
<i>Hum. Relat.</i>	1	<i>Psychol. Methods</i>	0
<i>Hum. Resour. Manage.</i>	30	<i>Psychol. Rev.</i>	0
<i>Hum. Resour. Manag. J.</i>	23	<i>Psychol. Sci.</i>	0
<i>Hum. Resour. Manag. Rev.</i>	1	<i>Psychometrika</i>	0
<i>IIE Trans.</i>	0	<i>Res. Organ. Behav.</i>	6
<i>IEEE Trans. Softw. Eng.</i>	0	<i>Res. Sociol. Organ.</i>	0
<i>IEEE Trans. Evol. Comput.</i>	0	<i>Risk Anal.</i>	2
<i>Ind. Labor Relat. Rev.</i>	7	<i>Science</i>	3
<i>Int. J. Confl. Manag.</i>	2	<i>SIAM J. Control Optim.</i>	0
<i>Int. J. Hum. Resour. Manag.</i>	2	<i>Small Group Res.</i>	0
<i>Int. J. Intercult. Relat.</i>	6	<i>Soc. Sci. Med.</i>	1
<i>J. Appl. Psychol.</i>	3	<i>Sociology</i>	8
<i>J. Bus.</i>	1	<i>Sociol. Health Illn.</i>	0
<i>J. Bus. Psychol.</i>	9	<i>Strateg. Manag. J.</i>	1
<i>J. Bus. Ethics</i>	194	<i>Work Occup.</i>	1
<i>J. Bus. Ventur.</i>	2		
<i>J. Cross-Cult. Psychol.</i>	3	TOTAL	523

TABLE 2
Summary of Reviews and Meta-Analyses

Citation	Core Focus	Relevance to Dignity	Direct or Indirect Relationship to Dignity	Key Findings
Colquitt, J. A., Conlon, D. E., Wesson, M. J., Porter, C. O., & Ng, K. Y. 2001. Justice at the millennium: A meta-analytic review of 25 years of organizational justice research. <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i> , 86: 425–445.	Organizational justice	Respected and embedded	Directly related to dignity by exploring interpersonal justice and how people are treated	Meta-analysis reviewing 25 years of organizational justice literature Focused on key outcomes of justice and the effects on organizations in a number of contexts
Hershcovis, M. S., & Barling, J. 2010. Toward a multi-foci approach to workplace aggression: A meta-analytic review of outcomes from different perpetrators. <i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i> , 31: 24–44.	Workplace aggression	Disrespected/excluded	Indirect connection to dignity related to treatment of employees and their individual outcomes and core values	Meta-analysis uncovered that workplace aggression in the form of supervisor aggression strongly impacted attitudinal and behavioral outcomes of employees Uncovered coworker aggression strongly impacted attitudinal and behavioral outcomes Organizational and personal strains are impacted by workplace aggression differently based on perpetrator of aggression Article explores ethical climate and treatments of ethical climate on individual outcomes
Martin, K. D., & Cullen, J. B. 2006. Continuities and extensions of ethical climate theory: A meta-analytic review. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 69: 175–194.	Ethical climate	Valued and infused with meaning	Indirectly related to dignity through core values of individuals and workplaces	Article explores ethical climate and treatments of ethical climate on individual outcomes
Zhang, Y., & Bednall, T. C. 2016. Antecedents of abusive supervision: A meta-analytic review. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 139: 455–471.	Abusive supervision	Disaffected/alienated	Indirectly related to dignity through workplace outcomes and core values	Explores unethical and abusive supervision leadership and the antecedents Also uncovers demographic characteristics of concerns as antecedents to abusive supervision
Acquisti, A., Brandimarte, L., & Loewenstein, G. 2015. Privacy and human behavior in the age of information. <i>Science</i> , 347: 509–514.	Privacy behavior	Disaffected/alienated	Indirect relationship to dignity where privacy-related behaviors can be influenced or manipulated by others	Highlights three areas of privacy concerns: consequences of privacy-related behaviors, the context of concerns, and how privacy can be manipulated by others Explores how privacy concerns impact individuals and how it relates to concepts of treatment and issues of dignity, among other aspects such as intrusion, anonymity, and protection
Collins, D. 2000. The quest to improve the human condition: The first 1500 articles published in <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> . <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 26: 1–73.	Human condition characteristics	Respected and embedded	Indirect relationship to dignity in workplace outcomes and to dignity on core values	Offers ways to protect privacy Review highlights popular methodologies and topics used when researching ways “to improve the human condition” Prevalence of ethical behavior Ethical sensitivities Ethics codes and programs

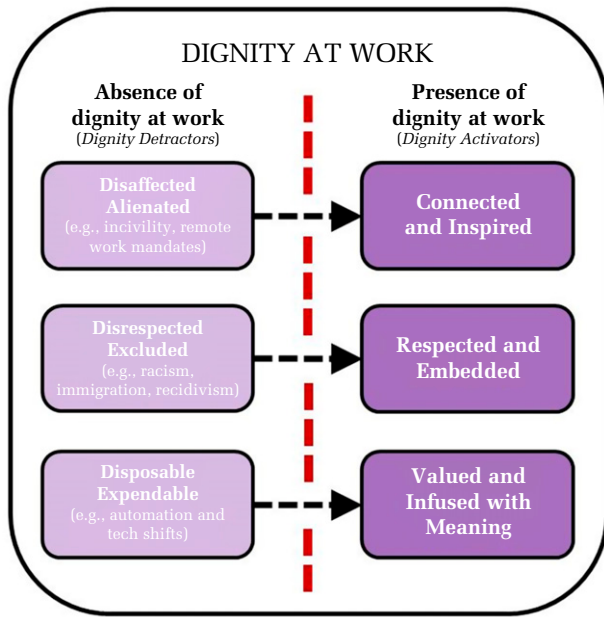
TABLE 2
(Continued)

Citation	Core Focus	Relevance to Dignity	Direct or Indirect Relationship to Dignity	Key Findings
Fantasia, R. 1995. From class consciousness to culture, action, and social organization. <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> , 21: 269–287.	Class consciousness	Connected and inspired	Indirect connection to dignity through core values	Corporate social performance and policies HR practices and policies Delineates observational, ethnographic, and historical methodologies to highlight class consciousness
Gotsis, G., & Kortezi, Z. 2008. Philosophical foundations of workplace spirituality: A critical approach. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 78: 575–600.	Workplace spirituality	Valued and infused with meaning	Indirect connection to dignity through core values and by facilitating interactional relationships of respect	Highlights the importance of spirituality in the workplace Highlights the importance of dignity in relation to respectful pluralism and all humans deserve to be treated with dignity and with equal respect
Greenberg, J., & Bies, R. J. 1992. Establishing the role of empirical studies of organizational justice in philosophical inquiries into business ethics. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 11: 433–444.	Organizational justice	Respected and embedded	Indirect relationship on dignity through truthfulness and through justice and fairness	Review articles on organizational justice to reconcile fairness, the rules of justice, and suggest ways to integrate different justice approaches
Greenwood, M. R. 2002. Ethics and HRM: A review and conceptual analysis. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 36: 261–278.	Ethical HRM	Disrespected/excluded	Indirect relationship to dignity through respect for individuals and treatment of workers in workplaces	Provides suggestions for ways to evaluate HRM in ways that are fair across all perspectives of ethics
Larsen, G., & Lawson, R. 2013. Consumer rights: An assessment of justice. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 112: 515–528.	Consumer rights and justice	Respected and embedded	Indirect relationship to dignity through interpersonal justice in consumer rights	Reviews 50 years of consumer rights and justice framework for consumers
Gross, J. A. 2012. The human rights movement at U.S. workplaces: Challenges and changes. <i>ILR Review</i> , 65: 3–16.	Workers' rights as human rights	Disaffected/alienated	Indirect relationship to dignity on core values of individuals Indirect relationship to dignity on interactional and organizational relationships	Basic human rights are needed to reduce the power one person may have on the other to cause harm and damage and leave the other vulnerable and powerless Explores how workplace human rights coincide with U.S. labor policy Calls for action of more enforcement of workers' human rights in organizations
Morrill, C., Zald, M. N., & Rao, H. 2003. Covert political conflict in organizations: Challenges from below. <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> , 29: 391–415.	Covert political conflict	Disrespected/excluded	Indirect relationship to dignity on core values Indirect relationship to dignity on a societal level	Reviews literature on covert political conflict which is defined as “contentious politics” by those who challenge or disagree with authorities on the shape and governance of systems of power Highlights instances where workers fight for inherent dignity from those who exploit them by exerting covert political conflict to defend their dignity

TABLE 2
(Continued)

Citation	Core Focus	Relevance to Dignity	Direct or Indirect Relationship to Dignity	Key Findings
Pless, N. M., Maak, T., & Harris, H. 2017. Art, ethics and the promotion of human dignity. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 144: 223–232.	Artful expression—human dignity as core value	Respected and embedded	Direct relationship to core values	How dignity is used to humanize the workplace
Peterson, C., & Park, N. 2006. Character strengths in organizations. <i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i> , 27: 1149–1154.	Character strengths	Value and infused with meaning	Direct relationship to work outcomes Indirect relationship to core values	How arts and artful expression can promote human dignity in the organization Character building and character strength leads people to make good decisions, choices, and to “do the right thing” Character strength can increase productivity, profitability in an organizational context Dignity is an organizational-level virtue that treats all individuals the same and decreases negative individual outcomes at work
Rowan, J. R. 2000. The moral foundation of employee rights. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 24: 355–361.	Employee rights	Value and infused with meaning	Direct relationship to dignity by understanding moral foundations of employee rights and treatment	Discusses employee rights from the perspective of the bargaining position of the employee Ethically sound decision-making regarding employee and stakeholder equity
Stähl, C., MacEachen, E., & Lippel, K. 2014. Ethical perspectives in work disability prevention and return to work: Toward a common vocabulary for analyzing stakeholders’ actions and interactions. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 120: 237–250.	Work disability prevention	Respected and embedded	Directly related to dignity by highlighting safe workplace systems aimed on providing safe working conditions	Analyzes work disability prevention and return to work practices from an ethical lens
Tharenou, P. 2010. Women’s self-initiated expatriation as a career option and its ethical issues. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 95: 73–88.	Women self-initiated expatriation	Disrespected/excluded	Indirectly related to dignity as lack of virtue shown to women and lack of justice during career advancement	Article explores ethical issues women face during self-initiated expatriation
Thomas, M., & Rowland, C. 2014. Leadership, pragmatism and grace: A review. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 123: 99–111.	Grace	Respected and embedded	Directly relates to dignity through grace and pragmatism in leadership	Reviews articles on leadership and grace
Werner, A., & Lim, M. 2016. The ethics of the living wage: A review and research agenda. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 137: 433–447.	Living wages	Disposable/expendable	Directly related to dignity by mistreatment of employees and worth of person	Examines literature on living wage from a philosophical and practical perspective Discusses ethical implications of living wages implementation in organizations
Wharton, A. S. 2009. The sociology of emotional labor. <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> , 35: 147–165.	Emotional labor	Disrespected/excluded	Indirectly related to dignity through core values and interactional facilitators	Article highlights theory and research on emotional labor on interactive work and management of emotions by workers Workers can strategically manage emotions and interactions to gain dignity in the workplace

FIGURE 1
Dignity Framework



maps the features of work through which dignity is experienced and restored for each detractor.

Specifically, to address the experience of disaffection/alienation identified in 12% ($n = 63$) of the articles, our review revealed that dignity is activated in the presence of an experience of work as connected and inspired; 22% ($n = 113$) addressed these features of work.¹ To address the experience of disrespect/exclusion addressed in 18% ($n = 92$) of the articles, our review revealed that dignity is activated when workers are respected and embedded; 25% ($n = 129$) addressed this experience at work. Finally, to address the disposability/expendability addressed in 7% ($n = 37$) of the articles, our review revealed that dignity is activated by the experience of work as valued and infused with meaning; 16% ($n = 83$) reflected this experience. Before reviewing this literature, we address below how dignity has been conceptualized and operationalized.

¹ Classifying articles into one of six categories of the model based on the primary focus was straightforward (see [Appendix C](#) in the online supplement). We labeled each category with experiences or characteristics of work that clustered together (e.g., the category “disaffecting/alienating” contains articles that addressed work that is either disaffecting or alienating). But we do not mean to imply that both experiences included in the category label must occur simultaneously in order to detract from dignity.

CONCEPTUALIZATIONS AND OPERATIONALIZATIONS

Our review indicates dignity is a subjective experience shaped by cultural and social norms (Howard & Donnelly, 1986), and yet a basic sense of what constitutes dignified treatment of people guides business practice and international policy (Kotzmann & Seery, 2017). Across disciplines and applications, authors are consistent on the centrality of worth, value, and esteem to their conceptualizations of dignity (Berger, 1970; Düwell, Braarvig, & Brownsword, 2014; Habermas, 2010; Hitlin & Vaisey, 2010; Howard & Donnelly, 1986). However, the emphasis differs based on religion, philosophical perspective, and literature subdomain.

Religious and Philosophical Approaches

The teachings of Judeo-Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Confucianism, and Buddhism contain numerous perspectives on dignity. A common thread is the juxtaposition of inherent and earned dignity. The Judeo-Christian perspective sees inherent dignity as a God-given human value (Genuis, 2016; Li, 2021). This implies every individual deserves dignity, equality, and fairness by virtue of being human (Islam, 2012; Pless et al., 2017). Melé (2012) noted that within organizations influenced by Judeo-Christian beliefs, a firm is viewed as a community of people, each possessing a dignity that all must respect. This inherent value is independent of the group, highlighting the uniqueness and irreplaceability of individuals (Ip, 2009). Human virtues of benevolence, decorum, righteousness, and loyalty are emphasized, as is the unselfish care and well-being of others (Chan, 2008; Lin, Ho, & Lin, 2013; Luo, 2014).

Inherent dignity is also a focus in the Islamic tradition, which highlights the importance of unity, humanness, and respect (Noronha et al., 2020; Richardson, Sinha, & Yaapar, 2014). Islam holds that all humans are equal and therefore should be treated with dignity and equity (Mellahi & Budhwar, 2010; Saeed, Ahmed, & Mukhtar, 2001).² Fairness and justice are paramount considerations in Islamic workplaces (Richardson et al., 2014). Like Islam, the Hindu tradition takes a holistic perspective in which humanity, society, and the cosmos are interrelated (Ashok & Thimmappa, 2006). Hindu devotees choose

² From an Islamic perspective, in addition to a focus on inherent dignity, there is also a belief that dignity can be earned, based on piety, good deeds, and living righteously (Mozaffari, 2014; Williams & Zinkin, 2010).

how to practice their faith, resulting in an array of beliefs and customs, but most practice nonviolence and believe in respect and human dignity for all (Ashok & Thimmappa, 2006).

In contrast, a focus on earned dignity emphasizes moral potential and holds that dignity is acquired through actions (Koehn & Leung, 2008; Li, 2021). For example, to live with dignity in the Confucian belief system depends on personal volition to act virtuously (Luo, 2014). Dignity is neither absolute nor guaranteed, and failing to cultivate dignity through one's actions fails to achieve universal human potential (Li, 2021; Luo, 2014). The Confucian concept of "role-based dignity" implies dignity is based on family background, occupation, or societal role and maintains social and moral order based on conforming to social expectations (Lin et al., 2013). As such, the Confucian work ethic focuses on duty in which agents are responsible for creating harmony while meeting external expectations (Lin et al., 2013).

Buddhists have a pragmatic orientation toward earned dignity, focusing on cause-and-effect relationships, the solving of problems, and the importance of verified observation (Weerasinghe, Thisera, & Kumara, 2014). Buddhists consider mindfulness, self-discipline, self-sacrifice for the common good, and mutual respect of the utmost importance, all of which cultivate wisdom and spirituality toward the ultimate goal of coping with the earthly suffering caused by an ever-changing environment. Buddhists tend to view human equality as a basis for ethical behavior (Guillory, 2000) and emphasize compassion, flexibility, and open-mindedness (Goffee & Jones, 2005) to nurture harmony among employees (Weerasinghe et al., 2014).

Disciplinary Approaches and Operationalizations

In addition to these perspectives, our review captured a range of approaches from sociology, organizational theory, industrial relations, and business ethics. As summarized in Table 3, these disciplinary approaches correspond with numerous operationalizations, including ethnographic analyses, experimental studies, and cross-sectional surveys. Sociologists have often emphasized earned dignity as linked to the value and esteem that comes from working and deriving self-value from instrumental contributions (Buzza-nell & Lucas, 2013; Sayer, 2007). For example, using an ethnographic approach, Hodson (1996) found support for both task-related (pride in work, on-the-job learning, and voluntary effort) and coworker-related

(solidarity, informal peer training, and social friendships) strategies to protect and maximize dignity at work. Hodson and Roscigno (2004: 680) operationalized workers' dignity as a result of organizational practices that establish "a sense of meaning and accomplishment in work and the creation of positive and supportive coworker relations." They concluded that different configurations of job- and organization-level practices are associated with both positive and negative impacts on employees' perceptions of meaningful work and positive coworker relations.

An important contribution of organizational theory scholars (Bolton, 2007; 2010; 2011; Lucas et al., 2017; Sayer, 2007; Thomas & Lucas, 2019) is an empirical examination of multidimensional theories of dignity at work. Defining dignity as "the self-recognized and other-recognized worth acquired from (or injured by) engaging in work activity," Lucas et al. (2017: 2549) drew upon ethnographic data to contrast facets of dignity *in work* and *at work*. Dignity in work included meaningful work, autonomy, respectful social relations, learning and development, and job satisfaction; dignity at work included secure terms of employment, safe and healthy working conditions, just rewards, equality of opportunity, and voice. Subsequently, Thomas and Lucas (2019) developed and validated an 18-item, self-report workplace dignity scale composed of six factors (respectful interaction, competency-contribution, equality, inherent value, general dignity, and indignity). Expanding workplace dignity's nomological net by examining relationships with incivility, workplace alienation, indignity, interpersonal justice, workplace status, and competence, Thomas and Lucas (2019) found that dignity enhances employee engagement while also decreasing counterproductive behaviors. They also found that *subjective* dimensions of dignity in work exceed objective dimensions as drivers of employee engagement. This work lends empirical support to a core theoretical claim that dignity demands either protection or insulation from workplace phenomena that detract from dignity as well as opportunities for meaningful work (Donaldson & Walsh, 2015; Pirson, 2017). In addition to establishing this dual-factor nature of workplace dignity, another major contribution was the validation of a quantitative measure of dignity at work—and its potential for replication across contexts and hypothesized relationships.

Adopting a narrower conceptualization, industrial relations scholars have primarily defined dignity at work in relation to the psychological contract and employees' resulting perceptions of organizational justice (Rousseau, 1995; Wood & Karau, 2009). They

TABLE 3
Operational Definitions of Dignity at Work Across Disciplines

Citation	Discipline (Subdiscipline)	Definition	Operationalization/ Measure	Notes
Thomas, B., & Lucas, K. 2019. Development and validation of the Workplace Dignity Scale. <i>Group & Organization Management</i> , 44: 72–111.	Management (Organizational behavior)	The self-recognized and other-recognized worth acquired from (or injured by) engaging in work activity (Lucas, 2017: 2549).	18-item Workplace Dignity Scale (WDS) WDS comprised of six factors: respectful interaction, competence-contribution, equality, inherent value, general dignity, and indignity.	Multi-study scale development using data from focus groups, expert panel, and two surveys. Participants completed the self-report WDS along with numerous convergent and discriminant validity scales across two survey studies. Workplace dignity associated with employee engagement, burnout, and turnover intentions beyond the effects of meaningful work and organizational respect.
Frenkel, S. J., Li, M., & Restubog, S. L. D. 2012. Management, organizational justice and emotional exhaustion among Chinese migrant workers: Evidence from two manufacturing firms. <i>British Journal of Industrial Relations</i> , 50: 121–147.	Industrial relations (Labor-management relations)	Definition grounded by psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995) and organizational justice (Greenberg, 1990). The employment relationship is an exchange process involving a psychological and material contract—the worker contributes effort and cooperation in exchange for present and future extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. This so-called labor process confers varying degrees of dignity or respect (Frenkel et al., 2012: 123). Distributive justice refers to the perceived fairness in the distribution of outcomes; procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the procedures, and interactional justice denotes. Interpersonal treatment and the quality of information people receive at work (Frenkel & Restubog, 2012: 123).	Niehoff and Moorman's (1993) 20-item, three-factor measure of perceptions of organizational justice: distributive (5 items), procedural (6 items), and interactional (9 items).	As part of a survey study, participants self-reported their perceptions of organizational justice using the Niehoff and Moorman (1993) scale. The authors selected organizational justice as a measure of how employees perceive the fairness of the exchange process (psychological contract). This cognitive and emotional exchange process grants varying levels of dignity and respect to employees. The study results indicate that strong HR systems engender favorable employee perceptions of organizational justice, while only distributive injustice is associated with negative emotions and emotional exhaustion.
Hodson, R., & Roscigno, V. J. 2004. Organizational success and worker dignity: Complementary or contradictory?	Sociology (Social psychology)	A sense of meaning and accomplishment in work and the creation of positive and supportive coworker relations. Meaningful work provides a sense of having made a useful contribution to the	Coding of organizational ethnographies ($n = 204$) that measured worker dignity as: <i>Meaningful work</i> : Sense of purpose and accomplishment in work	Worker dignity was conceptualized and measured as a consequence of successful organizational practices for the workforce. Data from a population of book-length organizational ethnographies were analyzed via relevant coding and

TABLE 3
(Continued)

Citation	Discipline (Subdiscipline)	Definition	Operationalization/ Measure	Notes
<i>American Journal of Sociology</i> , 100: 672–708.		organization and to society (p. 680).	(meaningless or somewhat meaningful vs. fulfilling) <i>Positive coworker relations</i> : Conflict within or between work groups (frequent conflict vs. occasional or less).	configurations for the work dignity variable (<i>meaningful work</i> and <i>positive coworker relations</i>). The authors examined the effects of job-level (on-the-job training, abuse, and firings) and organization-level (well-run organization, security, and involvement) practices on both organizational success (employee citizenship and peaceful management/employee relations) and worker dignity (meaningful work and positive coworker relations). The configurations of job- and organization-level practices are associated with both positive and negative outcomes for workers and organizations.
Lucas, K., Manikas, A. S., Mattingly, E. S., & Crider, C. J. 2017. Engaging and misbehaving: How dignity affects employee work behaviors. <i>Organization Studies</i> , 38: 1505–1527.	Business & management (Organization theory)	The ability to establish a sense of self-worth and self-respect and to appreciate the respect of others (Hodson, 2001: 3).	Two-factor measure of workplace dignity by applying Bolton's (2007; 2010; 2011) multidimensional theory of workplace dignity to Hodson's (2004) Workplace Ethnography Dignity in work: Meaningful work, autonomy, respectful social relations, learning and development, and job satisfaction. Dignity at work: Secure terms of employment, safe and healthy work conditions, just rewards, equality of opportunity, and voice.	Authors selected broad definition and measurement of workplace dignity (Bolton, 2007; 2010; 2011) for the purpose of identifying deeper theoretical insights. Authors assessed the Workplace Ethnography Project codebook to identify variables that mapped onto the dimensions of Bolton's (2007; 2010; 2011) dignity framework. Workplace dignity is associated with increases in employee engagement while also illustrating mixed results concerning counterproductive workplace behaviors.
Wood, M., & Karau, S. 2009. Preserving employee dignity during the termination interview: Via experimental scenario-based study, participants reviewed scenarios describing a termination interview and completed manipulation checks and the employee dignity scale.	Business and management (Business ethics)	Employee dignity conceptualized as employee respect, empathy, and fulfillment versus violation of psychological contracts. Employee respect definition adapted	21-item, five-factor employee dignity scale developed for a scenario-based experimental study.	

TABLE 3
(Continued)

Citation	Discipline (Subdiscipline)	Definition	Operationalization/ Measure	Notes
An empirical examination. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 86: 519–534.		from Kant (1785: 420): “Act so that you will treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only.” Empathy definition adapted from Goleman (1998): “The thoughtful consideration of employees’ feelings in the process of making intelligent decisions” (Wood & Karau, 2009: 521). Psychological contract fulfillment versus violation definition adapted from Morrison & Robinson, 1997): “The employee’s perception that the organization has failed to fulfill one or more of its obligations” (Wood & Karau, 2009: 521).	Scale factors include: (1) Perception of being treated with respect, (2) perception of being treated with empathy, (3) anger, (4) likelihood to complain to others about the employer, and (5) likelihood to take legal action against the employer.	Given the literature review failed to identify existing measures for the study’s definition of workplace dignity that were brief, face valid, internally consistent, and adaptable to examining termination interview contexts, the authors developed a new survey measure of employee dignity.
Malvini Redden, S., & Scarduzio, J. A. 2018. A different type of dirty work: Hidden taint, intersectionality, and emotion management in bureaucratic organizations. <i>Communication Monographs</i> , 85: 224–244.	Communication (Organizational communication)	Employee dignity conceptualized as dirty work and examined in the context of bureaucratic organizations. Dirty work definition adapted from Ashforth and Kreiner (1999; 2014): Dirty work is labor considered physically, morally, or socially stigmatized.	Content analysis of observational, ethnographic, and semi-structured interview data from municipal courthouses (judges) and airports (passengers & transportation security officers [TSOs]). New measure of dirty work defined as “hidden taint” embedded in professional contexts (judges and TSOs) via intersection of identity markers and coconstruction of emotion norms and power dynamics.	The study’s measure of worker dignity was derived from the emotion norms and power relationships that are embedded in the professions of municipal court judges and airport. Emotion norms and power dynamics are coconstructed between employees and patrons, exposing the “hidden taint” of these professional roles and potential assaults on employee dignity. Authors conclude that the severity of the “hidden taint” of these roles is highly interdependent with gender, race, and class.

have focused on the implicit exchange of effort between employees and their organizations for present and future rewards that “confers varying degrees of dignity or respect” (Frenkel, Li, & Restubog, 2012: 123). As such, employees experience dignity at work when they perceive the employment relationship as fair or just across multiple dimensions of organizational justice (Eisenberger, Rhoades Shanock, & Wen, 2020). Similarly, business ethics scholars have examined the features of work through which dignity is experienced and preserved, including human resource policies or practices.

Toward an Integrative Definition of Dignity at Work

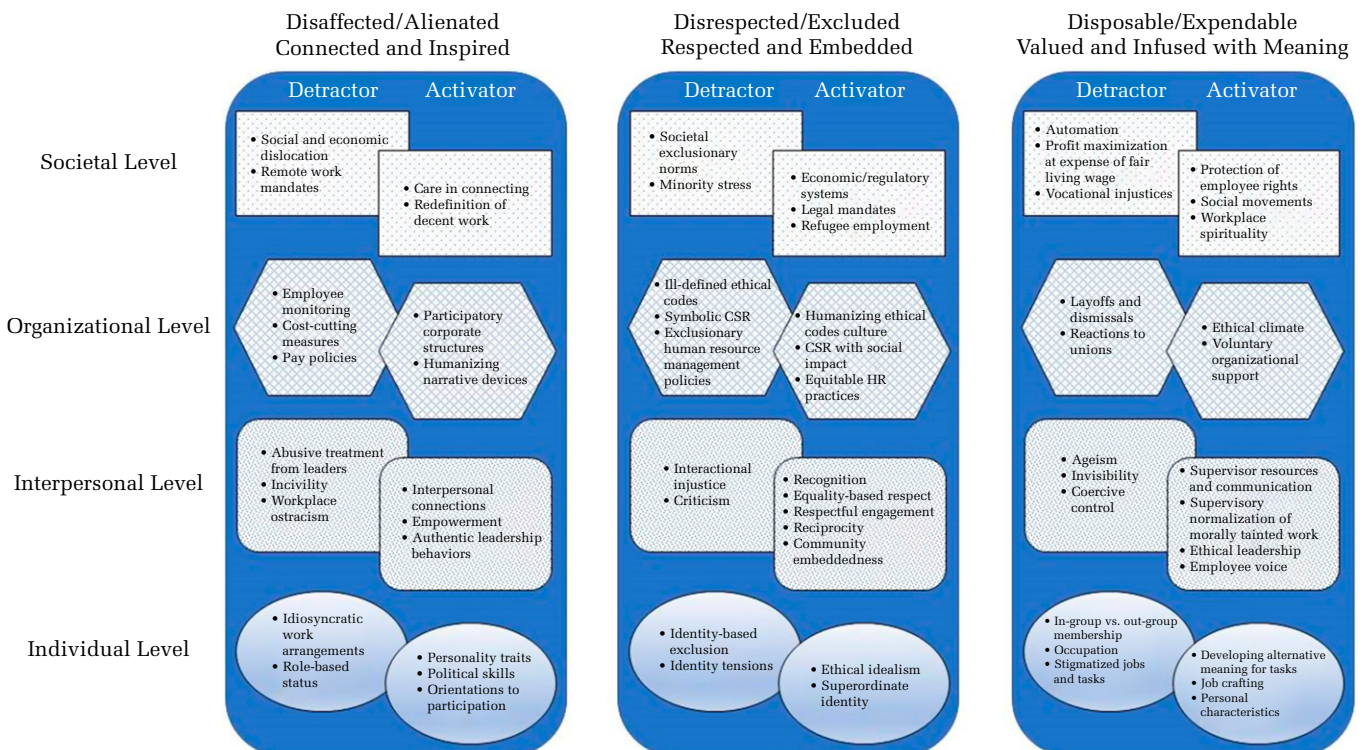
Given these prior conceptualizations, we define dignity at work as *the inherent and earned worth, value, and esteem experienced by individuals at work in the absence of disaffection, exclusion, and expendability, and in the presence of connectedness, respect, and meaningfulness*. This definition transcends traditional approaches to conceptualizing dignity by encompassing both inherent and earned dignity and integrating indicators of the absence as

well as the presence of dignity at work. Hence, it offers management researchers a conceptualization and construct to use as a starting point for research that examines the causal chain of workplace detractors as well as activators of dignity. Our integrative definition and framework offer scholars a path forward for extending theory on dignity at work, charting a course for future research that encompasses multilevel workplace phenomena through which dignity is experienced and reestablished.

REVIEW OF RESEARCH RELATED TO DIGNITY AT WORK

With this conceptualization as a foundation, we review the research within each of the three sections of our framework. Each section summarizes the literature related to detractors that indicate an absence of dignity (i.e., feelings of disaffection, exclusion, and of being expendable) along with activators of the presence of dignity (i.e., work that is connected and inspired, respect and being embedded, and work that is valued and infused with meaning). As summarized in Figure 2, topics and studies within each section are addressed at four levels of analysis: societal,

FIGURE 2
Summary of the Literature on Dignity at Work at Each Level of Analysis



organizational, interpersonal, and individual. Detractors and activators at the societal level include those that occur within countries or cultures that are beyond the organization and often associated with governments, religious traditions, and social norms. These mechanisms include government policies (e.g., COVID-19 lockdowns) and public attitudes (e.g., deeming frontline workers to be “heroes”). Mechanisms of detracting or activating dignity at the organizational level include those that occur within the bounds of an organization but beyond the interpersonal or dyadic level. As such, the organization is the actor or context for the experience. Organizational-level mechanisms include organizational policies (e.g., pay transparency), structures (e.g., participatory structures), routine practices (e.g., electronic monitoring), and even infrequent actions (e.g., layoffs). Mechanisms of detracting or activating dignity at the interpersonal level include those that occur between people, either within groups or dyads. They often occur within the bounds of an organization, such as two team members collaborating, but also could also go beyond these bounds (e.g., when independent contractors have an experience that affirms their dignity with a client). Interpersonal mechanisms include behaviors or statements directed at another individual (e.g., a statement that a supervisor says to a subordinate), as well as long-term relationships (e.g., connection between colleagues). Detractors and activators of dignity at the individual level include those that occur within a single individual. Individual-level mechanisms include personality traits (e.g., agreeableness), individual skills (e.g., political tools), or individual orientations (e.g., learning orientation).

Importantly, we note that several of these topics and related research could be categorized in multiple ways; however, rather than a definitive statement, we view our categorization as a means of integrating and making sense of the literature. Table 4 summarizes articles illustrating each component of the framework. Similarly, the detractors and activators of dignity at work may occur at one level and be impacted by phenomenon at another level. For example, a janitor in a hospital may be treated as lower status in interactions with a doctor. However, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the broader societal attitude that frontline workers are heroes may lead to the janitor experiencing more dignity through their work than they did prior to the pandemic. For the sake of clarity, we organize the following sections by the primary level at which dignity is detracted or activated.

DISAFFECTION/ALIENATION DETRACTING DIGNITY AND CONNECTION/INSPIRATION ACTIVATING DIGNITY

In the first section of our model, we explore the ways in which disaffection and alienation detract dignity and relatedly how connection and inspiration activate dignity. To do so, we rely on the following definitions. Disaffection is becoming detached from one's employer and those in charge (McCann, 2014), while alienation refers to estrangement from one's work (Luhman & Nazario, 2015; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). In contrast, connection is characterized by in-the-moment feelings of positive regard, mutuality, and vitality (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003), which are often experienced as elevating or inspiring (Bacha & Walker, 2013; Miller & Stiver, 1997).

Societal Level

The key societal phenomena that detract from dignity in this section of the framework pertain to social and economic dislocation and remote work mandates resulting from governmental policy or national and global social forces. The key means of restoring dignity involve a societal norm for connecting with care across remote locations and inspiring workers through a redefinition of what constitutes decent work. We discuss each of these in turn.

Societal disaffection and alienation detract dignity. Scholars have argued that alienation has societal origins (Nair & Vohra, 2012), and research has documented that those who are lonely tend to experience alienation (Amarat, Akbolat, Ünal, & Güneş Karakaya, 2019). Research has most recently explored the societal experience of disaffection and alienation prompted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Millions were “quarantined, desperate, and despairing, leading to social and economic dislocation not seen since the Great Depression,” such that the pandemic “tested the boundaries of dignity’s role under the law” (May & Daly, 2020: 1). A global survey in 2020 by the World Dignity Project found the pandemic’s most common impact was a decrease in mental health brought on by social isolation (Ivbijaro, Brooks, Kolkiewicz, Sunkel, & Long, 2020); this was a byproduct of remote work mandates and social distancing that were considered a medical necessity (Zhang, Yu, & Marin, 2021). By the end of 2020, 71% of workers who reported they could perform their jobs remotely were working remotely (Parker, Horowitz, & Minkin, 2020). Although some workers enjoyed avoiding a long commute, even experiencing greater productivity as a result, others suffered under the mandates, especially those

TABLE 4
Articles Illustrating the Components of the Integrative Framework for Dignity in the Workplace

Connected/Inspired	Methods	Sample	Study Focus	Treatment of Dignity
Chen, Y., Ferris, D. L., Kwan, H. K., Yan, M., Zhou, M., & Hong, Y. 2013. Self-love's lost labor: A self-enhancement model of workplace incivility. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> , 56: 1199–1219.	Quantitative; survey	Study 1: 235 technicians—large manufacturing company Study 2: 204 sales clerks—property company and department store	How incivility thwarts self-enhancement at work, tempering engagement and performance, especially for those high in narcissism.	Dignity is connected to engagement from a self-enhancement theoretical perspective.
Hodson, R. 1996. Dignity in the workplace under participative management: Alienation and freedom revisited. <i>American Sociological Review</i> , 61: 719–738.	Quantitative; analysis from coding of published ethnographies	86 published workplace ethnographies	Examines the workplace experiences and coworker relations under different forms of production.	Worker dignity as a consequence of certain organizational forms for production (craft organization of work, participative organizations of production).
Shapiro, B. 2016. Using traditional narratives and other narrative devices to enact humanizing business practices. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 139: 1–19.	Qualitative; case study	Manufacturing company	How organizations can embed humanizing narrative in management control systems to enact humanizing business practices.	Humanizing narrative devices respect a person's dignity and capacity for personal growth, respect human rights, promote care and service for others, and improve an organization's ability to serve the common good rather than only narrow special interests.
Disaffected/Alienated	Methods	Sample	Study Focus	Treatment of Dignity
Agassi, J. B. 1986. Dignity in the workplace: Can work be dealienated? <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 5: 271–284.	Conceptual	N/A	Discusses the harm done by alienating work and remedies through gradual de-alienation.	Alienating work is defined as that which employees incur mental, psychological, or psychosomatic damage, reducing dignity.
Farh, C. I., & Chen, Z. 2014. Beyond the individual victim: Multilevel consequences of abusive supervision in teams. <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i> , 99: 1074–1095.	Quantitative; survey and scenario study	Study 1: 295 employees in 51 teams across 10 firms Study 2: 276 undergraduate business majors	Examines how abusive supervision exhibits in the team setting and its implications for employee voice, performance, and turnover.	Leader treatment of team members with regards to dignity, respect, and politeness.
Respected and Embedded	Methods	Sample	Study Focus	Treatment of Dignity
Hodson, R., & Roscigno, V. 2004. Organizational success and worker dignity: Complementary or contradictory? <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> , 110: 672–708.	Qualitative; workplace ethnographies	204 work groups across industries, occupations, and organizations	Examines the degree to which organization- and job-level practices can advance the goals of organizational success and worker dignity.	Configurations of organization- and job-level practices can produce both positive and negative outcomes for organizational success and worker dignity. The configuration with the greatest negative impact on worker dignity is the lack of workplace involvement practices, poor organizational functioning, and significant supervisory abuse.

TABLE 4
(Continued)

Respected and Embedded	Methods	Sample	Study Focus	Treatment of Dignity
Lucas, K., Manikas, A. S., Mattingly, E. S., & Crider, C. J. 2017. Engaging and misbehaving: How dignity affects employee work behaviors. <i>Organization Studies</i> , 38: 1505–1527.	Qualitative; ethnographic	Hodson's (2004) Workplace Ethnography Project, 204 ethnographic cases from 156 books	The influence of workplace dignity on employee work behaviors and the subsequent effects on organizational performance.	Applies a multidimensional theory of dignity, which identifies conditions of work and the workplace that are essential for human dignity.
Melé, D. 2014. "Human quality treatment": Five organizational levels. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 120: 457–471.	Conceptual	N/A	Defines "Human Quality Treatment" (HQT) as acting with respect for human dignity and rights, caring for their problems and legitimate interests, and fostering their personal development.	Identifies five different levels of HQT in organizations based on: (a) maltreatment, (b) indifference, (c) justice, (d) care, and (e) development.
Disrespected/Excluded	Methods	Sample	Study Focus	Treatment of Dignity
Hollensbe, E., Khazanchi, S., & Masterson, S. 2008. How do I assess if my supervisor and organization are fair? Identifying the rules underlying entity-based justice perceptions. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> , 51: 1099–1116.	Qualitative; semi-structured interviews	33 graduating seniors about to begin new full-time jobs.	Identifies the rules that new job entrants use to form entity-based justice perceptions (organization and supervisor) beyond the four traditional justice dimensions.	Employees perceive their organizations as unfair when organization support, flexibility, and diversity are low; they perceive supervisors as unfair when support, flexibility, and valued traits are lacking. Entity-based justice perceptions are important factors in how employees experience dignity through work.
Henry P. J. 2009. Low-status compensation: A theory for understanding the role of status in cultures of honor. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> , 97: 451–466.	Quantitative; archival, survey, and experimental data	Study 1: 280 U.S. counties Study 2: 92 countries Study 3: 1807 participants from the General Social Survey Study 4: 96 men	Shows that herding regions ascribe to a culture of honor based on the role of status and that when threatened, this is linked to violence.	Those who experience low status attempt to re-establish dignity by placing great importance on honor in the face of insults and humiliation, showing lower status groups respect, recognition, and dignity, protects integrity of the group, reducing the probability of violent reactions toward the source of threats to their worth.
Valued/Infused with Meaning	Methods	Sample	Study Focus	Treatment of Dignity
Ashforth, B., Kreiner, G., Clark, M., & Fugate, M. 2007. Normalizing dirty work: Managerial tactics for countering occupational taint. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> , 50: 149–174.	Mixed methods; interviews and survey	54 managers from 18 "dirty work" occupations; 350 MBA students at U.S. universities	Identifies the challenges of performing the role of a manager in tainted work and the practices or tactics that managers use to normalize tainted or "dirty" work.	Managers of tainted work experience high levels of role complexity and stigma awareness and utilize four primary tactics for normalizing: occupational ideologies, defensive tactics, social buffers, and confronting clients/public.
Noronha, E., Chakraborty, S., & D'Cruz, P. 2020. "Doing dignity work": Indian	Qualitative; semi-structured interviews	31 security guards and four managers	Examines the dynamics of workplace dignity in a country (India)	Security guards serving bank AMTs experienced loss of dignity compared to guards

TABLE 4
(Continued)

Valued/Infused with Meaning	Methods	Sample	Study Focus	Treatment of Dignity
security guards' interface with precariousness. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 16: 553–575.		employed as contracted labor in India	and job context (security guards) characterized by low status, disrespect, and precariousness.	who served large, reputable organizations; the latter engaged in multiple practices for reclaiming dignity through their work and relationships at work.
Wood, M. S., & Karau, S. J. 2009. Preserving employee dignity during the termination interview: An empirical examination. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 86: 519–534.	Quantitative; experiment	296 undergraduate business students	How the presence of a third party (an HR manager or a security guard) affected employee dignity during a termination interview.	Employer treatment impacts how workers experience dignity.
Disposable/Expendable	Methods	Sample	Study Focus	Treatment of Dignity
Crowley, M. 2012. Control and dignity in professional, manual and service-sector employment. <i>Organization Studies</i> , 33: 1383–1406.	Qualitative; workplace ethnographies	154 work groups across many industries, occupations, and organizations (1940–1999)	Examines how complex combinations of control approaches compare in professional, manual, and service-sector employment, and how these approaches impact the multidimensional work experience.	Professionals experience persuasive “bundles” of control that enhance how dignity is manifested while manual and service employees encounter coercive control approaches that dehumanize job incumbents while weakening pride and effort.
Hamilton, P., Redman, T. & McMurray, R. 2019. “Lower than a snake’s belly”: Discursive constructions of dignity and heroism in low-status garbage work. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 156: 889–901.	Qualitative; semi-structured interviews	51 garbage collectors	Considers how dignity is discursively constructed in the context of work dominated by physicality and dirt.	Garbage workers respond to occupational indignities through discourses of “everyday heroism” with three narratives: (a) affirmation—reframing and recalibration to renegotiate status, and the inherent value to be had in working with dirt; (b) imposition of favorable social and occupational comparisons to elevate social position; and (c) paternalistic practices of care.

that had no choice but to work at home under cramped conditions with fewer resources (Gibson, 2020). Technological challenges, including equipment issues or intermittent internet access, caused a sense of disaffection (Fu, Greco, Lennard, & Dimotakis, 2021) and constituted a major source of stress (Shao, Fang, Wang, Chang, & Wang, 2021). Working remotely and collaborating virtually also increased the permeability of the work–life boundary which presented challenges, particularly for working parents who were forced to simultaneously manage both work and childcare, and sometimes worsened relationships with coworkers due to miscommunications that occurred in the online environment, or lengthened the workday beyond healthful limits (Zhang et al., 2021). Thus, at a societal level,

disaffection or alienation from work became more widespread than ever (Gibson, 2020).

Societal connection and inspiration activate dignity. Societal-level responses to disaffection and alienation include efforts to support and connect workers across a variety of occupations, such as what occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, many societies and governments joined together to support work from home (Gibson, 2020) as well as connection among workers (Gibson, Gibson, & Webster, 2021). Service providers, including schools, healthcare organizations, and local businesses, collaborated to combat the widespread disaffection. Online and curbside service became commonplace across schools and businesses. Healthcare benefits were extended, and flexible working

hours became normative. Widespread recognition that “care in connecting” through technology was critical spurred efforts to reduce feelings of isolation and hopelessness associated with the social distancing (Gibson, 2020). These collaborations helped increase workers’ psychological resilience and coping strategies (Park, Finkelstein-Fox, Russell, Fendrich, Hutchinson, & Becker, 2021). Indeed, with these features in place, as remote work mandates lifted, large-scale polls indicated that 65% wanted to remain remote and did not want to return to the office on a full-time basis (Brenan, 2020).

Another societal-level response entails a redefinition of “decent work.” Sociological accounts of the meaning of “working class” (Lucas, 2011) revealed a social construction that imbues the term with four values: strong work ethic, provider orientation, dignity of all work, and workers and humility. Based on in-depth interviews, Lucas (2011) argued that this constellation of values elevates the working class to the highest position in the social class hierarchy but at the same time fosters ambivalence toward class mobility. The comments from this study indicated “the very act of going to work, performing a needed (even if underappreciated) service, and doing so with respect for self and others . . . made all jobs ‘real’ and bestowed on workers a sense of dignity” (Lucas, 2011: 356). Indeed, this perspective was highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic as the public began to recognize traditionally underappreciated jobs, such as food service and cleaning crews.

In vocational psychology, the concept of decent work has also become integral to understanding sociocultural determinants of people’s career decisions and work experiences. Decent work is considered an essential component of well-being and work fulfillment (Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, & Autin, 2016). In a South Korean context, Nam and Kim (2019) found that societal norms dictated that recognition of one’s individuality and dignity (*in-gyuk*) are a key component of decent work. Community-based norms also shape employees’ experiences of dignity, with the community influencing organizations’ ability to create a culture that values decent work (Bourne & Snead, 1999).

Organizational Level

Beyond governments’ policies or normative forces, organization-level phenomena that detract from dignity include disaffection and alienation formed in reaction to monitoring, cost-cutting, and inequitable pay. Dignity is restored when businesses undertake

efforts to connect and inspire employees with participatory corporate structures and humanizing narratives.

Organizational disaffection and alienation detract dignity. Although most organizations purport to “act in a way that promotes or advances principles of human dignity and justice” (Butterick & Charlwood, 2021: 7), a disconnect often exists between espoused values and enacted practices (Francis & Keegan, 2006). One category of practices that can lead to disaffection and alienation includes those that intrude on employees’ privacy, such as electronic performance monitoring or health screening (e.g., Acquisti, Brandimarte, & Loewenstein, 2015; Kellogg, Valentine, & Christin, 2020; O’Rourke, Teicher, & Pyman, 2011). Whereas monitoring has evolved over the years, current algorithmic control allows employers to direct, evaluate, and discipline employees (Kellogg et al., 2020: 366). Employees may be influenced, knowingly or unknowingly, to accept intrusive privacy norms at work (Acquisti et al., 2015). Although some employees’ reactions to monitoring are stronger than others (Alder, Schminke, & Noel, 2007), privacy concerns increasingly lead them to feel alienated and marginalized (Brown, 1996) because “the right to human dignity generally implies the principles of respect for privacy and confidentiality” (Alder et al., 2007: 206).

Cost-cutting is another category of organizational practices that can detract from dignity by creating disaffection and alienation. For example, one study showed that when companies offshored financial service jobs, it led to employees feeling detached and disaffected toward both management and the union (McCann, 2014). Disaffection also occurs when rewards are unequal (Dundon & Rafferty, 2018) and when pay policies are secretive (Smit & Montag-Smit, 2018). Greenberg (1982; 2010) explored pay equity and concluded that negative emotional states can result from either too little or too much pay (anger and guilt, respectively). Researchers have also found that mismatches between organizations’ secretive pay policies and employees’ preferences result in perceptions of indignity (Smit & Montag-Smit, 2018).

Organizational connection and inspiration activate dignity. Outside of pandemic times, Lawrence and Pirson (2015) suggested participatory corporate structures can create the conditions through which dignity is experienced by organizing teams and supporting collaboration to build cultures focused on integrity as a cornerstone of relational exchanges with all stakeholders. In businesses from retail stores

(i.e., The Body Shop; Martin, Knopoff, & Beckman, 1998) to kibbutzim (Warhurst, 1998) to production organizations (Hodson, 1996) to the papal social tradition (Naughton, 1995), researchers have found participatory structures foster connection, exchanges of perspectives, and expertise. Also, Shapiro (2016: 1) explored how organizations that use humanizing narrative devices, defined as “complete studies as well as fragments that may under certain circumstances invoke a shared narrative context,” can enact participatory business practices.

Interpersonal Level

Work unfolds within interpersonal relationships, and dignity is detracted through abusive leaders, uncivil coworkers, and ostracism in these relationships that cause disaffection and alienation. The literature pertinent to this section of the framework indicates dignity is activated interpersonally when workers are connected and inspired through high-quality interpersonal connections, empowerment, and authentic leadership.

Interpersonal disaffection and alienation detract dignity. Abusive leaders influence how people perceive their own dignity and value as well as that of others (Eddleston & Kidwell, 2011; Ezzy, 1997; Farh & Chen, 2014). These leaders exhibit “behaviors that are directed toward subordinates and involve publicly ridiculing, belittling, and other similar behaviors . . . [that] violate the dignity of the subordinates” (Ünal, Warren, & Chen, 2012: 9). Abusive supervisors’ hostile behavior encourages employees’ withdrawal and decreased well-being (Bies & Moag, 1986; Tepper, 2000). This disregard for employees’ dignity interferes with job performance and is an interpersonal abuse of power (Vredenburg & Brender, 1998).

Transactional leaders, excessively rule-based managerial policies, and the inability to be one’s self around leaders is associated with alienation from the organization (Holtz & Harold, 2013; Nair & Vohra, 2010). Employees often retaliate, even if the retaliation is of no real benefit to them or their dignity (Litzky, Eddleston, & Kidder, 2006). The damage such indignities inflict on the self-worth of subordinates is recognized in cultures including Pakistan, Israel, Japan, and the United States (Severance et al., 2013). Yet other studies have been inconclusive about the impact of abusive supervisors on performance (Tepper, Simon, & Park, 2017). One reason may be that the shared discomfort of abusive supervision in teams may increase team cohesiveness (Stoverink, Umphress, Gardner, & Miner, 2014). Yet,

researchers have noted that when abusive supervision relates positively to performance, “it is in spite of their hostility and not because of their hostility” (Tepper et al., 2017: 135).

Other forms of destructive interactions between leaders and employees often result from undermining autonomy and, by extension, dignity (Valcour, 2014). Accounts of psychological contract breach and the resulting counterproductive behaviors have illustrated workplace phenomena that detract from dignity. Because managers receive little direction in maintaining employee dignity (Hodson, 2001), organizational paternalism may prevail (Fleming, 2005). This is common in non-Western organizations, leading to a distinct lack of autonomy and individuality for employees (Chou, 2002; Hunter, 1995; Johnson & Gill, 1993). Such practices can lead to employee disengagement and increased cynicism, lessened self-image, and dilution of individual dignity (Naus, van Iterson, & Roe, 2007). As a result, employees engage in a downward spiral of vulnerability and frustration, leading managers to incorrectly perceive employees as petulant and corrupt, then treating them with even less dignity (Kant, Skogstad, Torsheim, & Einarsen, 2013).

Building on these findings, it is unsurprising that dignity is centrally featured in the literature on incivility, with the very definition of civility being the treatment of others with dignity and respect (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). In many instances, manifestations of negative workplace practices lead to uncivil behavior because of increased demands placed on employees that harm effectiveness (Blau & Andersson, 2005; Scott, Zagenczyk, Schippers, Purvis, & Cruz, 2014; Wu, Yim, Kwan, & Zhang, 2011). Scholars have concluded that expressions of incivility or the perception of incivility in the receiver can be attributed to individuals’ approach to their status in the organization (Günsoy, 2020; Moon, Weick, & Uskul, 2017; Wasti & Erdas, 2019). Dignity can even be compromised when employees see the dignity or indignity with which their coworkers are treated (Liao & Rupp, 2005; Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara & Suárez-Acosta, 2014).

Incivility emanating from superiors apparently has no national boundaries, leading to an increased frequency of anger and retaliation (Günsoy, 2020). But in high power distance settings, Moon et al. (2017) observed that incivility from a high-ranking superior was perceived to be more acceptable than similar actions from a low-ranking perpetrator, with many occurrences of this latter interaction leading to misunderstandings, conflict, and lost productivity.

Misunderstandings can also occur in perceptions of workplace incivility because of inconsistent cultural norms (Moon et al., 2017). In a Turkish context, Wasti and Erdas (2019) found uncivil treatment was delivered across three dimensions: honor threatening (i.e., those that were very hurtful, such as public humiliation) versus ordinary (i.e., more typical in the workplace, such as withholding information); excluding versus intruding; and inoffensive versus offensive. Organizational chaos generates opportunities for such abuses of power (Hodson, Roscigno, & Lopez, 2006).

Lastly, workplace gossip has been shown to influence self-perceptions and adversely impact organization-based self-esteem, leading to negative behavior toward the organization and its members (Wu, Birtch, Chiang, & Zhang, 2018). Belittling or reductionist language also detracts from the experience of dignity at work, even if it is not from supervisors (Gist-Mackey & Dougherty, 2021), and workplace ostracism has been shown to negatively impact employees' self-esteem and performance (Ferris, Lian, Brown, & Morrison, 2015). Schumann and Walton (2022) questioned the ability of victimized individuals to restore their sense of humanity and concluded that interpersonal contexts prevail in generating both subtle and blatant forms of indignity.

Interpersonal connection and inspiration activate dignity. In response to these interpersonal detractors of dignity at work, the literature has highlighted numerous means of developing connection and inspiration at the relational level to restore dignity. Of all the connections a focal employee maintains at any given time, coworker relationships generally outnumber all others; thus, coworker relationships are especially consequential (Liden, Anand, & Vidyarthi, 2016). Stephens and Kanov (2017) noted that because people's sense of dignity emerges from their relational experiences with others, interpersonal connections (and disconnections) can be especially revealing for understanding dignity at work. They drew attention to the influence that small, everyday moments of interrelating with different people have on the experience of dignity. Although a certain sense of dignity might characterize a long-term pattern of exchanges, theory on connections suggests their quality is characterized by in-the-moment feelings of positive regard and mutuality (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). Stephens and Kanov (2017) described how personal stories of episodes of interpersonal (dis)connections at work—moments of mutual appreciation and empowerment or a sense of separation and distancing—can

help better understand the felt experience of dignity at work.

Connection with individuals of shared demographics and social identities is another way to experience and restore dignity. DiBenigno and Kellogg (2014) found that when occupational membership is uncorrelated with demographic group membership, there is looser attachment to the occupational identity and status order. This allows members of cross-occupational dyads to draw on other shared social identities, such as race, age, or immigration status, in their interactions and to establish connections across otherwise disparate groups. Sguera, Bagozzi, Huy, Boss, and Boss (2016) identified factors that enable employees to buffer the ill-effects of general incivility in the workplace. Their research found that organization-provided interpersonal resources, such as team building and personal interviews with management, reduced the frequency with which employees quit the organization or implied an intent to do so (Sguera et al., 2016).

Kanungo (1992) argued that an antidote to disaffection and alienation is empowerment, which must be understood in terms of the relational dynamics of power sharing between workers and management. Scholars have highlighted several empowerment practices such as self-determination and jobs with task variety, personal relevance, autonomy, and control (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Management can show also confidence in workers through high performance expectations, encouraging worker participation in decisions, and setting inspirational goals.

There has also been growing interest in the behaviors associated with authentic leadership, which are a promising means of experiencing and restoring dignity (Liang, Brown, Lian, Hanig, Ferris, & Keeping, 2018; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015; Whiteside & Barclay, 2016). Authentic leadership promotes both positive psychological capacities and ethical climate, including fostering greater self-awareness, internalized moral perspectives, and relational transparency (Avolio & Luthans, 2006), as well as developing greater self-identity and expression of one's true self (Gardner, Coglisier, Davis, & Dickens, 2011; Gardner, Karam, Alvesson, & Einola, 2021; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). Hannah, Avolio, and Walumbwa (2011) found that when leaders demonstrate authentic behaviors, followers are more likely to display moral courage as well as ethical and prosocial behaviors. In turn, managers are more likely to treat employees with dignity when they experience higher positive affect and when they are concerned about their social identity (Scott et al., 2014).

However, the nuances in these relationships may differ across cultures. Cheng, Jiang, Cheng, Riley, and Jen (2015) compared subordinates' commitment to a supervisor between the United States and China. They found that in the United States, perceived supervisor support increases commitment to the supervisor more when a high degree of supervisor integrity is also perceived. In contrast, a compensatory effect can be observed for Chinese subordinates—perceived supervisor support increases commitment to the supervisor more when a lower degree of supervisor integrity is perceived. Li, Yu, Yang, Qi, and Fu (2014) found authentic leaders engaging in self-disclosure cultivate subordinates' feelings that their leaders like and trust them, especially among highly traditional Chinese subordinates, perhaps due to a cultural emphasis on “face,” which involves preserving one's positive reputation in the eyes of others (Ho, Welbourne, & Howard, 2014).

Individual Level

Disaffection and alienation can also occur because of individual-level differences, such as idiosyncratic work arrangements and status differences, but can likewise be restored by factors such as personality traits, political skills, and orientations to participation when such characteristics result in greater capacity for connection and inspiration.

Individual disaffection and alienation detract dignity. An employee may become disaffected due in part to negotiated nonstandard, individualized work arrangements that employers typically grant to motivate and retain highly valued employees, known as “i-deals” (Hornung & Rousseau, 2008; Rousseau, 2005; Rousseau, Ho, & Greenberg, 2006). Rousseau noted that those who do not receive such “i-deals” may perceive them to be unfair (Rousseau, 2005), especially when they pertain to pay discrepancies and when individuals are targeted based on membership in social groups with different status (i.e., based on gender).

Status is also associated with the role that an individual occupies at work, including the hierarchical level in the organization, the subunit affiliation (e.g., headquarters versus offshore), and even specific project assignments (e.g., coveted high-profile or particularly lucrative opportunities) (Daniels, Miller, Mian, & Black, 2022; Hays & Bendersky, 2015). When individuals perceive that these status indicators are awarded inequitably, this can result in disaffection and an absence of dignity (Yap, Madan, & Puranam, 2022). Perceptions of pay raise decisions and other human

resource practices concerning status and pay policies can also undermine or restore dignity (Folger & Konovsky, 1989). As noted earlier, role-based dignity is prevalent in East Asia, and the Confucian *li* (or rules of propriety) imply that dignity is based on one's societal roles as well as family background and occupations (Koehn & Leung, 2004: 269).

Individual connection and inspiration activate dignity. In response to the absence of dignity via disaffection and alienation, personality traits can shape how individuals activate dignity. Narcissists, for example, because of their high desire for self-enhancement, can sometimes mitigate the effects of incivility by disregarding and ignoring incivility or diminishing the standing of their detractors (Chen, Ferris, Kwan, Yan, Zhou, & Hong, 2013). Agreeableness also likely strengthens dignity. Ilies, Scott, and Judge (2006) found agreeable employees reported engaging more often in organizational citizenship behavior and found them more consistent in such behavior.

Other research has investigated “workplace interpersonal relatedness” (WIR), a personality trait distinct from the Big Five personality taxonomy, which captures the propensity to promote and manage interdependent and harmonious social connections to obtain social resources, meet expectations at work, and seek to establish a favorable image in the workplace (Ho et al., 2014). Initially considered a trait indigenous to Mainland China, research has also shown WIR is relevant among Taiwanese and U.S. employees. A key component of WIR is face, and a person often tries to manage or enhance face by “engaging in behaviors such as attributing faults to associates; offering favors to associates; and using the favorable images of significant others to enhance his or her own image” (Ho et al., 2014: 1253).

Political skills are also useful. Distinguishing between political skills and cultural skills, Kellogg (2011) argued that cultural toolkits (defined as symbolic elements, such as frames, identities, and tactics that any organizational member can introduce) may let less powerful organization members see traditional practices as counter to their interests but still leave them powerless to significantly influence change, which requires political toolkits (defined as material elements, such as staffing, accountability, and evaluation systems that depend on the formal authority of powerful organizational members) that support change (Kellogg, 2011). Cultural tools serve to build bonds with other reformers, but political tools confer the skills to battle the status quo without damage to their careers, thus restoring their dignity through greater connection.

Finally, although status differences based on culture, language, or region sometimes serve to undermine dignity through a reluctance to speak up and exercise voice in the workplace, research has indicated this can be overcome through individually held “orientations to participation,” especially during online and remote work (Gibbs, Gibson, Grushina, & Dunlop, 2021). Individual orientations toward “help” and “learn” were contrasted with an “engage” orientation consisting of bidirectional and mutual relating. These orientations can even be gained in the course of collaborations. Increasing participation among collaborators is a means of activating dignity through connectedness and inspiration.

DISRESPECT/EXCLUSION DETRACTING DIGNITY AND RESPECT/EMBEDDEDNESS ACTIVATING DIGNITY

Moving on to the second slice of our framework (Figure 2), when faced with disrespect or exclusion, being respected and embedded in a community activates the experience of dignity at work (Gibson, 2022; Melton, 2005). Respect has been conceptualized as “an individual’s assessment of how they are evaluated by those with whom they share common group membership” (Huo & Binning, 2008: 1571). At its core, respect involves the perception of one’s treatment by another and is created through interpersonal interaction (Friedman, Carmeli, & Dutton, 2018). Embeddedness consists of three hallmarks: formal and informal connections among participants, congruence and compatibility among them, and a commitment to the community in the sense that leaving it involves material and psychological sacrifice (Singh, Shaffer, & Selvarajan, 2021). A community is often defined geographically (e.g., town, city, or suburb) (Singh, Shaffer, & Selvarajan, 2018) but is increasingly recognized in other forms such as online communities (Gibson et al., 2021).

Societal Level

As with disaffection and alienation, societal norms that legitimize exclusion also endanger the experience of dignity, as does stress from minority status. As illustrated by our review, restoring dignity societally requires respect and embeddedness that can be realized through specific economic and regulatory systems, legal mandates, and policies that favor underrepresented groups and truly integrate minorities instead of simply “checking the box.”

Societal disrespect and exclusion detract dignity. Societies are often compared according to the extent they are characterized by exclusionary norms and practices, usually based on social identities (such as race, gender, or sexual orientation) or disability status. For example, Sue (2004) identified a general belief in equality and fairness in the United States yet noted that the decoupling of these two concepts is difficult for most, which therefore perpetuates many unjust actions such as discriminatory microaggressions in interracial encounters (Sue et al., 2007). Studies conducted in the Middle East have identified challenges to gender status and the social, cultural, and economic justifications for doing so in typically patriarchal work contexts (Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Metcalfe, 2008; Thomason, 2021). Despite advancements for women in leadership and political roles, culturally embedded barriers remain and are made more complex by national and transnational interrelations. The phenomenon of “minority stress” reflects the hostility and anxiety generated within a stigma- and prejudice-filled social environment that leads to declining mental health as individuals hide and internalize their experiences to ameliorate their coping strategies (Hershberger & D’Augelli, 1995; Kertzner, 2001; Meyer, 2003).

Of the many sources of potential exclusion, the role of gender remains critical. Scholars have asked why gender inequality remains so pervasive, especially at a time when women are meeting if not exceeding the educational qualifications of their male peers (Ridgeway, 2011). Gender inequality extends beyond the organization because it is also a function of the roles men and women play elsewhere in society—specifically with women cast as caregivers and men as breadwinners—societal norms also continue to legitimize disproportionate responsibilities for women at home (Blair-Loy, 2009; Jackman, 1994). Although advancing women into leadership roles is important, researchers posit that if these roles are only symbolic, this has a negative impact on respect, authority, and dignity (Mendelberg & Karpowitz, 2016).

Societal respect and community embeddedness activate dignity. How societies afford respect and approach community, at least in part, determines the extent and means by which dignity is experienced (e.g., Alder & Gilbert, 2006; Pirson, Goodpaster, & Dierksmeier, 2016; Zetlin & Whitehouse, 2003). Strong arguments have been made for placing human dignity at center stage in society by institutionalizing respect (Margolis, 1998; 2001). Pirson et al. (2016) contended that dignity represents the cornerstone of

an alternative view of economic relationships. Bowie (1998) suggested that an economic system that values human dignity provides for market relationships as well as respectful human interactions. Other researchers advocated global labor standards and a public responsibility to protect human dignity in multinational organizations (Arnold & Bowie, 2007; Kobrin, 2009). Krueger (2008) empirically analyzed the ethical norms and regulatory compliance components in the global supply chains of multinationals in the toy, textile, and consumer electronic industries in China. He concluded “global firms face several constraints in their full capacity to enhance the dignity and character of workplace conditions . . . [yet] codes of conduct and their compliance systems . . . strengthen the rights, dignity and position of Chinese workers” (Krueger (2008: 119), which is important in the absence of enforced government regulations that protect human rights.

Dignity also appears in the literature on work-related legal mandates. Specifically, Creed, Scully, and Austin (2002) examined U.S. congressional testimony from the hearing on the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and found “the right to be treated with dignity and respect” was central to multiple frames used to invoke support for the Act, including a logic that exemplar companies recognizing their competitive edge is tied to the fair and enlightened treatment of their employees. In these frames, respect and dignity were closely tied to civil rights and invoked to support collective action, and in so doing, they influenced the identities of the participants.

Researchers have also examined societal influences on dignity among specific subpopulations of the workforce such as refugees. Lack of employment or underemployment represents the highest migratory stressor among all refugee groups, to the detriment of their physical and mental health (Dhalimi, Wright, Yamin, Jamil, & Arnetz, 2018). Loon and Vitale (2021) argued societies and firms often view refugees as a valuable talent pool but may fail to integrate them into the workplace. Restoring dignity entails building respect and embeddedness in the community, which is likelier when refugees rebuild an identity as productive employees (Zeno, 2017) and find work that allows them to internalize a sense of belonging and self-worth (Bloch & Hirsch, 2017). Gibson (2022) found the same to be true for Indigenous workers in at-risk communities for whom productive employment and self-determination were intertwined with dignity; community embeddedness was central to regenerating lives and communities.

Scholars have cautioned that societal phenomena that detract from dignity are complex and at times

even counterintuitive. Examining the giving and receiving of compassion, Simpson, Pina e Cunha, and Rego (2015) argued that receiving another’s aid may cause recipients to lose their sense of personal pride and dignity and can create relationships of dependency. Drawing upon examples of Western “aid” to developing nations, they found such aid can humiliate recipients “even at a person-to-person level, receiving charity induces a sense of pity and shame in the recipient” (Simpson et al., 2015: 484). They contended that compassion will be well received (i.e., and therefore promote, rather than erode, dignity) when profit is of little concern in providing support, the deliverer has a legitimate relationship with the receiver (i.e., colleague or authorized caregiver), the receiver experiences positive outcomes from the support, and the provision of support is not linked to conditions designed to give the provider advantage and control over the receiver.

Organizational Level

Although society is demanding an increase in ethical conduct within many facets of organizations (Perryer & Scott-Ladd, 2014), many corporate actions still detract from the experience of dignity at work. These include ill-defined or nonactioned ethical codes, corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs that are purely symbolic, and exclusionary HR practices. Dignity is restored when respect and embeddedness are promoted through humanizing corporate codes and cultures, CSR that focuses on social impact, and HR practices that promote equity.

Organizational disrespect and exclusion detract dignity. Larger organizations frequently have codes of ethical conduct, but many are ill-defined or poorly enforced, and as a result disrespect and exclusion may occur, rather than the equitable treatment of all employees that such codes often intend to promote. Skubik and Sterling (2009) contemplated the reasons why new codes are promulgated, the content, process of development, and expressed purpose of the codes and what these actions articulate to stakeholders, clients, and the public. They cautioned that the mechanisms for communicating the values of the organization through codes of ethics must be carefully considered to ensure dignity is protected. Other research stressed the importance of enforcing of codes. For example, despite codes of ethics, an extensive body of research has documented the pervasiveness of harassment at work based on gender (Berdahl, 2007a; 2007b; Cortina & Areguin, 2021; Leskinen & Cortina, 2014; Leskinen, Cortina, & Kabat, 2011).

Studies also have investigated corporate misuse, the exchange of favors for personal gain, and the deceit of clients or the public (Perryer & Scott-Ladd, 2014). Talaucar (2009) further noted that these issues become more complex and undergo scrutiny by a wider audience when companies expand into the various legal and cultural environments that make up the global market.

Corporate social responsibility programs are considered a way to operationalize corporate ethical codes, but experts agree it is highly unlikely the past wrongs of industry will be addressed by symbolic CSR programs (Humby, 2016). Because of their vagaries in purpose, implementation, and measurement, many CSR programs do nothing but burnish the firm's reputation (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). A growing body of literature has explored the components of CSR with real social impact (Wang, Gibson, & Zander, 2020) and called for programs to address the failures of previous programs, especially in developing countries (Gibson et al., 2021), and for remedial actions to overcome negligence that has resulted in the disrespect, diminished safety, health, and dignity of workers.

Scholars have also identified ethical deficiencies in the application of exclusionary HR policies. For example, although diversity programs have the potential to enhance dignity, those of many organizations fall short. Kaiser, Major, Jurcevic, Dover, Brady, and Shapiro (2013) found that perceptions of the existence of structural support for diversity can be enough to convince high-status individuals that an organization embraces inclusion despite evidence that the program is ineffective. This false legitimization of organizational credentials perpetuates discrimination and further entrenches it (Kaiser et al., 2013). Likewise, research has shown diversity programs impact workplace attitudes but may also provoke interactions detracting from dignity (Ellis & Sonnenfeld, 1994).

Human resource practices and the actual needs and priorities of workers are also often misaligned, thus contributing to exclusion rather than its mitigation. For example, Morgan and King (2012) investigated psychological and supervisory contract breach, finding that there was a disconnect for many employed mothers regarding perceived arrangements relating to family care. As a result, when work structure agreements for parents of younger children were not met, it created the impression of unfair treatment. Perceptions of the gravity of specific breaches are typically amplified when the relationship between parties and the processes of the transaction are complex (Jensen, Opland, & Ryan, 2010). According to Melton (1987),

child and family policies often represent conflicting, irrational, and unrealistic opinions on the role of children in the social order, leading to misaligned HR policies and diminished dignity for employees. Lavelle, Folger, and Manegold (2016) also found unethical approaches to "HR messenger" delivery of bad news to employees, especially when the news involved a refusal to divulge information or distancing behavior in communication, both of which infringe upon doctrines of fair treatment.

Organizational respect and community embeddedness activate dignity. When constructed in a thoughtful and meaningful manner, codes of ethics, CSR, and HR practices can also be means of conferring respect and restoring dignity (e.g., Hollensbe, Wookey, Hickey, & George, 2014; Hoover & Pepper, 2015; Kleynjans & Hudon, 2016; Mathew, Ogbonna, & Harris, 2012; Verhezen, 2010; Zhang, 2015). Valentine and Fleischman (2002: 307) highlighted the importance of written codes that emphasize that all employees are to be treated with dignity and respect, arguing "building productive working relationships through mutual respect must first be codified, and then these principles must be discussed extensively in diversity and ethics training." When companies had a code of ethics of this nature, respondents reported greater tolerance for diversity. Melé (2012) argued that a view of the organization as a community of people with dignity extends a manager's moral responsibilities to respect workers' rights, develop them through training and education, and involve them in decision-making. Such "humanistic" management supports positive treatment of humans at three levels: (a) respect for persons and their rights, (b) care and concern for people's interests and support for resolving their issues, and (c) development of virtuous behavior (Melé, 2014). Pless et al. (2017: 223) argued that "dignity plays a crucial role as both a fundamental value and as an end state in the process of humanizing organizational cultures, workplaces and relationships."

Likewise, CSR that exceeds symbolic representation presents an opportunity to show respect and community embeddedness (e.g., Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, & Ganapathi, 2007; Bansal & Song, 2017; Cornelius, Todres, Janjuha-Jivraj, Woods, & Wallace, 2008; Obara & Peattie, 2018). For example, the literature on CSR has discussed a "social license to operate," a concept originating in extractive industries but which the World Bank has broadly applied (Cui, Jo, & Velasquez, 2016). The term generally refers to a community's acceptance or approval of a firm's operations (Black, 2013). How stakeholders, including employees, are

treated is a key to achieving this license. Cui et al. (2016) found the religiosity of the local community, including attention to human dignity, related positively to employee-friendly practices that improved the likelihood a firm would gain approval to operate. Such an approach is central to corporate–community codevelopment that confers mutual benefits (Gibson, 2022).

Dignity can also be activated through HR practices that ensure employees feel both respected and embedded within the organization (e.g., Clarke, Alshenalfi, & Garavan, 2019; Farndale & Kelliher, 2013; Islam, 2012; Moore, McDonald, & Bartlett, 2017; Morand & Merriman, 2012; Schmidt, Pohler, & Willness, 2018). Lippel (2012) concluded in examining the preservation of dignity in workers' compensation systems that those best at promoting claimants' dignity provided both protection and fewer adversarial interactions. This is also true for performance appraisals (Byrne, Pitts, Wilson, & Steiner, 2012), high performance work systems (Heffernan, & Dundon, 2016), and hiring practices (Walker, Helmuth, Feild, & Bauer, 2014).

Interpersonal Processes

Within work relationships, dignity is experienced by individuals in the absence of injustice and criticism, both of which convey disrespect and exclusion. The literature has also indicated means for restoring dignity interpersonally through recognition, equality-based respect, respectful engagement, reciprocity, and community building.

Interpersonal disrespect and exclusion detract dignity. Dignity has been mentioned in the large body of literature on organizational justice (e.g., see reviews by Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007; Pawar, 2009; Rupp, Shapiro, Folger, Skarlicki, & Shao, 2017). Among the three forms of justice (procedural, distributive, and interactional), dignity is considered part of interactional justice (also known as interpersonal justice). This line of research contains evidence as to when and why a lack of interactional injustice detracts from dignity at work. The primary source of indignity in relation to workplace aggression occurs during interactions with a supervisor as opposed to colleagues (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010; Wood, Braeken, & Niven, 2013). Reactions are influenced by an employee's attributes, affective state, and awareness of social information about the perpetrator, as well as difficulty in recovering from these stressors at home (Ahmed, Eatough, & Ford, 2018; Hollensbe, Khazanchi, & Masterson, 2008; Wang, Ford, Wang, & Jin, 2019). Employees' perceptions of

injustice often result in aggression and bullying or turnover, which is compounded by aggression and violence in the community surrounding the workplace (Dietz, Robinson, Folger, Baron, & Schulz, 2003; Leineweber, Peristera, Bernhard-Oettel, & Eib, 2020). A related literature examined what is deemed as "fair" in the workplace (Brockner, 2002). For example, an individual's perceptions of what is and is not fair affect the experience of dignity (Khazanchi & Masterson, 2011). Differences in what is deemed as fair are based in part on educational background, marital and parental status (Wilkinson, Tomlinson, & Gardiner, 2018), as well as self-esteem (Wiesenfeld, Swann, Brockner, & Bartel, 2007).

Chentsova-Dutton and Vaughn (2011) examined criticism and unwanted advice as phenomena that detract from dignity and cautioned that a conflicted employee may see advice as a challenge to his or her autonomy and self-worth, thus potentially inciting more conflict. This research also found that rather than gracefully accepting or embracing advice as beneficial, European Americans were more susceptible to interpreting it as intrusive and might take offense. For these employees, advice may threaten face, which in turn affects dignity; hence, reactions to advice are a way to protect one's self-image (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998).

Interpersonal respect and community embeddedness activate dignity. Scholars have argued for understanding dignity through an "ethics of recognition," including emotional recognition (expressed through love, friendship, and emotional intelligence), social recognition (in groups, communities, and the workplace), and political recognition (expressed in civil and human rights) (Pless et al., 2017). Nonrecognition in any of these spheres undermines a person's sense of self-worth and detracts from the experience of dignity at work. This research illuminates that while dignity is inherent to every human being, its activation requires recognition from others, and "it is at the same time a radical individualized and a socialized moral concept" (Pless et al., 2017: 225).

Respect is a key component of interpersonal approaches to restoring dignity. Research has found that respect is a key antecedent to the experience of self-determination (Renger, Renger, Miché, & Simon, 2017); in turn, self-determined behavior predicts well-being and satisfaction with one's life across cultures (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In a series of three studies, Renger et al. (2017) concluded equality-based respect increased perceived autonomy and social cooperation. Equality-based respect was operationalized as agreement with statements such as "*Other people*

always communicate with me as with a person of equal worth" and *"Other people always treat me as a human being with equal worth."* Renger et al. (2017) reasoned that equality-based respect provides a basis to decide and act autonomously, representing a socially negotiated model of interaction (Honneth, 2012) that reinforces the institutionalization of dignity. Equality-based respect enables individuals to see themselves as possessors of equal rights and worth. Hence, they are more likely to view themselves as the authors of their own lives (Anderson & Honneth, 2005).

Relatedly, respectful engagement, defined as "being present to others, affirming them, communicating and listening in a way that manifests regard and an appreciation of the other's worth" (Dutton, 2003: 22), is a powerful means of activating dignity. In a study of employees across 13 Israeli organizations using time-lagged data, Friedman et al. (2018) found respectful engagement between employees and their supervisors to be key to fostering help-seeking, especially when employees reported lower levels of psychological safety. Help-seeking in turn improved employees' performance. The authors concluded that leaders should "deliberately work to become more psychologically present when interacting with subordinates, exhibit more effective listening, and develop a more civil approach that preserves and enhances subordinates' sense of dignity and worth" (Friedman et al., 2018: 193). Recent research in China, where social harmony is an important cultural value (Resick, Martin, Keating, Dickson, Kwan, & Peng, 2011; Wong, Ngo, & Wong, 2006), has similarly emphasized the importance of respectful engagement (Ünal, Chen, & Xin, 2017). For example, Resick and colleagues (2011) found "consideration and respect for others" is the most common leadership theme among six mentioned by Chinese followers. Other research has indicated cultural values and institutional environments shape interpersonal experiences of dignity through their influence on justice judgments. In one study, non-Chinese participants focused more on an individual employee's treatment in contrast with Chinese participants' focus on overall fairness, interpersonal interactions, and caring for employees personally (Guo & Giacobbe-Miller, 2015).

Reciprocity and trust are also important interpersonal processes that activate the experience of dignity while also representing means of establishing respect and embeddedness (e.g., Brockner, Siegel, Daly, Tyler, & Martin, 1997; Chan, 2008; Jones, & Martens, 2009; Kickul, Gundry, & Posig, 2005). In Confucianist Asian contexts, the concept of *guanxi*

reflects principles of reciprocity and interdependence (Chan, 2008). *Guanxi* is a system of personal connections that carry long-term social obligations; a central characteristic of *guanxi* is the reciprocal obligation to exchange favors (Yang, Ho, & Chang, 2013). *Guanxi* frequently also refers to the special relationships between two people in which at least one person needs something and the other person has the ability to give that something, including both expressive and instrumental transactions (Bu & Roy, 2005). If favors given by one party are not reciprocated by the other party, the latter may suffer a loss of face (*mianzi*) (Su & Littlefield, 2001). Thus, *guanxi* is a means of establishing and maintaining dignity. Actions of reciprocity within organizations have also been studied by scholars of moral identity. Barclay, Whiteside, and Aquino (2014) investigated moral identity and the likelihood of predicting revenge. They found an individual's moral identity determines the likelihood of revenge or aggressive reaction; an individual's internal framework guides the direction of the reaction.

Other research examined how to rebuild damaged relationships in a context in which respect has been contravened. Pate, Morgan-Thomas, and Beaumont (2012) studied a senior management team's attempt to regain trust by addressing workplace bullying. The firm developed a policy titled "Dignity at Work," which involved pursuing incidents of bullying and resulted in high-profile dismissals of senior staff, as well as compulsory training that emphasized the organization's code of behavior. The program resulted in increases in loyalty, benevolence, and openness but not integrity, competence, consistency, or respect. The authors concluded that the repair of damaged relationships requires a long-term commitment and not "one-off" solutions.

Fostering relationships via community embeddedness is also a means of establishing the features of work through which dignity is experienced, which results in psychological flourishing, positive mental health, and citizenship behaviors within the community (Singh et al., 2021). Singh et al. (2021) found spillover effects in which embeddedness in the organization has a positive effect on embeddedness in the community. Gibson (2022) documented a similar cascade of mutual positive benefits in her longitudinal study of corporate–community codevelopment through deep ongoing interpersonal relationships. Volunteers from the organizations experienced growth in thriving and prosocial behavior while community members gained dignity and proactivity.

Individual Level

Employees' expressions of individuality in the workplace are how they define themselves in relation to others, and this self-identity can be a source of pride and honor. Yet, many employees are conflicted over how they and others are categorized. Indeed, disrespect or exclusion, including on the basis of their identity, detracts from the experience of dignity. Key means of regaining respect and establishing embeddedness to restore dignity pertain to beliefs in ethical idealism and superordinate identity.

Individual disrespect and exclusion detract dignity. When individuals feel excluded based on identity, they may disengage in tasks that fail to garner respect or shift their self-identity to regain dignity (Margolis & Molinsky, 2008). Passing, which refers to "a cultural performance whereby one member of a defined social group masquerades as another in order to enjoy the privileges afforded to the dominant group" (Leary, 1999: 85) is an indicator of identity-based exclusion. For example, Black workers routinely face pressure to de-emphasize or hide parts of their identities and assimilate to White cultural norms (DeJordy, 2008; Reid, 2015). In the extreme, lighter-skinned Black workers may attempt to hide their racial identity altogether, whereas others may de-emphasize what they believe to be stereotypical aspects of their identity as an impression management technique in order to avoid stigmatization, discrimination, and social exclusion (Randel, Galvin, Gibson, & Batts, 2021).

Similarly, Roitenberg (2020) considered individuals' internalized comparisons and negotiations as generating opposite strategies of making and unmaking personal vocational boundaries. These contradictory strategies create conflict across ethnic values (Sasson-Levy, 2013), boundaries between classes (Van Eijk, 2013), and gender identities (Morash & Haarr, 2012), all of which generate identity tensions that can detract from dignity. For example, one study noted that lesbian, gay, and bisexual employees experienced an absence of dignity, as psychological stressors arose when they perceived their family identity was stigmatized at work (Sawyer, Thoroughgood, & Ladge, 2017).

Gibson's (2022) study of Indigenous workers and organizations revealed profound intrapersonal identity tensions and documented negative impacts on experiences of dignity. The same conflicts occurred more broadly in global teams whose members identified strongly with multiple groups (i.e., culture, organization, profession, and team) that were often in

conflict (Gibson, Dunlop, & Raghav, 2021). Studies of refugees revealed that their various identities and strengths were often challenged. For example, Wehrle, Klehe, Kira, and Zikic (2018) found that refugees' needs for value, uniqueness, permanence, and control were threatened as they attempted to reestablish themselves in their host country and required individuals to either protect or recreate an identity, directly impacting their potential for psychological growth. These threats to both individual and group identity activated negative attitudes or behaviors in individuals.

Individual respect and community embeddedness activate dignity. Numerous studies found that the presence of respect and feelings of embeddedness as features of work through which dignity is experienced tend to vary based on individual differences. Concern for dignity is considered a component of ethical idealism, which refers to the belief that there is a morally correct alternative that will not harm others (Forsyth, 1980). The precursors of ethical idealism include personal values of tradition (respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that the traditional culture or religion provide), conformity (restraint of actions inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms), and security (safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self) (Schwartz, 1992). Ethical idealism has been related to judgment of unethical consumer practices (Steenhaut & Van Kenhove, 2006).

A superordinate identity can also be leveraged to support respect and embeddedness. For example, Huo's (2003) relational model of authority suggests people are inclined to accept the decisions of ethnic out-group authorities when they identify with a superordinate category they share with the authority and when the authority satisfies their relational justice concerns. Those who highly identified with the superordinate category of "American" indicated greater reliance on relational concerns and less on instrumental concerns. Gibson (2022) found that corporate–community codevelopment projects are a means of helping multicultural workers navigate identity tensions, develop greater synergy across their different identities, and restore dignity.

DISPOSABILITY/EXPENDABILITY DETRACTING DIGNITY AND VALUE/MEANING ACTIVATING DIGNITY

Moving on to the final slice of our framework (Figure 2), dignity is experienced in the absence of

feelings of being disposable and expendable, and an experience of work as valued and infused with meaning can activate dignity. Employees may feel expendable because of technology shifts and the changing nature of work. Automation and artificial intelligence have brought about massive layoffs, singling out whole groups and demographics of workers, especially low-skill workers (Lindsay, 2005). Similarly, after the onset of COVID-19 pandemic, workers unable to work from home or who had temporary contracts were treated as disposable (Butterick & Charlwood, 2021).

In contrast to feelings of being disposable and expendable, the experience of dignity at work is activated when relevant stakeholders value it and employees perceive it as meaningful (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009). Although meaningful work is defined in many ways, we adopted May, Gilson, and Harter's (2004: 14) integrative conceptualization of it as "the value of a work goal or purposes, judged to the individual's own ideals or standards." The experience of work as meaningful is directly associated with an individual's subjective judgment of it according to their existential concerns, which is strongly associated with mental and physical well-being (e.g., Wong & Fry, 1998). As such, we consider meaningful work to be a fundamental human need (Yeoman, 2014).

Societal Features

Primary features of society that detract from dignity include making employees feel expendable due to automation, profit maximization over wages, and vocational injustices. Scholars have considered societal efforts to protect employee rights, support social movements, and societal legitimization of workplace spirituality to be means of activating and reestablishing dignity.

Societal disposability and expendability detract dignity. Machines are transforming business worldwide, ranging from the automation of assembly lines to the use of robots to staff hotels (Rajesh, 2015). The McKinsey Global Institute reported that most occupations are susceptible to partial automation, equal to about \$15 trillion in vanished wages (Manyika et al., 2017). This "radical reshaping of work" will especially impact low-skilled jobs, which has led policymakers to struggle with protecting the most vulnerable while also encouraging business advancement (McAfee & Brynjolfsson, 2016). This reshaping of work will also affect consumers. For example, more than half of the service experiences that enrage customers involve automated services, though some

companies are working to develop more humanlike robots to help alleviate this (Yam et al., 2021).

Scholars have argued that another potential phenomenon detracting from dignity is when there is a societal tendency among firms to put corporate profits above paying workers a fair living wage (Hosmer & Masten, 1995; Werner & Lim, 2016). Treating employees as a means to an end "runs counter to the belief that people should be treated as an end unto themselves" (Lucas, 2015: 624) and contrasts with a belief that the ability to earn a decent livelihood is a right, grounded in the intrinsic dignity and worth of the person (Werner & Lim, 2016). For example, offshoring production to developing countries (Egels-Zandén & Hyllman, 2007) or to sweatshops to evade labor and safety regulations or cut labor costs (Powell & Zwolinski, 2012) detract dignity.

Societal-level vocational injustices also result in a sense of being disposable or expendable, reflecting an absence of dignity (e.g., Colquitt, Greenberg, & Zapata-Phelan, 2005; Prilleltensky, 2012). The structural origins of social injustice emerge from poverty, unemployment, and forced movement of employees (McWhirter & McWha-Hermann, 2021) and signal marginalizing conditions. The results of these conditions, according to scholars, include less safe work environments (Flynn, Eggerth, & Jacobson, 2015) and perpetuation of overall poor working conditions (Duffy, Blustein, Allan, Diemer, & Cinamon, 2020), as well as increased work and income inequality (Thompson & Dahling, 2019).

Societal value and meaning activate dignity. Countering these phenomena that detract from dignity requires a commitment at the societal level to the protection of employees' rights. Rowan (2000) and others (Gibson, 2000; Kirby, 1985) have contended that the moral foundation of employee rights stems from focusing on employees "as persons"—human beings with basic rights. These include personal autonomy, the means to achieve one's goals, freedom and protection from coercion or physical confinement, and equality. Scholars have argued these rights are a matter of morality because "they may or may not be conventionally recognized, either legally or in corporate policy" (Rowan, 2000: 357). Similarly, Gibson's (2000) discussion of stakeholder theory reflected a deontological approach to ethics that obligates respecting employees as "ends in themselves." In this view, societies and organizations have a moral duty to ensure a level of dignity in the workplace (Bowie, 1998; Micewski & Troy, 2007). For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries introduced national legislation to compensate

and acknowledge frontline workers, including many minimum wage and part-time workers who were most vulnerable to furloughs and layoffs in the wake of the coronavirus (Alon, Doepke, Olmsted-Rumsey, & Tertilt, 2020). This compensation was important in acknowledging the value of care workers, who are chronically undervalued and underpaid (Thomason & Macias-Alonso, 2020).

Social movements can also change how individuals experience dignity. Social movements are an element of the frames people develop as ways to shape systems of meaning that mobilize collective action to accomplish social change. Isaac, McDonald, and Lukasik (2006) found that the new left activism during the 1960s in the name of civil rights, women's equality, and opposition to the Vietnam War extended beyond college campuses to also inspire workers' activism, including unionization, which instilled dignity among the affected workers.

Societal attitudes that allow workplace spirituality, defined as a framework of "values evidenced in the culture that promote employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy" (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2008: 577), help to counteract the feelings of expendability that detract from dignity. Displays of spirituality are liberating and increase a sense of meaning (Hicks, 2002). An often-neglected feature, spirituality is centered on universal traditions (deontology, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics), not specific faiths or religions. When spirituality is legitimized as a societal norm, it allows for the integration of one's personal and professional identities in ways that align with personal values (Brophy, 2015; Gotsis & Kortezi, 2008).

Organizational Level

In addition to societal norms, expendability may also be implied when organizations implement layoffs or undermine union activity. However, the literature also documents ways to address these workplace activities that detract from dignity, including establishing ethical climates and voluntary organizational support, which help employees feel they are valued and that their work has meaning.

Organizational disposability and expendability detract dignity. Workforce reductions (i.e., layoffs or downsizing) detract from the experience of dignity at work (Chadwick, Hunter, & Walston, 2004; Harcourt, Hannay, & Lam, 2013; Lucas, 2015). Those who are dismissed are likely to feel humiliated and

injured if they view their dismissal as unjustified (Lind, Greenberg, Scott, & Welchans, 2000; Wiesenfeld et al., 1999). Further, when survivors of an organizational layoff think those dismissed were treated unfairly, it lessens their own commitment to the firm (Brockner, Tyler, & Cooper-Schneider, 1992). In contrast, perceptions that those dismissed were treated with dignity and compassion by the organization bolsters survivors' faith in the firm's fairness and fosters increased commitment and productivity (Chadwick et al., 2004). The importance of fair and transparent communication from the organization during unionization activities has also been documented, and organizational-level reactions to unionization can threaten dignity by creating perceptions of injustice if the collective interests of employees have not been protected (Martin & Dixon, 2010; Moore & Read, 2006). Individuals who felt disrespected in collective bargaining were likelier to go against negotiations and strike versus those who were treated with dignity (Cloutier, Denis, & Bilodeau, 2013).

Organizational value and meaning activate dignity. Norms and expectations are the ingredients of an ethical climate that encourages decision-making and behavior around shared values (Martin & Cullen, 2006). Organizations with a "caring" climate cultivate the conditions necessary for experiencing work that is valued and infused with meaning. A meta-analysis concluded that such a climate, characterized by "an overarching concern for the well-being of others . . . within the organization as well as society" (Martin & Cullen, 2006: 179), is strongly associated with organizational commitment and psychological well-being. Importantly, employees in a caring climate perceive the organization's policies, practices, and strategies as aligned with general concern for others, activating dignity. Scholars have identified five virtues that characterize such organizations: purpose, safety, fairness, humanity, and dignity. The focus on dignity as an organizational virtue is defined as "the treatment of all people in the organization as individuals regardless of their position" (Peterson & Park, 2006: 152).

A study of perceived organizational support also suggested a range of organizational factors drives the experience of work as valued and meaningful (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Perceived organizational support is defined as "employees' perceptions that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being" (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). Employees are more likely to report perceived organizational support when they

think their organization is engaging voluntarily in specific practices such as fair pay, equitable HR practices, and leadership support—not because they are mandated.

Interpersonal Level

Individuals feeling disposable in the context of specific relationships and interactions detract from the experience of dignity. The literature has identified ageism, invisibility, and coercive control as contributors to this experience. As we discuss below, remedies include supervisor provision of resources, normalizing morally tainted work, ethical leadership, and employee voice—defined as constructive, change-oriented communication intended to improve a situation (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

Interpersonal disposability and expendability detract dignity. Not being seen or being misunderstood during interpersonal interactions are features of work that detract from dignity (Rabelo & Mahalingam, 2019). Because of ageism, older workers often feel they do not have the same status as their younger colleagues and their sense of meaningfulness suffers (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2011). In the case of workers in certain vocations, the stigma associated with their jobs often causes a sense of invisibility and reduces their sense of belonging. This has been documented for so-called “dirty work” based on physical taint (e.g., janitor, funeral director, miner, or sweatshop worker), social taint (e.g., prison guard, customer services, or maid), or moral taint (e.g., exotic dancer, pawnbroker, or bill collector) (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999).

Meaningfulness may be reduced when employees are mainly motivated by power, money, and social acceptance and display these motivations in interacting with others (Michaelson, 2008; Tang, 2016). Labor processes, especially coercive control, may also complicate achieving workplace dignity. Coercive control dehumanizes workers and is conducive to abuse and powerlessness (Crowley, 2012).

Interpersonal value and meaning activate dignity. An employee’s direct supervisor is one of the most important persons in shaping the interpersonal sensemaking process individuals use to establish the meaning and significance of their work through cues and evaluations of their job, role, and self (Ashforth et al., 2007; Avey, Wernsing, & Palanski, 2012; Caldwell & Dixon, 2010; Dust, Resick, Margolis, Mawritz, & Greenbaum, 2018; Kahn, 1990; Wrzesniewski, Dutton, & Debebe, 2003). The experience of dignity is activated when managers thoughtfully provide

developmental opportunities, provide appreciation, and communicate that an employee is valued during difficult events, such as a missed promotion or even in exit interviews (Wood & Karau, 2009). Further, the work of Ashforth and colleagues (Ashforth et al., 2007; Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999) examined the practices managers use to counter or normalize “taint.” Managers are critical to creating the conditions that help employees who do dirty work become and remain positive and overcome the stigma of their occupations. These managerial practices include developing occupational ideologies, building social buffers, defending workers before clients or the public, and other defensive tactics (Ashforth et al., 2007). As some “dirty” work is completed outside of organizational boundaries, research has suggested interactions among clients and independent contractors are also critical to the experience of dignity (Cameron, Thomason, & Conzon, 2021; Petriglieri, Ashford, & Wrzesniewski, 2019).

The concept of ethical leadership holds that both the character and behaviors of leaders create the conditions necessary to achieving results while maintaining ethical standards, which can activate an experience of dignity. Honest, caring, and principled leaders influence their followers by openly discussing ethical standards and appropriately recognizing and rewarding ethical behavior (Brown & Trevino, 2006). They also create the conditions for employee voice and psychological ownership, positively influencing employees’ psychological well-being and job satisfaction (Avey, Wernsing, & Palanski, 2012). Employee voice is especially consequential because it represents meaningful opportunities for employees to advocate to management for constructive changes in unsatisfactory work conditions (Brockner et al., 1998), thus permitting management and the organization to benefit from their sense of dignity at work rather than creating frustrated employees who may then leave for other jobs (Spreitzer & Mishra, 2002).

Individual Level

As a final consideration, perceptions of out-group membership, specific occupations, and stigmatized tasks contribute to a sense of disposability and thereby detract from the experience of dignity. These experiences are mitigated when individuals develop alternative meaning for tasks, craft their jobs, and develop certain personal characteristics that serve to reinforce their value to the organization and therefore restore dignity.

Individual disposability and expendability detract dignity. Perceptions of in-group versus out-group membership affect the experience of dignity;

being part of the in-group increases self-worth (Dittmann, Kteily, & Bruneau, 2021). Perceivers' attributions about the behavior of the groups to which they belong help to determine their perceived worthiness, although unfavorable attributions may threaten one's perception of the dignity of the group. In addition to the research on dirty work by organizational scholars, sociologists have also examined phenomena that detract from dignity that are associated with specific tasks (Anteby, Chan, & DiBenigno, 2016). Stigmatized tasks create negative employee reactions that threaten personal dignity (Jermier et al., 1989; Malvini Redden & Scarduzio, 2018). Such employees often experience physical deprivations in their work, which detracts dignity (Cameron et al., 2021; Hamilton et al., 2019). The perceptions others have of certain tasks also create conditions that detract from dignity; for example, garbage collectors' sense of expendability stems from the low social esteem of many tasks involved in their jobs.

Individual value and meaning activate dignity.

When faced with tasks that overwork or impinge on autonomy, workers may resist to maintain a sense of dignity (Hodson, 2001). Workers may also take action that increases a sense of pride in their achievements, create alternative meaning systems that ascribe greater value to tasks, and espouse rhetoric that influences the way they and others justify and view their tasks (Fine, 1996). Others have documented that forms of job crafting, such as "stretchwork" among contract workers identified by O'Mahony and Bechky (2006: 919), are a way of extending skills in a new direction to shape perceptions of their work.

A final set of means to activate dignity include the core personal characteristics that shape the value and meaning of an employee's work experience: wisdom, courage, humanity, temperance, and transcendence (Dahlsgaard, Peterson, & Seligman, 2005; Peterson & Park, 2006; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). All of these characteristics are associated with satisfaction with work, life, academic success, health and well-being, leadership success, and a sense of work as a "calling" (Peterson & Park, 2006; Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997). In turn, when individuals have these experiences at work, dignity is likely to be activated. Peterson and Park (2006) concluded that specific strengths of character—gratitude, hope, zest, curiosity, and love—are also instrumental to viewing one's work as a calling from which dignity can be gained.

DISCUSSION

Our review contributes to the organizational literature by developing an integrative conceptualization

of dignity and centralizing it in a multilevel framework; by incorporating both inherent and earned dignity; by mapping the phenomena that detract from dignity, along with the features of work through which dignity is activated; and by delineating multiple cross-disciplinary areas for research guided by our framework. We suggest research designs for extending the nomological net of dignity at work and offer practical organizational applications that we hope our review and framework will inspire.

Integrating Conceptualizations to Establish Dignity at Center Court

Our review brings dignity at work to center court in organizational studies and beyond. Scholarship addressing dignity has remained fragmented despite dignity's potential to address the many critical issues facing modern workplaces, including the accelerating digital transformation, growing economic inequality, and related calls for remote work, racial justice, and automation (Barley, Bechky, & Milliken, 2017; Nkomo, 2021; Singh & Lakhani, 2020). Few of these fragmented approaches have addressed dignity in any fundamental or comprehensive manner. This prior work has typically focused on inherent or earned dignity (but not both) and addressed either detractors or activators of dignity (but not both). Our conceptualization recognizes the criticality and necessity of each of these components to the coherent integration of the many approaches to dignity to allow further development of theory and practical applications.

We began with an overview of dignity within various religious and philosophical traditions, and we posited that understanding the origins of the concept of dignity is critical to comprehending its manifestation across societal, organizational, interpersonal, and individual levels of analysis. For example, a multinational company trying to implement processes and policies to ensure the dignity of employees may function differently with Confucian versus Judeo-Christian values as a backdrop. The Confucian concept of role-based dignity implies dignity may be based on family background, occupation, or societal role (Chan, 2008) and social and moral order may be pursued to conform to social expectations (Lin et al., 2013). Given that Confucianism emphasizes relationships and societal peace, policies that support connection may resonate most with those employees. In contrast, the Judeo-Christian tradition emphasizes a person's value independent of the group and highlights the uniqueness of individual capabilities (Ip, 2009). Thus, meritocratic policies may be accepted

more readily, even if they do not truly protect the dignity of all employees (Castilla & Benard, 2010). The Islamic belief that a fair minimum wage is one that is adequate to cover the cost of necessities (Beekun & Badawi, 2005; Possumah, Ismail, & Shahimi, 2013) is a practice frequently reflected in HR and managerial decisions. In contrast, Confucians relate dignity directly to virtuous conduct (Li, 2021; Luo, 2014). Accordingly, a tradition focused on duty and holding agents responsible for creating harmony, moral, and social order may not welcome a minimum wage (Lin et al., 2013).

Given these differences, our framework provides an integrated, culturally sensitive road map for examining dignity at work across geographic and labor market contexts. This framework is likely to be especially useful for organizations that are global or multinational, are characterized by increasing diversity in religious and philosophical beliefs, or are working to integrate refugees and immigrants with differing cultural backgrounds. We encourage scholars to recognize that different employees, managers, and organizations relate differently across cultural and geographic contexts with respect to cross-cultural phenomena that may detract from dignity and the features of work through which dignity is experienced.

Recognizing someone else's approach to dignity provides an inclusive way to protect dignity. Indeed, our review's connections across levels show that intrapersonal and relational approaches to dignity are embedded in societal and organizational contexts. This perspective allows for a greater understanding of the complexities of dignity across occupations, geographies, and cultures. Our framework recognizes and honors the many religious and philosophical traditions and approaches that inform both inherent dignity and earned dignity. Simultaneously, detractors and activators of dignity encompass *both* inherent and earned dignity. Accordingly, we provide a pathway to overcome the perils of ethnocentricity or single disciplinary perspective.

Incorporating Inherent and Earned Dignity

Our review incorporates both inherent dignity, which is a belief that all people have intrinsic and equal value, and earned dignity, which is a belief that dignity is meritocratic and at least partially based on individuals' differential qualities, abilities, and efforts (Brennan & Lo, 2007; Lucas, 2015). We underscore that considerable prior research has positioned inherent and earned dignity as different routes by which dignity is detracted and as different pathways to

activating dignity (e.g., Goodstein, 2019; Hodson & Roscigno, 2004; Lucas et al., 2017; Rogers et al., 2017). Specifically, scholars focused on phenomena that detract from dignity emphasized that inherent dignity is degraded when privilege and opportunity are conferred based on individual characteristics or social status. For example, research that underscored dignity detractors in the form of racial or gender bias implored scholars and practitioners to treat inherent dignity as a moral obligation. In contrast, our review confirms that the means of activating and restoring dignity presented in the literature address earned dignity through recommendations to change recognition or compensation policies to favor fairness and justice without attention to inherent dignity.

Nevertheless, we contend this bifurcation ignores that the modern phenomena and workplace conditions that detract from dignity—alienation, exclusion, and dehumanization—put *both* forms of dignity at risk. And importantly, by extension, this means the most successful means of activating dignity must also address both forms. This is where much of theory and practice fails. However, our review unveiled specific pathways advocated in prior literature, such as increasing connectedness, respect, and meaning at work, that can invoke *both* inherent and earned dignity. By mapping dignity detractors and specific features of society, organizations, interpersonal interactions, and individuals that activate the pathways through which dignity is experienced, we bridge the past divide between inherent and earned dignity. Our framework depicts a more extensive causal chain and sequence of events to help both scholars and practitioners understand how to avoid or minimize indignity, proactively enhance dignity, and engage in restorative practices for reestablishing dignity when lost or violated. Ours is the first such integrative perspective proposed in the management literature.

Integrating Dignity Approaches Across Disciplines

We opened this review with the claim that to support the experience of dignity at work, we must develop an integrated and holistic understanding of the specific actions that encourage and protect human dignity at work. We also recognized such an understanding must reflect multiple disciplinary approaches that typically do not talk to one other. We do not yet have a coherent science of dignity at work, and this lack of communication across disciplines is a key culprit. We have taken a first step by mapping scholarship from certain disciplines about

multilevel phenomena that detract from dignity onto scholarship from other disciplines that addressed the features of work that establish dignity. We hope our framework opens new lines of interdisciplinary inquiry.

For example, as we highlighted in our section on dignity detractors in the form of disaffection and alienation, psychologists have examined the loneliness and anxiety brought on by social distancing during the pandemic. But these scholars have rarely communicated with organizational researchers examining technology use or work design, although this work directly informs how best to connect and inspire workers, which our framework identifies as an important pathway to activating and restoring dignity. Likewise, research on decent work, participatory corporate structures, and authentic leadership all have the potential to address ostracism and the psychological impacts of abusive supervisors. Identifying the research from other disciplines that has addressed such threats to dignity enables more comprehensive theorizing and potentially useful approaches to workplace reform.

Similarly, sociologists have long been concerned with the indignity individuals may experience in being disrespected or excluded, such as when they are victimized by racism, immigrate, lose their jobs, or are denied opportunities for advancement or development based on dispositional characteristics. But although they have the potential to directly address these very threats to dignity, the scholarship on respectful engagement, reciprocity, and community development as a form of CSR have not been informed by, nor contributed back to, the work in sociology. The concepts reviewed in the section of the framework on exclusion (e.g., humanizing and ethical codes of conduct; community embeddedness) show promise for activating and restoring dignity that could add to the work on exclusion and disrespect in other disciplines.

Finally, technologists and ethicists have been struggling with concerns regarding individual experiences of being disposable or expendable when work is automated. But rarely has the work of organizational scholars on topics such as developmental opportunities or voluntary organizational support been brought to bear on these issues. Neither has scholarship on automation been informed by the work of occupational psychologists on the development of meaning in tainted occupations and tasks. By identifying the important pathway to activating the experience of dignity at work, through instilling value and meaning, we shed light on a way to address the concerns confronting other disciplines.

As such, we present a truly interdisciplinary framework that not only diagnoses the conditions of work that detract from dignity but also offers evidence-based pathways to protect and restore dignity at work.

Directions for Future Research

Our review offers numerous arenas for future research. First, we note that much of the literature on dignity is philosophical and conceptual; 44% of the articles identified in our search were nonempirical. We hope future work will provide empirical evidence regarding the activators and detractors of dignity at work. Empirical work is particularly scarce for features at the societal level, representing an area ripe for additional study. We also note that across the six sections of our model, research addressing the activation of dignity through work that is valued and infused with meaning is more heavily dominated by conceptual articles rather than empirical studies (i.e., this section contained 49% conceptual articles). The other five sections were less characterized by conceptual work (i.e., 40% conceptual articles for work as disaffected and alienated, 26% conceptual articles for work as connected and inspired, 26% for work as disrespected and excluded, 35% for work as respected and embedded, and 32% for work as disposable and expendable). Therefore, we particularly encourage empirical studies that investigate features of work that infuse it with value and meaning as a promising means of activating dignity. Furthermore, even within the empirical work that examines dignity, there is room to further clarify the concept of dignity, especially in relation to other concepts describing human treatment. For example, dignity and respect are often paired together and sometimes used interchangeably. We propose respect as a means of restoring dignity in the face of exclusion. But in the absence of empirical evidence on whether dignity and respect are distinct, we encourage research along these lines.

Additionally, research on dignity at the individual level is limited. Perhaps this is because dignity is fundamentally a relational construct (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). However, as illustrated in our review, much more research is needed to understand the key individual dispositions or traits that insulate or protect from workplace phenomena that detract from dignity, prompt a willingness to pursue solutions or pathways, and engage in restorative practices when dignity is lost or damaged. We encourage future research that questions whether there are individual attributes, mindsets, or behaviors that can protect one's own

dignity, regardless of the interpersonal, organizational, or societal context. Similarly, are there dispositions or other trait-like characteristics that enable individuals to seek out and sustain effort on work activities that provide elevated perceptions of respect, value, and dignity in their work? For example, future scholars could examine the role of character strengths, such as gratitude and hope, that have shown associations with employees' ability to overcome uncertainty and sustain efforts in work contexts threatened by major disruptions—downsizing, mergers and acquisitions, and terrorism—and other environments that threaten individuals' dignity (Peterson & Park, 2006; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). Individual-level predictors are particularly important as individuals increasingly work on-demand and as contractors (Petriglieri et al., 2019).

Furthermore, our review and framework offer scholars an integrated approach to examining the protective mechanisms (policies, procedures, and practices) that insulate individuals from work conditions detracting from inherent dignity and whether such protection is predominantly a function of stable personal characteristics, positional power or status, or job skills, competencies, and functional/disciplinary backgrounds. Dispositional factors related to one's identity can represent dignity detractors that are entirely outside of one's control, including gender (Ridgeway, 2011), race and ethnicity, sexual orientation or identity (Meyer, 2003), physical disability (Stone & Colella, 1996), or immigration status. How can such individuals be shielded from indignity and by what entities? Along a similar vein as dispositional characteristics, an individual's primary skills, disciplinary training, and other job-related capabilities represent relatively stable facets that potentially contribute to features of work that detract from dignity. As technological advancements accelerate (Bankins & Formosa, 2020; Ivanov et al., 2020), our review encourages research into how organizations can avoid violations of the fundamental value of being human. Thus, there is much intellectual ground to explore not only individual traits but also individual behaviors and organizationally based roles.

Future research could further examine how organizations eliminate unnecessary electronic performance monitoring, surveillance, and other privacy violations (Acquisti et al., 2015; Kellogg et al., 2020). We also encourage further examination of the link between consistency, transparency, and equality of pay policies and dignity. Given the wealth of evidence suggesting that dignity detractors are often perpetrated by supervisors and others in leadership roles (Holtz &

Harold, 2013), future studies could examine how whistleblowing policies and other measures allow individuals—especially those most vulnerable—to protest when disrespected or abused by persons in positions of authority.

As an integrative approach to examining the protective mechanisms (policies, procedures, and practices) that shield or insulate individuals from phenomena that detract from inherent dignity, our review also captures the proactive mechanisms (solutions, pathways, and routes) through which multiple stakeholders (organizations, governments, trans-organizations, leaders, teams, etc.) can provide meaningful opportunities for individuals to earn or secure dignity in work. This research can directly investigate the potential impact of participatory structures, such as organizing teams, projects, networks, and learning organization practices (Lawrence & Pirson, 2015; Shin, Picken, & Dess, 2017), as dignity activators. These structural participatory practices, which include exchanges with internal and external stakeholders across organizations and collaborative opportunities for addressing enterprise-wide challenges, offer great potential for understanding the features of work through which dignity is experienced. We also see research on employee recognition practices as fertile ground for dignity scholarship, particularly across cultural and geographic contexts in which appropriate displays of recognition differ, to help our understanding of the pathways through which dignity is experienced.

In these pursuits, we encourage the study of proactive solutions across the societal, organizational, and leader, or interpersonal levels. Given the many disruptions to the nature of work due to automation, artificial intelligence, and related technological advancements, we see this as promising research into the provision of job-relevant training and development opportunities to activate or reestablish dignity as new workforce requirements potentially detract from the experience of dignity at work (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Hodson & Roscigno, 2004). Automation may be implemented with the best of intentions to free up employee time for more valued pursuits, and yet the unintended consequences may be that these top-down shifts in the nature of work detract from dignity. Aligned with the ethical perspective that employees have a basic right to pursue their own goals and self-interests (Gibson, 2000; Rowan, 2000), future studies might also examine the nature and efficacy of job crafting, job enlargement, job rotations, and related pathways to enhancing the meaningfulness of work through “stretch roles” that offer

skills development, exposure to new markets or regions, and cross-functional or business unit experiences (Lucas et al., 2017; O'Mahony & Bechky, 2006).

For example, research is needed to understand how dignity at work is activated or restored when individuals are selected for coveted development opportunities as well as the interpersonal (leader-follower relationship) and individual factors that drive adaptation to new work requirements (Church, Guidry, Dickey, & Scrivani, 2021). As illustrated by our framework, the pursuit and provision of relevant learning and development opportunities as a means of restoring dignity is an important future research direction to advance our understanding of feeling disposable and expendable as phenomena that detract from dignity. From the perspective of industrial relations and business ethics (Frenkel et al., 2012; Wood & Karau, 2009), future studies should examine how the psychological contract is changing with the increasing learning and development needs of the workforce. However, in parallel, our review also encourages research that examines the potential exclusionary impact of providing career advancements and development opportunities to selected individuals (in-group) and necessarily excluding most others (out-group). As organizations continue to adopt talent management policies and practices that offer limited and invaluable opportunities to employees rated as "high potential" (Church et al., 2021), we implore scholars to examine the unintended consequences of such policies for those not chosen, which too often includes women, disabled persons, underrepresented ethnic and racial minorities, immigrants, and other persons with inherent dispositional characteristics (Bowles, Thomason, & Bear, 2019; Groves, 2019; Lacey & Groves, 2022). Research may examine how dignity is experienced as a function of perceptions of organizational justice based on skills training and related development initiatives.

It would also be worthwhile to consider how different roles in organizations influence how employees do or do not experience dignity. For example, several studies in our review found a supervisor is central to experiences of dignity (Herscovis & Barling, 2010; Hollensbe et al., 2008; Stoverink et al., 2014). Undoubtedly, managers are often central to how employees interface with their organizations. Moreover, the impact of managers on their team members is often most influential during highly disruptive work contexts and events (Hannah, Uhl-Bien, Avolio, & Cavarretta, 2009). As such, we recommend future research that adopts process models using longitudinal designs to examine the important role of

leaders through major crises or transitions and the associated experiences of worker dignity. It could be illuminating to unpack the ways dignity at work is activated and restored via leader-follower interactions across the major phases of organizational crises (Jaques, 2012). Such inquiries might also explore how subordinates, peers, and superiors to whom one does not report can also influence individuals' experiences of dignity. Locklear, Taylor, and Ambrose (2021) found that simply prompting people to journal about what they are grateful for at work brought reports of greater self-control and, according to their coworkers, subsequent less rudeness, gossip, and ostracism. Indeed, the simplicity of this intervention suggests organizations can indeed create the features of work to foster dignity.

Finally, we note that our framework ends where the experience of dignity begins. Indeed, in many ways, our research takes the approach that dignity is an end in and of itself. Nonetheless, we hope future work will explore the consequences of experiencing dignity at work. Similar to how diversity scholars have explored diversity and inclusion as a moral issue (Köllen, Kakkuri-Knuuttila, & Bendl, 2018) in addition to identifying the business case for it (Robinson & Dechant, 1997), it will be important for organizational scholars to consider the consequences of dignity for employees, leaders, and organizations. In this quest, scholars might seek to consider different interventions that activate or detract from the experience of dignity. Notably, it is possible that well-intentioned policies and practices may not actually restore dignity but deliver unintended consequences. For example, an organization might move to remote work with the intention of supporting working parents or primary caregivers with flexibility but find some employees feel disconnected from their colleagues. Or, an organization might automate parts of its process to support efficiency but make the individuals who were in charge of that task feel expendable. Hence, we encourage future empirical studies that extend prior work by assessing a broader range of antecedents to workplace dignity (dirty work demands, organizational rank, income insufficiency) and outcomes of workplace dignity (employee engagement, turnover, well-being, resilience, productivity). We also note that capturing the experience of activators and detractors for dignity at multiple levels of analysis will require creative methodologies and quite likely a mixed-methods design. We encourage studies that examine contexts using qualitative or ethnographic investigation combined with that which seeks to understand interventions or policy changes

and their impact on the interpersonal and individual level. Such studies would help to ensure coverage across the full experience of dignity at work.

CONCLUSION

In this review, we integrated the rich but fragmented literature on dignity at work. The conceptual framework that we have proposed synthesizes a vast body of research that has considered the activators and detractors of dignity at work across societal, organizational, interpersonal, and individual levels and integrates both inherent and earned dignity. At the time of publication, the world is grappling with “building back better” after the COVID-19 pandemic, confronting racial justice and rising immigration concerns, and increasing dehumanization of work via automation, artificial intelligence, and the digital transformation. We hope our review supports both scholars and practitioners in infusing work and organizations with dignity while inspiring individuals to advocate for dignity more broadly across society, governments, and the global business community.

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