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Spirituality in Business

Implications for Sustainability

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Topics to be covered

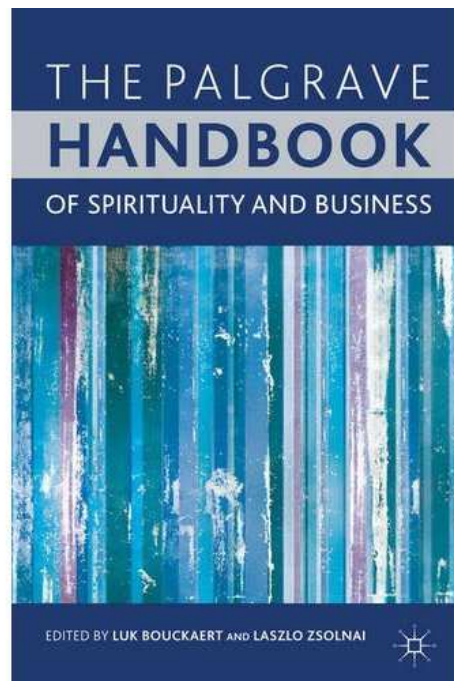
- **Spirituality in business**
- **Spiritually-oriented enterprises**
- **Implications for sustainability**

European SPES Forum, Leuven



<http://www.eurospes.be/>

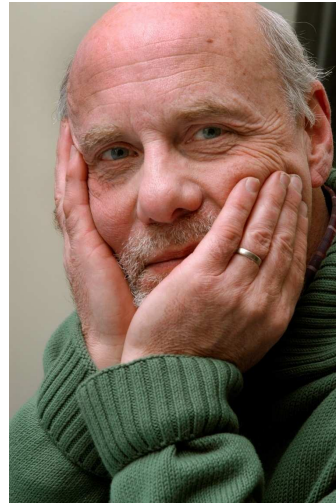
The Forum defines **spirituality** as people's multiform search for **meaning** which connects them with **all living beings** and to **God or Ultimate Reality**.



Luk Bouckaert: **Spirituality and Rationality**

Rationalism produced **ambiguous results** in the Western economy and society.

Increasing **material welfare** on the one hand, but **social disintegration** and large-scale **ecological destruction** on the other hand.



Spirituality activates **meta-scientific sources** (wisdom, traditions, introspection, meditation) and employs **meta-utilitarian means** (intrinsic motivation, emotions, intuition, enlightenment).

It is **not against** rationality. It is **against materialism**.

Tim Kasser: **Materialistic Value-orientation**

Numerous psychological studies document that the more people **prioritize materialistic goals**, the **lower their personal well-being** and the more likely they are to engage in **manipulative, competitive, and ecologically degrading behaviors**.



Luk Bouckaert, Hendrick Opdebeeck and Laszlo Zsolnai: Frugality

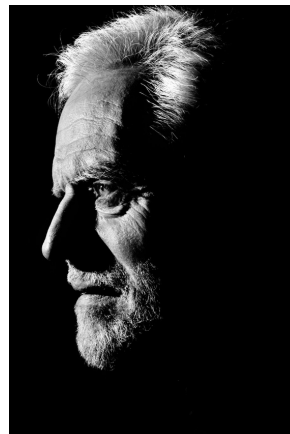
Frugality induces low material consumption and simple lifestyle. It opens up the person for **spiritual goods** such as **inner freedom, peace, justice and the search for the final truth.**



Authentic frugality means self-detachment and orientation toward others but is not inconsistent with **economic rationality**. A spiritually based frugality can result in rational outcome such as **preservation of nature, social reintegration** and care for **future generations**.

Peter Pruzan: Spiritually-based Leadership

Spiritually based leadership is emerging as an **inclusive and holistic approach** to business that integrates the leaders inner perspectives on **identity, purpose, responsibility** and **success** with their decisions and actions in the outer world of business.



Traditional management aims at **optimal economic performance** that mandate attention to the **well-being** of the **organization's stakeholders**.

In spiritual perspective the “**why**” of **organizational existence** is no longer economic growth but **material** and **spiritual fulfillment** of all those affected by the organization.

Spiritually oriented enterprizes



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Preconditions of sustainability

- **Considering the whole persons and the whole systems**
- **Giving priority to intrinsic motivation**
- **Orienting toward the common good**
- **Measuring success in multi-dimensional, holistic way**

The great paradox

Materialistic value orientation destroys material values, including nature.

To save material values we need to follow a non-materialistic (i.e. spiritual) path.

Spiritually-based rationality

