FROM MEANING OF WORKING TO MEANINGFUL LIVES: THE CHALLENGES OF EXPANDING DECENT WORK

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FROM MEANING OF WORKING TO MEANINGFUL LIVES: THE CHALLENGES OF EXPANDING DECENT WORK

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This Research Topic explores issues that are central to the continued relevance of organizational and vocational psychology, and equally central to the well-being of individuals and communities. The cohering theme of this publication revolves around the question of how people can establish meaningful lives and meaningful work experiences in light of the many challenges that are reducing access to decent work. Another essential contextual factor that is explored in this volume is the Decent Work Agenda (International Labour Organization, 2008), which represents an initiative by the International Labour Organization. In this book, we hope to enrich the Decent Work Agenda by infusing the knowledge and perspectives of psychology into contemporary discourses about work, and well-being. Another inspiration for this project

emerged from the UNESCO Chair in Lifelong guidance and counseling, recently established in Poland in 2013 under the leadership of Jean Guichard, which has focused on advancing research and policy advocacy about decent work.

This new era calls for an innovative perspective in constructing decent work and decent lives: the passage from the paradigm of motivation to the paradigm of meaning, where the sustainability of the decent life project is anchored to a meaningful construction. During this period when work is changing so rapidly, leaving people yearning for a sense of connection and meaning, it's fundamental to create a framework for an explicitly psychological analysis of decent work.

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The Editorial on the Research Topic

From Meaning of Working to Meaningful Lives: The Challenges of Expanding Decent Work

This Research Topic explores issues that are central to the continued relevance of organizational and vocational psychology, and equally central to the well-being of individuals and communities. The cohering theme of this publication revolves around the question of how people can establish meaningful lives and meaningful work experiences in light of the many challenges that are reducing access to decent work. Numerous interrelated trends are reshaping access to work, especially stable, dignified jobs. These trends include the continued fallout from the Great Recession, which has had a profound impact on many regions of the world (International Labour Organization, 2016). Simultaneously, the rapid growth in information technology is reducing the number and quality of jobs for people across the occupational spectrum (Brynjolfsson and McAfee, 2014; Standing, 2014).

Another essential contextual factor that is explored in this volume is the Decent Work Agenda (International Labour Organization, 2008), which represents an initiative by the International Labour Organization. In this book, we hope to enrich the Decent Work Agenda by infusing the knowledge and perspectives of psychology into contemporary discourses about work, and well-being.

During this period when work is changing so rapidly, leaving people yearning for a sense of connection and meaning, we believe that scholarship is needed to foster new developments in understanding how people construct meaning about their lives and work. This new era calls for an innovative perspective in constructing decent work and decent lives: the passage from the paradigm of motivation to the paradigm of meaning, where the sustainability of the decent life project is anchored to a meaningful construction.

Another inspiration for this project emerged from the UNESCO Chair in Lifelong guidance and counseling, recently established in Poland in 2013 under the leadership of Jean Guichard, which has focused on advancing research and policy advocacy about decent work. After the inaugural Conference in November 2013 in Wroclaw (Poland), the following Conference was in Florence in 2015 on the topic "How can career and life designing interventions contribute to a fair and sustainable development and to the implementation of decent work over the world?"

In the section that follows, we summarize the articles that are included in this volume, highlighting their connections to the main themes of this project.

The 1st article by Blustein et al. summarized existing scholarship on decent work; using the psychology of working framework (Blustein, 2006, 2013), the authors created a framework for an explicitly psychological analysis of decent work.

The 2nd article by Di Fabio and Maree proposed a transdisciplinary interpretive lens as a means of understanding the psychological meaning of decent work. This article provided a thoughtful synthesis of legal, philosophical, economic, sociological and psychological

perspectives of poverty and decent work, creating important theoretical linkages.

The 3rd article by Pouyaud used the decent work lens to explicate a career counseling intervention. Pouyaud reviewed the literature on decent work and built important theoretical linkages between decent work and vocational psychology.

The 4th article by Di Fabio and Kenny presents a new theoretical model entitled Positive Self and Relational Management (PS&RM) for the Twenty-first century. Using a structural equation model design, this theoretical model explored three interrelated constructs, Positive Lifelong Life Management, Positive Lifelong Self-Management, and Positive Lifelong Relational Management into a coherent framework.

The 5th article by Ribeiro et al. examined the concept of decent work via narratives derived from 20 non-college educated adults in Brazil. Ribeiro et al. demonstrated that the concerns conveyed by the participants paralleled the attributes of decent work.

The 6th article by Allan et al. used self-determination theory in conjunction with the psychology of working framework in study that identified predictors of meaning at work. Their findings underscored the importance of internal motivation as a major predictor of meaningfulness at work.

The 7th article by Luke et al. reported a qualitative study that involved interviews with 22 retirees who returned to work after a period of retirement. Using Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2002) and the psychology of working framework (Blustein, 2006), Luke et al. affirmed the importance of work as means of establishing meaning in life for older adults.

The 8th article by Di Fabio and Gori described the development of a new construct and measurement tool for assessing workplace relational civility (WRC). This measure provides a means of explicating an important aspect of decent work—the relational health of working people.

The 9th article by Kenny et al. examined the experiences of 18 urban, low-income graduates of a U.S. Catholic high school that was characterized by a work-place learning program. The interviews revealed that the students' experiences after high school were often marred by their exposure to external barriers.

The 10th article by Maree and Twigge used life-design theory as a framework for an analysis of career interventions provided to six adults in South Africa. Maree and Twigge identified how the life design counseling enhanced self-knowledge and also fostered growth in the relational-moral self.

The 11th article by Di Fabio and Bucci sought to explore the predictors of high school students' interests in nature and the environment. Using a quantitative design, this study found that empathy predicted connectedness to nature and affirmed that green positive counseling is optimally best understood from a relational perspective.

The 12th article by Di Fabio and Palazzeschi presented a case study that provided an illuminating perspective in the world of precarious workers. Using a life-design approach, the authors described how a 23-year old University graduate struggled to find a life of meaning while searching for stable work.

The 13th article by Ryba et al. described the development of a cultural transition model that emerged from a qualitative analysis of professional athletes who changed geographic regions in pursuing their careers.

The last article by Arnoux-Nicolas et al. presented the results of a quantitative study of 336 French workers who were surveyed about their turnover intentions, where meaning of work was inversely predictive of working conditions and turnover intentions.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors listed, have made substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

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Decent Work: A Psychological Perspective

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This contribution, which serves as the lead article for the Research Topic entitled "From Meaning of Working to Meaningful Lives: The Challenges of Expanding Decent Work," explores current challenges in the development and operationalization of decent work. Based on an initiative from the International Labor Organization [ILO] (1999) decent work represents an aspirational statement about the quality of work that should be available to all people who seek to work around the globe. Within recent years, several critiques have been raised about decent work from various disciplines, highlighting concerns about a retreat from the social justice ethos that had initially defined the concept. In addition, other scholars have observed that decent work has not included a focus on the role of meaning and purpose at work. To address these concerns, we propose that a psychological perspective can help to revitalize the decent work agenda by infusing a more specific focus on individual experiences and by reconnecting decent work to its social justice origins. As an illustration of the advantages of a psychological perspective, we explore the rise of precarious work and also connect the decent work agenda to the Psychology-of-Working Framework and Theory (Blustein, 2006; Duffy et al., 2016).

Keywords: decent work, precarious work, Psychology-of-Working, career development, social justice and work

INTRODUCTION

The two specialties of industrial/organizational (I/O) and vocational psychology have been exploring work as a context for human experience and development for more than a century, producing substantive bodies of scholarship and practices that have positively impacted the lives of people, organizations, and communities (Savickas and Baker, 2005; Blustein, 2006; Guichard, 2009; Landy and Conte, 2010; Schleicher et al., 2011; Di Fabio and Maree, 2012; Di Fabio, 2014). At the present time, the labor market is undergoing radical transformations that are upending many of the taken-for-granted assumptions about work and careers (Blustein, 2013; Brynjolfsson and McAfee, 2014; Stiglitz, 2015). Working conditions are increasingly governed by market forces that are currently creating growing levels of instability and insecurity, thereby evoking greater levels of stress and anguish for people around the globe (Kalleberg, 2009; Paul and Moser, 2009; Richardson, 2012; Stiglitz, 2012, 2015; Guichard, 2013; Piketty, 2014; Standing, 2014). Amidst the radical changes in the world of work, international leaders from government, labor, and other public policy domains have provided needed guidelines about the quality of work that people should be able to access in contemporary society (International Labor Organization [ILO], 2008a,b, 2014, 2015; Standing, 2008). Their guidance has yielded an aspirational statement about the sort of work that ought to define the lives of all who work and who want to work—**decent work.**

As a means of understanding these changes and creating a knowledge base that will help to foster relevant research, we have developed this special Research Topic for *Frontiers in Psychology* entitled "From Meaning of Working to Meaningful Lives: The Challenges of Expanding Decent Work," This article serves as an introduction to this special section and also provides a needed psychological examination of the concept of decent work, which is a key element of this project. When considered collectively, the articles that comprise this Research Topic build on the interface between I/O and vocational psychology (Carr et al., 2012; Blustein, 2013) by examining the complexities that people face as they seek to transition from school or unemployment to work and as they strive to adjust to an increasingly challenging workplace. In accordance with globalization trends and the intellectual pluralism that is defining the discourse on organizational and applied psychology (e.g., Di Fabio and Kenny, 2011; Carr et al., 2012; Blustein, 2013; MacLachlan, 2014), these contributions represent various settings around the world and also employ qualitative analyses, quantitative methods, case studies, and critical reviews, thereby furnishing readers with a broad canvas upon which to generate the next generation of scholarship to address these growing challenges to the world's workforce. This introductory article provides a cohering thread, linking the articles by defining the psychological features of decent work and outlining its utility in enhancing the potential for people to create a life that includes fair, dignified, and decent work.

For the most part, policies, research, and advocacy on decent work have emerged from economics, public policy, sociology, governments, and the private sector. With the understanding that the availability of work that is stable and secure is associated with mental and physical health as well as greater cohesion in communities (Wilson, 1996; Paul and Moser, 2009; Swanson, 2012), we propose that psychologists need to understand and contribute to the conception of decent work, and join in ongoing dialogs about how to optimally create the conditions that promote decent work. To accomplish these goals, we seek to define decent work from the perspective of individuals and communities—in other words, what is the experience of decent work for people (as contrasted with the tradition of examining decent work from the perspective of macro-level markets) and what are the barriers that exist in attaining decent work?

While nuanced disagreements across disciplines remain as to what constitutes a good job, the conversation has progressed from subjective measures of job satisfaction to efforts by I/O psychologists (e.g., Hammer and Zimmerman, 2011) and vocational psychologists (e.g., Blustein, 2013; Lent and Brown, 2013), economists (e.g., Burchell et al., 2013), business management scholars (e.g., Vidal, 2013), and others (e.g., Deranty and MacMillan, 2012) to develop a consensus on the defining dimensions of high quality work. The use of a consensually agreed upon definition of decent work as fair, dignified, stable, and secure has the potential to drive research, policy initiatives, and potential solutions to the growing crisis in work.

While the International Labor Organization [ILO] (1999, 2008a,b) concept of decent work has been offered by some as an aspirational set of standards that can transform the nature of working, others have persuasively argued that there is a political battle for consensus within the ILO between stakeholders with competing interests (Standing, 2008; Deranty and MacMillan, 2012; Burchell et al., 2013; Di Ruggerio et al., 2015). In a thoughtful critical discourse analysis, Di Ruggerio et al. (2015) identified troubling themes in texts from the ILO, World Health Organization, and World Bank, suggesting a disconcerting shift of the ILO's agenda away from social conceptualizations of work toward neoliberal, market-driven definitions following the global financial crash of 2008–2009. The move toward a more market-driven definition of decent work is a troubling development considering the historical influence of neoliberalism on governance, namely that the tendency of neoliberal social policy to privilege the individualization of work, health, and overall well-being (Rushton and Williams, 2012). Additionally, Piketty (2014) has presented painstakingly thorough evidence from 20 countries over three centuries that markets, left to their own devices, as is the goal of neoliberalism, will serve to elevate inequality. This political and ideological battle within the ILO effectively renders any consensus of aspirational standards a moving target, which, depending on who prevails, may or may not be consistent with a social justice and human rights agenda. The question becomes what can psychologists contribute to "redress(ing) the imbalance between economic and social framings of work to ensure that health and health equity remain at the forefront" of conceptualization of decent work (Di Ruggerio et al., 2015, p. 126)? In the next sections of this article, we explore a number of ways in which psychology can provide an important lens with which to understand the complexities and promise of decent work.

DECENT WORK: AN OVERVIEW

Decent work, as international concept, can be traced to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, which expressed the need for work as an integral aspect of human rights. The passage regarding work, which was endorsed by the General Assembly of the UN in December 1948, proposed the following:

> (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection. (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests (United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).

Building on this critical statement about work, the International Labor Organization (ILO), focused on defining the attributes of a work life that fulfills the mission of the UN Declaration. The International Labor Organization [ILO] (2008a, p. 6) advanced the notion of decent work as a statement to guide its agenda for the future of workers within an increasingly complex occupational context. The overarching objectives of the ILO Decent Work Agenda are "to meet the universal

aspiration for social justice, to reach full employment, to ensure the sustainability of open societies and the global economy, to achieve social cohesion and to combat poverty and rising inequalities."

The International Labor Organization's [ILO] (2008a) definition of decent work, as stated in the report, includes the following attributes:

1. Promoting employment via sustainable institutional and economic contexts;
2. Defining, developing, and enriching social protection for workers, including social security and labor protection, which are constructed in accordance with the cultures of given societies;
3. Promoting social dialog via intentional connections among governments, worker organizations, and employers;
4. Affirming, advancing, and fulfilling the fundamental rights that define a dignified and just work place.

DECENT WORK: PREVALENCE AND FEATURES

For the most part, decent work has been defined via macro-level economic factors, resulting in thoughtful analyses about the extent to which decent work is available in various countries and regions of the world (e.g., Ghai, 2003; Burchell et al., 2013; International Labor Organization [ILO], 2014). Much of the existing literature on decent work has used global indices of the labor market, including unemployment and underemployment rates, existence and proportion of child labor, employment-population ratio, conditions of work, availability of social security, access to basic rights at work, discrimination at work, freedom of association, and union density (Ghai, 2003; Standing, 2008). A perusal of the data in the report by Ghai (2003) and in more recent contributions from the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2014, 2015) reveals considerable variability with respect to access to decent work across the globe. Some countries, such as those from the Nordic region, do fare relatively well in these global indices of decent work (International Labor Organization [ILO], 2015). However, considerable gaps exist in the macro-level indices of decent work, which have become even more pronounced in recent years due to the major impacts of the Great Recession and the growing rise of automation (Guichard, 2013; Stiglitz, 2015). For example, the recent report by the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2015) reveals the unemployment rate will likely increase over the next 4 years by 8 million people globally. Similar views have been articulated by a panel of economic experts convened by the OECD Development Centre (2015), who have discussed some distressing developments in the world of work that echo the observations by the ILO.

As indicated by the trends identified by the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2015) and OECD Development Centre (2015) as well as scholars in economics (Burchell et al., 2013; Piketty, 2014) and psychology (Byars-Winston et al., 2012; Di Fabio, 2014), the crisis at the workplace is not likely to improve markedly in the coming years. The struggle to obtain decent work, particularly for workers without marketable 21st century skills, remains one of the major social justice challenges of our era. In this climate, we believe that linkages are needed between existing macro-level definitions of decent work and the psychological literature on quality of work life, social justice, and emancipatory views of human behavior (e.g., Prilleltensky, 1997; Blustein, 2006, 2013; Hammer and Zimmerman, 2011). In order to better understand the nature of the decent work concept, we first turn our attention to the emerging critiques, which have been generated from social philosophy (e.g., Deranty and MacMillan, 2012), economics (e.g., Burchell et al., 2013), public health (e.g., Di Ruggerio et al., 2015), and sociology (e.g., Standing, 2008). These critiques, in our view, provide the cohering thread between existing definitions of decent work and a psychologically infused conceptualization, which is the intention of this article and of this Research Topic.

DECENT WORK: CRITIQUES AND A WAY FORWARD

As indicated earlier, emerging concerns are being voiced about the ideological divisions present in the ILO's tripartite governing structure, which includes representation from governments, the private sector, and workers. A similar set of concerns has been articulated by Standing (2008), who was involved in the development of the International Labor Organization [ILO] (1999) position paper about decent work. Standing's critique centered around some of the same issues that Di Ruggerio et al. (2015) described, notably the relative retreat from a more assertive position with respect to workers' rights. He indicated that due to organizational problems within the ILO and the diffusion of an explicitly justice-oriented agenda, existing definitions of decent work are replete with vagueness and ambiguity.

In addition to the concerns about the dominating influence of market-based forces, another theme has emerged that pertains to the relative neglect of psychological notions of work within existing views of decent work. This position is best articulated in the social philosophical critique by Deranty and MacMillan (2012), who have argued that internal constructions of meaning at work are excluded from existing formulations of decent work. Informed by the psychodynamic theory of working developed by Dejours (2006), Deranty and MacMillan (2012) constructed a compelling argument that decent work needs to include the perspectives of working people themselves. They proposed that decent work also needs to be meaningful work, which is a position that parallels many existing formulations in psychology about meaning at work (e.g., Savickas, 2011; Dik et al., 2013).

Legal concerns also have been raised about the decent work agenda. A defining feature of the decent work agenda has been its aspirational nature; in effect, the proposals to advance decent work are generally not based on legal mandates or policies that have been endorsed by governments (Deranty and

MacMillan, 2012). A thorough analysis of the legal complexities inherent in advocating for decent work has been provided by MacNaughton and Frey (2011). These legal scholars provided a compelling rationale for using a holistic human rights framework to help establish the legal context for the decent work agenda. That said, their article identified the complexity in moving from an aspirational set of principles to legal structures that can result in systemic change in people's experiences with work.

When considered collectively, the critiques that we have reviewed herein point to a growing lack of consensus with respect to the values that are integral to notions of decent work. Rather than the clear posture of the earliest developers of decent work which explicitly endorsed a human rights view characterized by a strong rejection of prevailing views of working people as economic commodities (International Labor Organization [ILO], 1999), the current trend seems to be increasingly responding to market forces (cf. Di Ruggerio et al., 2015). While we have argued that the macro-level perspectives used in original conceptualizations are clearly welcome in psychology to provide external criteria with which to evaluate work-based policies, we believe that a bridge needs to be created between these macro-level perspectives, which are increasingly vulnerable to outside influences from employers and neo-liberal policies, and the lived experience of working people. In our view, this bridge can be constructed via the scaffolding of psychological theory and research about work. Additional support for this bridge needs to come from the critical perspectives that have been reviewed previously, which are conceptually connected to the social justice-based ideas that are increasingly emerging in psychological discourse about work and careers (e.g., Richardson, 1993, 2012; Blustein, 2006, 2013; Carr et al., 2012; Flores, 2013).

In the sections that follow, we first review the relationship between work and psychological health, which underscores the advantages of adopting a psychological perspective of decent work. In order to provide an exemplar of the utility of a psychological lens in the decent work discourse, we explore the emergence of precarious work and its impact on workers, particularly their health and well-being. Then, from a Psychology of Working Framework (PWF; Blustein, 2006), we will position a socially constructed aspiration of decent work for all who would like stable, dignified, and secure work as the antidote to precarious work. We propose that the PWF can function as a needed conceptual framework for the decent work agenda. In effect, our view is that the concept of decent work can enhance the psychological study of work and careers, and that a psychological standpoint can enrich the decent work agenda. This sort of intentional synthesis may help to integrate the diverse streams of scholarship on unemployment, precarious work, social oppression, and other forms of "bad work" environments that continue to plague the labor market. Finally, we discuss how the integration of decent work and PWF will promote a needed synthesis of research and public policy on workplace initiatives and labor policy, which has tended to neglect the important contributions from psychology.

WORK AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

Considerable research within psychology has detailed the various ways that access to work promotes psychological health (Blustein, 2008; Swanson, 2012). In this section, we examine this literature with a particular focus on how the decent elements of work may be critical in understanding the relationship between work and psychological health. As detailed in an excellent review by Swanson (2012), extensive research exists that supports the basic premise that working is associated with psychological health and well-being. In this article, we define psychological health as encompassing not simply the absence of mental health problems (cf. Swanson, 2012), but in accordance with the World Health Organization (WHO), "as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community" (World Health Organization [WHO], 2014).

The Swanson (2012) contribution explored two specific lines of research that explicated the relationship between work and psychological health. First, Swanson (2012) described the extensive scholarship that has identified a significant and pernicious rise in mental health problems for individuals who are unemployed for 6 months for more (see Paul and Moser, 2009, for a detailed meta-analysis on this issue). She also reported research that documented improvements in mental health once people became reemployed (cf. Paul and Moser, 2009; Wanberg, 2012). Second, Swanson (2012) reviewed research that has detailed the various ways that work supports psychological health, such as promoting an adaptive family-work balance and enhancing various indices of adaptive well-being (such as quality of life, life satisfaction, etc.). However, as recent research from Australia has indicated (e.g., Butterworth et al., 2013), not all jobs are associated with gains in psychological health. Many jobs present people with psychologically and physically painful experiences, exposure to various forms of social oppression and marginalization, boredom, exhaustion, and other sources of physical and psychic distress (Blustein, 2006).

THE INCREASING PREVALENCE OF PRECARIOUS WORK

One of the most important contributions of the decent work concept and agenda is the acknowledgment that by ignoring the quality of work available, conventional indicators like unemployment statistics reveal little about how well a labor market is meeting the needs of a society and its workers. Likewise, an emerging literature in the social sciences is highlighting growing concerns about rising levels of precarious work. Although a full consensus has not been reached among scholars regarding its definition, precarious work is generally understood as a multidimensional construct defined along four dimensions: continuity/employment insecurity, vulnerability (i.e., powerlessness/lack of bargaining position or ability to exercise workplace rights), protection (i.e., access to benefits and legal protections), and income (Benach et al., 2014). Precarious

workers typically lack effective agency and have little bargaining power, or means of resisting exploitative and oppressive labor conditions, leaving them little choice other than to abide by market forces or face severe consequences of not being able to find work and maintain their livelihoods (Standing, 2014).

Although precarity has been a continuous feature of work in developing nations, its prevalence in Western economies had declined during the 20th century, as expansions of social protections, regulation of workplace conditions, the promotion of collective bargaining, and the rise of union representation successfully addressed many of the problems, and reduced the occurrence of precarious employment (Menéndez et al., 2007; Evans and Gibb, 2009). However, since the 1970s, employment relationships have again been undergoing substantial changes, this time emerging from neoliberal restructuring of labor markets as governments and business have sought to respond to the effects of globalization, growing global competition, rapid technological advances, and a changing labor force (Merolli, 2012). In accordance with a neoliberal agenda, which emphasizes the effectiveness of markets to self-regulate and respond efficiently to change, governments have increasingly adopted policies aimed at deregulation, and supportive of corporate *'flexibility,'* often in ways that have eroded employment standards and shifted social risk away from businesses, with adverse effects on workers (Evans and Gibb, 2009). Among the consequences of policies aimed at promoting corporate flexibility, growing precarious employment shifts risks away from employers (and governments) and places them instead on workers, their families, and communities. As a result, the burden of risk is now being shouldered by those who are least able to bear it (Evans and Gibb, 2009). Modern precarity, unlike its pre-WWII incarnation, is notable because it has spread to all sectors of the economy, including occupations that were historically seen as secure or permanent (Malenfant et al., 2007; Kalleberg, 2008; Facey and Eakin, 2010; Quinlan, 2012). Many workers are now facing job insecurity not as a transient condition on the path to permanent employment, or a temporary setback, but as a chronic situation in their lives, and consequently, an ongoing source of stress (Artazcoz et al., 2005; Lipscomb et al., 2006). Increased occupational stress, sustained uncertainty due to the threat of job loss, and a lack of control over the future, leads many workers to overwork and/or avoid taking needed time off in order to maintain employment (Clarke et al., 2007; Malenfant et al., 2007).

Not surprisingly, a growing body of research supports the conclusion that precarious employment has deleterious health effects (Lewchuck et al., 2003; Facey and Eakin, 2010). Multiple studies have found a negative impact of casual or intermittent work, and related experiences of insecurity, on well-being, self-esteem, and social recognition, all of which were as damaging to workers' mental health as the stress and insecurities linked to unemployment (e.g., Artazcoz et al., 2005; Malenfant et al., 2007). Workers experiencing chronic job insecurity had the highest morbidity on self-report measures, made more frequent use of health services, and had higher rates of adverse physiological indicators and cardiovascular risk factors (e.g., high blood pressure, increased serum cortisol, increased Body Mass Index ratios; Lipscomb et al., 2006; Benach and Muntaner, 2007).

Perceived job insecurity associated with precarious employment has also been linked to increased prevalence of depressive symptoms and generalized anxiety in a preponderance of studies examining the issue (Benach et al., 2012, 2014). As a result, precarious employment has come to be considered a social determinant of health, with well-documented aversive effects on workers, families, and communities (Benach et al., 2014).

Although workers in these circumstances are still technically employed, precarious employment involves a loss of many of the latent functions of work, such as the development of a sense of adult identity, a sense of purpose, and inclusion in social organizations (Blustein, 2006; Benach et al., 2014). Thus, notable among the factors identified in empirical studies as leading to negative health outcomes are a lack of recognition (most often characterized by low pay and lack of respect from colleagues), job insecurity, restricted autonomy, limited possibility for advancement or to develop one's abilities, lack of work support, and the intensification of work (Malenfant et al., 2007; Benach et al., 2014). Precarious workers also typically gain fewer social connections through work, and experience a comparative lack of social support (Clarke et al., 2007; Evans and Gibb, 2009) along with increased social isolation, which are known psychological stressors (Blustein, 2006, 2011; Swanson, 2012; Blustein et al., 2013; Flum, 2015).

Considered collectively, this evidence suggests that the impact of employment on health depends more on the quality of work than simply the obtainment of work. We would further make the case that precarious work and unemployment actually occur along a continuum. In fact, expanding this continuum to include the adaptive concept of decent work will help to provide locations for indexing the complexity and diversity of contemporary work experiences and will provide scholars with a means of understanding the various ways that work can provide meaning and purpose, as well as stability and economic security.

MODERATING FACTORS

Although precarious employment has been associated with increased physical health risks in the workplace, Clarke et al. (2007) suggest that the relational characteristics of employment and the changing nature of the social structure of employment better explain the social/psychological health outcomes of precarious employment. Whether individuals want more permanent employment, and whether they believe this goal is attainable, may be central in understanding the impact of precarious employment on health and mental health. For example, the small population that does seem to thrive under conditions of precarious employment seems to have access to greater collective and individual sources of support (Kalleberg, 2008). Workers who engage in temporary work "voluntarily" are more likely to have resources enabling them to seek out employment arrangements that enhance their quality of life, whereas employees who accept temporary work "involuntarily" are significantly more likely to experience job dissatisfaction and stress (Benach and Muntaner, 2007).

Often, these individuals have greater access to healthcare benefits, a partner who is stably employed with adequate earnings, and workplace supports (such as training and opportunities for social networking), all of which have been found to mitigate the impact of workplace precarity (Clarke et al., 2007). Additionally, several studies (e.g., Artazcoz et al., 2004; Clarke et al., 2007) have found evidence that social and systemic support were essential to the health of precarious workers, and that negative mental health effects were particularly associated with precarious work among less educated workers, women, and ethnic minorities. Thus those who most need support are arguably among the least likely to receive it.

Indeed, social marginalization plays a substantial role in determining who has access to decent work (Ali, 2013; Flores, 2013; Duffy et al., 2016). Employment conditions, such as precarious, insecure or low-paying jobs, child labor, and work in hazardous conditions, significantly influence individual, family, and community health and thereby, inequality. Such employment conditions have a notably differential impact on health across social classes, racial or ethnic groups, and gender (Quinlan, 2012). Access to decent work provides a well-established pathway out of poverty and marginalization (Duffy et al., 2016). Yet, as Lipscomb et al. (2006) note, the nature and quality of benefits afforded by work vary by class, race, and gender in ways that affect health, and contribute to disparities among groups.

In sum, the literature on precarity provides an informative exemplar of how a psychological perspective of decent work can help to illuminate issues regarding the quality of a given job. The rise of precarious work underscores the need for a comprehensive definition of decent work that explicitly captures the psychological aspects of working. As reflected in the next section, a psychological explication of decent work, based on the PWF, has the potential to further clarify the definitional boundaries and contours of the concept.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DECENT WORK

Although the decent work agenda has not been formally integrated within psychology, considerable psychological theory and research has focused on various aspects of work that correspond with existing definitions of decent work. For example, substantial research has been devoted to identifying the nature and predictors of people finding a good fit in their work lives; various indices exist within vocational and I/O psychology to assess the extent to which a given job fits the values, interests, attitudes, and abilities of a given worker (see for example, Holland, 1997; Dawis, 2005; Schleicher et al., 2011). In vocational psychology, extensive effort has been devoted to understanding and predicting the nature of a good person-environment fit, as reflected in the seminal theory development efforts by Holland (1997) and Dawis (2005). Empirical research within vocational psychology has documented that individuals whose work environments fit well with their interests, values, and abilities are more likely to experience job satisfaction (Nauta, 2013) and other indices of well-being at work (Lent and Brown, 2013). Moreover, individuals who have the opportunity

to experience job satisfaction also are more likely to have other forms of well-being and psychological health in their lives (Swanson, 2012; Lent and Brown, 2013). In addition, psychologists from the I/O and work psychology traditions have explored the various ways that people can obtain quality of life at work (Hammer and Zimmerman, 2011), job satisfaction (Schleicher et al., 2011), and other forms of meaning at work. Indeed, the scholarship within vocational and I/O psychology has generated considerable relevant knowledge in understanding many of the psychological attributes of a functional work environment (see Lent and Brown, 2013, for an excellent review of the existing research in both I/O and vocational psychology).

A PSYCHOLOGY OF WORKING PERSPECTIVE ON DECENT WORK

The PWF (Blustein, 2006, 2008) was initially advanced as a critique of existing discourses in vocational psychology that had privileged the lives of people who had some individual control over their career choices. As the critique was fully developed, a meta-perspective was constructed that provided a rich exploration of the psychological nature of contemporary working experiences (Blustein, 2006, 2013). Consistent with the decent work agenda, the PWF incorporates an activist, social justice perspective that seeks to link individual analyses of work-related issues to broader social and economic factors, which clearly play a key role in understanding the distribution of resources and access to decent work (Blustein, 2006, 2013). More recently, Duffy et al. (2016) have constructed a precise theoretical statement, known as the Psychology-of-Working Theory (PWT), which has sought to identify the salient antecedents and consequences of decent work. The PWT posits an empirically testable model based on the concepts outlined in the PWF that places decent work at the center of work experiences for all individuals. This theoretical model includes psychological factors such as proactive personality, career adaptability, and critical consciousness along with social and economic factors, such as economic conditions, marginalization, and social class. These two contributions seek to understand the diverse work experiences of individuals from different backgrounds, particularly those belonging to marginalized and disenfranchised social groups who have historically had less access to traditional career narratives, a group that is growing as work becomes increasingly precarious (Standing, 2008; International Labor Organization [ILO], 2015). Furthermore, the PWF and PWT pay attention to the ways in which sociocultural factors, such as discrimination, oppression, intersectional identities, high barriers, and low volition, affect the career development process and experience of work. By expanding the definition of work and those who engage in the world of work to include every person who is involved in market or care work, the Psychology-of-Working movement advances a view of work as a human right central to mental health and wellbeing through its ability to meet three basic needs: survival and power, social connection, and self-determination (Blustein, 2006, 2013; Duffy et al., 2016). Due to the variations in the nature of different jobs, these needs are additive and are not mutually

exclusive, meaning that people can achieve wellbeing through different combinations and levels of fulfillment with each need, that multiple needs may be met by the same facet of work, and that gratification of one need may bolster the fulfillment of other needs.

Decent work, as outlined by the International Labor Organization [ILO] (2008a), has the inherent capacity to meet the three needs set forth by the PWF. Because the needs outlined by the PWF can be fulfilled to varying degrees and in varying arrangements, the PWF, like decent work, provides an aspirational frame for work. To further provide a more structured framework to the integrated vision of decent work, as well as to promote the psychological aspects essential to truly defining decent work, we will outline the ways in which it provides or interacts with the needs posited by the PWF.

Survival and power, as posited by the PWF (Blustein, 2006), comprise one need defined as an individual's access to work that ensures survival and the capacity to make his or her objectives prevail. Survival is fulfilled by work characteristics such as job security, job stability, provision of a living wage, benefits such as health insurance and paid time off, and a sense of independence and control in the work place. Each of these characteristics can also be considered as part of the definition of a decent work environment. Characteristics of work that fulfill survival needs exist at the workplace level, as well as at the policy and macroeconomic levels. The extent to which individuals' survival needs are met by work can serve as one important dimension of decent work in individual jobs or workplaces and can be scaled to assess how well countries are meeting the aspiration of decent work. For example, although individual workplaces may vary in the wages and benefits they offer employees, governments have the ability to set minimum wages and offer safety nets to their citizens that reduce the negative consequences of precarious work.

The second need outlined by the PWF is social connection, which describes the aspects of work that provide access to relationships with others, as well as a sense of connection to society and the world at large (Blustein, 2006, 2011; Flum, 2015). Work can fulfill this need through a supportive, respectful environment – regardless of an individual's identity or social location – and through policies that provide time and resources for individuals to maintain positive relationships outside of work (e.g., paid family leave). Like the facets of work that fulfill the survival need, the characteristics of work that lead to social connection can be influenced at multiple levels connected to employment.

Finally, the PWF asserts that work can and should fulfill the need that humans have for self-determination, or the development of meaning for jobs, whether or not they are inherently intrinsically rewarding (Blustein, 2006). Self-determination in the workplace is generated by opportunities for autonomy, relatedness, and competence, with an emphasis on value congruence and access to the opportunity structure (Blustein, 2006). When individuals have the ability to locate and make use of resources and supports that bolster successful work experiences within their jobs, fields, or the world of work writ large, they are more likely to develop a sense

of self-determination in the realm of work (Duffy et al., 2016). In terms of decent work, employers and governments should aspire to increase the volition that individuals have in choosing work through easy access to quality education, increased training and vocational programs, and equal access to opportunities for independence and advancement within employment organizations. Psychologically, the ability to gain a sense of satisfaction, autonomy, and competence from one's work is integral to the universal vision of decent work (Deranty and MacMillan, 2012).

By working toward the fulfillment of survival, social connection, and self-determination needs as outlined by the PWF, the decent work agenda can gain clarity and form while placing an emphasis on the psychological health and wellbeing of workers around the world. To further add specificity and depth to this structure, scholars, policymakers, and human rights advocates can draw on the emerging PWT (Duffy et al., 2016), which represents the next logical step within the PWF movement. Research stemming from the PWT can lead to recommendations about the specific stepping stones needed to reach the goal of decent work for all, as well as a model for evaluating the extent to which employers and governments have met the integrated vision of decent work across the globe.

PSYCHOLOGY AND DECENT WORK: CONCLUDING POINTS

Employment conditions are determined by a combination of labor markets and social policy (Quinlan, 2012). Given the dominance of neoliberal ideology and agendas and the rise in automation (Piketty, 2014; Stiglitz, 2015), the current growth in precarious employment is not likely to diminish any time soon. In this context, the psychological health consequences of precarious or non-standard employment conditions remain a neglected concern, particularly as such work-related inequalities remain somewhat invisible in economically prosperous countries (Benach et al., 2010). One of the directions that is suggested by our discussion is the use of qualitative, discovery-oriented research as a tool to unpack how people experience their working contexts. The use of rigorous and relevant narrative data on the nature of working may help to respond to some of the critiques of the decent work agenda (Burchell et al., 2013; Di Ruggerio et al., 2015), which has been so heavily rooted in statistics and macro-level data, thereby missing important aspects of people's lived experiences at work. In our view, qualitative research may be particularly informative in detailing the impact of the growth in precarious work.

Consistent with Deranty and MacMillan's (2012) thoughtful critique of decent work, we have sought to provide an initial map of an integrative landscape that embraces both psychology and decent work. As reflected in the material that we have reviewed, the growth in precarious work is evoking greater problems for people in maintaining their sense of stability, health, and well-being at work. The infusion of the PWF provides a meta-perspective that may help to delineate the complex ways that working fulfills core human needs. Moreover, the socio-political

context of the PWF and the new PWT (Duffy et al., 2016) parallel the focus on the importance of creating macro-level conditions that will nurture our inherent need to contribute, collaborate, and create. In particular, research derived from the PWT can provide an integrative rubric for considering the complexity of how macro-level factors, such as social and economic conditions, interface with individual psychological experiences. Indeed, one of the major recommendations that we advance here is that psychologists develop collaborative research groups with other social scientists and policy makers to examine the psychological and social antecedents and consequences of decent work. The PWT is one viable tool to stimulate this research; the articles in this Research Topic coupled with the input from the thoughtful critics of decent work can also inform much needed scholarship that can shape policy.

In keeping with the decent work agenda that prioritizes health and health equity, we position political and economic systems of organizations, that is governments and economies, as the next frontier for psychologists interested in work and careers—the next unit of analysis and deconstruction on the basis of how well they facilitate equitable access to decent work. Many psychologists recognize that the environment and individual recursively influence each other; however, by not engaging directly in political and economic discourse, they may inadvertently endorse structures and ideologies that are deterministic, ahistorical, and serve to over-individualize the responsibility for psychological health (Rushton and Williams, 2012). A research and policy agenda infused with the psychology of working will protect us from being unaware of or complacent in our tacit endorsements of systems whose logic and ideology runs counter to our stated values, assumptions, and practices as psychologists concerned with social justice (Prilleltensky, 1997).

As psychological research-practitioners, we recognize that the integrity of our inquiry, analysis, and interpretation is vital to maintaining trust in psychology as a discipline concerned

with advancing the public good. However, contrary to Burchell et al. (2013), we find it unlikely that even the most rigorously researched scientific findings will be privileged above the fray of clashing political and economic interests merely because they are less overtly political. We argue that psychologists should not shy away from being political when human health and health equity, our foundational ethos, are thrust into the political arena by conflicting interests. An adoption of a decent work agenda grounded in the social justice principles that inspired this movement means not only using the theory and research that illuminated the conditions of a just society to advocate for those conditions, but using psychology to be more aware of political interests that threaten their realization. Our hope is that the psychological perspective advanced in this article, coupled with the other contributions in this Research Topic, will serve to revitalize the decent work agenda so that it can clearly and forcefully set standards for work that is safe, secure, meaningful dignified, and consistent with the best aspects of the human spirit.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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Using a Transdisciplinary Interpretive Lens to Broaden Reflections on Alleviating Poverty and Promoting Decent Work

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This article aims to broaden current reflections on definitions of decent work and poverty using a transdisciplinary interpretive lens comprising philosophical, juridical, economic, sociological, and psychological understandings. We (the authors) undertook an adapted systematic qualitative review to gather data on different perspectives on decent work and poverty. The article summarizes and compares reflections on the two constructs and proposes an enhancement of the current definition of decent work. The aim is to facilitate the identification and development of new research and intervention projects that can be implemented to promote fair and sustainable economic development, the provision of decent work, and the reduction of poverty globally. We believe that challenges should be dealt with pro-actively rather than reactively and that intervening at the level of primary prevention should lie at the heart of any strategy to promote decent work and alleviate poverty. Radical intervention is needed to ensure that future generations not only survive but develop, grow, and express themselves meaningfully through decent work

Keywords: decent work, poverty, transdisciplinary perspective, intervention, fair and sustainable development, new responsibility for decent work agenda

INTRODUCTION

Somavia (1999, n.p.) describes decent work as "productive work in which rights are protected, which generates an adequate income with adequate social protection. . .and employment, income and social protection can be achieved without compromising workers' rights and sound standards." The author maintains that decent work deficit occurs when:

- involuntary unemployment and poverty are evident;
- abuses of rights occur in the workplace and when forced child labor exists;
- basic income security is compromised;
- employees and employers are not organized well enough to express themselves openly or when effective dialogue is impeded; and when
- work-life is not balanced with legitimate family demands.

According to the United Nations [UN] (2006), "The Decent Work Agenda promotes access for all to freely chosen employment, the recognition of fundamental rights at work, an income to enable people to meet their basic economic, social and family needs and responsibilities and an adequate level of social protection for workers and their family members" (p. 85). This definition (adopted by the International Labour Organization [ILO], 1999) was interpreted by the international community as productive work for male and female employees in work environments that promote freedom, equity, security, and human dignity. Decent work, defined thus, encompasses jobs that (a) deliver a fair income, (b) are characterized by workplace security, (c) provide protection for workers and their families, (d) offer opportunities for personal development, (e) encourage social integration, (f) allow workers to express their concerns, (g) allow workers to organize themselves into interest groups that can contribute to decisions that influence their lives, and (h) guarantee equal opportunities and equal treatment to everybody. The Decent Work Agenda thus reflects a balanced and integrated approach to the pursuance of broad and productive employment and decent work for all workers at international, national, regional, sector-specific, and local levels [FAQs/Useful definitions (UN sources), n.d., n. p.].

The aims of the Decent Work Agenda are in line with the UN's 17 sustainable development goals (Sustainable development goals, 2015). These 17 goals confirm the importance of promoting decent work for all as such work enhances opportunities for progress, counters marginalization, and helps develop individuals, families, communities, and countries (in short, promotes sustainable development and growth globally) (Guichard, 2013; Di Fabio, 2015; Guichard and Di Fabio, 2015).

Aims of the Study

The study discussed here was a response to calls (Guichard, 2013; Di Fabio, 2015; Guichard and Di Fabio, 2015) for further reflections and research on the definition of decent work and poverty. The study aimed to deepen our understanding of decent work and poverty using a transdisciplinary interpretive lens comprising philosophical, juridical, economic, sociological, and psychological perspectives on the two constructs (decent work and poverty). We attempted to identify similarities as well as differences between the constructs. More particularly, we endeavored to harness transdisciplinary perspectives, theories, and definitions in order to gain some insight into critical global humanitarian needs. It is hoped that this will cast new light on current and envisaged research and interventions aimed at promoting decent work and reducing poverty thereby contributing to the realization of the aims and goals articulated by the UN and the ILO.

Working Assumptions

The study was premised on the belief that decent work can be provided and that poverty can be ended. However, interventions at the level of tertiary prevention of poverty or even at the second level of prevention only are not sufficient. Interventions at the level of primary prevention should override all other considerations and forms of intervention (Hage et al., 2007; Kenny and Hage, 2009).

Research Method

An adapted version of the systematic qualitative review (recommended by Higgens and Green, 2011) and others was undertaken of the literature on decent work and poverty. Given that this is an entirely qualitative study, and mindful of the words of Booth (2001, p. 1), namely "Why should systematic reviewers of qualitative research pursue a 'gold standard' comprehensive literature search when concepts such as 'data saturation' have an established pedigree?", we purposefully chose to rather search for sources until we believed that no new 'themes' emerged (in other words, until we had reached a point of data saturation). The review focused on scholarly articles and books and included also older, seminal sources. Data were collected by examining various studies, and the findings were synthesized. The following procedure was followed:

(i) We requested academic information specialists to search for abstracts of a number of databases for information (international books, articles, reference works, conference papers but also other relevant publications) on our topic. These specialists first chose platforms and databases; EBSCOHOST being the basic platform. EBSCOHOST Databases included: Academic Search complete, Masterfile, Eric, PsycInfo, PsycArticles, and Sociological Abstracts.

(ii) We did a simultaneous search (Google and Google Scholar) to improve or chances of identifying the widest range of sources possible.

(iii) Duplicate sources were removed.

(iv) Once we had received the information from our academic information specialists, we examined sources appropriateness and subsequently requested full-texts.

Inclusion criteria included the following: sources were included if we believed that sufficient 'evidence' were provided that they reflected contributed to elucidation of the topic, if they reflected more than mere personal opinions, and if they were written in English and Italian. No specific data range was specified. Dated sources believed to be sufficiently seminal were thus also included.

Exclusion criteria included the following: sources were included if we believed that insufficient 'evidence' was provided that they reflected more than mere personal opinions, if we believed that they were not meaningfully related to our topic, and if we believed that they reflected and form of bias. Dated sources believed to be insufficiently seminal were thus excluded.

Data Analysis

Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis was adapted to identify, analyze, and report themes (perspectives) and subthemes (subperspectives) that emerged. More specifically, we made a conscious, inductive attempt to determine a number of recognizable perspectives on our topic. We familiarized ourselves with the large number of sources, read and re-read them, after which we generated preliminary codes systematically. Next,

we organized the codes into five themes (perspectives) and subthemes (sub-perspectives), which were subsequently reviewed labeled. We concluded by writing our manuscript.

Below, we provide substantiation for the five perspectives and make it clear to the reader how specific studies contributed to certain perspective on decent work and poverty.

PERSPECTIVES ON DECENT WORK

The Philosophical Perspective on Decent Work

The philosophical approach to decent work centers on dignity as a fundamental dimension of decent work (Peruzzi, 2015) and holds that the notion of dignity varies within and between cultures. This is consistent with perspectives that challenge the assumption of universal human rights and maintain that any particular doctrine is always relative and not universally shared. The assumptions underlying the slogan that "all men [sic] are equal" that preceded the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) and its reframed, politically more correct, slogan "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and right" (United Nations, 1948, General Assembly) are clearly incorrect. Human beings are ideally considered equal in terms of their rights, yet, in reality, they do not have the same opportunities. Peruzzi (2015) believes that the assumption of equality leads to a rethink of concepts such as rights and dignity: if human beings have an inalienable claim to equal rights, they also have the right to be different to other people (to lead different lives and choose and execute different occupations). Furthermore, decent work should not be considered solely from a "Western" or "Eurocentric" point of view.

Seen from a human rights perspective, decent work intrinsically has four dimensions (Peruzzi, 2015): freedom (to choose or refuse a specific type of work); equity (to have a fair income); security (including something as basic as access to primary health care); and dignity. If the notion of a decent society implies a society that is fair and just (Arneson, 2007), then it follows that organizational and occupational contexts and work lives should also be equally fair and just (decent). The idea of respecting a person's honor and reputation (Article 12 of the UDHR) and the entitlement to the unrestricted development of one's own personality (Article 22) lie at the heart of the notion of decent work. This underlies the basic right to be protected against humiliation and dehumanization. The same applies in occupational contexts where workers are not free to choose what work they wish to do and, instead, have to accept mandatory work. The opposite of mandatory work, namely decent work, is promoted when working environments are structured to enhance dignity, respect, humane working conditions, and adequate self-construction (Guichard, 2009). What is needed is the active promotion of such environments and the identification of contexts where action is needed (Peruzzi, 2015). Examples of such contexts are those where delocalization in manufacturing services and the extractive industry (Peruzzi, 2015) occur. This boils down to the importance of changing economic models rather than attempting to perpetuate the myth of promoting

economic growth to enhance sustainable development. Suffice it to say that the idiosyncratic logic (revealed by this myth) entertained by many global economies is easily shown up when analyzed through a humane and visionary analytic lens.

The Juridical Perspective on Decent Work

The current kaleidoscopic assortment of juridical definitions of decent work has at one end of the range Article 23 of the United Nations (1948) Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

"(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself (sic) and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests."

At the other end of the range, Faioli (2009) distinguishes between decency at work and dignity at or in work. Decency at work implies the pre-legal assumption of modernizing labor law and is defined in terms of the application of social security, which is regarded as an indispensable ingredient of decent work. Dignity at or in work refers to the legal assumption of decency at work and is associated with equal opportunities and workers' entitlement to social security rights. Dignity in work concerns work quality and implies that workers absorbed or involved in their work should be allowed to combine their lives (in terms of their work-related vision and their personal life) with their work (Faioli, 2009).

International consensus exists on the need for labor law to promote decent work at national level in all countries. High stakes are involved because the labor law system is expected to restore and maintain equilibrium in the labor market in terms of (a) facilitating access to new employment opportunities and (b) reinforcing employability policies (Faioli, 2009). Promoting employment opportunities and workers' employability have lately emerged as critical ingredients of decent work.

The Economic Perspective on Decent Work

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (2006, n.p.), by means of a General Comment, defined decent work in terms of meeting the minimum requirements stipulated in Article 7 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: "The right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favorable conditions of work." More particularly, reference is made to "(a) remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with: (i) fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed

by men, with equal pay for equal work; (ii) a decent living for themselves and their families; (b) safe and healthy working conditions; (c) equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his/her employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence; (d) rest, leisure and reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, as well as remuneration for public holidays."

Moreover, as regards an economic perspective on decent work, Lavagnini and Mennella (2015, pp. 5–11) introduced a multidimensional concept of decent work that includes three kinds of profiles based on different indicators. First, a basic profile with indicators corresponding to daily working conditions. Second, a fairness profile with indicators corresponding to how people with different kinds of personal characteristics should be able to access the same job. Third, a relations profile with indicators involving the social aspect of working. Indicators in the basic profile include working hours (or time actually spent on work activities), physical safety, legality of jobs, and unemployment rate pressure. Indicators in the fairness profile include the irrelevance of private characteristics (e.g., gender, religion, nationality) and hanging work (including lengthy non-productive working conditions and social protection such as unemployment benefits). Indicators in the relations profile include monetary indicators (financial sufficiency) and monetary as well as educational enrichment (the percentage of workers who received training during the last 12 months in a certain job) as well as freedom to voice grievances and to embark on strikes.

An overview of the economic perspective on decent work reveals that its main aim is to detect "labor unfreedoms" (Sen, 1999, p. 3), implying that overcoming these constraints will enhance realization of the wide range of human capabilities and promote human development (Sen, 1999). Seen from this perspective, decent work is linked closely to the attainment of a minimum standard of living (Stiglitz et al., 2010) and becomes a key determinant of quality of life, especially in economic terms.

The Sociological Perspective on Decent Work

Sociological perspectives on decent work relate mainly to progressive definitions of the term by the ILO. Decent work was initially defined as "productive work, in conditions of freedom, equality, security and human dignity" (International Labour Organization [ILO], 1999, n.p.). More recently, the definition was changed to "opportunities for work that is productive (to satisfy individual basic needs and to give a contribution to society) and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men" (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2015, n.p.). The initial International Labour Organization [ILO] (1999) definition of decent work included the following four pillars of decent work: "(1) Workers' rights,

the ethic and juridical basis of decent work. (2) Employment, vital element of decent work (productive work, freely chosen and adequately remunerated for everyone). (3) Social protection, promoting the well-being and social inclusion of the more vulnerable people in the labor market (worker protection). (4) Social dialog, involvement of the workers and participation through their representatives; participatory democracy (voice of workers)." These four pillars have evolved into the following four strategic objectives advocated in the current International Labour Organization [ILO] (2015, n.p.) definition of decent work: "(1) Promoting jobs; . . . (2) Guaranteeing rights at work; . . . (3) Extending social protection, to promote both inclusion and productivity; . . . [and] (4) Promoting social dialog."

Sociologically oriented reflections on decent work draw on both ILO definitions (International Labour Organization [ILO], 1999, 2015) and hinge on the following themes: Work has to be safe and secure, has to provide a livable income (which means that no person's income should fall below the minimum income needed to ensure a reasonable living, health, and dignity), has to recognize workers' basic rights (including the absence of discrimination or harassment), has to ensure that income earned enables workers to meet their basic economic, social and family needs and responsibilities, has to ensure that work offers social protection for workers and their family members, has to ensure that work allows freedom of speech in the work context and representation at work through self-chosen representatives, and has to ensure that work promotes health and lower levels of disease and injury (International Labour Organization [ILO], 1999, 2015). UNESCO's (2009) definition sheds light on the sociological perspective of decent work. It supports the right to decent work by advocating the provision of adequate work of acceptable quality (protecting workers' rights and ensuring that workers generate an adequate income), the advancement of diverse income-generating pursuits (salary employment, self-employment, and working from home), fair and favorable conditions for income generation (adequate wages, occupational safety and health, hours of work, and the right of workers to organize), and work that promotes the dignity of the person.

The Psychological Perspective on Decent Work

Psychology of Working Theory (PWT, Blustein, 2006) emphasizes the importance of satisfying workers' needs for power, relationships, and self-determination because they involve activities that are experienced as authentic and motivating.

The humanitarian work psychology perspective (Carr et al., 2013) concerns ensuring decent work for all workers that entails challenging responsibilities and offers opportunities for promotion. The aim is to prevent marginalization of workers by granting them access to valued tasks, reducing their work stress and chronic work overload, recognizing their achievements, and facilitating their access to a living wage and work-related support structures. Many people in developing countries in particular work in the informal economy, which is often characterized by

unsafe work conditions and low pay. In terms of this perspective, the fight against poverty is advanced by promoting the ideals of economic growth, equitable and sustained employment opportunities, and quality of work, especially among the poor (Bell and Newitt, 2010).

Burchell et al. (2014) reflect on decent work in terms of job satisfaction, intrinsic job quality, and a job desirability index. Job satisfaction refers to the relationship between workers' perceptions of the quality of work and their expectations of work (Agassi, 1982). The writers also consider workers' ability to adapt to adverse conditions (Nussbaum, 2004). Intrinsic job quality refers to workers' well-being and employers' contribution to it through health schemes, education, compensation schemes, child care programs, adequate wages, and promotion opportunities (Burchell et al., 2014). Index of job desirability refers to objective job characteristics that can promote quality of work and workers' appraisal of their situation and contribution (Burchell et al., 2014).

Ferrari (2009) broadens psychological perspectives by stressing the value of (any) work as an instrument in combating poverty. She also highlights the importance of the right to work and workers' rights as well as the meaning of work in terms of its power to facilitate cohesion (work promotes socialization) and its instrumental value (work facilitates access to goods). Ferrari (2009) reflects on (a) employment in terms of quality, quantity, and employment as seen from a decent work perspective, (b) underemployment in terms of challenges but also as "opportunities to organize personal alternative spaces" (Ferrari, 2009, p. 7), and (c) challenges for research in psychology to shed light on what dignity entails by also focusing on the extent to which dignity is afforded to workers in non-traditional occupational contexts. Ferrari's views are corroborated by those of many other scholars (Wilson, 1996; Blustein, 2008; Paul and Moser, 2009; Swanson, 2012; Wanberg, 2012; Guichard, 2013), who highlight the strong, positive relationship between decent work (which affords workers dignity) and workers' well-being. Put differently: access to decent work is a prerequisite for the psychological health of individuals and groups (Blustein, 2008; Paul and Moser, 2009).

Career psychology, too, advocates the promotion of decent work. The 2001 International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) declaration states: "Effective educational and vocational guidance and counseling can assist individuals to understand their talents and potential and enable them to plan the appropriate steps to develop essential skills that will lead to personal, educational, economic and social advancement for the individual, family, community and nation" (The International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance [IAEVG], 2001, n.p.). Athanasou (2010) stresses the link between decent work and career by arguing that the notion of decent work is recognized and promoted globally and includes reasonable income, equal opportunities, safe working conditions, trade union representation, and a social safety net. This view underlines vocational counselors' social obligation to advance equity and fairness in occupational contexts.

All this confirms the challenge faced by career counseling and guidance to (a) conduct in-depth global research on decent work,

(b) promote the implementation of decent work globally and thereby advance fair and sustainable development, and (c) move beyond and expand the ILO definition of decent work (Guichard, 2013). Serious consideration should be given to the question as to whether work (as defined by the ILO) can be regarded as "decent" if it proves to be damaging to human life or the environment (Guichard, 2013).

Based on the Psychology-of-Work Framework (PWF) (Blustein, 2006, 2013), Duffy et al. (2016) recently proposed a conceptualization of decent work that incorporates contextual factors into an index of one's own psychological experience. Duffy et al. (2016) also underline the fact that decent work is embedded in self-determination, which in turn leads to meaningful and fulfilling work.

In summary: It is clear that the definition of decent work is still open to discussion and debate. Further in-depth reflection and research are needed to arrive at a generally agreed upon definition (Guichard, 2013; Guichard and Di Fabio, 2015).

PERSPECTIVES ON POVERTY

The Philosophical Perspective on Poverty

The distinction between absolute and relative poverty lies at the root of the philosophical perspective on poverty (Peruzzi, 2015). Whereas absolute poverty refers to biological deprivation in terms of the daily minimum intake of food and water, relative poverty refers to the maintenance of a preferred standard of living that changes in accordance with societal or historically determined norms and standards. Many parts of Africa and Asia display the typical characteristics of absolute poverty. Peruzzi (2015) states that emergency help is often provided in circumstances of absolute poverty by external entities, but, as crucial as it is, this kind of intervention does not resolve the challenge of absolute poverty. Absolutely poor refugees, for instance, often escape from war and famine and are subsequently helped to meet their immediate needs – only to end up experiencing extreme relative poverty. This highlights the need to implement medium- and long-term projects to help (absolutely) 'poor people' develop and grow instead of merely survive. Narveson (2004, p. 347) argues that "the road to poverty is [often] paved with bad economics." No one single strategy or approach will work for all victims of poverty. Strategies should be devised to help people realize their full potential. A philanthropic approach alone will not help as feeling sorry for the poor can never be regarded as a long-term solution for poverty. What is needed is a defensible strategy, based on sound business practices, to help poor people earn a decent wage (Narveson, 2004). Education and knowledge acquisition, as the cornerstone requirements for any democracy, will promote a stable income and advance people's well-being (Peruzzi, 2009).

Cognizant of what constitutes a globally acceptable standard of living, more people will want to purchase goods that will help them meet that standard, and they will therefore need to work harder in order to earn more money, thereby stimulating economic activity. Failure to earn the money required to buy

basic goods implies poverty and a lack of well-being. People who are affected often become despondent, fail to find employment, and are eventually denied access to a living wage. Failure to achieve the global standard of living means that people will either remain spectators and passively accept being poor and unhappy, or they will protest against laws they regard as condemning them to a life of poverty. The two main risks here are (a) the risk of unhappiness, and (b) the risk of promoting crime, both of which run contrary to basic ethical principles (Peruzzi, 2015).

Lastly, Peruzzi (2015) considers the challenge of poverty from a universal point of view taking all cultures into account, not just Western culture. This will facilitate more encompassing, culturally based interventions to reduce absolute and relative poverty.

The Juridical Perspective on Poverty

From a juridical perspective, poverty is a human condition characterized by deprivation in terms of the means to survive and make a reasonable living (United Nations [UN], 2003). The Despouy (1996, p. 2 and p. 13) (Part III) lists the following juridical criteria for poverty: "The denial of human rights as a whole [. . .] the extent to which poverty is a violation of economic and social rights, of civil, political and cultural rights, of the right to development"; "an accumulation of mutually reinforcing misfortunes: poor living conditions, insalubrious housing, unemployment, ill health, lack of education, marginalization, etc., a veritable 'horizontal vicious circle' of poverty"; "deprivation of one right can have repercussions on the exercise of the rest"; "tendency of the phenomenon to perpetuate itself by being passed on from one generation to the next: 'vertical vicious circle' of poverty"; "social consequence of poverty: exclusion and stigmatization of the poor."

These criteria make it possible to draw a "juridical" distinction between absolute poverty and relative poverty (Osia, 2010). While absolute poverty is considered as a state of being that deprives individuals of the means to meet their basic needs (Kokaz, 2007), relative poverty refers to comparative societal deprivation and different expectations of justice (Brandt, 1980). Burton (2007) lists the following criteria for assessing poverty: dearth, deficiency, indigence, paucity, and deprivation.

There are juridical indices of poverty such as the Human Poverty Index (HPI) and the Human Development Index (HDI) (United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 2004). Whereas the HPI is a summary measure of deprivation in terms of outcome indicators for identifying unmet basic needs, the HDI reflects the average achievements of countries in terms of citizens' ability to lead a long and healthy life, to be well educated, and to have a decent standard of living. Poverty is thus an outcome of economic processes and of interacting economic, social, and political forces.

The Economic Perspective on Poverty

From an economic perspective, poverty exists when income levels do not permit the satisfaction of basic needs. A distinction can be drawn between absolute and relative poverty (Dizionario di Economia e Finanza, 2012; Treccani Etymological Dictionary, 2012): absolute poverty is defined as the lack of the money

needed at a given moment to purchase a basket of essential goods and services to just exist. Relative poverty refers to inequality and the income differences between diverse social groups. The International Standard of Poverty Line (ISPL) (Treccani Etymological Dictionary, 2012) is used to measure poverty (relative to a given population's average living standard). The Treccani Etymological Dictionary (2012) points out that the word "poverty" stems from the Latin words "parere" (to obtain or produce) and "pauper" (a person who produces little, has inadequate economic resources, and is therefore unable to support himself/herself).

A review of the evolution of the definitions of poverty over the past few years casts light on the economic perspective on the topic. For example, a distinction was drawn in the 19th century between groups referred to as "pauvre" and "indigent" (Hulme and McKay, 2005). While the pauvre experienced cyclical poverty when crops failed or when the demand for seasonal agricultural labor was low, the indigent were perpetually poor due to of ill health, accidents, old age, or intoxication. In the 20th century, the focus in definitions shifted to the persistence of poverty (at individual and household levels) as well as the high, positive correlation with poverty and the serious effects of poverty (Gaiha, 1993). Attention was also paid to the complexity of the phenomenon, the lack of resources, and the fact that people were increasingly being deprived of choices that would facilitate decent living conditions (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 1998), as well as to the escalating denial of human beings' right to fulfill their most basic needs (Yunus, 1994). According to Englama and Bamidele (1997), people suffering from poverty are unable to provide sufficiently for their themselves (e.g., clothing, decent accommodation, and food, Fallavier, 1998); cannot fulfill their social and economic responsibilities; cannot access beneficial employment and acquire the skills and resources needed to find suitable employment; and have insufficient access to economic and social infrastructures (e.g., health services, education, potable water, sanitation, and roads). Their economic opportunities are also often limited by, for instance, their parents' financial situation, their race, and their religious beliefs (Solon, 1999).

The 21st century witnessed the introduction of a variety of definitions of poverty that are related to the economic perspective. They include defining poverty in terms of income (or prosperity) level below the generally accepted minimum (Atoyebi et al., 2008); in terms of a high unemployment rate, a low median income, and significant income disparity (Addae-Korankye, 2014); and in terms of socioeconomic instability, vulnerability, occupational uncertainty, and social exclusion (Weiss and Montgomery, 2005). Others have defined poverty as the deprivation of basic necessities, pleasures, possessions, and services (usually taken for granted) (Weiss and Montgomery, 2005); as food shortage or lack of shelter; as being ill without access to a doctor; as losing a child who fell ill through drinking contaminated water; as incapacity; and as lack of representation at social and political forums or not being free (World Bank, 2005). Lastly, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency [SIDA] (2005) defines poverty

as the lack of money and money-making opportunities, while Corbett (2007) describes poverty as the lack of basic necessities (e.g., adequate, nutritious food, clothing, housing, clean water, and access to health services) needed to execute a job efficiently.

The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) (Alkire et al., 2015) is an international measure of acute poverty used in over 100 developing countries. It complements and extends traditionally applied income-based poverty measures by including the deprivations that many people experience in, for instance, education (e.g., only a few years of schooling and minimal school attendance), health (e.g., high child mortality and inadequate nutrition), and living standards (e.g., a lack of cooking fuel, sanitary facilities, water, electricity, and proper surfaces or ceilings in homes). An assessment of poverty at the individual level can be used to create a comprehensive image of people living in poverty; permits comparisons both across and within countries, regions, and the world by ethnic group and location (urban vs. rural); and enables policy makers to obtain an overview of resources and devise strategic plans to deal with poverty (Alkire et al., 2015). Chakravarty et al. (2015) propose the poverty line as a way of assessing poverty by defining it on the basis of income position. Absolute position ranks individual income relative to an accepted (minimum) daily income in terms of its purchasing power parity for household consumption. Relative position ranks individual income in terms of a reference income (e.g., the mean or median income).

The Sociological Perspective on Poverty

From a sociological perspective, poverty is defined as the inability to achieve a minimum standard of living – a state that is generally feared and viewed as extremely undesirable. Whatever citizens do should be aimed at preventing or eradicating poverty (World Bank, 1990). Ajuzie (2000) describes poverty as living without essential daily necessities such as adequate food, clothing, shelter, funding, and water supplies, thus accentuating inequality and social injustice, and Aworawo (2000) and Zakaria (2006) established links between poverty, loss of livelihood, inequality, and youth impatience. Okemakinde (2010) regards poverty as the inability to afford decent food, medical care, recreation, decent shelter and clothing, and to meet basic family needs and community obligations.

The sociological definition of poverty (Enciclopedia delle Science Sociali, 2015, Treccani) is that poverty has material features (e.g., lack of food and other essential goods), non-material features (e.g., disrespect and undermined dignity), and intergenerational features (poverty is generally transmitted from one generation to another). Anti-poverty policies should therefore be aimed at promoting self-realization by all members of society, especially the poorest people. The sociological definition of poverty indicates lack of social, political, and cultural goods and services (Enciclopedia delle Science Sociali, 2015, Treccani) and implies that such policies should help people suffering from poverty achieve a decent living standard by creating the socioeconomic conditions needed to grant them equal access to opportunities.

Adeola (2000) and Nwenearizi (2011) argue that poverty is a relative concept. Poor people lack material goods and also often have little confidence in others (Nwenearizi, 2011). The poor tend to live in inaccessible rural areas or in urban slums (Nwenearizi, 2011), and a link has also been established between poverty and minority status (e.g., black, Hispanic) and family structure, with unmarried or single people more likely to be poor (Cox and Healey, 2003).

Brady (2003) makes the following recommendations about what should be done about poverty: (1) a comparison should be drawn between different historical poverty and inequality trends, (2) poverty should be regarded as relative rather than absolute, (3) poverty should be conceptualized as and promotes social exclusion, (4) poverty indices should measure the profundity of inequality among the poor, and (5) taxes and state benefits (e.g., child grants) should be considered when family resources are calculated.

The Psychological Perspective on Poverty

Psychological and sociological conceptualizations of poverty differed widely in the past and still do today (Di Fabio, 2015). From a sociological perspective, poverty was previously regarded as being shaped by economic, political, and structural factors (e.g., conditions of unemployment or differences in educational opportunities) (Lewis, 1968), and from a psychological perspective, poverty was regarded as being caused by individuals' lack of effort and initiative and the result of character weakness (Allen, 1970). During the second half of the 20th century, psychology was largely unsuccessful in its attempts to broaden our understanding of poverty and to reduce poverty (Carr and Sloan, 2003). While the current sociological perspective on poverty takes into account the role of material deprivation as well as the lack of social, political, and cultural benefits and services (Kotecha et al., 2013), the current psychological perspective sees poverty in terms of people's feelings of insecurity as well as their unmet needs, including unmet cognitive and affective psychological needs (Underlid, 2007).

During the last decade of the previous century, psychology contributed to poverty alleviation in three major life domains, namely health and welfare, social and organizational change, and personal and educational development (Carr and MacLachlan, 1998). American Psychological Association [APA] (2000) announced its intention to reduce poverty and highlighted the severe effect of poverty on people's psychological well-being. However, psychologists have always found it difficult to conceptualize and define poverty satisfactorily because of the numerous causative factors and consequences, meaning that it cannot be studied as a unitary psychological construct in isolation (Brown and Lent, 2008).

Carr and Sloan (2003) argue that psychology's interest in poverty revolves around its relatedness to powerlessness and injustice and the fundamental insecurities that it causes. Prilleltensky (2003), too, emphasizes poverty's connection with powerlessness and believes psychology's interest relates to its avowed aim to promote wellness, to resist exploitation, and to help people fulfill their basic needs.

Some authors define poverty from an attribution theory perspective (Kelley, 1967; Furnham, 2003). From an individualist point of view, poverty is brought about by the behavior of the poor. While the structural position attributes poverty to external social and economic factors, the fatalistic position attributes poverty to the role of fate. Underlid (2007) believes that the subjective meaning of poverty should be considered in addition to cognitive considerations. Whereas cognitive aspects include poor people's experience of insecurity and their belief that significant others fail to support them, affective aspects of poverty relate to feelings of anxiety, panic, a devalued sense of self, anger, shame, guilt, sadness, and loss of autonomy. Poverty does not pertain only to an unwanted state experienced by most of the world's population but also relates to deprivation as an unwelcome psychological state that is associated with a variety of life-expectancy limiting emotional and physical health issues (Anand and Lea, 2011). This means that behavioral economics (the study of the effects of psychological, social, cognitive, and emotional factors on the economic decisions of individuals and institutions) should be included in any discussion about poverty (Anand and Lea, 2011). Psychological insight into attitudes to debt and credit, for instance, could help indigent individuals improve their financial situation and thus help alleviate poverty.

From a psychological point of view, poverty may be caused or prevented by negative or positive individual as well as contextual factors. Individual factors that may help prevent or help people escape from poverty include the ability to understand the concepts of credit availability and debt management (Livingstone and Lunt, 1992; Anand and Lea, 2011), diligence, leadership skills, social skills, confidence, openness, emotional stability, energy, and a well-developed sense of self-esteem (Farkas, 2003), self-discipline, and money management skills (e.g., managing financial affairs meticulously and avoiding excessive spending) (Webley and Nyhus, 2001). Contextual factors that may help people avoid the poverty trap include a financially stable family background (Bowles and Gintis, 1976) as well as stable and financially sound consumption patterns of comparable reference groups (Lea et al., 1995; Schor, 1998).

Most importantly, poverty influences people's choices negatively. Poor people have fewer choice options and often have a limited understanding of choices, which means that they are unlikely to choose appropriately from the choices available (Chakravarti, 2006). Likewise, poverty has a negative influence on people's ability to adapt (Schmitt and Pilcher, 2004; Blustein et al., 2014; Osborne and Weiner, 2015; Thompson, 2015), on their ability to enjoy life and to avoid pain (Andrews and Withey, 1976; Kahneman et al., 1999), and on their ability to realize their potential and use their resources and strengths optimally (Vázquez et al., 2006; Ryff and Singer, 2008). Moreover, poverty limits people's ability to assess the severity of threatening situations (Jacobson, 1991; Schneier, 2008), condemns them to membership of isolated groups with a similar status (Gylfason and Zoega, 2003; Blackford, 2006), and diminishes their quality of life and self-perceptions (in terms of, for example, their position in life in the context of their culture and value systems and with respect to their goals, expectations,

standards, and concerns) (World Health Organization [WHO], 2002).

Psychology can contribute to poverty alleviation by (a) promoting psychosocial empowerment (e.g., by facilitating access to beneficial employment, formal education, and decent work; by promoting social equality, human rights, and by promoting engagement in decision-making and capacity-building networks) (Psychological Coalition at the United Nations [PCUN], 2012), mental health care and social protection, and psychosocial well-being (World Health Organization [WHO], 2002); (b) addressing the needs of marginalized and disenfranchised groups (those most at risk as regards poverty and related psychosocial and mental health problems); (c) evaluating the effectiveness of programs aimed at eradicating poverty; and (d) making calls to action to elicit an immediate response from established institutions and volunteers alike.

Regarding the development of psychological measures of attitudes toward poverty (widely regarded as a meaningful predictor of poverty), the *Attitude Towards Poverty* (*ATP*) scale (Gesinde et al., 2014) was developed to assess five major areas believed to perpetuate poverty, namely unemployment (lack of work), gambling (addiction to gambling), reckless spending (squandering money on unnecessary commodities), religion (some religions are less concerned about poverty reduction), and stealing (including robbery and theft). Used in a preventive framework for poverty reduction, this instrument can help identify effective poverty reduction strategies.

DISCUSSION

This article used a transdisciplinary interpretive lens to broaden reflections on decent work and poverty. Decent work and poverty were defined and elaborated on from philosophical, juridical, economic, sociological and psychological perspectives. Our aim was to propose a tentative transdisciplinary reflection on and comparison of the concepts of decent work and poverty. Below, we briefly summarize and compare the five perspectives referred to above.

According to Peruzzi (2015), the philosophical perspective on decent work focuses on dignity as intrinsic to decent work and emphasizes people's right to be different to other people (in terms of life and work). The author foregrounds four aspects of decent work, namely freedom, equity, security, and dignity. From a juridical perspective, decent work is defined in terms of basic rights, such as the right to work and freedom to choose employment, to fair working conditions, to protection against unemployment, to fair remuneration, and to worthy existence and human dignity (United Nations, 1948; Faioli, 2009). The economic perspective on decent work emphasizes remuneration (fair wages and equal remuneration for the same work, a decent living for workers and their families, a safe and healthy occupational environment, equal promotion opportunities for all, and sufficient rest, leisure opportunities, and reasonable working hours and holidays) (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2006). Three work-related profiles are identified: a basic profile (pertaining to daily working

conditions in general), a relations profile (pertaining to social aspects of the occupation), and a fairness profile (with all people having access to decent work, Lavagnini and Mennella, 2015). The sociological perspective considers decent work in terms of "[a summary of] the aspirations of people in their working lives, opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men" (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2015, n.p.). It also prohibits abusive occupational practices such as bonded labor. The psychological perspective emphasizes needs satisfaction (e.g., the need for power, relationships, and self-determination) (Blustein, 2006), the promotion of opportunities for progress, the prevention of marginalization, the reduction of work stress (Bell and Newitt, 2010; Carr et al., 2013), helping people gain insight into their potential (The International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance [IAEVG], 2001; Athanasou, 2010; Di Fabio and Maree, 2013), the boosting of individual resources (Di Fabio and Kenny, 2012; Di Fabio and Palazzeschi, 2012; Di Fabio and Saklofske, 2014), the advancement of individuals, families, communities, and nations, and the encouragement of sustainable development (The International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance [IAEVG], 2001; Di Fabio, 2015; Guichard and Di Fabio, 2015).

Differences between Definitions of the Terms Decent Work and Poverty

Key differences have emerged between definitions of the terms decent work and poverty. Decent work refers explicitly to the right to work, freedom to choose employment, just and favorable working conditions, protection against unemployment, the right to equal pay for equal work, safe and wholesome working conditions, opportunities for adequate self-construction (realizing one's talents and potential), gender and racial equality, guaranteeing workers' rights, promoting social dialog related to decent work, self-determination, fair and sustainable development, health, and well-being. Poverty refers explicitly to deprivation, shortage, deficiency, indigence, paucity, privation, denial of human rights, social exclusion, stigmatization, powerlessness, anxiety, impaired sense of self or self-images, anger, shame, guilt, sadness, as well as loss of autonomy, and well-being.

Similarities in Terms Used to Describe Perspectives on Decent Work and Poverty

Similarities in terms use to describe perspectives on the concepts decent work and poverty are indicated by the following keywords or terms: human dignity or absence thereof, a decent or non-decent living standard, insecurity versus security, unmet versus meeting of basic and psychological needs, power versus lack of power, justice versus lack of justice, denial versus promotion of human rights, equality versus inequality, freedom versus lack of freedom, employment versus lack of employment, social protection versus lack of social protection, livable income versus lack of livable income, marginalization, and a lack of versus promotion of well-being.

The five perspectives provide a good basis for a more expansive definition of decent work and poverty.

Expanded Definition of Decent Work and Poverty

Considering what has been written above, it seems feasible to recommend that the following aspects be included in future definitions and operationalizations of decent work and poverty: Decent work helps all workers attain a sense of self-respect and dignity, experience freedom and security in the workplace, and (as far as possible) is afforded the opportunity to choose and execute productive, meaningful and fulfilling work that will enable them to construct themselves adequately and without restrictions and make social contributions. Moreover, the focus in discussions on the topic should emphasize the importance of preventing marginalization of employees, helping them find long-term employment, receive equal pay for equal work, and are protected by labor laws (which includes the right to join labor unions). The latter also includes meeting workers' legitimate need for power, sound relationships in the workplace, acknowledgment of their work-related achievements, and authentic self-determination. Decent work ultimately aims to combat and alleviate poverty and precludes any and all forms of damage to workers.

We believe that this expanded definition could have important implications for the way in which researchers use these constructs (poverty and decent work) in their work and for interventions aimed at reducing poverty and promoting decent work. In the next section, we use this definition as a basis for discussing the quest for decent work and poverty alleviation.

Acquiring Well-Being by Accessing Psychological and Tangible Opportunities to Improve Individual Growth and Development

Guichard and Di Fabio (2015) believe that acquiring well-being by accessing psychological and tangible opportunities to improve individual growth and development is intrinsically embedded in definitions of decent work and poverty. However, while the International Labour Organization [ILO]'s (1999, 2015) key definition of decent work underscores the importance of promoting well-being, Blustein (2008), Swanson (2012), Wanberg (2012), and Guichard (2013) state that dignity (an aspect of well-being) should be included in definitions of decent work. Poverty reduction, too, is closely linked to the promotion of the well-being. This view is supported by the philosophical perspective on poverty, which holds that poverty reduction through education and knowledge acquisition (generally regarded as prerequisites for democracy) can lead to people's well-being (Peruzzi, 2009). The psychological perspective, more than any other perspective, links poverty

reduction to well-being (American Psychological Association [APA], 2000), yet it has not adequately inspired meaningful contributions to poverty reduction in terms of promoting individual well-being (Carr and Sloan, 2003; Maree, 2015b).

Viewed from a decent work and poverty perspective, the promotion of well-being relates to the distinction introduced by positive psychology (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, 2002) between hedonic well-being (pleasure attainment and pain avoidance) (Andrews and Withey, 1976; Kahneman et al., 1999) and eudaimonic well-being (functioning optimally and realizing one's potential by exploiting one's resources and strengths) (Vázquez et al., 2006; Ryff and Singer, 2008). While the first step to attaining decent work is ensuring that survival needs are met (through fair wages, safe working conditions, family security – all of which are connected to hedonic well-being), the second step is to conceptualize it in terms of the opportunity to construct oneself adequately and that invokes the importance of eudaimonic well-being (which provides a measure of workers' well-being). People who give evidence of experiencing a sense of self-realization and meaning in work-related contexts inevitably give evidence of being more fully functioning than those who are not (Ryan and Deci, 2001). Work may thus be regarded as decent if it enables workers to obtain meaningfulness, fulfillment, self-realization (aspects of the authentic self) and facilitates purposeful identitarian awareness (Di Fabio, 2014b).

Employing Intrapreneurial Self-Capital to Promote Decent Work and Combat Poverty

Individual psychological resources are a key means of escaping from poverty and promoting the attainment of decent work. Marginalization and economic constraints impede the attainment of decent work; however, drawing on psychological experiences and resources can moderate the effect of these limiting contextual factors and thus promote attainment of decent work and reduction of poverty. In addition to the value of possessing a proactive personality (Li et al., 2010), critical consciousness (Watts et al., 2011), perceived social support (Blustein, 2011), and work volition (the capacity to make occupational choices despite constraints; Duffy et al., 2012), a novel nucleus of individual resources, namely Intrapreneurial Self-Capital (ISC) (Di Fabio, 2014a) warrants mentioning here. Measured by the *Intrapreneurial Self-Capital Scale* (Di Fabio, 2014a), ISC can be developed through training. It comprises a nucleus of individual intrapreneurial resources that enable people to manage frequent changes and transitions by creating innovative solutions when confronted with environmentally imposed restrictions and turn restrictions into resources (Di Fabio, 2014a). A higher order construct, the ISC consists of seven specific constructs considered fundamental resources to contend with challenges posed by the 21st century occupational environment. These constructs are Core Self-Evaluation in terms of self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, and the absence of pessimism (Judge et al., 2003); Hardiness in terms of commitment, control, challenge (Maddi, 1990); Creative

Self-Efficacy (individuals' perceptions about being able to face and solve problems creatively; Tierney and Farmer, 2002); Resilience (the perceived ability to cope with and continue to withstand adversity adaptively; Luthar et al., 2000) and to implement adaptive strategies to manage discomfort and adversity (Tugade and Fredrickson, 2004); Goal Mastery (the pursuit of unceasingly developing one's own skills) (Midgley et al., 2000); Decisiveness (the perceived ability to make timeous decisions in all contexts) (Frost and Shows, 1993); and Vigilance (careful and adaptive examination of relevant information in decision-making processes) (Mann et al., 1997). There is empirical evidence that ISC scores correlate positively with scholastic success, employability, and career decision-making self-efficacy and negatively with career decision-making difficulties (Di Fabio, 2014a).

The ISC unlocks promising research perspectives and can be used to moderate between conditions of marginalization and economic constraints on the one hand and promote decent work and reduce poverty on the other hand. Moreover, a person's ISC can be developed through targeted, tailored training (Di Fabio, 2014a). Guichard highlights the potential value of ISC in enabling marginalized people to collaborate in organizing systems of local exchange trading systems (LETS, Guichard, 2013). Maree (2015a) states that currently the aim of life design counseling for career construction, guidance, and life counseling intervention is to help people, individually and in groups, deal with transitions brought about by fundamental changes in occupational contexts. Guichard (2013, 2015) believes that ISC development can play an important role in achieving this aim. Furthermore, guidance and counseling intervention in the 21st century should be aimed primarily at helping people facing major challenges (young people without work, peripheral workers, people who have been unemployed for a long time, and so on). This aim can be achieved by promoting the development of LETS and associated systems that support the creation and organization of LETS. Career and life counselors are urged to help in this regard. Lastly, it should be noted that LETS and LETSpreneurial Self-Capital should be contextualized in terms of the community to which they belong, taking into account cross-cultural factors. The enhancement of intrapreneurial self-capital of individuals through targeted training can promote the development of personal resources that could enable them to emerge from conditions of exploitation, economic difficulties, the struggle to find decent work, and, eventually, combat poverty.

Limitations of the Study

First, we are cognizant of the fact that some colleagues may regard the fact that we did not strictly adhere to the 'standard' (semi-quantitative) procedure to conduct a systematic qualitative overview of the literature as a major limitation of the study. Second, some of the documents that we studied were not peer-reviewed. Third, we are aware that other researchers, while analyzing the same sources, may arrive at different findings. Lastly, despite this being a collaborative, international study, we realize that our insights and findings are bound by time, space, and our idiosyncratic perspectives on matters.

CONCLUSION

The 17 sustainable goals for global development as stated by the UN (Sustainable development goals, 2015) include:

(1) Ending poverty in all its forms everywhere.
(3) Ensuring healthy lives and promoting the well-being of all people.
(8) Promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.

To achieve these three goals, it is more important to devise medium- and long-term projects to help victims of poverty not only survive but develop and grow than help people in emergency situations at a given point in time, which, on its own, will solve nothing and may even divert attention from the real aim, namely to help poor people escape from poverty and find decent work (Peruzzi, 2015). We recommend that decent work agendas should focus less on interventions at a tertiary prevention level and more on interventions at a secondary and, especially, a primary level of prevention (Hage et al., 2007; Kenny and Hage, 2009). This calls for a reprioritization of the levels of intervention and the re-allocation of available resources. Purposeful identitarian awareness needs to be instilled into helping agenda projects and actions. Interventions should be designed not only to respond to emergency situations but, especially, to break the vicious cycle of emergency occurring → resolving the emergency → another emergency occurring → resolving the emergency → another emergency occurring →. It is essential to identify the level of intervention needed to resolve particular challenges and to tailor different kinds of interventions to deal not only with the idiosyncratic challenges reactively but, more importantly, to devise strategies aimed at pro-active prevention of challenges because intervening at the level of primary prevention lies at the heart of any strategy. Radical intervention is needed to ensure that future generations not only survive but, more importantly, escape from poverty, develop, grow, and express themselves meaningfully through decent work.

The importance of timeous, pre-emptive, transnational intervention to ensure decent work for all workers and to alleviate poverty worldwide is clear. Rising unemployment across the globe and limited access to decent work have led to widespread poverty and feelings of profound frustration among many millions of people. This has played a key role in the global migration trends of the past few years, the growing socio-economic inequality, and the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor. The future of humankind will be bleak indeed if we do not join hands today to overcome these challenges in a spirit of collaboration.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

AD conceptualized the review, collected the materials and organized them. Then AD and JM wrote the paper together and read and revised the manuscript several times together.

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For a Psychosocial Approach to Decent Work

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The notion of decent work was developed by the International Labour Organization 20 years ago. The notion is now well known by lawyers, economists, and sociologists, and even if it appears difficult to define it clearly, it constitutes a useful general framework with which to think of the relationships between policy practices, work market globalization, and human rights principles. The fields of career guidance and counseling psychology are highly concerned by questions of social justice and human rights that people experience through work. Career choices being made in a liquid and unstable society, incompatibility between individualist values and collective work issues, increasing psychological health problems at work, work-family balance in precarious job situations, the growing necessity of mobility, adaptability or flexibility... all of these questions are at the heart of current career counseling practices, and concern the decent work debate. Nevertheless, the notion of decent work is not well developed in the field of vocational psychology. Despite its relevance, it is difficult to operationalize the policy and human rights principles during career counseling sessions. The article aims to explore the usefulness of the concept for career counselors, and to propose a psychosocial framework that incorporates decent work in career counseling practices. The first part of this article presents the theoretical bases of the notion of decent work and their possible use in the field of psychology. It deals with the necessity of a multilevel and psychosocial perspective, that takes into account both objective and subjective dimensions of decent work. The second part focuses on a case study illustrating how the notion of decent work emerges during counseling sessions. Four levels of the work experience linked with subjective and objective dimensions of decent work are explored; the personal level, the activity level, the collective level, and the social level. Finally, the third part discusses and proposes a framework based on the analysis of the four dimensions of work (activity, trade, others and society) in order to integrate a psychosocial view of decent work into career counseling.

Keywords: decent work, activity, career counseling, professional stance

INTRODUCTION

At first glance, the notion of "decent work" is not a psychological concept. It was first defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1999, and finds its roots in fundamental moral principles of justice and equality for human rights. The utility of the notion lies primarily in its ability to support and enhance political actions for sustainable development. Thus, multiple publications already explore decent work in the fields of policy, economics, law, and even

philosophy, but psychology remains mostly absent from the debate around decent work.

Nevertheless, decent work has recently begun to find a foothold in the field of career counseling psychology with the input of authors like J. Guichard and D. Blustein. For the former, we will refer to his conceptual work about self-construction (Guichard, 2009; Collin and Guichard, 2011), his association with the Life design constructivist perspective (Savickas et al., 2009), and his leadership of the Unesco Chair 'Lifelong Career Guidance and Counseling' where he encourages career practitioners and researchers to expand their concerns to more political dimensions (Guichard, 2015). For the latter, we shall refer to his theoretical perspective the "psychology of working" (Blustein, 2006, 2013), which provides a useful framework for the notion of decent work to be effective.

However, in order to use this concept in career counseling practice, it is still necessary to redefine or clarify it from a psychological perspective. Indeed, although the ILO definition explains the "objective" economical and moral conditions that make work decent, it does not explore more subjective aspects. The definition is therefore incomplete for a psychologist because of its lack of a subjective dimension. The core question is how the subjective meaning of work can be a part of the conditions that make work more or less decent for the individual *and* for society.

Several authors have already pointed out the imprecision of the initial ILO proposition and since 1999, conceptual efforts have been made to operationalize the concept (e.g., Deranty and MacMillan, 2012; Burchell et al., 2014; Di Ruggiero et al., 2015; Sehnbruch et al., 2015). The present article is based on these various propositions in order to formulate a psychosocial conceptualization of decent work, and to integrate the political aims inherent to decent work into career counseling practices.

The first part of this paper presents the theoretical bases of decent work and their possible use in the field of psychology. The second part focuses on a case study illustrating how the notion of decent work emerges during counseling sessions. The article will conclude with a discussion of concepts and methodologies to position a psychosocial view with the aim of integrating decent work into the career counseling field.

Research Aims

This study and the research it is based on aim to explore the usefulness of the notion of decent work for career counseling theorists, researchers, and practitioners. Moreover, it aims to propose a psychosocial framework for incorporating the decent work perspective into career counseling theory, research and practice.

Theoretical Question

From Economical Policy to Psychology

As an answer to the global economical crisis of the beginning of the 90's, the ILO "made 'decent work' the centerpiece of its recommended recovery strategy" (Bisom-Rapp, 2011, pp. 1–2). But what is decent work? Presented in 1999 by the director of ILO Juan Somavia, decent work "involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects

for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize, and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men" (http://www.ilo.org/). Deranty and MacMillan (2012) expound the history of the ILO initiative and explain how the definition lies within the ILO principles created in 1919, upon a tripartite foundation: governments, employers and unions. The objective was then to participate in social justice through better organization of employment. The partners need to agree on common standards to regulate the labor market with logic other than that of the market economy. This first initiative was then reaffirmed, actualized, and specified three times after this date: in 1944 in the "Declaration of Philadelphia," in 1998 in the "Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work," linked with the Human Rights Principles (United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, 1948) and in 2008 in the "Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization." The authors summarize these principles: "[first] labor is not a commodity [Second…] it is not enough for a person to be employed; rather their employment must also afford them the opportunity to fully express their skill and in so doing contribute to the common well-being to the greatest extent possible [Third, this means defining core labor standards which are…] freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labor; the effective abolition of child labor; and the elimination of discrimination in respect to employment and occupation " (pp. 388–389).

Finally, in 2008, four pillars of decency defined in relation to human rights were decided to constitute the ILO framework for a sustainable economic recovery: "employment promotion, social protection, social dialog, and fundamental rights" (Bisom-Rapp, 2011, p. 2).

This short historical overview clearly locates the notion of decent work in the fields of economics, law, and politics. It primarily stresses the importance of human values for the organization of society and the working world, but this approach has also been criticized for its imprecision and its difficulty to be operationalized. Burchell et al. (2014) and Sehnbruch et al. (2015) for example, underline the terminological confusion that occurs sometimes in publications between words like "job," "work," "employment," "job quality," and "quality of work." This confusion makes difficult the construction of clear and common indicators of what constitutes decent work. Furthermore, the lack of clear indicators makes international comparisons difficult, which explains the relatively low impact of the decent work proposition on policy, academic education, and research. The authors compare the decent work initiative to the "Human Development" or "Capacity" Approach (Sen, 1999, 2010; Nussbaum, 2000) which is, on the contrary, well operationalized (through the HDI–Human Development Index) and which, therefore, allows international comparisons and direct applications in policy decisions. The ideological roots of the concept, its aspirational dimension (Peccoud, 2003), and its grandeur seem to be a major constraint to its development and use. From a law perspective, this constraint is also clearly associated with the difficulty in establishing the legal and social responsibility of internationalized corporations (Javillier, 2007).

The main difficulty in elaborating a reliable measure of decent work is that it would needed to take into account multiple levels of analysis simultaneously. Ensconced in Urie Bronfenbrenner's theoretical model of Ecology of Human Development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005), a contextual and embedded view of decent work can be defined from the micro system (the actions and the relations between the individual and his/her actions), to the macro system (culture, religion, world of work, values…), passing through the meso and exo systems (groups in which individual interacts, and groups in which these groups are embedded). Without such a holistic perspective taking into account the various contexts of life, it is indeed difficult to understand how more or less decent work can be subjectively experienced by individuals.

From a legal studies perspective, MacNaughton and Frey (2011) show how decent work can be positively enhanced by the addition of a "holistic human rights approach." With the same logic, and in order to use the concept in psychology, a subjective definition of decent work must be added to the objective one, highlighting how interactions (between individuals in systemically organized embedded contexts) construct the conditions for equality and individual capacity to develop. (Burchell et al., 2014) underline that the capacity approach developed by Sen (1999) and elaborated by Nussbaum (2000) allows a method of addressing this question of subjective definition of work through the notion of "adaptative preferences." The capacity approach is characterized by "the ability of people to adapt to unfavorable circumstances (including poor employment conditions), which distorts their ability to evaluate their job characteristics objectively […] Because expectations vary considerably between countries, it is often the case that a developed country has lower aggregate job satisfaction than does a developing country. The same process can explain why some less advantaged groups of workers (e.g., women) have higher satisfaction levels than workers with objectively better working conditions" (p. 465). These two perspectives—decent work and capacity—appear to be more complementary to one another than opposing allowing the construction of a psychosocial view of the question. Decent work focuses on ideological conditions of work, while the capacity approach deals with the possibility inherent in the conditions of the individual's capacity and freedom.

Career Counseling and Decent Work: Defining a Strategic Stance

The previous two approaches, both of which come from the economic world, can resonate with a social, organizational, or career counseling psychologist, especially if this practitioner sees his/her work as an ethical and political one (Guichard, 2003). If, as a psychologist, one's core activity is to help individuals construct and develop a capacity for action in relation to others and for the well being of the society, then the professional stance is to serve, at the same time, as an agent for socialization and individualization.

From the theoretical perspective of "active socialization" (Curie, 2000), "the process of socialization and of individualization aren't opposite, they are supporting each

other" (p. 202, free translation). The strategic stance involves helping individuals realize a work to "interlace," on the one hand, society and institutions that are vectors of conflict and alienation, and on the other hand a personal history, which is the integrated story of an individual's fight against external constraints in an effort to expound a personal world in which one wants to live. The result is a more or less decent environment that we individually and collectively build according to our freedom of choice and social latitude.

For the career counseling psychologist, assisting this interlaced construction often means adopting a person-centered approach and an "unconditional valorization" of the individual (Rogers and Kinget, 1962, cited by Curie, 2000, p. 202), but it also draws on "an action of mediation of the individual in cooperation with others" (p. 203). In other words, this can be described as a co-construction of projects (Young et al., 1997) on the micro and meso systemic level.

More generally, this professional stance meets the aims of the critical psychology perspective (Teo, 2005; Fox and Prilleltensky, 2009; Stead and Perry, 2012) and the social role that psychology should play for fair and sustainable development. A holistic, constructivist, and ecologic approach to decent work that can be used in psychology may contribute to this mission. As pointed out by Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky (2006), the well being of a society depends on the well being of the individual, but conversely, the well being of the individual also depends on the well being of society. To define the strategic stance, Prilleltensky and Stead (2011), describe the client-counselor relation as a dilemma between adjustment and confrontation with the environment (society, work, institutions). This "Adjust-Challenge Dilemma" not only regulates the capacity of the counselor to participate in the development of the general question of well being (both for the individual and the society), but is also the key for action.

The career counselor who tries to support the individuals in developing their own well being through self-construction in relation to others and others' well being, acts as an agent of active socialization. In doing so, he takes a political part, an ethical stance centered on the processes of personalization. He thus helps individuals to "permanently recreate a space of freedom that allows them to signify to themselves and to others that they are not the ones that the institutions would like to confine them" (Curie, 2000, p. 204, free translation).

The main objective of career counseling for the development of decent work is then the creation of a space of personal and social freedom, taking into account "the social and subjective conditions through which a subject, as a person, during a whole lifetime, and with the help of others […] objectifies and realizes the development of the potentialities that the personal history and the structures of socialization have let him/her glimpse (or have prevented)" (Beaumartin et al., 2010, p. 49, free translation).

A Multilevel but Fragmented Perspective on Work

To the question "what is good work or quality work?" psychologists already have some answers from a large corpus of work that has emerged since the beginning of organizational and career guidance, and counseling psychology. The primary

part of this corpus defines the factors (personal, cultural, socio economics, organizational) that constitute the main predictors of well being at work. Nevertheless, this research has sometimes forgone the subjective aspects of work. The second part of the corpus is centered on the explanation of what the work means for the individual, but this research neglects to take into account more political and social issues. Again, it is difficult to forge a multilevel analysis of what constitutes a good job. Three examples are presented now as short illustrations.

For the first example, a large body of scientific literature is based on studies of occupational health, quality of life, quality of work, stress, and psychosocial risks at work. Gollac and Bordier (2011) propose a good summary of the groups of factors that play a role in defining psychosocial risks at work. Six groups are described: (1) *Work intensity and working time* (complexity, duration, work-life balance); (2) *Emotional demands* (relationships to clients, emotional inhibitions, fear, relationships to stressful situations); (3) *Autonomy at work* (autonomy within tasks, monotonous tasks, unpredictability, possibility of using competencies, pleasure at work); (4) *Social relations at work* (integration, socialization, justice, procedural justice, recognition, relations with colleagues, with hierarchy, wage, link between task and individual, work evaluation, social valorization, attention paid to well being, violence at work); (5) *Conflicts of values* (ethical conflicts, prevented quality, useless work); (6) *Insecurity* (job, wage, career security, risks of changes at work). Using this classification system, decent work will be work for which conditions are decent regarding well being and health risks for the worker. Bennett et al. (2003) coalesce organizational health perspectives into three streams of practice and research focused, respectively, on a healthy workplace, practice-oriented and consultative models that promote organizational health, and comprehensive multi factor health promotion and disease management programs. The main problem the authors highlight is that "although the different streams speak to a comprehensive view of organizational wellness, they tend to emphasize different levels of health (individual, job, or organizational) [they suggest] that occupational health psychologists must play a more proactive role in assessing relationships and integrating strategies among these levels" (p. 70).

On the individual side, a very broad field of study on the meaning of work, work satisfaction, work commitment, performance, and motivation, provides a complementary view. As a recent example, Mercure and Vultur (2010) identify "work ethoses", that represent various relationships to work. Although, this approach is mainly sociological, based on the works of Bourdieu (1984), ethoses can refer to personal differences in work meaning, work values, and work engagement. Work ethoses are linked with life ethoses and are defined through three dimensions: centrality of work (and work-life balance), finality of work, and work engagement in relation to the dominant social and managerial norms. Six ethoses are described: *Autarky* (search for financial independence, autonomy); *professionalism* (search for personal development, valorization of competencies, peer recognition); *utilitarism* (search for personal satisfaction, consumerism); *egotist* (search for assertiveness through work and other life domains); *resignation* (work lived as a constraint); and *harmony* (search for consistency with personal values). These ethoses can be seen as personal translations of work experiences and work conditions. Objective decent work experiences defined through work conditions can be colored with various degrees of personal acceptance. Decent work is then work "lived as" decent through the filter of work ethoses. The authors also highlight that some ethoses (e.g., professionalism and egotist) are highly compatible with contemporary liberal management, which helps to internalize the core priorities of the new liberal spirit: valorization of the centrality of work, flexibility and mobility, and valorization of subjective engagement at work.

In the field of career counseling, the now classical approach of "social cognitive career theory" (Lent et al., 2000) provides an understanding of how individuals can create a personal perspective and experience work conditions to act and transform their environment. The theory is an application of the works of Bandura (1986), especially the concepts of self-efficacy and agency, on career issues. Work performance and career attitudes are results of "self-efficacy beliefs," built from the interaction between the individual and a more or less afforded environment. Again, decent work can be seen as the personal meaning that individuals grant to their capability to regulate conflicts with work. Other theoretical constructs such as career adaptability (Savickas and Porfeli, 2012) and intrapreneurial self-capital (Di Fabio, 2014) are gaining attention in the field today, but again the main point of difficulty is the focus on the individual that doesn't take into account ethical and political levels of responsibility. The risk here is a reduction of ethical and political intentions and responsibilities, because of the possible fluctuations of the perception of work decency between individuals.

CASE STUDY

The following case study illustrates how the notion of decent work appears in career counseling situations, from the individual level to more collective dimensions. It will later support a discussion of and proposition for a psychosocial perspective of decent work.

Client Background

Mrs. V is a 48 year-old woman who has been a social worker for about 26 years. Mrs. V says she always wanted to have a job helping others. During high school, she was already thinking of becoming a social worker. After she completed high school, she entered university, and moved away from her family. She then experienced several periods of depression because of loneliness. She completed her social worker diploma at the age of 25, and began working in an official institution. She got married and had two children. At 35, she divorced and 2 years later began a new relationship with another person. Her companion became ill and died 3 years later. During his illness, she began working part time in order to take care of him. Since then her profession has became harder to perform. One year ago, doctors diagnosed her with a serious disease, at which point she began to experience depression again. The occupational medicine department offered

her a part time job. She has started thinking she would like to change jobs and do something else, because she can't stand her work anymore. Consequently, the department proposed for her to start a "bilan de competence" (see below for the detail). She met with a counselor at the elicitation center ("Centre Interinstitutionnel de Bilan de Compétence") in order to find new professional prospects. At the beginning of the Bilan, Mrs. V said that she couldn't work anymore because she felt tired and powerless.

Counseling Process

The "bilan de competence" in France is a system of career guidance and counseling based on collaboration between social partners and state authorities. Since 1991, a law has established the right to attend a bilan and the way it must be organized. This program was proposed first for adults faced with the termination of employment and women wishing to return to work, then extended to young people without qualifications and to unemployed adults. Today, the bilan is available to all workers. Within companies, all employees with 5 years of experience, including at least 12 months in their present company, can request a leave of absence to draw up a "bilan." "The bilan is intended to determine the current state of the individual's competence, and personal and occupational skills. The bilan is based on an assessment which may include a variety of methods (interviews, diagnostic assessments, self-assessment, tests, etc.) in order to draw up an occupational plan and, if appropriate, a training plan. It is the property of the person concerned and may not be communicated to a third party without the permission of the subject" (Perker and Ward, 1996, p. 137). This personal and occupational bilan is organized in three phases: the preliminary phase (defining needs, setting up a working alliance and information), the investigation phase (exploring and/or assessing values, interests, aspirations, motivation, general and occupational knowledge, skills and experiences), and the concluding phase (drawing up a summary that is a personal and confidential document only dedicated to the person). Only public or private organizations external to the company have the right to offer this service, following the rules defined by law: reliable methods and empirically-based instruments for assessment; qualified counselors; and confidentiality (the results of the bilan are the property of the individual and not of the company or of the funding organization). In 2007, 194,000 persons underwent a bilan in one of the 1100 approved centers (Dares, 2009). The main association that provides this service in France the Centre Interinstitutionnel de Bilan de Compétence (CIBC), which has 330 centers. Workers can access a bilan at their own request, at the request of their employer, or through employment services (in case of a training project for example). It is most often financed by the training budget of the company, or from the companies' compulsory contribution. In the case of unemployed and young people, the state or the region pays for the service.

In the case of Mrs. V, the company proposed to finance her bilan in order to help her recover and find a more protective working environment or new training. Her bilan lasted 2 months. It consisted of 10 interviews of 2–3 h each, all with the same counselor. The bilan followed the three phases: analysis of needs, investigation, and writing of a "summary document." Like many bilan, even if the process is initially focused on work-related issues, it addresses health problems at work, as well as more global dimensions of people's lives. When Mrs V. came to the CIBC, she was asked to participate in research on career counseling practices.

Research Procedure

The case of Mrs V. is an illustration taken from a project conducted on the effect of counseling sessions in France (bilan de compétences). It is part of a larger research agenda, designed to study the effect of the dialogical and dynamic relationship between clients and counselors. The design was inspired by grounded theory (Fassinger, 2005), triangulation of perspectives in action research (Kidd and Kral, 2005; Polkinghorne, 2005), and self-confrontation procedure (Young et al., 1994). The research used multiple participants to make various analysis of the bilan in order to highlight the dynamic and developmental processes during counseling sessions. As pointed out by Polkinghorne, "by comparing and contrasting these perspectives, researchers are able to notice the essential aspects that appear across the sources and to recognize variations in how the experience appears. In this sense, multiple participants serve as a kind of triangulation on the experience, locating its core meaning by approaching it through different accounts. [...] The use of multiple participants serves to deepen the understanding of the investigated experience ≫ (2005, p. 140). The research procedure, which can be described as Participatory Action Research (Kidd and Kral, 2005), was organized in 6 parts:

1 –Over 1–3 months, the 10 interviews of the bilan de competence are performed by a counselor from the CIBC. The interviews are videotaped. A first descriptive thematic analysis (Bardin, 1977) is conducted with advanced students in psychology in order to define the key moments and the dynamic structure of the bilan.

2 –One month after the bilan, a collective discussion session is organized between the students and the counselor. The discussion is recorded and provides an opportunity for the researcher to gain a second point of view on the key moments and the dynamic of the bilan. This session also allows the counselor to reconsider her process with the help of the students and their observations. The novice questioning of the students turns this session into a kind of "collective supervision," in the sense that the counselor can rediscover her practice in the eyes of beginners. The objective of this session for the researcher is to validate the key moments marked previously, in order to determine the impact of each one for future work with the client.

3. Two months after the bilan, a career construction interview (Savickas, 2011) is conducted with the client. The interview is recorded and analyzed by the researcher in order to verify the choice of key moments. The objective is to have a third perspective on the key moments, and to analyze them in the light of the subjective career and life themes.

4. The researcher puts together a video with the key moments from the bilan. These key moments are the result of the triangulated perspective and analyses of the counselor, the client, and the students, as well as the researcher's analyses of the career construction interview. These key moments are turning points, in which the development of the relationship and the progress of the counseling take place (moments of unveiling, resistance, transference, etc.). The video is then viewed during a "self-confrontation session" (close to the interpersonal process recall procedure: Watson and Rennie, 1994; Larsen et al., 2008) between the counselor and the client, led by the researcher. The researcher helps the client and the counselor to jointly analyze what is occurring in the key moments, understood as instances of development. The self-confrontation session is also videotaped for an analysis of the change process.

5. At the end of the process, the counselor and researcher together choose some key moments of the assessment that will serve as an illustration to use with the CIBC team. A second video of key moments is made for this purpose. It may be used either collectively at a team meeting, or during another self-confrontation session with two colleagues wishing to pursue the process with one of their clients.

Ethics

In this case, the research didn't need to be formally approved by an ethic committee for two main reasons. One, institutional ethical clearance is not required for interview studies. Two, the article presents a case study based on a counseling encounter as an illustration. Thus, the work referenced with the participant in the article was not research *per se*, but it was an intervention that was used to inform the article, from a research action perspective. Nevertheless, the research procedure followed the ethical standards of the latest version of the Declaration of Helsinki revised in Fortaleza (World, Medical Association [WMA], 2013), and of the French society of Psychology Ethical Guidelines (French Psychological Association, 2012). Prior to the interview, the research procedures were explained and the participants agreed to participate in the study by signing the informed consent. All participants were informed about their rights to withdraw from the study at any time.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze how the notion of decent work appears during Mrs V.'s bilan, we have used the thematic analysis (Bardin, 1977) performed by the supervised students during phase 1. The present analysis consists in bringing together the thematic analyses and a psychosocial model of decent work.

RESULTS

At the beginning, Mrs. V said that she could no longer work as a social worker because she felt exhausted and couldn't find the necessary strength to accompany people anymore. In addition, she thinks her work has evolved to no longer be appropriate for her. She explains that her institution does not allow her to give fair and equitable support to people in

difficulty. For example, she was very upset when she saw that electricity was cut off to people in need who could not pay their bills.

According to her, working conditions have deteriorated over the years, and are now particularly degraded, with less autonomy, much more oversight, and a loss of team work and of collaboration with colleagues. The result is a more individualistic work environment in which she has to face the misery alone. For her, struggling with poverty is increasingly hard to bear. Every day she experiences the failure of bringing any real help. Ultimately, she thinks she is doing her job badly. But when she looks back at her career, she wonders if she really wanted to do this job, even at the beginning. She mainly describes the circumstances that guided her, but now that the demands of work have become more difficult she wonders if she is really made for that field. She has just emerged from a very difficult period during which her husband died. She is now alone with her two children who are almost adults.

She says the job has become less and less recognized and respected, even by the beneficiaries who only "use" her services in a "technical" way (i.e., to search for financial support) without engaging in a true helping relationship. She feels discouraged and tired of trying to help people in trouble without any means or recognition.

She asked the following questions to the counselor: Why does this occupation exhaust me so much? And how can I find another occupation that fits my values more? A thematic analysis shows five main themes that the counselor and Mrs. V discussed during the course of the bilan. The themes are illustrated below with direct quotes from Mrs. V (extracted from the first three meetings).

Theme 1: Find the energy to re-engage in a project.

"Today I have the impression that, in fact, there is no creativity at all. There is no surprise, and a certain weariness. It's actually so confining that it leaves little space to open new things, and to start projects" (Interview 1)

"The counseling will be successful if I can get involved in a project with motivation and not by default, if I have enough energy to get involved" (Interview 1)

Theme 2: Allow myself to "remove barriers"–in relation to the institutional framework, to social norms, to the expectations of the environment, what is correct or not correct, and not be afraid to say what I really want to do.

"For me the bilan will be successful if I can break down barriers, fears and have faith in myself, and it will help me to know what I want to do, and it will help me to give myself the means" (Interview 1)

"I really need to be able to say what I want, not staying in... because again I... I have some barriers... I do not dare.... I really need to dare to say what I want because... at the moment I tell myself that it's not possible, or that I am not able to, or that it will not allow me to earn a living" (Interview 1)

Theme 3: Social worker, why is it a job that no longer suits me?

"There is no more interest, no more interest to work as a social worker,... how the procedures currently replace... when I started in this profession, it was a profession that involved much more relationships and much less proceedings... Now that I am a social worker, there are lot of procedures, and we live in an increasingly restrictive society... so we are no longer helping people, we have to put people in boxes, and that's not why I chose this job" (Interview 1)

Theme 4: Human relationships are at the heart of my job dissatisfaction—along with isolation and loss of collaboration.

"When you personally meet with the people and witness all the suffering just because, I think there is such a degradation of the social fabric, that the situations are more and more heavy, and one's shoulders must be a bit strong…, I feel less and less capable to feel empathy. People quickly irritate me" (Interview 1)

"It's actually a big question for me…for example, in human relationships, the relationship... the human approach…all that, it has always been of great importance to me, be it for commercial purposes etc... it was the human relationship. These days... it's a bit ambivalent. I'm tired, and it's a kind of what I was saying previously... listening to people, it's really a mental strain..." (Interview 2)

Theme 5: Communicate and work with team

"I know that I'm a bit... like that. I sympathize, I have my colleagues, I sympathize... that's not a problem but I'm pretty individualistic in my way of working" (Interview 3)

"I mean if it's recognized, that I'm able to work with partners, well with partners... with colleagues... it's also a way to be recognized. Compared to my hierarchy... that will allow me to have a place in relation to my skills, that I do not know how to sell... My skills I make them on my own, in my corner.... I make them individually, in the moment... it's very interesting for me but it does not allow me professionally... I will not be able to work in a... and be recognized so that I can get a position in relation to that" (Interview 3)

Through these five themes, the counseling process with Mrs. V dealt with a gradual deterioration of her relationship to work and an increasing perception of her work as indecent. To her, the degradation seems connected to a personal fatigue (her recently painful life story, her midlife career situation, a need for change and a lack of positive perspective of evolution), and to the objective degradation of working conditions, in the institution, but also more generally in society. The "indecent dimension" of her work is thus related to the conjunction of subjective and objective relationships to work:

"That's what is difficult actually, to really see…is it the evolution of our profession that wore me out or is it personal? Because I think it's the two" (Interview 1)

More generally, four levels can finally be highlighted for defining the decency of work:

Personal Level: Life Story

The work situation of Mrs. V resonates with personal fears that exist and persist in her life story. For example, the fear of not being able to be free and to express herself and the need (as a life theme) to be original, and to avoid to be constrained.

"My thought at that time was... I wanted to know... have more knowledge of what life is in order to help people and that is, not be restricted (...) I needed to see other things."
"This dissatisfaction that I still drag now, is a dissatisfaction growing old"

The Level of Activity: (Work as Concrete Action)

Gradually, the work of social worker has moved from an independent counseling relationship, to a relationship based on a search for social control. Mrs. V mainly expresses her loss of empowerment with a feeling of helplessness and worthlessness.

"My current role is a role of social control... control... it's no longer a helping relationship, it is a control relationship"

Collective Level: Interaction with Peers

Mrs. V expresses that her work is more and more individualized. She also regrets the increasing difficulty to be recognized for the work she provides.

"I have trouble communicating with my colleagues... I am not the only one…well I mean it may be a state of mind…it's what I'm thinking, that maybe it's a general state of mind of our profession." (Interview 3)

Social Level: Values

Finally, the evolving general mindset of society contributes to Mrs. V's subjective experience of her work devolving:

"In a society in crisis, I do not want to be Private Ryan anymore" (Interview 2)

The result of this multilevel degradation is an impassable situation—congested with fear, isolation and feelings of injustice—which leads Mrs. V to be unable to say what she wants. And for her, it is no longer possible to believe in her future.

DISCUSSION

A Psychosocial Perspective on Decent Work

A strategic perspective on decent work in the field of career counseling must be rooted in a comprehensive, multilevel psychosocial analysis of work. Such a perspective certainly needs to consider work as a major life domain through which to explain self-construction and society. The question of the centrality of work in relation to other life domains is, then, of major importance.

The framework of the psychology of working (Blustein, 2006) clearly integrates this dimension. The theoretical perspective

is based on Richardson's propositions (Richardson, 1993) that suggest enlarging the concept of career and opening research on work to pluralistic theoretical approaches such as constructivism and social-constructionism. Some core tenets constitute the basis of this framework (Blustein, 2013, pp. 7–9): It is necessary to use diverse epistemologies to understand the nature of working; Work is central in life and to mental well being, and has the ability to fulfill core human needs (survival, relatedness, and self-determination); Work is broader than career and includes "non paid work," non work, working for survival, indecent work, and others because all these activities contribute to people's lived experiences in various contexts; Culture and relationship are core tools of meaning making for people's experiences; Understanding work means identifying how social, economic, and political forces influence the distribution of resources and affordances on a macro level. From Blustein's perspective, "there is considerable variability in individual's experiences regarding volition, and poor and working class individuals may experience little choice regarding their working lives [...] 'Working' is thus a more universal and inclusive term than 'Career'" (Swanson, 2013). In considering working rather than career, this approach allows us to think of the relationships between concrete subjective experiences of work, and more social, organizational and political issues.

In the same way, the capability approach of Sen (1999), complementary to Bandura's agency, allows a multilevel conception of decent work. It helps understand how the micro and macro levels are linked together. As explained by Sen (1995), the capability approach involves "concentration on freedoms to achieve in general and the capabilities to function in particular" (1995, p. 266). The author distinguishes between functionings and capabilities. "A functioning is an achievement, whereas a capability is the ability to achieve. Functionings are, in a sense, more directly related to living conditions, since they are different aspects of living conditions (e.g., personal, social, and environmental characteristics). Capabilities, in contrast, are notions of freedom, in the positive sense: what real opportunities you have regarding the life you may lead" (Sen, 1987, p. 36).

It is between functionings and capabilities that a psychosocial definition of decent work can take place. The multilevel analysis that can support a psychosocial view of decent work can be described from the micro to the macro level:

"The capability approach to a person's advantage is concerned with evaluating it in terms of his or her actual ability to achieve various valuable functionings as a part of living. The corresponding approach to social advantage—for aggregative appraisal as well as for the choice of institutions and policy—takes the set of individual capabilities as constituting an indispensable and central part of the relevant informational base of such evaluation" (Sen, 1993, p. 30). Well-being is thus defined as people's capability to function (to work, to relate to others) and to freely undertake the actions and activities that they want to engage in, in order to be whom they want to be.

A psychosocial definition of decent work should consider work experience (in its relation to other life domains) as a central part of self-construction. The working experience is then a major dimension of an identity structure that can be described as a dynamic system of subjective identity forms (Guichard, 2009;

Guichard et al., 2011; Guichard and Pouyaud, 2014). A subjective identity form (SIF) is a construction and implementation of oneself in a particular setting (a set of ways of being, acting, interacting, and thinking of oneself in a particular role). This does not mean that the professional role constitutes a more important SIF than the familial or social ones, but it means that the adjustments inside this system, between work and non work subjective identity forms, will contribute to work being perceived as more or less decent. In that sense, the working identity form plays a central role in self-construction as it helps to design and construct the self in other meaningful non-work subjective identity forms. Indecent work (work that doesn't respect the human rights principles) is then work that degrades the dynamism of the identity structure because of living, working or organizational conditions. As illustrated by Mrs. V's case, the four thematic levels of analysis highlight how her working subjective identity form as a social worker (in terms of personal history, professional action, values, and social role) is not allowing her to develop anymore.

This centrality of the working life is also well described by the French psychoanalyst Dejours for whom working is "a subjective activity that mobilizes the emotional, cognitive, and moral capacities of the individuals, and in return transforms them, for better or for worse" (Deranty and MacMillan, 2012, p. 395). For Dejours, work plays a "decisive role in the elaboration of the civil relationships whereby individuals can live and act together [this is...] the thesis of the political centrality of work" (Dejours, 2009, p. 14, free translation). The idea is close to Rawls' view about the meaning of work: "the lack of opportunity for meaningful work and occupation is destructive of citizen's self-respect" (1996, p. 159, cited by Deranty and MacMillan, 2012).

Deranty and MacMillan (2012) endorse Dejours' propositions for a more comprehensive view of decent work. The authors explain that "an important aspect in determining whether work is decent or not is constituted by the activity entailed in work or by the content of work" (pp. 402–403). "[...] the focus on the very activity of work in its unfolding, and on the impact of this unfolding on subjective capacities, provides crucial indications as to what can make work interesting, a vector of intelligence and initiative, and indeed a place of concrete democratic action" (p. 395).

Following their proposition, and as briefly illustrated by Mr. V's case, a multilevel analysis of the dynamic system of identity forms during counseling sessions allows an understanding of the psychosocial meaning of work. The following framework combines the previous theoretical stances to propose a guide to structure this multilevel exploration.

This framework is illustrated in **Figure 1** and is based on the following 5 proposals:

- Four levels of embedded contexts constitute the developmental environment for the individual (the workplace in connection with other living environments constitutes the interactional contexts where the system of subjective identity forms can occur).
- A spiral suggests possible development in this environment. Development is rooted in the conflict lived by individuals at

work, between the task and the activity (as a response to the task). Within this response is potential: capability and personal agency, which depend on the freedom granted by the embedded contexts.

- The "psychosocial set" that allows the potential for development is the "trade" or "profession," as defined in the theoretical framework of the "Activity Clinic" approach (Clot, 2009). It is constructed through four dimensions of relation to working: personal/intrapersonal/interpersonal/and transpersonal dimension.

- Decent work, viewed as the psychosocial conditions of well being, is a trade that draws the individual into a dynamic system of subjective identity forms supported by the four dimensional architecture of work (and mainly by the personal and intrapersonal ones, which link the psycho and the social).

- Finally, this set impacts health, well-being and identity both at the individual and collective levels.

The following sections explain more clearly theses proposals.

Activity

The starting point corresponds to the micro level of action. Work is defined here as an activity and, more specifically, as a dialectic with the working environment. This theoretical view is the classical distinction made by French-speaking ergonomists between task and activity (Ombredane and Faverge, 1955). As pointed out by Clot, "Whereas international ergonomics focused on the engineering of task and artifacts, French-speaking ergonomics was organized around activity and health with the intention of preserving and developing the operators' power to act in the workplace" (2009, p. 286). The work situation demands that the individual answer to a prescription (a task) taking into account internal conditions (age, health, gender, intelligence, etc.) and external conditions (tools, peers, hierarchy, management, noise or temperature conditions, etc.). But the answer that the individuals are constructing within these conditions is always different from the expected task. This construction is called activity and the gap between the task and the activity is an indicator of what the individual subjectively adds in order to overcome the conflict. As depicted in **Figure 1**, this conflict is the starting point of individual and social development at work. For Mrs. V., this conflict is circumscribed, as the professional action is impossible for her to sustain.

The theoretical approach of Activity Clinic (Clot, 2009; Kloetzer et al., 2015) expands the ergonomic point of view, especially on the basis of Vygotsky's concepts. Two complementary analyses are made, one on the notion of activity, and the other on the notion of "Profession."

For the first, Clot distinguishes what can be observed from the activity (gestures, actions, interactions, tools used) called "realized activity," from what may have been done, but did not survive in the working conditions, called "the reality of the activity."

As pointed out by Vygotsky, "behavior is a system of victorious reactions… at every moment, the individual is full of unrealized possibilities" (Vygotsky, 1999, pp. 266–267). The reality of the activity refers to "what is not done, what can't be done, what one tries to do without succeeding, the failures,

what one would or could do, what one thinks or dreams to do elsewhere […] what is done to avoid to do what is to be done, or even what is done without the will to do it. Not to mention what has to be redone" (Clot, 1999, p. 119, free translation).

Activity is defined as a story of the development of action and of the subjective investment of the individual in order to "be" and to "do" beyond any conflict with the task. What can be observed from the activity is a trace, a result of this story. Helping people at work means co-constructing the resources of the development of their activity, and re-opening the possibilities for self-construction through work. For Clot, "the transformation of actions for developing the subjects' power to act is the object itself of a basic and field-based science of psychology" (2009, pp. 287–288). From a decent work perspective, Deranty and MacMillan express that "at this first level, decent work would be work in which the design of the job and the organization of work enable the individuals to make full use of their capacities in the deployment of their activity" (2012, p. 399).

Profession and Decent Work

The second analysis on activity made by Clot helps to understand how this could be possible. The Activity Clinic approach extends the notion of activity by explaining how the individual level is dependent on more collective and social levels. The notion of "Profession" can be used to analyze the importance of others (e.g., professional collectives, peers, managers, institutions) in the development of activity, and in the enhancement of individual capacities at work. A profession is defined through four dimensions, which consolidate a subjective armature of work activity (see **Figure 1**). All dimensions can be places for work development, as well as for decent work development.

The first dimension is the "personal" one and refers to the first level described previously. It corresponds to "the specific way one is performing one's activity, according to one's specific skills, knowledge, history, life story, professional experience, preferences, moods, expectations, worries, goals, hopes, and desires" (Kloetzer et al., 2015, p. 61). The second dimension, called "interpersonal," moves the analysis to the interaction zone. Indeed, activity exists and evolves within action and interaction with others. Personal action is always mediated by others who can support, restrain, or change its development. On the third level, called "transpersonal," the activity becomes collective. The profession exists at this level as a "transpersonal memory" of shared activities. Historically built from the collective development of the professional milieu, this collective memory plays the role of a constraint (as an unofficial culture, like the rules to be followed in order to be recognized as a good professional by peers), and a resource because it helps resolve the common professional conflicts of work activities. This level also involves a "professional identity" built upon a common way of working in a particular profession, product of the collective history of professional activity. It refers to "the usual ways of acting and interacting, speaking, doing, and relating to people and things in a professional way that are established in a specific work environment" (Kloetzer et al., 2015, p. 61). As depicted in **Figure 1**, this can be defined as a Professionnal Subjective Identity form. This level is of major importance, because "it is a

FIGURE 1 | Decent work as a psychosocial relationship between an individual and a context of production with others (collective, organization and society—work as a conflict to resolve).
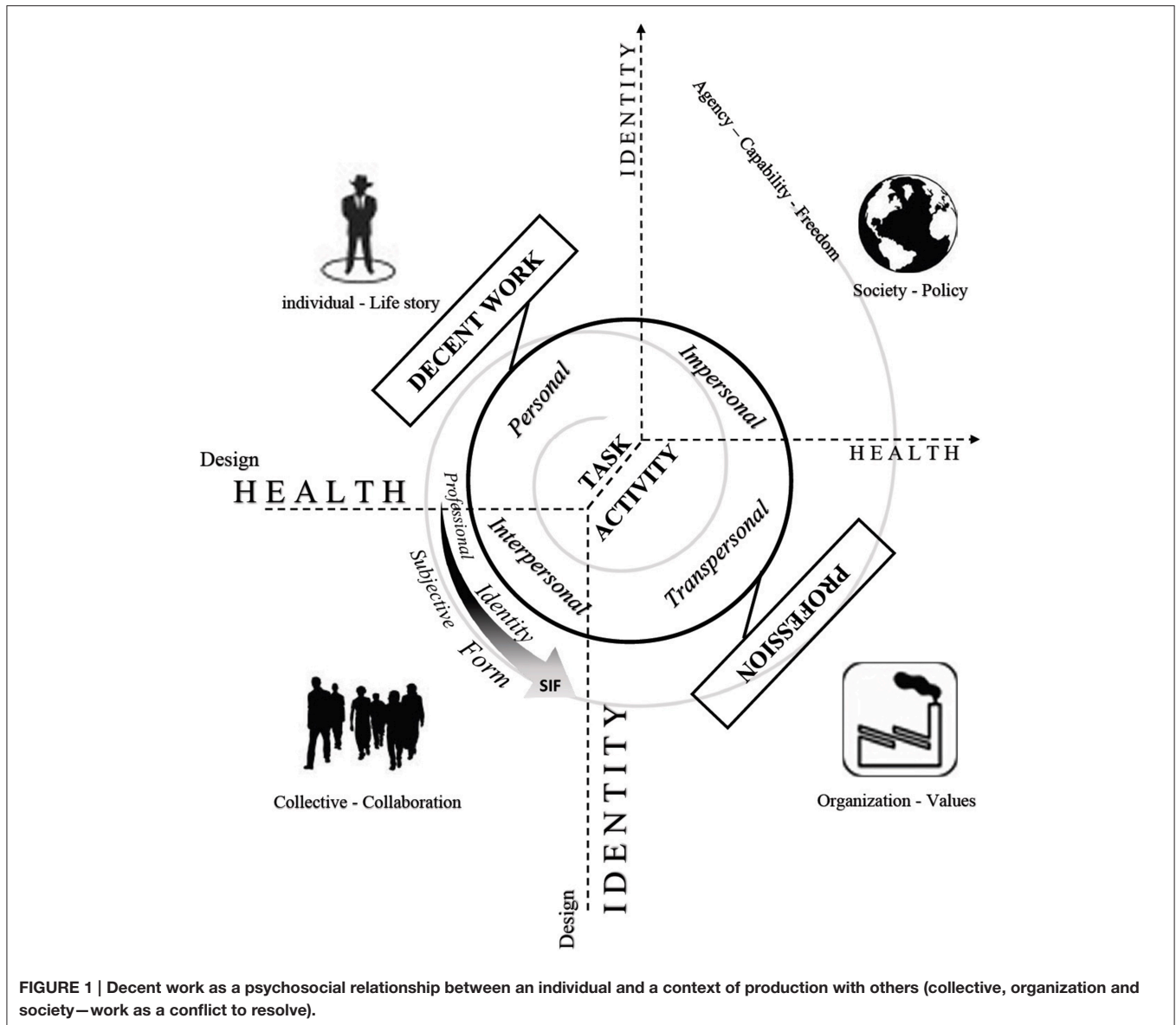
binding characteristic across generations and individuals, always at risk of disappearing if it is not reconstructed in the course of personal and interpersonal activities" (Kloetzer et al., 2015, p. 61). The personal and interpersonal activities (first and second dimensions) refer to the "professional style." This is where the "professional identity" can develop by integrating the individual and interindividual creativity used to resolve the dialectic of working. It thus involves the processes of personalization. If the first two dimensions are places for novelty and innovation, the intrapersonal dimension is a first level of cooperation and solidarity at work and a first source for a personal recognition. It is the starting point for the employment promotion, social protection, social dialog, and fundamental rights that constitute the four pillars of decent work. For this reason, psychologists can find the link that allows them, in their own work, to contribute to the enhancement of decent work by working on the processes of personalization that reconstruct professional subjective identity

forms. However, these efforts can't be effective without social and institutional recognition regarding more impersonal descriptions of the profession, which refer back to the task. Indeed, the fourth dimension defines the profession as "impersonal." It corresponds to all the official characteristics of work organization (e.g., tasks, job profiles, career rules) that build work outside the individual level.

As pointed out by Kloetzer et al. "in this model, all four dimensions are bound together, but antagonisms may provoke a loosening of these bonds. The feeling of sharing the same experience at work may disappear due to interpersonal conflicts. A trade that is deprived of transpersonal mediation may degenerate into destructive opposition between a personal, solitary work exercise, and impersonal, spurious work injunctions from the organization, with all workers at risk of work depersonalization" (Kloetzer et al., 2015, p. 62). For example, in the case of Mrs. V., the way she perceives herself

in terms of values or skills (which are parts of the description of subjective identity forms) is no longer supported by her professional environment. We may say that the professional scenarios no longer sustain her professional self.

Career counseling psychologists who want to integrate the decent work perspective into their practice could have an interest in understanding how the dynamic system of subjective identity forms of their clients integrates these four levels as resources or constraints for self-construction and personal and social recognition (see **Figure 1**).

In doing so, they could play a role in helping clients to engage in new "ecological transitions" (reflecting their relationships to peers, to task, to hierarchy and to institution). Nevertheless, such a practice will also needs another type of intervention that can help the professional milieu to be more inclusive in order to accept such ecological transitions, development and capacity to transform society.

Others

Decent work exists within the relationship between a subjective meaning of work and an objective definition of what constitutes good working conditions. It withholds the structure of personal identity at work. But this structure also needs to be supported by others. Two levels underlined by Deranty et al. concern the relationships to others—work as cooperation (which can refer to the transpersonal dimension of work) and work as political culture (the impersonal dimension).

We have already outlined that the collective of peers could be helpful for individuals to perform tasks and resolve activity conflicts. The collective also has the power to recognize the quality of good work (recognize a "professional style" as a good one), and to support human rights at work. As noted by Dejours, the only true recognition of the quality of work is made by peers who can have a "judgment of beauty" about the work (Dejours, 2009, pp. 42–43). Decent work is then work that can be recognized by peers according to the conditions of certainty and cooperation. These two conditions are essential for the profession to be a mediating agent of personal and collective development alongside the institutional prescriptions. Career psychologists need to think of how they can contribute to engaging organizations and institutions to be more cooperative and positive places.

One main difficulty in career counseling is that career interviews are often "disconnected" from concrete work situations, and especially from their collective dimensions. The involvement of pairs in the co-construction of possible solutions and potential development is, however, of high importance. In the case of Mrs V., this certainly constitutes a core issue. Because she is already in conflict with her colleagues, and interviews are conducted outside her work, it can be difficult for the counselor to intervene further than personal dimension. One of the main challenges for the career counseling field is perhaps to extend the practical interventions to the collective and political levels inside the workplace.

The specific methodology used by the Activity Clinic (see Kloetzer et al., 2015, for an example) can provide a complementary approach to individual interviews. It consists of grounded research-action methodologies based on the idea that working is a process of learning and development. In building, for example, cross self-confrontation situations, the researchers elaborate a dialogical Zone of Proximal Development with workers that can support the development of the four-dimensional dynamic architecture of the profession (personal, interpersonal, transpersonal, and impersonal dimensions). Phases 4 and 5 of the participatory action research described previously explicitly refer to such perspectives, with the aim of developing the profession of counselor into the CIBC, and allowing the counselors to enhance their power to act (and for example help them to integrate the decent work concerns into practices). Because the main developmental tool within this methodology is professional controversy, cooperation and support are the first assumptions that must be sustained.

Society

As depicted in **Figure 1**, yet another level of analysis needs to be developed. As noted by Dejours "the fact that the relationship between work and life turns into happiness or misfortune does not depend on individual economy. Success in the face of the personal challenges that constitute the subjective experience of work depends on the social conditions of work" (2009, pp. 42–43, free translation). The social conditions of work are part of the political culture. Everyone can see how the reality of the precarious and flexible job market makes solid self-construction difficult. Authors like Dejours have a severely pessimistic view of the impact of our organizational, economic and political culture on post-modern identity construction, and on the global capacity of our society to maintain democratic and human rights values. For Dejours, the organization of today's work makes malicious behaviors commonplace, and endangers democracy. The economic war, at the heart of the neoliberal system, has created a lot of wealth, but also a lot of inequality, injustice, unemployment, discrimination, marginalization, and precariousness (Piketty, 2013). The work conditions today are lead by fear (fear of unemployment, fear of the future, fear of climatic evolution, fear of communities, fear of exclusion). Economic health is determined by the stock market's confidence thermometer, like an aggregate of all individual fears. The result is suffering and malicious behavior that have become structural components of today's societies. When fear is accepted as a natural dimension of working conditions, work becomes a theater for the normalization of evil (where inequalities and inequities are perceived as natural). The result is, for Dejours, the development of attitudes of submission and domination at work, with these behaviors becoming reasonable, justified, and rational (as social norms). Every "post modern citizen" is therefore supposed to follow one of these two options and accept living in an indecent world, framed as an injunction to be realistic. Today's organization of work is the theater of a fight between domination (alienation) and democracy for one, and between individualism (isolation) and solidarity for another. Fear at work as a norm is the origin of isolation and of the loss of democracy, because it muzzles cooperation and collective action. On the other hand, work can also be seen as a major key to human development, if the cultural and organizational conditions allow

work collectives to sustain personal identity. As pointed out by Deranty et al. "because it can be such a destabilizing experience for individual subjective identities, the very organization of the work process can be a major factor in entrenching general forms of social domination [...] By contrast, because it can also be a major vehicle for the development of cognitive, emotional, and moral capacities, work can also be a vehicle for democratic life and respect of others" (Deranty and MacMillan, 2012, p. 401). The strategic stance of career practitioners should enable them to contribute to political and economic changes through the development of individuals and institutions in which they are included.

Finally, the following "formula" could be used as a first step in that direction:

Work is decent when it allows the individual and the society to be healthy, in the following ways:

- By consolidating social and individual identity to allow the realization of tasks
- By developing work activities, through recognition, evaluation, and confrontation with others (especially peers)
- By integrating concern for others into work (for more justice, equity and democracy).

CONCLUSION

The notion of decent work is not easy to define from a psychological perspective. But from the point of view of career counseling, the notion clearly points out the importance of human rights in career issues and practices at work. Most of the theoretical approaches in guidance and career counseling consider "at risk work" as degraded work before it becomes degrading. The case of Mrs. V. is certainly not illustrative of every career issue. As a consequence, it cannot be generalized. Nevertheless, as a case study, it points out the main characteristics that make decent work a powerful concept to address today's challenges for research and practice in the field of career counseling. A main difficulty of today's world of work is that working conditions are deteriorating. Work has become increasingly precarious and constraining. This change does not only concern the poorest countries, where work may not even allow survival, but also rich ones, where work has become a form of alienation, even if it provides sufficient income. Thus, middle class populations are now concerned with the problem of decent work. This is the case for Mrs V. The purpose of this case study was mainly to highlight that decent work issues now concern all workers. It also points out the need for a clear and effective

definition and framework. This notion allows us to focus on what makes a work situation disintegrated to the point that it is not acceptable, as framed by the principles of human rights.

The distinction is of great importance. Indeed, while degraded work can be upgraded, repaired, and prevented, indecent work needs to be fought with multiple political, economic, humanitarian, collective, and individual actions. A psychosocial definition of decent work raises the question of individual and socially acceptable limits of working conditions. While these limits can more easily be established on the basis of law or economics, individual acceptability is more difficult to define. For example, some constraints are legitimated by individuals even if they correspond to degrading working conditions (e.g., because of poverty, but also the neoliberal system that produces inequality to the point of questioning the individual attitudes of solidarity and democracy).

Thus, it may be easier to fight for decent work on a collective level than on an individual level. The main issue is indeed to understand how the conditions of decent work meet individual significance in order to allow or constrain an area of freedom, a space for action, and the capability for health. As underlined by Ricoeur, "suffering is not defined solely by physical pain, nor even by mental pain, but by the reduction, even the destruction, of the capacity for acting, of being-able-to-act, experienced as a violation of self-integrity" (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 190). Canguilhem's definition of health suggests a similar idea. "I feel good, because I feel myself capable of taking responsibility for my actions, of making things happen and of creating new connections among things that were not possible without me, but that wouldn't be the same without them. This is why I feel the need to learn what they are so that I can change them" (Canguilhem, 2002, p. 68, free translation). The starting point for this is therefore the subjective relationship to work, which can gradually be incorporated into collective and social issues. It follows the movement from the subjective to political dimensions through relationships with others. This movement primarily concerns the career counseling psychologist, whose action begins within the individual relationship, and continues through spiraling levels of collective action that promotes a progressive capability for self construction (a psychosocial activity of self-construction through work).

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From Decent Work to Decent Lives: Positive Self and Relational Management (PS&RM) in the Twenty-First Century

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The aim of the present study is to empirically test the theoretical model, Positive Self and Relational Management (PS&RM), for a sample of 184 Italian university students. The PS&RM model specifies the development of individuals' strengths, potentials, and talents across the lifespan and with regard to the dialect of self in relationship. PS&RM is defined theoretically by three constructs: Positive Lifelong Life Management, Positive Lifelong Self-Management, Positive Lifelong Relational Management. The three constructs are operationalized as follows: Positive Lifelong Life Management is measured by the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS), the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), the Meaningful Life Measure (MLM), and the Authenticity Scale (AS); Positive Lifelong Self-Management is measured by the Intrapreneurial Self-Capital Scale (ISC), the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS), and the Life Project Reflexivity Scale (LPRS); and Positive Lifelong Relational Management is measured by the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue), the Multidimensional Scale for Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), and the Positive Relational Management Scale (PRMS). Confirmatory factor analysis of the PS&RM model was completed using structural equation modeling. The theoretical PS&RM model was empirically tested as defined by the three hypothesized constructs. Empirical support for this model offers a framework for further research and the design of preventive interventions to promote decent work and decent lives in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: decent work, decent life, Positive Self and Relational Management (PS&RM), respectivity, relationality

INTRODUCTION

Across the lifespan, individuals inevitably confront multiple challenges in the domains of work and relationship. While these are longstanding human challenges, recent economic, and social changes related to unemployment, globalization, and the changing nature of work have created a crisis involving underemployment, unemployment, and subsequent loss of financial security. The field of vocational psychology can assume a leadership role in responding to the current crisis by advancing theories, research, and practices that address the impact of these pressing social and economic challenges (Blustein, 2011b; Guichard, 2013b). While these challenges are experienced across all social classes, those who are poor and less educated are most vulnerable to the ill effects of social and economic change. Conditions of unemployment and employment that offers less than a

living wage increase the number of persons living in poverty (Fryer and Fagan, 2003; Smith, 2010), along with the loss of psychological power (Prilleltensky, 2003) and heightened educational, health, and nutritional insecurities that accompany loss of material resources (Carr and Sloan, 2003; Sachs, 2005).

Vocational psychologists must seek to advance knowledge and services not only for the middle-class who exercise some degree of choice in their lives, but also for the poor and unemployed who typically have less volition with regard to their education and work lives (Blustein, 2006, 2011b). With few notable exceptions (Super, 1957; Saks, 2005), however, vocational psychology has not devoted significant attention to research and intervention for the poor or the unemployed (Blustein, 2011b). This study seeks to assess a model of Positive Self and Relational Management (PS&RM) intended to be applicable for promoting the strengths of individuals across varied social classes in meeting the economic and workplace challenges of the twenty-first century.

Current economic conditions are diminishing access to decent work for many segments of the population (ILO, 2015), while the salience of decent work as a fundamental human right central to human dignity and well-being has been widely affirmed. The concept of decent work was first introduced as part of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948), which states that: "Everyone has the right to work, to the free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment; everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work; everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection." The Universal Declaration was confirmed by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations agency that aims to promote social justice and basic human and labor rights, stating that decent work should be assured for all workers (1999, 2015). Like the earlier UN proclamation, the ILO (1999, 2015) emphasized the importance of work availability for all those who want to work, basic rights for workers in the workplace (e.g., absence of discrimination or harassment and opportunities to exercise voice and participation through self-chosen representation), and working conditions that are safe, secure, and respect family and social values, provide a liveable income, and permit access to adequate health care.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2009) has also reaffirmed the right for decent work, and the UNESCO Chair ≪Lifelong Guidance and Counselling≫ (Guichard, 2013a) has identified the in-depth study of decent work, including a more equitable approach to economic growth and sustainable opportunities for the working poor, as one of the challenges for the Chair (Guichard, 2013a; Guichard and Di Fabio, 2015). The Chair, founded at the University of Wroclaw, Poland in 2013, part of UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Program, facilitates the networking of scholars from internationally recognized world universities, to develop an integrated system of research, training, information and documented activities in educational and vocational counseling. The Chair moreover aims to foster equal

opportunity, occupational mobility, and the development of vital career-related competencies through counseling projects and programs. The development of the PS&RM model was designed to meet the UNESCO call for research and intervention to develop personal competencies that will expand entry into decent work for the broad population.

In industrial and organizational psychology, the inclusive psychology of working (Blustein, 2006) offers a central theoretical framework relevant for conceptualizing the psychological importance of decent work for all people. According to this framework, decent work satisfies needs for power, relationship, and self-determination or the experience of engaging in activities that are experienced as authentic and motivating (Blustein, 2006). The psychology of working (Blustein, 2006) also recognizes that work and non-work experiences are highly interrelated, particularly in the sphere of human relationships. Blustein (2011a) enriched his theoretical articulation on the centrality of relationships in the relational theory of working, which recognizes that every work decision, experience, and interaction is influenced and shaped by relationships within and beyond the workplace (Blustein, 2011a). Decent work should thus foster competencies and conditions to support adaptive relationships in the workplace and beyond (Blustein, 2011a; Di Fabio, 2013a, 2014c). Moreover, given the importance of work and relationships as the major contexts of people's lives (Richardson, 2012), theory and practice need to be responsive to changes in contemporary life and guide people in constructing healthy lives through work and relationships. The PS&RM model affirms the role of work and relationships as interrelated and central to well-being for all people.

Additional theoretical shifts have emerged in vocational psychology in the twenty-first century in response to new challenges and transitions that have influenced and defined the PS&RM model. These theoretical developments include the shift from planning for career development to enhancing career management (Savickas, 2011b) and self-management skills (Guichard, 2013b; Di Fabio, 2014c). These theoretical developments are taking place in response to changes in work and life more broadly. While in the twentieth century individuals (at least those who were part of the broad middle class or above) were able to develop careers within a stable organization, career stability and security are less available for all in the twenty-first century (Savickas, 2011a). In the twenty-first century, work is often temporary and organizations are fluid (Savickas, 2011a). Rather that progressing through a predetermined and predictable series of stages (Super, 1957, 1980) or succession of vocational activities across the life span (Osipow, 1990), individuals now require a set of flexible career management and self-management skills to gain insight or reflexivity about themselves and their environments and to successfully navigate their increasingly unpredictable and chaotic career paths (Savickas, 2011b). For example, individuals have to maintain their employability when unemployed and actively manage their careers through adaptability, intentionality, life-long learning, autobiographical reasoning, and meaning-making (Savickas, 2011a). Life design is recognized as extending beyond career (Guichard, 2005) and integrating work and relationship in a dialectical manner across

the entire life span (Di Fabio, 2014c). The notion of career management through self-management (Di Fabio, 2014c) thus emphasizes the importance of strengthening many aspects of self (Di Fabio, 2014b; Di Fabio et al., in press), including building resilience in order to adapt to changes in one's career and life pathways (Di Fabio et al., 2014; Di Fabio and Kenny, 2015). Career management and self-management draw upon psychological resources to maintain personal and social well-being in the midst of changing social and economic conditions and structures.

In the context of life design, the development of self and reflexivity are central processes (Savickas, 2011c; Guichard, 2013b). People are considered as having plural selves, with an individual's identity composed of a dynamic system of subjective identity forms (Guichard, 2005, 2013b). People interact in different contexts and with different experiences through which they develop different images of the self and take on roles that are different from one context to another (Guichard, 2005, 2013b). Through a dynamic and continuous process of reflexivity, individuals expand self-awareness and attribute meaning to their life experiences (Savickas, 2011a; Guichard, 2013b; Bernaud, 2015). In counseling dialogues, reflexivity enables individuals to discover their complexity and plurality, create personal meaning, define future objectives, and construct a future self with purpose and authenticity (Guichard, 2004, 2005; Di Fabio, 2014f).

In addition to shifts in vocational theory, the PS&RM model builds on developments in positive youth development (PYD, Catalano et al., 2004; Lerner et al., 2005; Di Fabio et al., 2014; Kozan et al., 2014) and positive psychology (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, 2002), with a focus on the attainment of well-being from hedonic and eudaimonic perpsectives. Hedonic well-being refers to pleasure attainment and pain avoidance (Kahneman et al., 1999), while eudaimonic well-being refers to an optimal state of functioning, focusing on the cultivation of resources and strengths, personal self-realization, and the attainment of personal meaning and pursuing life according to the true or authentic self (Ryan and Deci, 2001; Vázquez et al., 2006; Ryff and Singer, 2008; Waterman et al., 2010). Whereas hedonic and eudaimonic well-being are both valuable, eudaimonic well-being is particularly relevant to lifelong positive development. The pursuit of happiness or pleasure can lead persons to embrace goals and engage in activities that are not ultimately aligned with the realization of one's full potential or of benefit to society (Ryan and Deci, 2001; Ryff and Singer, 2008).

PYD emphasizes the importance of building individual resources and strengths, not only as protective factors for coping with challenge, but as resources that allow youth to fully thrive and contribute meaningfully to society (Di Fabio et al., in press). Positive Adult Development (PAD; Helson and Srivastava, 2001; Commons, 2002) similarly emphasizes the capacity of individuals to cope adaptively with change and challenge across the life course (Helson and Srivastava, 2001; Commons, 2002). Positive Lifelong Development (PLD; Colby and Damon, 1992) highlights resources that contribute to optimal health and life quality (Colby and Damon, 1992). In consideration of the above frameworks, PS&RM specifies positively lifelong development

as "the development of individuals' strengths, potentials, and varied talents from a lifespan perspective and the positive dialectic of the self in relationship" (Di Fabio, 2014b). The PS&RM model focuses on the promotion of self and relational management across varied personal and professional transitions toward the attainment of identitarian purposeful awareness and positive lifelong development (Di Fabio, 2014f). Identitarian purposeful awareness entails the realization of the authentic self, accompanied by a sense of meaning and purpose (Di Fabio, 2014f), and is thus congruent with eudaimonic conceptions of well-being.

In sum, the PS&RM model (Di Fabio, 2014b, 2015a) model was formulated for addressing the complex work and life challenges of the twenty-first century (Di Fabio, 2014b, 2015a) and the integral dialect of relationship across work and life contexts (Guichard, 2004; Blustein, 2011a; Savickas, 2011a; Di Fabio, 2014b, 2015a). PS&RM adopts a preventive perspective (Hage et al., 2007; Kenny and Hage, 2009; Di Fabio et al., in press), underlining the importance of individual strengths (Di Fabio and Palazzeschi, 2008a,b, 2009, 2012; Di Fabio and Blustein, 2010; Di Fabio and Kenny, 2012a; Di Fabio et al., 2012, 2013, 2014; Di Fabio and Saklofske, 2014a,b) and relational strengths (Blustein, 2011a; Di Fabio and Kenny, 2012b) to face the challenges of the twenty-first century and promote overall-well-being. PS&RM embraces Positive Psychology (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, 2002), is aligned with PYD (Lerner, 2002; Kenny, 2007), and is informed by the inclusive psychology of working (Blustein, 2006), the relational theory of working (Blustein, 2011a), and contemporary developments in career theory, including Career Construction (Savickas, 2005), Self-Construction and Life-Construction (Guichard, 2005, 2013b), Life Meaning (Bernaud, 2015), and meta-reflection and reflexivity emphasizing self-insight and awareness (Guichard, 2009, 2013b; Maree, 2013; Di Fabio, 2014c).

At a more specific level, the PS&RM theoretical model is defined by three constructs: Positive Lifelong Life Management, Positive Lifelong Self-Management, and Positive Lifelong Relational Management. The operationalization of this model is as follows. The first construct, Positive Lifelong Life Management encompasses hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, and is measured by the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS, Watson et al., 1988) and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS, Diener et al., 1985), as indices of hedonic well-being; by Meaningful Life Measure (MLM, Morgan and Farsides, 2009) and the Authenticity Scale (AS; Wood et al., 2008), as indices of eudaimonic well-being, emphasizing life meaning and authenticity. The second construct, Positive Lifelong Self-Management emphasizes individual level resources and self-insight for coping adaptively with change in the work domain and is assessed by Intrapreneurial Self-Capital Scale (ISC; Di Fabio, 2014d), the Career Adapt-Abilities Inventory (Savickas and Porfeli, 2012), and the Life Project Reflexivity Scale (Di Fabio, 2015b). The third construct, Positive Lifelong Relational Management assesses resources for relational adaptation within the workplace and beyond and is operationalized by the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue; Petrides and

Furnham, 2004), the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS; Zimet et al., 1988), and the Positive Relational Management Scale (Di Fabio, 2015c).

The operationalization of the three PS&RM constructs is based upon a significant body of existing research. The measures of Positive Lifelong Life Management are widely used assessments of hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, including life meaning and authenticity, and have been associated with a range of valued life outcomes for individuals and for society (Ryan and Deci, 2001). Positive Lifelong Self-Management incorporates well-known constructs and measures, such as the Career Adapt-Abilities Inventory, developed, and studied by vocational psychologists interested in the individual resources needed for adapting to an uncertain and changing career context (Porfeli and Savickas, 2012; Savickas and Porfeli, 2012). Intrapreneurial self-capital (ISC) was developed by Di Fabio (2014c) to further specify and assess skills relevant for innovative and effective problem-solving in the context of uncertainty and change. The ISC metaconstruct encompasses nine individual factors (e.g., hardiness, resilience, positive self-concept, creative self-efficacy, decisiveness, and goal mastery) found in prior research to be associated with career adaptability, employability, and well-being (Di Fabio, 2014b). Di Fabio (2014c) confirmed the factor structure of the ISC metaconstruct as derived from the seven underlying constructs. The new ISC scale was found to correlate positively with career decision-self efficacy, perceived employability and school grade point average (GPA), and negatively with career decision-making difficulties. The Positive Lifelong Relational Management construct similarly incorporates widely used relational and social skills measures, such as emotional intelligence and social support, as well as a measure developed specifically to assess competencies relevant to the current challenges. The new Positive Relational Management Scale (PRMS, Di Fabio, 2015c) focuses on three positive dimensions of relationships, respect, care, and connection, that are relevant across multiple life domains.

The aim of this study is to empirically test the PS&RM theoretical model. Specifically, the present study addresses the following question: is there empirical evidence for the conceptualization of PS&RM as constituted by the three constructs of Positive Lifelong Life Management, Positive Lifelong Self-Management, Positive Lifelong Relational Management? In other words, does evidence exist for the latent construct PS&RM operationalized by the three lower order latent constructs of Positive Lifelong Life Management, Positive Lifelong Self-Management, and Positive Lifelong Relational Management?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

Participants are 184 Italian students of the University of Florence. Regarding gender, 81 participants were male (44%) and 103 participants were female (56%). The age of the participants ranged from 22 to 27 years ($M = 24.13$; $SD = 1.79$). Participants were predominantly White Italians from middle-class backgrounds.

Measures

Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)

To evaluate positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA), the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS, Watson et al., 1988) in the Italian version by Terracciano et al. (2003) was used. The PANAS is composed of 20 adjectives of which 10 refer to Positive Affect (PA; e.g., enthusiastic, interested, determined) and 10 to Negative Affect (NA; e.g., afraid, upset, distressed). The participants has to indicate to what extent they generally feel on average on a Likert scale from 1 = Very slightly or not at all to 5 = Extremely. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were:0.71 for Positive Affect and 0.81 for Negative Affect in the present study;0.72 for Positive Affect and 0.83 for Negative Affect in the Terracciano et al. (2003) study. Regarding the validity of the Italian version of the PANAS, a positive but moderate relation was found between Positive Affect and Extraversion and an inverse but moderate relation was found between Negative Affect and Neuroticism, similar to findings with the original American version (Terracciano et al., 2003). Furthermore the Italian version of the PANAS showed predictive validity in relation to depression (Terracciano et al., 2003).

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)

To evaluate life satisfaction, the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS, Diener et al., 1985) in the Italian version by Di Fabio and Gori (2015) was used. The scale consist of five items (e.g., "I am satisfied with my life," "The conditions of my life are excellent") on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree. The scale has a one-dimensional factorial structure. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.88 in the present study and 0.85 in the Di Fabio and Gori (2015) study that validated the Italian version of the scale. Regarding concurrent validity, Di Fabio and Gori found the Italian version of the SWLS to be positively correlated with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965).

Meaningful Life Measure (MLM)

To evaluate meaning in life, the Meaningful Life Measure (MLM, Morgan and Farsides, 2009) in the Italian version by Di Fabio (2014e) was used. The questionnaire is composed of 23 items on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree. The MLM detects five dimensions: Exciting life (e.g., "Life to me seems always exciting"), Accomplished life (e.g., "So far, I am pleased with what I have achieved in life"), Principled life (e.g., "I have a personal value system that makes my life worthwhile"), Purposeful life (e.g., "I have a clear idea of what my future goals and aims are"), Valued life (e.g., "My life is significant"). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were: for Exciting life, 0.85 in the present study and 0.87 in the study relative to the Italian version; for Accomplished life 0.83 in the present study and 0.86 in the Di Fabio (2014e) study that validated the scale for the Italian context; for Principled life, 0.84 in the present study and 0.85 in the Italian validation study; for Purposeful life, 0.84 in the present study and 0.87 in the Italian validation; for Valued life, 0.83 in the present study and 0.85 for the Italian validation. Regarding the concurrent validity of the Italian version of the MLM, positive

relationships emerged with life satisfaction and positive affect and inverse relationships with negative affect (Di Fabio, 2014e).

Authenticity Scale (AS)

To evaluate authenticity, the Authenticity Scale (AS; Wood et al., 2008) in the Italian version by Di Fabio (2014a) was used. The measure is composed of 12 items with a response format on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Does not describe me at all to 7 = Describes me very well. The scale provides a total score of authenticity and also the scores for three dimensions of authenticity: Self-alienation (e.g., "I feel out of touch with the real me"), Authentic living (e.g., "I am true to myself in most situations"), and Accepting external influence (e.g., "I always feel I need to do what others expect of me"). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were: for Self-alienation, 0.83 in the present study and 0.81 in the Di Fabio (2014a) study that validated the Italian version; for Authentic living, 0.80 in the present study and 0.79 in the Italian validation study; for Accepting external influence, 0.81 in the present study and 0.84 in the Italian validation study. Regarding concurrent validity of the Italian version of the AS, positive relationships emerged with self-esteem, life satisfaction, and positive affect and inverse relationships with negative affect (Di Fabio, 2014a).

Intrapreneurial Self-Capital Scale (ISC)

The Intrapreneurial Self-Capital Scale (ISC; Di Fabio, 2014c) was used to assess a higher order construct related to the individual resources for innovation and problem solving in the context of uncertainty. The ISC scale is composed of 28 items (e.g., "I am able to deal with most of my problems," "I'm able to improve the ideas produced by others," "One of my goals in training is to learn as much as I can") with a response format on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly agree to 5 = Strongly disagree. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.84 in the present study and 0.86 in the Di Fabio (2014c) study reporting on the development of the scale. Regarding the validity of the ISC, a positive relationship between ISC and academic performance in terms of Grade Point Average supported predictive validity of the scale (Di Fabio, 2014c). Furthermore the positive relationship of the ISC with perceived employability and career decision self-efficacy and the inverse relation of ISC with career decision-making difficulties supported concurrent validity of the scale (Di Fabio, 2014c).

Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS)

To evaluate career adaptability, the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS; Savickas and Porfeli, 2012) in the Italian version for young adults (Di Fabio, 2016c) was used. The scale is composed of 24 items with a response format on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongest to 5 = Not strong. The scale assesses four dimensions of career adaptability: Concern (e.g., "Thinking about what my future will be like," "Realizing that today's choices shape my future"), Control (e.g., "Taking responsibility for my actions," "Doing what's right for me"), Curiosity (e.g., "Looking for opportunities to grow as a person," "Becoming curious about new opportunities"), Confidence (e.g., "Performing tasks efficiently," "Working up to my ability"). The Cronbach's alpha

coefficients were: for Concern, 0.83 in the present study and 0.85 in the Di Fabio (2016c) study that validated the Italian version for young adults; for Control, 0.84 in the present study and 0.86 in the Di Fabio (2016c) study; for Curiosity, 0.82 in the present study and 0.83 in the Di Fabio (2016c) study; for Confidence, 0.81 in the present study and 0.82 in the study relative to the Italian version for young adults. Regarding the Italian version of the CAAS for young adults, relationships emerged between the CAAS and both self-perceived employability and authenticity (Di Fabio, 2016c).

Life Project Reflexivity Scale (LPRS)

The Life Project Reflexivity Scale (LPRS; Di Fabio, 2015b) was used to assess reflexivity on one's future career and life projects according to the authentic self, as opposed to acquiescing to others. The scale is composed of 21 items and three dimensions (e.g., Project actuality: "The projects for my future life are clear and defined"; Authenticity: "The projects for my future life are aligned with my most authentic values"; Acquiescence: "The projects for my future life are aligned with societal values, rather than with my most authentic values") with a response format on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly agree to 5 = Strongly disagree. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were: for Project actuality, 0.76 in the present study and 0.77 in the scale development study (Di Fabio, 2015b); for Authenticity, 0.79 in the present study and 0.78 in the Di Fabio (2015b) study; for Acquiescence, 0.82 in the present study and 0.80 reported by Di Fabio (2015b). Regarding the concurrent validity, positive relationships emerged between the LPRS and both authenticity and meaning in life (Di Fabio, 2015b).

Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue)

To evaluate trait emotional intelligence, the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue; Petrides and Furnham, 2004) in the Italian version by Di Fabio (2013b) was used. The questionnaire is composed of 153 items with response options on a 7-point Likert scale format ranging from 1 = Completely disagree to 7 = Completely agree. The questionnaire provides a total score, and scores for four principal dimensions: Well-being (e.g., "I feel that I have a number of good qualities," "On the whole, I'm pleased with my life," "I generally believe that things will work out fine in my life"), Self-Control (e.g., "I'm usually able to calm down quickly after I've got mad at someone," "I would describe myself as a calm person," "Controlling my urges is not a big problem for me"), Emotionality (e.g., "I often find it difficult to recognize what emotion I'm feeling," "I find it difficult to tell others that I love them even when I want to," "It is very important to me to get along with all my close friends and family"), and Sociability (e.g., "I can deal effectively with people," "If I wanted to, it would be easy for me to make someone angry," "I have many reasons for not giving up easily"). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were: for Well-being 0.88 in the present study and 0.90 in the Di Fabio (2013b) study that developed the Italian version; for Self-control, 0.82 in the present study and 0.83 in the Di Fabio (2013b) study; 0.83 in the present study and 0.86 in Di Fabio (2013b); for Sociability, 0.82 in the present study and 0.85 in Di Fabio (2013b). Regarding convergent and discriminant validity of the Italian version of the TEIQue (Di

Fabio, 2013b), positive correlations emerged between TEIQue and Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (Bar-On EQ-I, Bar-On, 1997). In contrast, low and non-significant correlations between the TEIQue and ability-based emotional intelligence detected through the Mayer, Salovey and Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT, Mayer et al., 2002), indicating that these measures tap two different aspects of the same construct. Furthermore, low to moderate positive correlations between the TEIQue and personality traits emerged, indicating that Trait EI presents some overlap with aspects of personality, but is also a distinct construct.

Multidimensional Scale for Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)

The total score of Multidimensional Scale for Perceived Social Support (MSPSS; Zimet et al., 1988) in the Italian version by Di Fabio and Palazzeschi (2015) was used to evaluate perceived social support from family, friends, and significant others. The scale is composed of 12 items (e.g., "My family works very hard to help me," "I can speak about my problems with my friends," "When I need someone, there is always a special person who stands by me," with response options in a 7-point Likert scale format ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were: for family support, 0.91 in the present study and 0.92 in the Di Fabio and Palazzeschi (2015) study that validated the Italian version; for friends support, 0.94 in the present study and 0.90 in Di Fabio and Palazzeschi (2015); for the significant others support, 0.90 in the present study and 0.93 in the Di Fabio and Palazzeschi (2015) study. Regarding concurrent validity, positive relationships emerged between the MSPSS, and social support (Di Fabio and Palazzeschi, 2015).

Positive Relational Management Scale (PRMS)

The Positive Relational Management Scale (PRMS; Di Fabio, 2015c) assesses three positive dimensions of relationships, including respect (my respect for others, respect of others for myself, my respect for myself), care (my care for others, care of others for myself, my care for myself), and connection (my connection with family, with friends, with significant others). The scale is composed of 12 items and three dimensions (e.g., Respect: "I keep a balance between respect toward others and toward myself"; Caring: "I often take care of others"; Connection: "I have good relationships with my family") with a response format on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly agree to 5 = Strongly disagree. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were: for Respect 0.80 in the present study and 0.81 in the Di Fabio (2015c) study reporting on the development of the scale; for Caring, 0.80 in the present study and 0.79 in the Di Fabio (2015c) study; for Connection, 0.81 in the present study and 0.80 in Di Fabio (2015c). Regarding the concurrent validity, positive relationships emerged between the PRMS and perceived social support (Di Fabio, 2015c).

Procedure and Data Analysis

The questionnaires were administered to groups of participants by trained psychologists. Students participated voluntarily in the study and were not compensated. The order of administration of the questionnaires were counterbalanced to control for possible effects of presentation during the administration. The questionnaires were administered according to the laws of privacy and informed consent of the Italian law (Law Decree DL-196/2003). Concerning ethical standards for research, the study followed procedures consistent with the latest version of the Declaration of Helsinki revised in Fortaleza [World Medical Association World Medical Association (WMA), 2013].

Descriptive statistics and Pearson's r correlations were computed. Confirmatory factor analysis of the PS&RM model conducted through structural equation modeling using AMOS version 6 (Arbuckle, 2005). The adequacy of the model was tested based upon the χ^2/df, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI, Bentler, 1990) and the Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI, Tucker and Lewis, 1973), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA, Browne and Cudeck, 1993).

RESULTS

Means, standard deviations, and correlations between the variables included in the model are reported in **Table 1**.

To test the PS&RM model through confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modeling was conducted using the total scores for each variable included as an oberved variables in the model. The observed variables as previsouly described include: positive affect and negative affect (PANAS, Watson et al., 1988), life satisfaction (SWLS, Diener et al., 1985), meaning in life (MLM, Morgan and Farsides, 2009) and authenticity (Wood et al., 2008) to assess Positive Lifelong Life Management; Intrapreneurial Self-Capital (ISC; Di Fabio, 2014d), career adaptability (Concern, Control, Curiosity, Confidence; Savickas and Porfeli, 2012), and life project reflexivity (Di Fabio, 2015b) to assess Positive Lifelong Self-Management; and the four TEIQue dimensions (Well-being, Self-Control, Emotionality, Sociability; Petrides and Furnham, 2004), perceived social support (Zimet et al., 1988), and positive relational management (Di Fabio, 2015c) to assess Positive Lifelong Relational Management. Goodness of fit for the model was evaluated using established criteria (See **Figure 1**). Values of the χ^2/df between 1 and 3 are considered indices of a good model fit. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI, Bentler, 1990) and the Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI, Tucker and Lewis, 1973) are considered indicative of a good fit when the values are higher than 0.90 (Bentler, 1990). Also values for the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA, Browne and Cudeck, 1993) lower than 0.08 also indicate a good model fit. In **Table 2** fit indices and fit changes for different compared models are reported. The first model corresponds to the theoretical hypothesized model with a latent construct PS&RM operationalized by three lower order latent constructs: Positive Lifelong Life Management with five indicators, Positive Lifelong Self-Management with three indicators, and Positive Lifelong Relational Management with three indicators. Inspection of the modification indices suggested several changes to improve the model fit. Considering that the correlations among the indicators, as apparent in **Table 1** and theoretical support for these correlations, subsequent models

TABLE 1 | Means, standard deviations, and correlations between the variables included in.

	M	DS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Positive Affect	20.12	6.13	—																
2. Negative Affect	20.19	5.35	0.76***	—															
3. Life satisfaction	21.65	5.97	0.57**	-0.45**	—														
4. Meaning in life	92.40	14.17	0.40**	-0.33**	0.43**	—													
5. Authenticity	44.60	7.48	0.32**	-0.28*	0.47**	0.52**	—												
6. ISC	101.54	10.24	0.49**	-0.48**	0.43**	0.57**	0.37**	—											
7. Concern	19.69	4.65	0.30**	-0.29*	0.35**	0.33**	0.13	0.36**	—										
8. Control	20.54	4.52	0.26**	-0.24*	0.39**	0.37**	0.23*	0.45**	0.44**	—									
9. Curiosity	21.28	4.14	0.29**	-0.24*	0.33**	0.30*	0.12	0.34**	0.36**	0.49**	—								
10. Confidence	21.86	4.54	0.30**	-0.22*	0.37**	0.32**	0.23**	0.50**	0.41**	0.68**	0.56**	—							
11. LPRS	70.88	10.13	0.32**	-0.29**	0.36**	0.37**	0.20*	0.45**	0.28**	0.42**	0.19*	0.29**	—						
12. Well-being	15.10	4.81	0.48**	-0.41**	0.44**	0.37**	0.37**	0.61**	0.21*	0.40**	0.19*	0.39**	0.44**	—					
13. Self-control	14.20	4.61	0.22*	-0.21*	0.46**	0.39**	0.25**	0.40**	0.17	0.25**	0.07	0.28**	0.20*	0.25**	—				
14. Emotionality	15.00	4.70	0.33**	-0.31**	0.44**	0.40**	0.47**	0.37**	0.23*	0.32**	0.30**	0.23**	0.25**	0.44**	0.30**	—			
15. Sociability	14.61	4.60	0.35**	-0.33**	0.48**	0.38**	0.41**	0.50**	0.29**	0.29**	0.26**	0.34**	0.19*	0.51**	0.16	0.50**	—		
16. MSPSS	23.29	4.65	0.26**	-0.30**	0.28**	0.25**	0.19*	0.12	0.13	0.10	0.03	0.12	0.16	0.24**	0.16	0.14	0.16	—	
17. PRSM	47.33	5.06	0.39**	-0.35**	0.40**	0.36**	0.28**	0.34**	0.13	0.24**	0.23**	0.20*	0.33**	0.46**	0.14	0.33**	0.41**	0.20*	—

$N = 184$. *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$.

TABLE 2 | Fit indices and fit changes for model 1 trough model 7.

	χ^2 (df)	RMSEA	CFI	NNFI	$\Delta \chi^2 (\Delta df)$	Δ Sig.
Model 1	59.42(43)	0.11 CI [0.10, 0.13]	0.89	0.89		$p < 0.05$
Model 2	58.34(42)	0.10 CI [0.09, 0.11]	0.89	0.90	1.08(1)	$p < 0.05$
Model 3	55.74(41)	0.09 CI [0.08, 0.10]	0.90	0.90	2.60(1)	$p < 0.05$
Model 4	54.37(40)	0.09 CI [0.07, 0.10]	0.91	0.90	1.37(1)	$p < 0.05$
Model 5	52.73(39)	0.08 CI [0.06, 0.09]	0.91	0.91	1.64(1)	$p < 0.05$
Model 6	50.54(38)	0.07 CI [0.06, 0.08]	0.92	0.91	2.19(1)	$p < 0.05$
Model 7	44.77(37)	0.05 CI [0.04, 0.06]	0.93	0.93	5.77(1)	$p < 0.01$

allowed residual errors among the indicators to correlate. As such, we inserted one covariance (starting from the more significant) in each model, with the final model showing covariance of indicators within model constructs.

The goodness-of-fit indices for the best model are the following: $\chi^2/df = 1.21$, RMSEA $= 0.05$, confidence interval [0.04, 0.06], NNFI $= 0.93$, CFI $= 0.93$.

An evaluation of these indices in relation to the results of the analysis for this study reveals good fit and support for the PS&RM model.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to provide empirical support for the conceptualization of PS&RM (Di Fabio, 2014b, 2015a). The study sought to establish the empirical validity of the latent construct PS&RM operationalized by three lower order latent constructs: Positive Lifelong Life Management, Positive Lifelong Self-Management, and Positive Lifelong Relational Management.

Structural equation modeling confirmed the hypothesized structure articulated by the three lower order latent constructs: Positive Lifelong Life Management, Positive Lifelong Self-Management, and Positive Lifelong Relational Management. The construct of Positive Lifelong Life Management integrates hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, meaning in life and authenticity. Given that rapid social, economic, technological, and career change can disrupt a sense of meaning, coherence, and well-being (Masten, 2014), the capacity for sustaining well-being, meaning, and authenticity in the context of change and disruption are considered adaptive. Positive Lifelong Life Management incorporates hedonic well-being, including the presence of positive affect, the absence of negative affect (Watson et al., 1988) and the presence of life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1985). It also encompasses dimensions of eudaimonic well-being hypothesized as fundamental for optimal life management. These dimensions are aligned with prior research on the realization of authenticity (Wood et al., 2008), the authentic self (Di Fabio, 2014f), meaning in life (Morgan and Farsides, 2009), authentic meaning (Bernaud, 2015), and purposeful identitarian awareness (Di Fabio, 2014f). Di Fabio (2014a,e) recently introduced the construct of purposeful identitarian awareness as a preventive life-management competency that includes awareness of the authentic self, including knowledge of one's intrinsic interests

FIGURE 1 | PS&RM model.
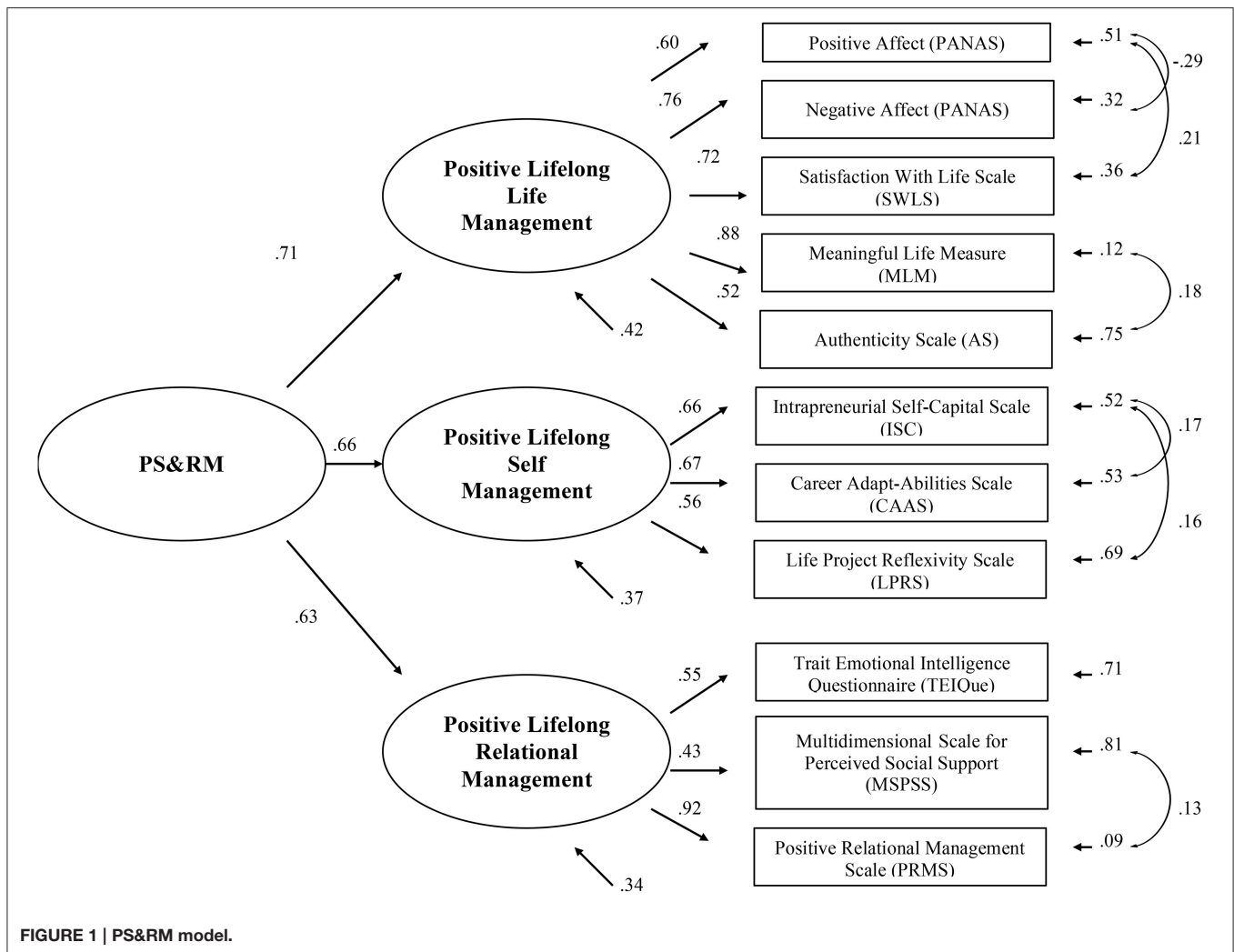
(Sheldon and Houser-Marko, 2001) and a striving toward goals that matter both personally and socially (Di Fabio, 2014d).

The second construct Positive Lifelong Self-Management emphasizes self and intraindividual resources considered important for coping proactively with the challenges of the post-modern era (Di Fabio, 2014c). These resources encompass the meta-competencies of ISC, adaptability, and reflexivity (Di Fabio, 2014f). Adaptability resources, including concern about the future; control or the application of self-discipline, effort, and persistence to shape and prepare for the future; curiosity or the capacity to think about oneself in a variety of future roles; and confidence that one can pursue hoped-for choices and aspirations, can be drawn upon to cope with undefined, unfamiliar, and uncertain life demands (Savickas and Porfeli, 2012). Reflexivity (Guichard, 2004, 2005; Maree, 2013) contributes to personal efforts to construct personal meaning, identification of the essence of one's authentic self, and development of one's own purposeful identitarian awareness (Di Fabio, 2014f).

The third construct Positive Lifelong Relational Management includes personal (e.g., trait emotional intelligence; Petrides and Furnham, 2004) and social resources (perceived social support; Zimet et al., 1988) and the dialectic of self in relationship (positive relational management; Di Fabio, 2015c) hypothesized as central for adaptive relational functioning while managing the life challenges of the twenty-first century. The contributions of emotional intelligence and social support for adaptive social, emotional and career functioning have been widely documented in prior research (Di Fabio and Kenny, 2012a,b; Di Fabio et al., 2014). The value of positive relational management has been confirmed in studies with Italian university students and Italian workers (Di Fabio, 2016a,b), showing associations between positive relational management and acceptance of change, perceived employability, well-being, and academic and workplace relational civility in terms of relational readiness, relational culture, and relational decency toward the others.

In sum, the current study provides empirical support for the conceptualization of PS&RM as Positive Lifelong Life Management, Positive Lifelong Self-Management, Positive

Lifelong Relational Management. Considered collectively, the three dimensions consider the importance of advancing a state of well-being that benefits the individual and society and promotes personal skills to adapt to change and uncertainty while integrating and balancing individual, relational, and community concerns and interests. Together, the dimensions are supportive of decent work and decent life.

Although the results of the present study test the PS&RM model (Di Fabio, 2014b, 2015a), some limitations need to be considered. The sample characteristics limit generalizability of the findings. In fact, the present research included a group of Italian university students who were not representative of Italian context. Future studies should include participants more representative of the broader Italian population, taking into consideration other geographical areas. Future studies should test the model and replicate the findings with larger samples. Future research will also need to test the PS&RM model in other international contexts and with samples across varied social classes and employment statuses. Since our goal is to develop and test an inclusive construct, establishing the construct validity of the model for diverse populations will be vital. Although the constructs and measures incorporated into the model have been validated in prior research as predictive of social, psychological and career adaptation and life-long well-being, the value of this model and its parsimony in explaining positive adaptation and well-being in comparison with alternative models needs to be established, especially with diverse populations. While our model is specified as lifespan relevant, future research should assess its applicability and value in the context of specific life transitions.

If the PS&RM model is tested and validated in future research with diverse populations, it may offer a useful framework for preventive intervention. As a preventive framework (Hage et al., 2007; Kenny and Hage, 2009; Di Fabio et al., in press), PS&RM underlines the importance of building individual (Di Fabio and Blustein, 2010; Di Fabio and Kenny, 2012a; Di Fabio and Palazzeschi, 2012; Di Fabio et al., 2012, 2013, 2014; Di Fabio and Saklofske, 2014a,b) and relational strengths (Blustein, 2011a; Di Fabio and Kenny, 2012b) that should be helpful in adapting and thriving despite the disruptions of the twenty-first century. The focus of the model on building strengths draws from positive psychology (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, 2002) and emphasizes the attainment of higher levels of eudaimonic well-being, including meaning, authenticity and social purpose. Since social and economic change can be disruptive to a sense of meaning and coherence, maintaining well-being is an adaptive capacity. The PS&RM model also highlights the dialectic of the self in relationship (Blustein, 2011a; Di Fabio, 2014b, 2015a) as relevant for creating a rich career and life project (Di Fabio, 2014c) and for decent work, simultaneously balancing and integrating needs for power, for relationship, and for self-determination (Blustein, 2006). The capacity for building strengths and resources aligned

with this model through preventive intervention is already being documented by initiatives of the International Laboratory of Research and Intervention in Vocational Guidance and Career Counseling and the International Laboratory in Positive Psychology and Prevention at the University of Florence (Di Fabio et al., in press). The Laboratory is engaged in the design and evaluation of school and workplace based interventions to build self and career management through the narrative assessment of career competencies, life design activities, and the promotion of specific competencies, such as emotional intelligence and intrapreneurial self-capital. The further validation of this model will provide a strong conceptual foundation for furthering these and other efforts to build culturally and contextually sensitive interventions.

It is our hope that the preventive and relational framework specified by the PS&RM model can contribute to building decent work and decent lives for many people in the twenty-first century. We propose that life construction (Guichard, 2013b) should seek to expand well-being with a focus on positive life management, positive self-management and positive relational management. PS&RM might thus be a framework for building well-being and psychological decency through attention to the authentic self (Di Fabio, 2014f), purposeful identitarian awareness (Guichard, 2013b; Di Fabio, 2014f), and the centrality of relational processes (Blustein, 2011a). It is essential to recognize that the model is entirely psychological and thus limited in its capacity to foster decent work and decent lives. We focus in this model on the subjective experience of decent work and life and what vocational and relational psychology can do to assist persons in developing the resources to thrive despite challenging and disruptive life circumstances. In recognition that this state of uncertainty and disruption may be persistent, we emphasize the value of the individual's psychological resources in positively and constructively managing one's self, life, and career. Nonetheless we are also hesitant to place too much responsibility for adaption and well-being on individuals. In a multidisciplinary framework, the psychological perspective complements the perspectives of economics and public policy in framing interventions to promote decent work. The psychological perspective does not, however, preclude the economic, social, organizational, and political policies and actions that need to be implemented to broaden opportunity and access to resources, so that equal access to decent work, rather than adjustment to scarcity, insecurity, uncertainty, and inequality, is the context for life construction.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

AD and MK conceptualized the study, chose the theoretical framework and chose the measures. AD collected the data and with MK wrote the methods and results. Then the authors wrote the paper together and read and revised the manuscript several times.

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Discussing the Notion of Decent Work: Senses of Working for a Group of Brazilian Workers without College Education

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Despite recent stability and socioeconomic development, Brazil's history is marked by social inequality, informality, precarious work, and psychosocial vulnerability, with little opportunity for decent and meaningful work, as recommended by the International Labour Office (ILO), for people in the country. Nevertheless, based on a social constructionist view, the hypothesis can be raised that there is no substantive definition of decent work, but rather a psychosocial one, constructed based on the discourse, narratives, and practices produced through the relational processes which grant sense and meaning to work. Therefore, the examination of narratives and discourses is an important methodological strategy to understand the socio-occupational reality of Brazil. Thus, this study aims to understand the senses attributed to working through content analysis of the narratives produced by a set of 20 urban workers and contrast them with the ILO definition of decent work, in an effort to analyze the relationships, similarities, and differences between an established collective social discourse and the interviewees' singular narratives. The main results point out that the participants look for working with fair wages, social protection, safety, and personal development opportunities, as the ILO recommends. The main difference is that these characteristics do not derive from the State's actions, as in the employment and formal qualification model, but come from informal sources, such as family and community relationship networks. The informal relationship networks produce job opportunities as well as social protection; qualification takes place through practical learning from more experienced colleagues; the opportunity to be able to keep working (employed or working informally) leads to success and safety; and the possibility to make choices and have control over one's life translates into personal and occupational development. In conclusion, the participants searched for working according to the principles recommended by the ILO. Nevertheless, in contexts of vulnerability and with restricted support from the State, these principles are constructed in the community and not offered by the public power, which generates distinguished forms of decent work.

Keywords: decent work, social constructionism, career counseling, vulnerability, Brazil

INTRODUCTION

Touraine (2007), Castel (2009), Krein (2013), and Antunes (2015) propose that the contemporary working world has been marked by ruptures and weakening of its traditional structures and the emergence of more fluid working dynamics, making it more flexible, heterogeneous, and complex. This creates, on the one hand, room for changes and innovations but, on the other hand, frequent precariousness, instability and insecurity, as well as greater onus on the workers themselves for their working activity and career in an era of so-called contemporary stability, as stated by Ribeiro (2014).

The contemporary stability we envision refers to a form of stability generated by the current working conditions and would not be marked by instability, but by a new form of stability, achieved through the people's active positions in their relationships with working contexts, in order to produce experiences of continuity and sense in working (Ribeiro, 2014).

In that vein, international institutions like the International Labour Office (ILO) have tried to promote safety, dignity, and protection in contemporary working, through proposals like decent work and an activity agenda to guarantee decent work: "Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men" (International Labour Office [ILO], 1999).

Nevertheless, the notions of security, stability, social protection, social integration, precariousness, freedom, equality, participation, decision-making power, working, and career have gradually changed, along with the senses and meanings of work, outside of variations in different contexts (Bescond et al., 2003; Auer, 2007; Mocelin, 2011; Sato, 2013; Michaelson et al., 2014; Bendassolli and Coelho-Lima, 2015; Mattos, 2015).

The concepts of meaning and sense (or meaningfulness, as proposed for this special issue), can either be considered synonyms in academic studies and research or a distinction can be made. In this article, we assume that the senses and meanings of working differ from one another, in line with the social constructionist perspective – the theoretical perspective in this research. Hence, meanings are "constructions collectively elaborated in a certain concrete historical, economic and social context. The senses, then, are a personal production deriving from the individual apprehension of the collective meanings, in the daily experiences" (Coutinho, 2009, p. 193).

Thus, sense relates to individual interpretation or the way people make meaning of themselves and their relationships with the world, for example, their working activity. This concept lies in contrast to meanings that are collective and consensual interpretations produced in a given context.

According to Bendassolli and Coelho-Lima (2015), senses are unlimited, unstable, and dynamic, while meanings are stable, category-based, reflect the accumulated cultural repertoire of a given group, and instruct its members on how to act on reality.

In this paper, we are interested in understanding the unique senses about working constructed by Brazilian workers and contrasting them with collective meanings, such as the notion of decent work of the ILO.

In line with Blustein (2006), we will use the conception of "working" instead of "work," as "working" is a more dynamic and structuring conception that indicates action and process in a given context (verb representing an action), while "work" is a more abstract, stable and structured conception constructed in a given context and incorporated in others (substantive representing a state). Hence, "working" represents the abstract concept of "work" in action through human activities in a specific socio-historical context.

In the introduction to this article, we present several questions, inquiries, and dilemmas regarding decent work that we have derived from the literature, to be discussed based on field research in a specific socio-occupational context located in the Southern hemisphere – Brazil.

Several authors have questioned the range and universality of the notion of decent work. Rodgers (2002), Rosenfield and Pauli (2012), and Mattos (2015) defend the idea of decent work as dignified working, but question what definition of dignity the notion of decent work should rest on: universal or historically constructed as an open axiological category (Rosenfield and Pauli, 2012).

Rodgers (2002) signals the strong relationship between the concept of decent work and the notion of human dignity, as working is the sphere in which people's economic and social objectives converge; that is, decent work is the bridge between the economic and the social (Druck, 2011). Castel (2009) stresses that working is the fundamental means to guarantee social protection and security to the majority of people without property who do not gain security from accumulated wealth.

Ghai (2002), Standing (2002), Mocelin (2011) and Mattos (2015) raise doubts on the ILO's position that social protection and stability derive from paid working and that typical (industrial) jobs should be the model of decent work. Mocelin (2011) concludes that an *a priori* normalization of a typical job as decent work is important, but idealized and limited; after all, why would a typical (industrial) job be good if the model has been questioned for a long time? Typical jobs may lack quality and, in addition, Mocelin (2011) argues, the stability they provide does not guarantee meaningfulness and security in working, as it serves as an ambiguous indicator, because a continuous and stable job potentially represents both security and meaning, as well as stagnation and lack of sense in working.

Another important point of analysis is the contrast between decent work and precarious work. Rodgers (1989) and Evans and Gibb (2009), in a synthesis of the international literature, consider that precarious work is associated with instability or uncertainty regarding the continuity of working, lack of protection in situations of need, very bad working conditions or unacceptable occupational practices, and insufficient income, which entails social vulnerability. Barbier (2004), Mocelin (2011), Baltar (2013), and Burchell et al. (2014) criticize the dichotomy between decent work and precarious work, which the ILO generally advances from, as the contemporary complexity of the

working world does not permit dichotomizations and pure types (Costa, 2010), as well as the fact that precarious work means different things in different national and disciplinary contexts (Barbier, 2004). Saunders (2003), in turn, calls attention to the fact that the international literature has used vulnerable worker as a synonym for workers in precarious situations, but that concept also leaves room for countless interpretations, due to the existence of distinct forms of occupational vulnerability (Proni, 2013).

At that, Mattos (2015) summarizes the thinking of many contemporary authors and raises the question: is there one decent work or are there distinct versions of decent work, varying in function across distinct contexts? Are there one or several ways to reach the same goal?

Ghai (2002, p. 2) states, "the decent work paradigm provokes questions about its universality and particularity." Bescond et al. (2003) proposed that decent work means different things to distinct groups of people. Di Ruggiero et al. (2015) and Hauf (2015) indicate that there are competing discourses on decent work in different economies and contexts, because "asymmetries in power relations shape different conceptualizations of decent work" (Di Ruggiero et al., 2015, pp. 120–121).

The concept of decent work was elaborated based on consensus among groups representing different regions around the world. Its attempts to rescue full employment and renews typical work (paid work) as a model of attachment to working still exert strong influence, which excludes most underdeveloped regions that have not fully established social welfare States.

In contexts like Brazil (*locus* of study), which Ghai (2002) ranks among the developing countries with a "development model" of decent work, as opposed to industrialized countries with a "classical model" and countries moving from communism to a market economy with a "transition model," it is important to take into account the particularities of this development. According to Costa (2010), as opposed to what happened in many of the social welfare nations, full employment has never been part of the Brazilian reality, in which a significant part of the population has always worked beyond the formal employment bonds, being active in unprotected and unregulated jobs. Therefore, one might say that informality is a matter of structural and constitutional order of the Brazilian working world, not a transitory dysfunction of that world. Recent data by the Institute of Applied Economic Research (Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada [IPEA], 2015) show that, in Brazil, 32.5% of the economically active population (EAP) works in the informal economy (Proni and Rocha, 2010; Proni, 2013; Ribeiro, 2014).

The concept of informality or informal economies emerged in the United Nations System based on European experts' observations of the repercussions of capitalism in African countries, as well as on studies focused on the effects of industrialization in peripheral economies, mainly in Latin America. It is understood in opposition to the idea of formality, which occurs in developed economies that are centered on employment or paid working (Cacciamali, 2000; Trebilcock, 2005; Sato, 2013). Like decent work, however, it is a controversial and polysemic concept with distinct meanings in different

contexts (Cacciamali, 2000; Sato, 2013; Bendassolli and Coelho-Lima, 2015). Informality tends to be interpreted dichotomously (formal versus informal), as the negative side of paid working, a model that has also been criticized in the literature, mainly in Latin America (Noronha, 2003; Nouroudine, 2011; Sato, 2013).

Feijó et al. (2009), Nouroudine (2011), and Sato (2013) propose focusing on the positive aspects of these informal working modalities, which can offer elements to set up the social protection that is missing. The core problem of informal working is not the lack of formalization, as informal working has organization modes, agreements and rules, but the lack of social protection.

Alves and Tavares (2006), Rosenfield (2011), Proni (2013), and Tavares (2015) point out the two sides of informal working, marked by autonomy or precariousness, and often mixed up with the individualist discourse of entrepreneurism (Appay, 2005; Rosenfield, 2011) that produces undue tolerance for several forms of precariousness (Feijó et al., 2009). Castel (2009) argues that a smaller part of the population would be able to exercise modern individualism in the construction of their lives, that is, to be independent and take an individualist stand due to too many subjective investments and self-assertion (entrepreneur notion), while most of the population practices negative individualism due to disaggregation and lack of collective references of support with a consequent lack of social protection (characteristic of informality).

Therefore, according to Trebilcock (2005), in contexts like the Brazilian reality, the promotion of decent work depends on the elimination of negative aspects of informality, mainly the lack of social protection. Hence, International Labour Office [ILO] (2002, 2004), Feijó et al. (2009), Spink (2009), and Mocelin (2011) acknowledge that there exists no clear border between formal and informal working, but a *continuum* ranging from extreme lack of protection and precariousness to extreme protection with intermediary levels, producing degrees of formality and informality. "Our working hypothesis is to assume that, just like the border between formal and informal working is not well drawn, in the informal sector, one can also identify a *continuum* of situations in which the premises of decent work are more or less present" (Feijó et al., 2009, p. 331).

According to Druck (2011), in the Brazilian reality, several types of precariousness exist, such as vulnerability associated with social participation and inequality, intensification of working and outsourcing, insecurity and occupational health, loss of individual and collective identities, weakening of workers' organizations and disposal of Labor Law. "Unemployment, low wages, informality and lack of protection are severe problems that affect a significant part of the Brazilian workers" (Proni, 2013, p. 826), despite distinct degrees of vulnerability and occupational precariousness in Brazil.

That is the picture in which, in Brazil, the study of informality has gained room, according to some recent studies (Spink, 2009; Abramo, 2010; Costa, 2010; Araújo, 2012; Araújo and Lombardi, 2013; Dedecca and Menezes, 2012; Sato, 2013; Antunes, 2015; Bendassolli and Coelho-Lima, 2015; Tavares, 2015). These studies privilege specific angles on the phenomenon, such as social relationships (sociability), incomes, working conditions, gender

and race relations, subjective wellbeing, health, quality of life, meaningfulness in work, organizational processes and, according to Bendassolli and Coelho-Lima (2015), predominantly the consideration of the dynamism of informality and its extensive multiplication – including informal practices as a part of the formal economy (Costa, 2010; Krein and Proni, 2010; Tavares, 2010; Antunes, 2015), or the concept of new informality (Noronha, 2003).

In that sense, in contrast to many studies the ILO has published, the soundest route would be the creation of decent work in the informal economy, rather than the elimination of informality in order to achieve decent work, as Tokman (2009) highlighted. After all, poorer or developing countries often have a heterogeneous and important informal economy that should be maintained. "However, it should not be a job at any price or under any circumstances" (Trebilcock, 2005, p. 3), but the four dimensions of decent work should be minimally guaranteed (rights, employment, social protection, organization and social dialog). Hence, according to Ghai (2002), the paradigm of decent work is universal, but requires contextualization for the sake of effectiveness, as each country needs to find its own way to produce decent work (Boyer, 2006), a notion that highlights the importance of social dialog for the conception of decent work (Rodgers, 2002).

"This is expressed today as decent work for all, whether the activity is carried out in a formal or an informal context" (Trebilcock, 2005, p. 1). Thus, the strategies to guarantee decent work and fundamental rights to informal workers should aim to accomplish the same objectives (Hanssene, 1999), which, according to Chen et al. (2004), are promoting opportunities, securing rights, promoting protection, and promoting voice. "To the previously consolidated notion of a high-quality job, the concept of decent work adds the notions of rights" (Abramo, 2010, p. 152).

In summary, as discussed to date, the main issues associated with studying decent work in Latin America, and specifically in Brazil are: (a) What notion of dignity is associated with decent work? (b) Should decent work depart from the typical employment model? (c) Should a generic or a contextualized conception of decent work be adopted, with the consequent need to relativize the concepts for the sake of a psychosocial discussion of decent work? (d) Does decent work exist in the singular (universal concept) or plural (singularized concepts)? (e) Should decent work be created in the informal economy or should informality be eliminated for the purpose of decent work?

In view of these inquiries and to understand the matter of decent work in the Brazilian reality, we consider the contributions of Richardson (1993), Ghai (2003), Blustein (2006, 2011), Deranty and MacMillan (2012), Michaelson et al. (2014), and Bendassolli and Coelho-Lima (2015), and argue in this paper for the importance of including the psychosocial dimension in an assessment of whether a work is decent or not and defending "a more nuanced analysis of the activity of work based upon the subjective investment that people make in their work to determine whether the work experience is a decent one or not" (Di Ruggiero et al., 2015, p. 126), which lead us to the analysis of the relational co-construction of the senses and meanings

of working in a given context (Blustein, 2011; Duarte, 2015; Savickas, 2015).

Michaelson et al. (2014, p. 77) affirm that "in the human quest for meaning, work occupies a central position." Together with Tolfo and Piccinini (2007) and Bendassolli and Gondim (2014), they point out that, traditionally, the senses and meanings of working were constituted as themes different authors have investigated from the perspective of several epistemological branches and based on different psychological and psychosocial phenomena produced by the quality of life at work (Hackman and Oldhan, 1975). This phenomenon has been studied in different ways. First, researchers have looked at the results of working and desirable organizational consequences, such as job satisfaction, engagement, well-being, work values, work involvement, work orientation, job performance, organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment, and occupational identification (Michaelson et al., 2014). Second, studies have focused on the articulation of variables like importance, regulation, and resulting from working (Meaning of Work International Research Team [MOW], 1987), or significance, orientation and coherence (Morin, 2001). As pointed out earlier in the text, here we use the concept of sense to define what working simply means to each person.

In this research, the focus is to understand the senses attributed to working so as to be able to compare these senses with the meanings produced by institutional discourses, such as the ILO's notion of decent work (International Labour Office [ILO], 1999). This procedure aims to analyze the correspondences and incongruences between the narratives of workers from a specific context and generic discourses of international institutions since, in line with Kaplan (2002, p. 180), "Policy instruments operate as rhetorical and normative modes of discourse to convince others to take action."

Thus, we will attempt to understand if a given working activity is "meaningful, that is, is purposeful and significant" (Michaelson et al., 2014, p. 79), since "the fact that work has a particular meaning does not necessarily determine that it is meaningful... meaningfulness refers to the amount of significance something holds for an individual" (Rosso et al., 2010, p. 95). Therefore, in this article, we will take "sense of work" as a synonym for "meaningfulness in working."

Burchell et al. (2014) and Sehnbruch et al. (2015) emphasize that the term "decent work" has not been used in the academic literature and that psychology has focused more on studying working as employment, often without including multiple coexisting forms of working. Thus incorporating the concept of decent work into the psychological literature constitutes a great opportunity to investigate, assess, and understand phenomenon like informality or the informal economy, which are characteristic of the Brazilian reality (Amin and Singh, 2002; Sato, 2013).

Bendassolli and Coelho-Lima (2015) indicate that exploring the meanings of informality can be one way to discover the symbolic/cultural meanings produced by/in capitalism with regard to informality. These explorations can reveal positive meanings institutionally produced about informality (entrepreneurism, self-initiative, autonomous, and eventually informal forms of working), as well as depreciative meanings in

the sense of informality being defined as the negative of formal employment (Sato, 2013) through the macro-narrative of formal employment.

Hence, we can hypothesize, from a social constructionist view, the theoretical perspective of this study, that decent work should not be substantively but rather psychosocially defined. This definition must be constructed based on the discourses, narratives, and practices produced by the workers themselves through the relational processes of signification that grant them senses (or meaningfulness) and meanings. This method of definition allows for distinct versions of decent work to vary as a function of distinct contexts.

Blustein (2011, p. 4) proposes that the notion of sense in working "includes one's sense of purpose in working and the way in which one understands his/her work life." Richardson (1993, p. 427) complements this view by proposing that the "focus on the study of work in people's lives in which work is considered to be a central human activity that is not tied to or solely located in the occupational structure" and Flum (2015, p. 148) points out that "to work is to relate … A sense of being-in-the-world is based on interaction. It is a combination of an awareness of connection and meaningful action." The authors agree that sense "is given shape in social interactions in which one's own constructions of working are embedded in relational understandings" (Blustein, 2011, p. 4) as part of a process of self-construction (Guichard, 2009) or life construction (Duarte, 2009). Savickas (2005, p. 44) states that: "rather than choose among attractive options, some individuals may have to take the only job that is available to them, often a job that grinds on the human spirit because its tasks are difficult, tedious, and exhausting. Nevertheless, the work that they do can be meaningful to them and matter to their community."

Therefore, as also suggested by Spink (2007), we should concentrate on understanding the daily life of "unseen" people, asking about the theories and practices that guide their lives, as well as their conceptions of dignity and citizenship, in an attempt to answer what decent work means to them. We must not be constrained by an idealized view of paid and stable working, but focus on what we have – whether we like it or not – because it is extremely important to "give voice to those who have not much voice in our research" (Blustein, 2006, p. 307). As pointed by Savickas et al. (2009, p. 243): "If there exist multiple ways to interpret one's own diverse life experiences, different life perspectives and designs become possible."

To accomplish this task, this study is based on three basic conceptions proposed by social constructionism. First, the psychosocial element is central and can be defined, based on Frosh (2012), "as a process that is neither 'psychological' nor 'social,' but transcends the separation of these elements to create something new – the psychosocial" (Ribeiro, 2015, p. 20). Second, social constructionist thought is based on the notion of relational ontology according to Gergen (1997), who states that the "reality is not objectively constituted, but intersubjectively constructed by means of the narratives and social practices generated in relational processes" (Ribeiro, 2015, p. 20). And, finally, it is based on the notion of narratability proposed by the life designing paradigm (Savickas

et al., 2009) and understood as the psychosocial capacity to meaningfully narrate one's life history to oneself and others.

According to Brockmeier and Harré (2003), narratives constitute an important methodological strategy for understanding the working world through the people who act in it. These narratives potentially define the ways in which people construct senses in their psychosocial relationships, turning them into narrative realities in line with Savickas et al. (2009), which would allow analysis of the multiple forms and meanings of the current social discourse.

The main objective in this study was to understand the sense of working for a group of 20 formal and informal workers in the city of São Paulo, Brazil and contrast them with the ILO's definition of decent work, aiming to analyze the relationships, similarities, and differences between an established collective social discourse and the interviewees' singular narratives, as well as to contribute to the discussions on the notion of decent work and its possibilities and limits in terms of theoretical conceptions and practical applications. Thus, we intend to discuss the following research problem: How do workers from socio-occupational contexts marked by inequality, informality, instability, and precariousness construct senses in their working experience?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this research, the qualitative narrative approach (Polkinghorne, 1988) is used because of the minimal existing literature on the subject and the need to explore the fieldwork to formulate new hypotheses from the everyday experience and senses related to working built by people throughout their lives. The main reason for using narrative interviews is that they can capture the lived experience of working both in terms of the construction of working life over time, as well as the senses constructed in relation to work. In this regard, the models of quantitative research and qualitative research based on pre-existing categories of analysis would not be appropriate to achieve the objectives of this research.

The qualitative narrative approach (Polkinghorne, 1988) was used to co-construct the life histories and significant experiences in the participants' daily working, stimulating their unrestricted speech and allowing them to direct the narrative. It aimed to exploring the basic points of the ILO's definition of decent work (International Labour Office [ILO], 1999), which are: opportunity for work with fair income, security in the workplace and social protection, prospects for personal development and social integration, and respect for fundamental rights. The singular autobiographical narratives of life and daily working the participants co-constructed with the researchers permitted contact with the way each person was influenced by social relationships and discourses. They reconstructed the senses and strategies they used as a function of the properties of the narratability, that is, the ability to narrative one's life history with a sense of identity and psychosocial legitimacy, in line with Savickas et al. (2009).

Alvesson and Willmott (2002) and Bendassolli and Coelho-Lima (2015) highlight that, when studying singular narratives, one necessarily gets in touch with the way each person intersects with social relationships and discourses, creating a space for the emergence of social discursive productions; the autobiographical narrative is a singularity in which the others can see themselves through social discursive productions, which construct the collectively shared meanings. The reliability of a personal narrative would therefore derive from the fact that it is constituted based on collective agreements constructed inside a given community that shares central social discourses, which are produced with and related to common meanings and practices (Denzin, 1989).

Hence, the study did not seek statistical generalizations and is more based on the validity of the analysis than on the representativeness of events and the confirmation among methodologically similar studies undertaken previously. "The advantage of using qualitative methods is that we have an opportunity to learn about new concepts and experiences in relation to working that are above and beyond what we already know" (Blustein, 2006, p. 232).

Socio-Occupational Context of the Participants

First, the participants' socio-occupational context needs to be characterized – the city of São Paulo, which is the largest Brazilian city with approximately 12 million inhabitants, is located in the Southeast of Brazil, which, together with the South, is responsible for 71.8% of the Brazilian Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It is considered a globalized, multicultural city with large groups of immigrants (both from other countries and other Brazilian regions). It is also a wealthy city, and is the main financial and corporate center of South America, based on industries and services, with plenty of working opportunities. Moreover, it is marked by a more collective than individual relational tradition (Brewer and Chen, 2007), in which social embeddedness is very meaningful to people's experiences.

In educational terms, the achievement rates in São Paulo are comprised as such: 33.4% have a primary school education, 19.7% a middle school education, 29.3% are high school graduates, and 17.6% have graduated from college (International Labour Office [ILO], 2013).

In terms of the job market, 7.4% of the population is unemployed, 64.9% are engaged in the formal job market, and 27.7% are informal workers, with a mean monthly income of US$365. Ninety percent of new jobs in the formal market demand at least a high school education. In recent decades, there has been a gradual increase in people working with greater social protection due to the socio-economic development of the country. However, the research participants, due to the length of their careers, have had little benefit from this national improvement.

The context is also marked by great socioeconomic inequality (sixth city in the world in terms of number of billionaires but with 10% of the population living below the poverty line), spatial segregation and contact between formal and informal economies.

This inequality creates an important space in which we can analyze the role of decent work in contexts not predominantly marked by the typical employment model.

Participants

The participants were recruited using intentional selection at a college career counseling service and each of them met the inclusion criteria of being: urban workers, without a college education, from São Paulo, Brazil, with at least 20 years of (formal and/or informal) working experience, who were working at the time of the research. The criterion of having at least 20 years of working experiences was included to understand the changes and continuities in participants' lives and daily working histories, in terms of the personal senses constructed and the prevailing social meanings, which would not be possible in shorter periods of working experience.

The number of participants was not defined *a priori*, but during the data collection phase, based on the rules of representativeness (differently from the sample, the goal is to highlight significant informants on the investigated theme), homogeneity (minimal common criteria to choose the participants) and saturation, when repeated narratives started to be found (Bardin, 1977).

The choice of this specific set of participants was not with the intention of being representative of Brazilian low-skilled workers, but aimed to highlight significant informants on the investigated theme, mainly because they were a group of understudied workers who sought a career counseling service, and were clearly eager to discuss the working world. In addition, the main difference between workers who qualified for the study and those who did not is that, in general, understudied workers hold informal jobs and skilled workers hold formal jobs. Thus, the sample was driven by the interest of the current research in working experiences not guided by the logic of typical work as a model for decent work.

The set of participants is formed by 20 urban workers (10 men and 10 women), without a college education, between 35 and 55 years of age, from São Paulo, Brazil, with 20–40 years of working experience. Most participants were married, mulatto[1], between 41 and 50 years of age, had completed middle school, had between 31 and 40 years of working experience beginning at the age of 10–15 years, varied between formal and informal working activities in the course of their career, and were working at the time of the research, mainly as blue-collar workers, domestic servants, doormen, and street hawkers, as it can be seen in **Table 1**. It is important to note the division of working by gender; women were more likely to be domestic servants and street hawkers, activities characterized as more flexible, while the men were more likely to be blue-collar workers and doormen, activities that traditionally have more fixed work hours, supporting a trend in the Brazilian job market toward these occupations (Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada [IPEA], 2015). Their main motivation to participate in this study was to

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[1]In the Brazilian context, the term "mulatto" is used to designate everyone who is son of white man and black woman or vice versa.

TABLE 1 | Characterization of the set of participants.

Features	Participants (n = 20)
Gender	Men – 10 (50%)
	Women – 10 (50%)
Skin color	Black – 5 (25%)
	Mulatto – 11 (55%)
	White – 4 (20%)
Marital status	Married – 17 (85%)
	Single – 1 (5%)
	Divorced – 1 (5%)
	Widow – 1 (5%)
Age groups	30–40 years 5 – (25%)
	41–50 years 10 – (50%)
	≥51 years 5 – (25%)
Educational level	Elementary school – 5 (25%)
	Middle school – 5 (25%)
	High school – 10 (50%)
Career length	20–30 years – 9 (45%)
	31–40 years – 11 (55%)
Career beginning	5–10 years old – 4 (20%)
	10–15 years old – 10 (50%)
	≥16 years 6 – 6 (30%)
Predominant kind of working model over the career	Formal economy (Private sector employee) – 6 (30%)
	Informal economy – 4 (20%)
	Mix of working models (formal/informal) – 10 (50%)
Current working activity	Blue collar worker – 5 (25%)
	Housekeeper – 5 (25%)
	Doorman – 4 (20%)
	Street vendor – 2 (10%)
	Others – 4 (20%)

contribute to the improvement of the career counseling service they were attending to rethink their careers.

Instruments and Procedures

The instrument used was the thematic autobiographical narrative, defined as an open-ended report on the participant's working life history, which the researchers can consult for clarifications, complementation, further development, and approach of unexplored themes (Van Langenhove and Harré, 1993). After the institutional authorization to pursue the research and with the participants' consent, the interviews were held at the college career counseling service the participants were attending. Each interview took between 60 and 180 min. The interviews started with the following request to the participants: "Please, tell me about your daily working experiences in the course of your history." First, the participants talked about their daily working life experiences through free speech, in which the people recounted their own history (autobiography) and, in the course of the narratives, the researchers intervened as necessary for explanations, additional information, and unexplored issues, creating a co-construction process of the autobiographical narratives (heterobiography). The complete interviews were then submitted to content analysis of the autobiographical narratives.

The interviews were recorded as an audio file, the dialog was transcribed, and then analyzed as described below.

Analysis of the Narratives

Based on descriptive narrative investigation (Polkinghorne, 1988), the narratives were submitted to content analysis as proposed by Bardin (1977), in combination with additional suggestions by Van Langenhove and Harré (1993), through the following steps:

(a) Pre-analysis Phase

Individual independent reading of each transcription of the autobiographical narratives to organize a content structure for the personal senses and collective meanings that informed on the participants' life histories and the significant daily working experiences, making them operational in terms of the exploration of the earlier mentioned basic points in the ILO's definition of decent work (International Labour Office [ILO], 1999).

(b) Vertical Analysis

Identification of each participant's key indicators, as well as a survey of registration units that represented the key indicators. The registration units are the smallest content parts expressed by phrases or ideas extracted from the narratives, and an indicator is understood as content that can summarize the main elements of a given psychosocial phenomenon, like is the case of the senses of working in this study.

(c) Horizontal Analysis

Grouping of the narratives based on their shared content (registration units and indicators), resulting in the identification and systemization of the fundamental social discourses of the specific context studied on decent work and their respective indicators. These were contrasted with the ILO's definition of decent work (International Labour Office [ILO], 1999), with the aim of analyzing the relations, similarities and differences between a universally established collective social discourse (ILO), the fundamental social discourses of a given specific context (meanings of decent work in Brazil) and the interviewees' singular narratives in this specific context (senses of decent work for a set of Brazilian workers).

An intercoder reliability system was used in which three independent judges identified and categorized the contents of the participants' narratives according to the research objectives, seeking the intercoder agreement between them (Tinsley and Weiss, 1975) that resulted in the emic categories listed in the results section.

Ethical Standards

This study was carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the Institutional Ethics Committee with written informed consent from all participants. All participants gave written informed consent in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and with Resolution 466/12 by the Brazilian Committee for Research Ethics (Conselho Nacional de Saúde [CONEP], 2012).

RESULTS

The results are presented and discussed based on the shared senses of working the participants constructed within the specific context of Brazil (senses of decent work for a set of Brazilian workers based on their singular narratives crossed and co-constructed by the fundamental social discourses of the meanings of decent work in Brazil). These senses will gradually be contrasted with the central principles of the ILO's conception of decent work (International Labour Office [ILO], 1999), which is the universally established collective social discourse on decent work and is comprised of: (a) Opportunities to work with fair income; (b) Security at work and social protection; (c) Perspectives of personal development and social integration; (d) Freedom of expression, organization and decision; and (e) Respect for fundamental rights. The author of the vignette will be characterized between parentheses in each excerpt of the singular narratives cited (for example, P1, man, 45 years – participant 1).

We chose emic categories, that is, categories constructed based on excerpts of the singular narratives, to summarize and name the main senses of working. These are: (a) Without at least having the possibility to choose; (b) Everything I have learned, I did on my own; (c) I met a person who invited me to work; (d) I accept what is coming, because my income has never been very good and success means to keep on working; (e) It seems that everything is always temporary, remuneration is always unsatisfactory and the working is hard; (f) It's working and making money, I don't think about the future; and (g) Decent work is . . .

Without at Least Having the Possibility to Choose

The large majority of the interviewees said that they started their working trajectory in childhood or youth in the North and Northeast of Brazil as a form of financial help to the family, generally in a small family business and often some type of informal work. As the opportunities in their natal city were restricted, migration to the Southeast of Brazil provided an option to be able to work, both for participants who grew up in urban areas ("I migrated from the small city to the big city to be able to work" – P1, man, 45 years), as well as in rural zones ("I migrated from the farm to the big city to be able to work" – P2, man, 35 years).

The beginning of participants' professional working trajectories were marked by an inability to choose and decide on what work to engage in, as described by P4 (man, 36 years), who said that he started "to work due to family pressure and, since then, [is] choosing what comes up" and P5 (woman, 49 years), who said that: "I did not choose this profession, it was the job that came up."

This working trajectory start seems to determine the sequence of the subsequent trajectory of the majority, as represented in some statements. P3 and P2 talked about never stop working. P3 (man, 50 years) said: "I started early and I have never stopped working," as well as P2 (man, 35 years) told: "without at least having the possibility to choose . . . you can never stop working." P3, P12, and P16 talked about the impossibility to choose. P3

(man, 50 years) stated: "In fact, I did not choose a profession, but the circumstances led me to this option," P12 (man, 50 years) said: "I did not choose any of the jobs I had, I always had to accept the opportunities that emerged on each occasion," and P16 (man, 52 years) declared: "I accepted anything that would come up, that came up."

In summary: "I have always worked on what came up without being able to choose anything" (P3, man, 50 years), began "a story of many difficulties and instabilities, I don't know where I made a mistake or what would be the right course" (P8, man, 56 years). Although "work is good, I have nothing to complain about, I will have to work until the end of my life" (P10, woman, 38 years).

Castel (2009) considers that the possibility of making choices is directly related to power in social relationships and that, for a large part of the population who does not have choices, what remains is negative individualism, marked by a lack of social support, in which choices are determined by psychosocial contingencies, not people's decisions. The lack of opportunity to make choices and decisions marked by "doing what comes up" (P16, man, 52 years) produces polyvalences due to negative individualism. On the one hand, this situation provides a flexibility that guarantees employability and, on the other hand, it often makes the sense of working and of making any kind of planning impossible, turning the future into a reproduction *ad infinitum* of the present, as discussed by P2 (man, 35 years): "My future perspectives are to continue in the same thing I am doing now."

This long-term circumstance conflicts with two principles of decent work as recommended by the International Labour Office [ILO] (1999): perspectives of personal development and social integration and freedom to decide. Further, this state truly seems to worsen the working experiences of the interviewees, in accordance with Rodgers (1989) and Evans and Gibb (2009).

Everything I have Learned I did on My Own

If the trajectory of working starts early and if it is marked by difficulty choosing and defining what work to engage in, there is also an alternative form of learning embedded in this trajectory. This learning is not centered on education in schools, but is practical learning, which most participants value. For example, they say "I haven't studied and I don't miss that" (P1, man, 45 years) and "I don't see that much need for a college degree in the work I do" (P4, man, 36 years), breaking with the dominant logic that education would prepare individuals for working and that good performance is directly related with previous specialized learning. "I never imagined that I would work in what I have worked and I think I did not even know what that was when I went to work the first day, but I have always received compliments for my performance at working" (P5, woman, 49 years).

The majority of participants says that "everything I have learned I did on my own"; "my main source of learning was the errors, trials and errors . . . on my trajectory there were many things I found hard to achieve and which I was able to do" (P8, man, 56 years). P1 agrees, stating: "I introduced myself to the

owner of the business, I said I was able to do anything. I got the job, but I didn't know exactly what I was gonna do … I have always learned everything in practice and I've always been successful" (P1, man, 45 years).

Most participants share this feeling of being able to learn in practice. P10 summarizes this shared perception well: "I feel proud of myself. Sometimes I think, can I handle it? Did I handle it? Did I manage? So I feel proud of myself. I didn't study but I managed, like many others I know who have done the same … And I feel proud of myself, yes" (P10, woman, 38 years). Again, according to Castel (2009), it is negative individualism, due to a lack of social and State support; not individualism due to too many subjective investments and assertions of self (notion of entrepreneur), but an alleged autonomy established through threats to opportunities for working and studying, as described by Alves and Tavares (2006); Rosenfield (2011), Proni (2013), and Tavares (2015).

The International Labour Office [ILO] (1999) discusses personal development perspectives but based on the logic of institutional formality, and the State's responsibility to provide learning conditions. In the cases reported, however, learning is a construction of the person himself/herself in relation to his/her context. Therefore, it is a psychosocial construct (Ribeiro, 2014), which depends on the informal relationship network: "I feel happy for overcoming the difficulties alone, with the help of my family only" (P9, man, 51 years).

I Met a Person Who Invited Me to Work

There is a significant point in the senses the participants' working life that is distinct from what the ILO's conception of decent work proposes; the workers need a support network for their trajectories and working life, but it should be provided formally by the State, instead of informal relationship networks. In countries like Brazil, where the occupational care network is not structured and comprehensive enough to reach everyone, informal networks help to solve the issues of working life. Further, they go beyond the realm of working, constituting true relationships of solidarity in light of the partial absence of the State.

P1 (man, 45 years) says that, "whenever I leave a job with something at hand, even when that did not happen, I was able to get a job rapidly because of my friends," emphasizing that everything he achieves in his personal and working life comes through indication and friendship – "everything is an exchange of favors." The base for the protection and security to keep working is his ability to use his contacts, in accordance with the idea of Flum (2015, p. 148) that "to work is to relate."

P4 (man, 36 years), like other participants, said that he did not turn to the public occupational care network in situations of unemployment, but instead relied on the informal contact network: "after a while, a friend introduced me to his friend who invited me to work" (P8, man, 56 years). Therefore, to keep working, "you need to have a lot of friendships, if you're a good person to others, you achieve many things" (P13, man, 50 years). Therefore, many people maintain and participate in support networks that work "to get formal as well as informal

working activities" (P6, woman, 38 years), as "the type of work does not matter, what matters is to keep on working" (P10, woman, 38 years).

I Accept What is Coming, Because My Income has Never been Very Good and Success Means to Keep on Working

Most participants switched between formality and informality in the course of their working trajectories, without any preference for one or the other working modality, with the mere need to "keep on working" (P9, man, 51 years). To continue working is what guarantees security and stability, in line with Castel (2009)'s proposition that working is fundamental to guaranteeing social protection. Success and security are perceived as the ability to continue working, whether formally or informally, distinctions that do not seem to be as clearly divided as the literature proposes. Indeed, the participants' experiences support the idea of a *continuum* from extreme lack of protection and precariousness to extreme protection with intermediary levels, creating degrees of formality and informality, as stated by International Labour Office [ILO] (2002, 2004), Feijó et al. (2009), Spink (2009), and Mocelin (2011).

The participants gave several examples of vacillation between formal and informal working activities along their trajectories. P1 points out (man, 45 years): "One day they needed a person for a 3-day job in a bar and I accepted. I ended up reconciling the two jobs, one formally registered and the other not," as well as P6 (woman, 38 years): "when I am not formally employed in companies, I do the weekly cleaning at houses in the city where I live." P2 (man, 35 years) stated that: "This thing with formal and informal, I've never understood it very well, because there are good and bad things to any job," as well as P1 (man, 45 years) who said that: "We had to win in life … success is the ability to pay all expenses without getting unemployed," and P4 (man, 36 years) who explained that: "without a job, then there's a problem, but when I don't have a job, I turn to acquaintances and they help rapidly." These quotes align the informal support network for working with the idea argued by Feijó et al. (2009), Nouroudine (2011), and Sato (2013) that the main problem with informality is the lack of social protection it affords and that the promotion of decent work depends on the elimination of the negative aspects of informality (Trebilcock, 2005).

Hence, the idea that social protection and stability exclusively accompany paid working and that typical (industrial) employment should be the model of decent work does not seem to resound with the participants, supporting the criticism by Ghai (2002), Standing (2002), Mocelin (2011), and Mattos (2015). In that sense, in response to one of the questions raised in the Introduction about the relationship between decent work and informality, it seems the participants indicate the need to create decent work in the informal economy, instead of the need to eliminate informality for the sake of decent work. This argument validates the idea that informality is a structural and constitutional matter of the Brazilian working world (Proni, 2013; Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada [IPEA], 2015).

It Seems that Everything is Always Temporary, Remuneration is Always Unsatisfactory, and Working is Hard

Despite this apparent lack of distinction between formal and informal working for decent work, stability always seems to be temporary, in terms of contemporary stability, in line with Ribeiro (2014) and Sultana (2013). As P2 reports (man, 35 years): "I have never experienced great moments of stability in life, it seems that everything is always temporary;" it is as if "I had no control over my career" (P5, woman, 49 years); and, although "working is good, you cannot complain, but I'll have to work until the end of life" (P10, woman, 38 years). Stability seems to be a synonym for "keeping on working," as P9 summarized well (man, 51 years), which is guaranteed by informal support and relationship networks.

In addition, there are great difficulties in gaining appropriate remuneration, which conflicts with the principle of opportunity to work for a fair income in the ILO's recommendation (International Labour Office [ILO], 1999). P2 demonstrates this point (man, 35 years): "remuneration has never been totally satisfactory, right?" P7 says (woman, 45 years): "my career ambition is to increase my income, but I end up accepting what comes, because my salary is never that good," and P13 describes (man, 50 years): "I leave one job because the salary is low and because I think I would get something I thought would be better." In short, the main problem is the existence of "great rush and working, little financial gain" (P13, man, 50 years).

Besides the unsatisfactory remuneration, working journeys are intense and working activities are very hard: "There is little time for leisure and personal life, I work every day, almost without leave" (P1, man, 45 years), "Ah, I really find myself in a mad life, I never get time to relax" (P14, woman, 50 years). These experiences may cause withdrawal: "I spent two and a half years there and I resigned, I was working a lot" (P17, woman, 42 years) and are often, marked by a double working journey. For example, "I used to work as a guard in the condominium and, after my shift, I used to go to the trailer and sell my things" (P9, man, 51 years). These double working experiences are generally aiming to offer more comfort to the family: "After all, all the conquests I have made and what I am able to give to my daughters comes from 16 h of continuous working in this trailer selling things" (P9, man, 51 years).

Further, there is the gender issue, marked by the double shift (working and household chores) characteristic of the so-called bipolarity of women's working (Bruschini and Lombardi, 2000). This phenomenon appeared in the reports of P14 (woman, 50 years): "And there's something else, besides working out of the house, you have to work at home," and of P17 (woman, 42 years): "Women still have to work out and at home." The double shift is a chronic problem of unequal opportunities and working conditions for men and women pointed out by the International Labour Office [ILO] (1999, 2004, 2013) and discussed by Abramo (2010), Araújo (2012), and Araújo and Lombardi (2013) who highlight the considerable differences in income and hours dedicated to domestic work between men and women.

This situation conflicts with another principle recommended by the International Labour Office [ILO] (1999), the respect for fundamental rights, which, in this case, includes the right to relax from working. Further, this situation seems to represent a precarious working situation, due to the instability or uncertainty about the continuation of working, lack of protection in situations of need, and insufficient income (Rodgers, 1989; Evans and Gibb, 2009; Proni, 2013).

It's Working and Making Money, I Don't Think About the Future

This situation influences individuals' view of the future, which the majority of participants often did not conceive of as a possibility. Instead, the perceptions of the future are based on present tasks and achievements: "I am unable to think of tomorrow, to make plans, those things. I am unable to do that. I let things come, I don't think, I don't keep on making plans, now I'm gonna do this or that" (P10, woman, 38 years), "I think more of the present and of keeping on working" (P9, man, 51 years), after all "my future perspectives are to continue doing the same thing I am doing now" (P2, man, 35 years).

The participants' future predictions can be summarized in two ways. On the one hand, there is the material aspect of improving one's remuneration, as described by P1 (man, 45 years): "I intend to increase my monthly income," and P10 (woman, 38 years): "It's working and making money, I don't think about the future." On the other hand, there is the search for meaningfulness in working and control over one's trajectory, as articulated by P1 (man, 45 years): "I want to develop a job to work alone, being more independent," and P6 (woman, 38 years): "I would like work that paid more and offered more professional accomplishment." In response to missing a working identity, some participants agree with P8 who said, "when analyzing my trajectory, I am unable to identify an identity, a theme to say it is mine" (P8, man, 56 years), although some conform to the situation: "I don't think of what my future would be, I am not qualified for a better job" (P5, woman, 49 years) and "I regret not having been able to save money in the course of my life" (P1, man, 45 years).

Hence, in both formal work and informal work, the notion of dignity seems to be equally based, relationally co-constructed and not established *a priori* in terms of material conquests (fair income) and one's accomplishments in working (senses of working), in accordance with Richardson (1993), Blustein (2011), and Flum (2015).

Discussion: Decent Work is . . .

In synthesis, each participant constructed a singular view on what decent work is supposed to be, which varied across several psychosocial dimensions of working life, some in tune with the ILO's decent work concept (International Labour Office [ILO], 1999), others not.

There are four singular views that support the ILO's concept of decent work (International Labour Office [ILO], 1999). The first is related to the dimension of future protection. According to P1 (man, 45 years), "decent work allows you to save money in the course of your life" and P10 (woman, 38 years), "decent work

means to be able to have a future after you stop working" (social protection according to the ILO). The second is the dimension of the opportunity to make decisions and have some degree of control over one's life. As P2 stated (man, 35 years), "decent work is to be able to make choices," and P7 agreed (woman, 45 years), "decent work is to have control and autonomy in life" (freedom to decide according to the ILO). The third is the dimension of security and good income. According to P11 (man, 47 years), "decent work is to have a fixed job and make good money," P12 (man, 50 years), "decent work means security, even if temporary," P13 (man, 50 years), "decent work means autonomy, security and remuneration," and P16 (man, 52 years), "decent work means having security, right?" (security at work and opportunities to work with a fair income according to the ILO). And, finally, the fourth is the dimension of the de-intensification of working, as described by P14 (woman, 50 years) and P17 (woman, 42 years), "decent work means calmer work" (respect for fundamental rights according to the ILO).

There are three singular views that did not fully support the ILO's concept of decent work (International Labour Office [ILO], 1999). The first is the dimension of career stability, described as being able to work continuously, as articulated by P4 (man, 36 years) and P5 (woman, 49 years): "decent work is being able to keep on working." The second is the dimension of possibility of meaningfulness in working, mainly expressed by P6 (woman, 38 years), "Flexibility guarantees work, but withdraws the possibility of meaningfulness in working," and P8 (man, 56 years), "decent work is being able to find an identity in one's work." The third is the observation by P9 (man, 51 years) that, in contexts like the Brazilian working world, "decent work is being able to overcome difficulties, even without the support of the State."

In summary, the participants' working trajectory starts early in childhood and youth, is marked by a sequence of non-chosen, badly paid working activities that make up an intense working journey. Learning occurs informally as part of working practice, and is developed with little valuation of formal education and great acknowledgment of personal efforts. Informal relationship networks and support constitute the psychosocial base for security and for the conquests of working life, which generally is a movement of transition between formality and informality. Hence, the factors that grant meaningfulness in working and could be described as characteristics of decent work are appropriate remuneration, being able to continue working, having an informal support network, being polyvalent, being able to make choices, and having control over one's trajectory.

This presentation about diverse and relationally constructed senses of decent work, which intersect with one another, supports the need to relativize the concepts with a view to a psychosocial discussion of decent work, producing not a generic, but a contextualized concept of decent work. After all, according to Bescond et al. (2003), Di Ruggiero et al. (2015), and Hauf (2015), decent work has different meanings for distinct groups of people, demonstrated by the need to take into account the particularities of how working is developed in Brazil, because "asymmetries in power relations shape different conceptualizations of decent work" (Di Ruggiero et al., 2015, pp. 120–121).

Despite the need for contextualization, universal elements and dimensions are equally important as guidelines. There exists a tension between the universal and particular nature of the decent work concept; "on the one hand, the existence of an absolute and universal value, inherent in all human beings anytime and anywhere; and, on the other hand, the particular nature" (Rosenfield and Pauli, 2012, p. 322). This tension is marked by several concepts of decent work that more concretely refer to cultural and historically determined social groups. Both are important and, in this sense, the authors propose that "the universal is not the starting point, but the end point" (Rosenfield and Pauli, 2012, p. 322), that is, both contextual elements and universal elements are extremely important for decent work.

Hence, the research participants from the Brazilian context attempt to work for fair income, social protection, security and better personal development opportunities, as the ILO recommends (International Labour Office [ILO], 1999). These elements are juxtaposed with the universally established collective discourse the ILO puts forward and the specific social discourse of the Brazilian context, constructed based on the singular narratives of the participant group, which can represent potential universal elements of the decent work discourse.

However, the main difference between the ILO's discourse and the participants' narratives indicates that the elements described earlier as potentially universal do not come from the action of the State, like in the formal employment and qualification model, but from the informal economy, composed of mainly family and community relationship networks. Hence, the context-specific concepts inherent to decent work, in a more concrete form of the narratives of the participants from the city of São Paulo, Brazil, is that working opportunities, as well as social protection, are produced by informal relationship networks; qualification takes place through informal learning in practice from more experienced colleagues; success and security are perceived as the opportunity to continue working (employed or working in informality); and personal and professional development is defined as the possibility to make choices and have control over one's life.

These findings show the need to focus on understanding the daily reality of "unseen" people (Spink, 2007), granting them voice in our studies (Blustein, 2006) in an attempt to define what decent work means to these persons, not based on an idealized view of paid and stable working, but based on what emerges concretely.

CONCLUSION

In response to the questions formulated in the introduction to this article, the participants in this study coming from the Brazilian reality of the city of São Paulo produced four conclusions. First, the notion of dignity associated with decent work should be a synthesis of the tension between the universal and the particular. Second, the decent work model should not be based exclusively on the model of typical working, out of respect for contexts in which that is not the predominant working model and alternative working forms have been produced, such

as in the case of the Brazilian context, particularly the city of São Paulo. Third, the concept of decent work that should be adopted, should contain universal elements, but these elements should be relativized as a function of the context in which working happens from a psychosocial perspective of decent work (plural concepts of decent work). And, fourth, in contexts in which informality structures the working world, decent work should be advanced in the formal as well as informal economy.

In conclusion, the synthesis of the participants' singular narratives indicated the presence of the principles the International Labour Office [ILO] (1999) recommended. However, in more collective contexts with vulnerability and restricted State support, these principles are co-constructed in the community, but not offered by the public power, which produces a distinguished form of decent work.

The main contribution this study offers is the analysis of the concept of decent work through the narratives of workers who do not make a clear distinction between formal and informal working, and who works in collective contexts marked by inequality, vulnerability, and partial absence of the State as a source of security and social protection.

However, the core limitations lie in the analysis occurring in a more collective and unequal context, which somewhat diminishes the relevance of the findings for individual and equalitarian contexts with strong State action to guarantee decent work. Further, gender, race and social class were not analyzed, which intersect with and constitute the experiences of the study

participants. That said, the issue of gender inequality in the working world clearly emerged in the narratives of the women interviewed and issues of social class and race determined the career construction possibilities of the participants. Moreover, the discussion about work stress, burnout and work addiction, in addition to an analysis about work health, work conditions, and the contribution of these concepts in the definition of decent work was not presented.

Quantitative studies and similar research with other sets of workers, mainly analyzing intersectionality between gender, race, and social class would be very important.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors listed, have made substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

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Self-Determination and Meaningful Work: Exploring Socioeconomic Constraints

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This study examined a model of meaningful work among a diverse sample of working adults. From the perspectives of Self-Determination Theory and the Psychology of Working Framework, we tested a structural model with social class and work volition predicting SDT motivation variables, which in turn predicted meaningful work. Partially supporting hypotheses, work volition was positively related to internal regulation and negatively related to amotivation, whereas social class was positively related to external regulation and amotivation. In turn, internal regulation was positively related to meaningful work, whereas external regulation and amotivation were negatively related to meaningful work. Indirect effects from work volition to meaningful work via internal regulation and amotivation were significant, and indirect effects from social class to meaningful work via external regulation and amotivation were significant. This study highlights the important relations between SDT motivation variables and meaningful work, especially the large positive relation between internal regulation and meaningful work. However, results also reveal that work volition and social class may play critical roles in predicting internal regulation, external regulation, and amotivation.

Keywords: meaningful work, work volition, social class, self-determination theory, psychology of working

INTRODUCTION

Meaningful work is a fundamental component of well-being (Rosso et al., 2010) that contributes to a more meaningful and fulfilling life (e.g., Baum and Stewart, 1990; Emmons, 2003; Steger and Dik, 2009; Allan et al., 2015). Therefore, understanding causes of meaningful work and helping people manage and construct more meaningful work is an important focus of scholarship and career interventions, both on individual and organizational levels (Guichard, 2013). Meaningful work is the subjective experience that one's work has significance, facilitates personal growth, and contributes to the greater good (Steger et al., 2012). Scholars consider meaningful work to be a key outcome of self-determination, which itself is derived from having decent work (Duffy et al., in press b). Although self-determination may lead to more meaningful work, not all people have access to self-determined work (Blustein, 2001; Duffy et al., in press b). People who are perhaps the most constrained include people from lower social class backgrounds who do not have the privilege of occupational choice. People from lower social class backgrounds often lack access to societal resources (e.g., education) and may be coping with frequent economic insecurity, limiting the freedom to choose work that meets intrinsic needs, given the urgency of satisfying external needs (Blustein, 2001, 2013).

Therefore, in the current study, we broadly examined the notion that external factors restrict self-determination, which in turn predict the experience of meaningful work. Specifically, we tested whether social class and work volition (the perceived ability to choose one's work) negatively predict internal regulation at work and, in turn, whether these variables positively predict meaningful work. We worked from two existing frameworks: (i) Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Ryan and Deci, 2002), which extensively outlines intrinsic and extrinsic human motivation and (ii) the Psychology of Working Framework (Blustein, 2001, 2013), which outlines the role of access to privilege and power in the satisfaction of work needs and overall work well-being.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory is a macro theory of human motivation that describes and explains psychological needs, the continuum of external and internal regulation of behavior, and the attainment of psychological well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2002). Over the past forty years, SDT has been abundantly supported by empirical studies and has expanded to include applications of health (Ryan et al., 2008), work (Gagné and Deci, 2005), education (Black and Deci, 2000), relationships (Patrick et al., 2007), and psychotherapy (Ryan and Deci, 2008). It rests on the assumption that people display different types of motivation that are driven by three basic needs: autonomy, relatedness, and competence.

Autonomy refers to the extent to which one's internal world is holistically integrated and self-regulated (Ryan and Deci, 2002). When people are acting autonomously, they have an internal locus of control and perceive their actions as self-directed. *Relatedness* refers to the extent to which one is cared for by and connected to others. When people's relatedness needs are satisfied, they feel that they belong and have a sense of safety within their communities (Baumeister and Leary, 1995; Ryan and Deci, 2002). *Competence* refers to feeling a sense of mastery in one's ability to interact with one's environment as well as obtaining opportunities to express capacities on a regular basis (Ryan and Deci, 2002). When people's competency needs are met, they feel confident in their abilities to navigate specific life domains and to control the outcomes of different activities.

According to SDT theory, psychological health and well-being are determined by the extent to which these three needs are satisfied and how much behavior is internally regulated. The extent to which one's behavior is internally motivated is increased when psychological needs are met. Ryan and Deci (2008) described five types of motivation that range from intrinsic motivation, in which the individual engages in a given activity purely for personal fulfillment and enjoyment, to external regulation, in which one acts purely for external reward or to avoid a negative consequence. They also discuss amotivation, the absence of an intention to act. The types of motivation that fall between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation – introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation – are forms of internal regulation that range in the extent to which behavior is self-directed. For introjected regulation, behavior is partially internalized but functions to avoid negative

emotions and maintain self-esteem. In identified regulation, behavior is more autonomous and valued personally. In the most autonomous form of internal regulation, integrated regulation, regulations are assimilated into one's self in accordance with one's own values and needs. However, they are still partially external because behaviors are not done for their inherent enjoyment but, instead, for some other outcome.

Studies suggest that intrinsic motivation plays a key role in meaningful work and related constructs. One hypothesis is that engaging in intrinsically motivated work behavior creates congruence between work behaviors and one's self-concept, which results in feelings of meaningfulness (Rosso et al., 2010). Despite the limited number of studies in this area, existing research supports this idea. For example, Steger et al. (2012) found significant correlations between intrinsic motivation and meaningful work, and Kashdan and Steger (2007) found that higher levels of state and trait curiosity at work led to greater perceptions of meaningfulness, more frequent growth-oriented behavior, and higher levels of life satisfaction. Recent literature on viewing one's work as a calling (see Duffy and Dik, 2013 for a review) also provides evidence for a link between intrinsic motivation and experienced meaningfulness. A key-implied aspect of career calling is that it is intrinsically motivated work and satisfies the worker beyond external reward. Numerous studies have linked living a calling with increased life satisfaction, commitment to one's career, life meaning, and meaningful work (Duffy and Dik, 2013). Taken together, the evidence provides support for a positive relation between intrinsic motivation and well-being in and outside of work.

Psychology of Working Framework

Like SDT, Blustein's (2001, 2013) PWF focuses on the satisfaction of universal human needs and their relation to well-being. Blustein (2001, 2013) proposed three groups of basic needs that have the potential to be satisfied through working: survival/power needs, relational needs, and self-determination needs. Unique to the PWF, however, is its core focus on the role of privilege and social power in satisfaction of needs and its encouragement of inclusivity and social justice in work research, policy, and practice. Scholars building upon the PWF have proposed the Psychology of Working Theory (PWT), which integrates notions of decent work (Duffy et al., in press b). Specifically, the PWT proposes that economic constraints and social marginalization impact access to decent work, work that is dignified, safe, and offers fair wages and social protection (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2015). Duffy et al. (in press b) further argue that decent work leads to self-determination, which in turn leads to meaningful and fulfilling work. Although many of these links have empirical support, others are yet to be tested, especially the links from self-determination to meaningful work.

From the perspectives of the PWF and the PWT, an important question is the extent to which workers have access to intrinsically motivated work. From the PWF lens, two primary factors that impact access to meaningful work are social class and work volition. Social class is a multidimensional construct that reflects a person's status in society (Diemer and Ali, 2009). Recommended practices for assessment of social

class include both objective and subjective measures (Diemer and Ali, 2009). Objective measures include income, education level, and occupational prestige – often referred to together as socioeconomic status (SES). In contrast, subjective social status (SSS) refers to people's perceptions of their standing in society as compared to the general population and is obtained through self-report measures. Studies have found that SSS predicts psychological well-being above and beyond SES (Adler et al., 2008), which may make SSS a better choice when using psychological outcomes (Liu et al., 2004). Past studies have linked higher SES and SSS to greater levels of career commitment, meaningful work, and likelihood of living out a calling (Duffy et al., 2013; Allan et al., 2014).

A second key variable in access to intrinsically motivated work is work volition. Work volition refers to a person's perception of freedom in work choice (Duffy et al., 2012). Work volition is an important construct that may be crucial for decent work. Specifically, inherent in the idea of decent work is that workers have the ability to choose work that is not exploitative or degrading and that offers greater opportunities for engaging in intrinsically motivating tasks. Although contextual variables – like social class and objective work barriers – relate to work volition, the correlations are weak; indicating that work volition is a person input distinct from social class (Allan et al., 2014). Previous research suggests that work volition is strong, positive predictor of meaningful work. For example, career calling studies show that work volition positively predicts a person's likelihood to be living out their calling (Duffy and Autin, 2013; Duffy et al., in press a). Moreover, variance in work volition predicts living a calling above and beyond the effects of income and level of education (Duffy et al., in press b). The authors suggested that perceptions of constraints in work choice may impede people from obtaining intrinsically rewarding work.

Only one known study has examined both social class and work volition in predicting meaningful work. In a two-part study, Allan et al. (2014) examined (i) sources of meaningful work and (ii) levels of meaningful work in people from various social class backgrounds. They found that, although people from higher social class backgrounds were more likely to endorse meaningful experiences at work, people from across social class backgrounds endorsed similar sources of meaningful work. In particular, prosocial impact was reported by the vast majority of participants when asked what made their jobs meaningful, regardless of social class background. This suggests that the underlying mechanisms of meaningful work may be similar across class backgrounds; however, it appears that being from a lower class background is associated with barriers to meaningful work.

Although Allan et al. (2014) laid a foundation for examining social class and meaningful work, their study had several limitations. First, the study was limited in its measurement of social class. Specifically, the authors used only SES and a categorical measure of SSS, despite best practice recommendations to use continuous measures of SSS (Diemer and Ali, 2009). Second, although the authors referred to SDT and implicitly incorporated SDT assumptions, they did not directly test motivational variables. Therefore, in the current study, we aim to build on Allan et al. (2014) by (i) using a more

sophisticated measure of social class and (ii) testing the extent to which SDT motivation variables predict meaningful work.

The Present Study

The overall goal of this study was to better understand how SDT and PWF variables predict meaningful work. Building off previous research (Blustein, 2001, 2013; Ryan and Deci, 2002; Steger et al., 2012), we sampled a large and diverse group of employed adults and proposed a structural model with social class and work volition predicting SDT motivation variables and with these variables predicting meaningful work. Specifically, we predicted that social class and work volition would both show strong positive relations to internal regulation and strong negative relations to extrinsic motivation and amotivation. In turn, we hypothesized that internal regulation would predict greater meaningful work but that amotivation and extrinsic motivation would predict less meaningful work. We also hypothesized there would be indirect effects from work volition and social class to meaningful work via the motivation variables. Reflecting our hypotheses above, we predicted that indirect effects through amotivation and extrinsic motivation would be negative and that the indirect effects through the internal regulation would be positive.

To investigate the viability of this model we also tested two alternative models. In the first alternative model, we tested a model similar to Allan et al. (2014). This study found work volition to mediate the relation between social class and meaningful work, suggesting that social class could potentially be a predictor, rather than a correlate, of work volition. In the second alternative model we tested a different permutation of the indirect effects. Given that our hypotheses were based on cross-sectional data, meaningful work could be positioned before work motivation. Specifically, work may become perceived as internally regulated when people perceive it as meaningful. Therefore, we tested an alternative model with meaningful work mediating the relation between social class and work volition and the six motivation variables.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

The sample consisted of 339 working adults living in the United States. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 71 ($M = 35.33$ and $SD = 11.78$) and self-identified as female ($N = 187$, 55.2%), male ($N = 146$, 43.1%), transgender ($N = 2$, 0.6%), and other ($N = 3$, 0.9%). In terms of race/ethnicity, participants were able to select multiple answers. Participants mainly self-identified as White/European American/Caucasian ($N = 272$, 80.2%), with remaining participants identifying as African/African-American ($N = 27$, 8.0%), Asian/Asian American ($N = 22$, 6.5%), Hispanic/Latinao American ($N = 19$, 5.6%), American Indian/Native American ($N = 9$, 2.7%), Asian Indian ($N = 6$, 1.8%), Arab American/Middle Eastern ($N = 1$, 0.3%), and Other ($N = 2$, 0.6%). In terms of education, 11.8% ($N = 40$) had a high school education or less, 4.5% ($N = 15$) had a trade or vocational school diploma, 33.0% ($N = 112$) had some

college, 36.9% ($N = 125$) had a college degree, and 13.0% ($N = 44$) had a professional or graduate degree. The sample captured a wide range of occupations with 248 unique job titles represented. The most frequently reported job titles included customer service representative (3.5%; $N = 12$), administrative assistant (3.2%; $N = 11$), sales representative (3.2%; $N = 11$), computer programmer (1.8%; $N = 6$), teacher (1.8%; $N = 6$), writer (1.8%%; $N = 6$), and office manager (1.5%, $N = 6$).

Instruments
Social Class
Social class was measured with the MacArthur Scale of subjective social status (Adler et al., 2000). Participants are given a picture of a ladder and the following instructions: "Think of this ladder as representing where people stand in our society. At the top of the ladder are the people who are the best off, those who have the most money, most education, and best jobs. At the bottom are the people who are the worst off, those who have me least money, least education, and worst jobs or no jobs." Participants are then asked to indicate where they fall on the ladder on a scale from 1 = *bottom rung* to 10 = *top rung*. Adler et al. (2000) found the measure to relate to measures of psychological functioning and health-related factors (e.g., heart rate), and most relations remained significant after controlling for objective social status (e.g., income, education, etc.). Other studies have found scores on the measure to significantly and positively correlate with level of employment, education, income, wealth, standard of living, and perceptions of financial security (Adler et al., 2008).

Meaningful Work
The degree to which participants felt their work was meaningful was measured with the 10-item Work as Meaning Inventory (WAMI; Steger et al., 2012). Steger et al. (2012) found the scale to load onto three factors (i.e., positive meaning, meaning-making through work, and greater good motivations) that loaded onto a higher order meaningful work factor. Sample items include "I have found a meaningful career," and "The work I do serves a greater purpose." Participants answered items on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Points from each item were summed to calculate a total score, with higher scores representing higher levels of meaningful work. In the instrument development study, Steger et al. (2012) found the scale to correlate in the expected direction with overlapping variables, such as career commitment, presence of life meaning, job satisfaction, and calling. Furthermore, Steger et al. (2012) found the WAMI to have high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.93$), and in the present study, the estimated internal consistency was $\alpha = 0.94$.

Work Volition
Work volition was measured with the Work Volition Scale (WVS; Duffy et al., 2012). Duffy et al. (2012) found items from the WVS to load onto three factors (i.e., volition, financial constraints, and structural constraints) that, in turn, loaded onto a higher order work volition factor. The scale includes 13 items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include, "I feel total control

over my job choices," "Due to my financial situation, I need to take any job I can find" (reverse coded), and "Negative factors outside my personal control had a large impact on my current career choice" (reverse coded). Higher scores are associated with higher work volition. Duffy et al. (2012) found the WVS to correlate in the expected directions with work locus of control, job satisfaction, discrimination, and career barriers. They also reported an estimated internal consistency of $\alpha = 0.86$. The estimated internal consistency for the present study was $\alpha = 0.91$.

Work Motivation
Work motivation was assessed with the Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS; Tremblay et al., 2009). The scale consists of 18 items on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*does not correspond at all*) to 7 (*corresponds exactly*). The measure includes six subscales, each containing three items, corresponding to Ryan and Deci's (2000) increasing levels of self-determination. Tremblay et al. (2009) found scores on the scale to load predictably on the six factors and to correlate in the expected directions with one another and work-related outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions. The authors also reported estimated internal consistencies of $\alpha = 0.80$ (intrinsic motivation), $\alpha = 0.83$ (integrated regulation), $\alpha = 0.67$ (identified regulation), $\alpha = 0.70$ (introjected regulation), $\alpha = 0.77$ (external regulation), and $\alpha = 0.64$ (amotivation), acceptable internal consistencies given that the scales only consisted of three items each. The estimated internal consistencies for the six subscales in the present study were $\alpha = 0.89$ (intrinsic motivation), $\alpha = 0.89$ (integrated regulation), $\alpha = 0.76$ (identified regulation), $\alpha = 0.75$ (introjected regulation), $\alpha = 0.69$ (external regulation), and $\alpha = 0.83$ (amotivation).

Procedure
Participants joined the study through Mechanical Turk (MTurk). MTurk is an online participant source that allows people to complete surveys for monetary compensation, although most respondents report completing surveys for enjoyment (Buhrmester et al., 2011). Recent reviews and studies examining MTurk have largely concluded that it produces valid data that is comparable to laboratory and other internet recruitment methods (Buhrmester et al., 2011; Sprouse, 2011). A link including an informed consent document and the survey itself was posted on MTurk, and in order to participate, participants had to (i) be over the age of 18, (ii) reside within the United States, and (iii) be employed at least part-time. Participants were given $0.25 for completing the survey completed, which is consistent with typical amounts offered to participants on MTurk.

The initial sample included 430 participants. However, 22 were unemployed and therefore did not meet inclusion criteria, and 21 people only answered demographic questions. Additionally, 36 participants did not respond correctly to three validity items. Finally, 12 cases only completed the first two questionnaires and were, therefore, missing data on seven or more study variables. All these cases were removed, leaving a final sample size of 339. Of this sample, 283 (83.5%) participants had complete data, 49 (14.5%) were missing data on one study

variable, and 7 (2.1%) were missing data on two study variables. For the remaining missing data, we used Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) to impute values for missing data (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). FIML uses all available information to calculate estimates with added error so as to not bias estimates. Experts (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007) argue that approaches like FIML are superior to the traditional techniques, such as list-wise deletion and mean substitution, which tend to discard valuable information and bias estimates.

Data Analysis

To test the hypotheses discussed above, we used structural equation modeling in AMOS 22. We first conducted preliminary analyses to evaluate for non-normality and the existence of outliers and to obtain correlations among study variables. We then tested a measurement model to evaluate if all indicators loaded onto their respective factors with good fit, then moved onto testing the structural model. To assess model fit, we used indices that minimized the likelihood of Type I and Type II error (Hu and Bentler, 1999). These were the chi-square test (χ^2), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). A significant χ^2 can indicate a poor fitting model, but this test is not reliable in larger samples (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Criteria for the CFI and RMSEA have ranged from less conservative (CFI $\geq$ 0.90 and RMSEA $\leq$ 0.10) to more conservative (CFI $\geq$ 0.95 and RMSEA $\leq$ 0.08; Hu and Bentler, 1999; Weston and Gore, 2006). However, criteria should not be used as strict cut-offs, and researchers should consider sample size and model complexity when judging the fit of models (Weston and Gore, 2006).

After testing the structural model, we calculated its indirect effects. Because AMOS 22 only gives significance tests for the combined indirect effects (i.e., the effect of work volition on meaningful work through all three work motivation variables), we used RMediation (Tofighi and MacKinnon, 2011) to produce confidence interval estimates tests for individual indirect effects. These indirect effects are significant when they do not include zero. Finally, we evaluated the fit of our alternative models and compared their fit to the structural model.

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

No variables had scores above 3.25 standard deviations from the mean, so no cases were removed due to outliers. All study variables had absolute values of skewness and kurtosis less than one, and all except for amotivation appeared normally distributed on visually inspected histograms and boxplots. Amotivation appeared positively skewed due to many low scores on the scale. However, given that its absolute value of skewness was under one (0.85) and that amotivation scores fell relatively normally other than the floor effect, we did not transform the variable.

We also ran preliminary correlations on the manifest study variables. The four variables representing internally motivated behavior were highly correlated ($r = 0.73$–0.77). This raised issues of multicollinearity and the potential for the variables

to represent a single factor. This is consistent with Tremblay et al.'s (2009) suggestions of summing subscales into self-determined (intrinsic motivation, integrated regulation, and identified regulation) and non-self-determined (introjected, external, and amotivation) subscales. The authors found these subscales to predict work-related variables, such as organizational commitment, in the expected directions, and scholars have used these subscales in subsequent studies (e.g., Shu, 2015). To explore this further, we ran an exploratory factor analysis on all WEIMS items. We used principal axis factoring with promax rotation based on Eigenvalues greater than one (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). The items loaded on three factors at values of 0.51 or above. The first factor included all items from the internal regulation variables (i.e., intrinsic motivation, integrated regulation, identified regulation, and introjected regulation), the second factor included the external regulation items, and the third factor included the amotivation items.

Therefore, similar to the recommendation made by Tremblay et al. (2009) we measured a single internal regulation variable (intrinsic motivation, integrated regulation, and identified regulation). However, given the results of the exploratory factor analysis above, we loaded introjected regulation onto the internal regulation variable. First, the three items form this subscale had high factor loadings from the exploratory factor analysis (0.62, 0.75, and 0.53). Second, introjected regulation represents behaviors undertaken to regulate self-esteem based on external factors. However, it is partially internalized (Ryan and Deci, 2002) and could reasonably be grouped with other internally regulated variables. Regardless, only its shared variance with the self-determined variables would be included in the latent factor.

Also contrary to Tremblay et al. (2009), we did not load introjected regulation, external regulation, and amotivation onto a single factor. In our sample, amotivation was unrelated to introjected regulation ($r = 0.10$ and $p = 0.08$) and external regulation ($r = 0.00$ and $p = 1.00$), and external regulation had only a small correlation with introjected regulation ($r = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$). Although these correlations are consistent with Tremblay et al.'s (2009) results, they reveal that these variables clearly do not represent a single construct, especially when viewed in light of the exploratory factor analysis described above. Therefore, we kept them separate in the structural model (**Figure 1**).

TABLE 1 | Descriptive statistics and factor correlations of study variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Work volition	–					
2. Social class	0.35**	–				
3. Meaningful work	0.57**	0.22**	–			
4. Internal regulation	0.55**	0.26**	0.84**	–		
5. External regulation	−0.001	0.11	−0.16**	−0.04	–	
6. Amotivation	−0.40**	0.05	−0.25**	−0.06	0.03	–
Mean	55.36	4.98	46.78	51.54	15.20	7.42
Standard deviation	16.99	1.64	14.49	16.80	3.83	4.40

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01.

FIGURE 1 | Final structural model with standardized regression coefficients. Correlations among work motivation variables and errors are not depicted in the figure (*$p < 0.05$ and **$p < 0.01$).
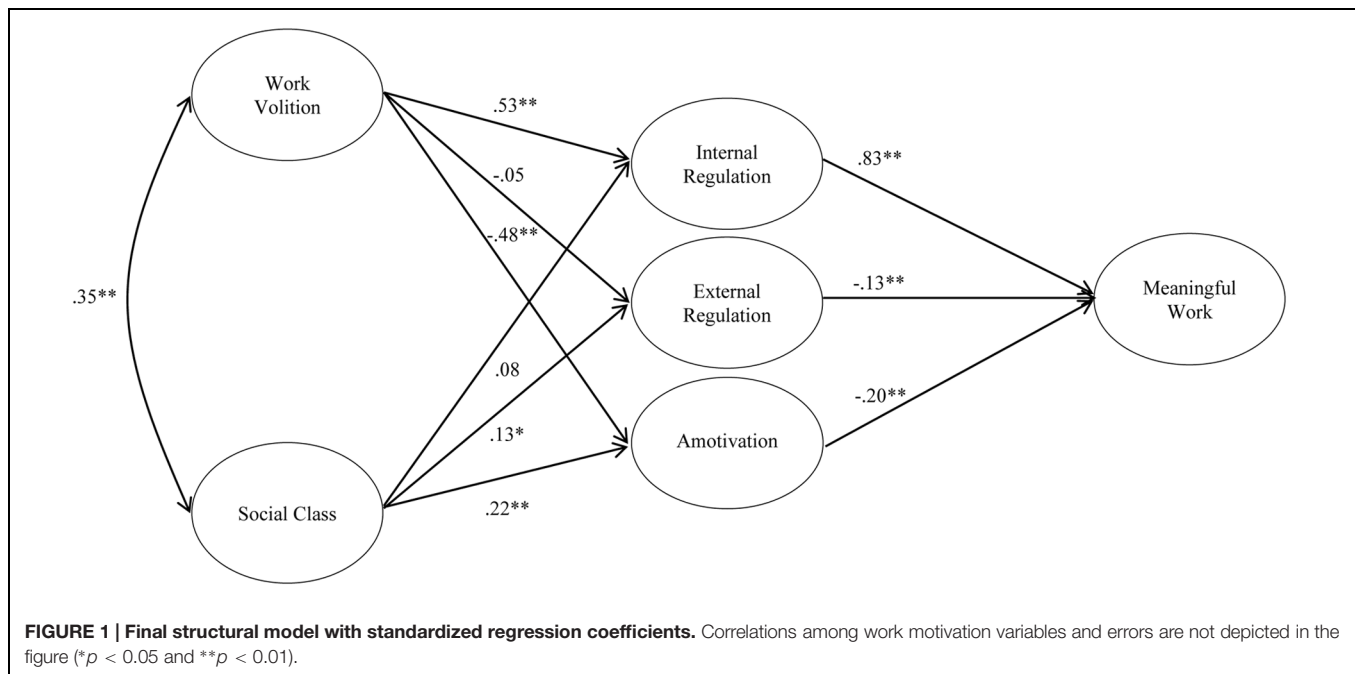
Measurement Model

Before testing the structural mediation model, we tested a measurement model with all study variables. The three subscales for work volition and meaningful work and the individual items for external regulation and amotivation were loaded onto their respective factors. The sum of the subscales for intrinsic motivation, integrated regulation, identified regulation, and introjected regulation were loaded onto an internal regulation latent variable. Because social class was a single item, it was included as a manifest variable. All variables were allowed to correlate. This model was an acceptable fit to the data, $\chi^2(105) = 369.47$, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.92, and RMSEA = 0.09, 95% CI [0.8, −0.10], and all indicators loaded on their factors with coefficients of 0.44 or higher. **Table 1** depicts the factor correlations among study variables. Meaningful work was significantly and positively related to work volition (0.57), social class (0.22), and internal regulation (0.84). Meaningful work was also negatively related to external regulation (−0.16) and amotivation (−0.25).

Structural Model

The structural model included work volition and social class predicting meaningful work via the work motivation variables. As with the measurement model, all indicators loaded on their latent factors, except for social class, which was represented as a manifest variable. We tested both partial and full mediation models. The partial mediation model included direct paths from work volition and social class to meaningful work. This model had good fit to the data, $\chi^2(105) = 369.47$, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.92, and RMSEA = 0.09, 95% CI [0.8, −0.10]. The full mediation model did not include direct paths from social class and work volition to meaningful work, and it also had acceptable fit, $\chi^2(107) = 371.49$, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.92, and

RMSEA = 0.09, 95% CI [0.8, −0.10]. Given that the difference in chi-square between models was not significant, $\chi^2(2) = 2.02$, $p = 0.64$, we retained the full mediation model for its parsimony. **Figure 1** displays the final, structural model with standardized regression coefficients. This model explained 77% of the variance in meaningful work.

Indirect Effects

We tested each indirect effect from work volition and social class to meaningful work via the three work motivation variables. The indirect effects from work volition to meaningful work via internal regulation ($c' = 0.60$, SE = 0.08, 95% CI = 0.44, 0.76) and amotivation ($c' = 0.13$, SE = 0.03, and 95% CI = 0.07, 0.20) were significant but the indirect effect via external regulation ($c' = 0.01$, SE = 0.01, and 95% CI = −0.02, 0.04) was not. The indirect effects from social class to meaningful work via internal regulation ($c' = 0.25$, SE = 0.16, and CI = −0.08, 0.57) was not significant, but the indirect effects via external regulation ($c' = −0.06$, SE = 0.04, and CI = −0.14, −0.001) and amotivation ($c' = −0.16$, SE = 0.05, and CI = −0.27, −0.06) were significant.

Alternative Models

First, we tested an alternative model following from the model described by Allan et al. (2014). In this model, social class directly predicted work volition but did not predict the work motivation variables. This model had comparable fit to the structural model, $\chi^2(110) = 390.21$, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.92, and RMSEA = 0.09, 95% CI [0.8, −0.10], but it had a significantly greater chi-square, $\chi^2(3) = 18.72$ and $p < 0.001$, indicating that the fit of the structural model was better. As described above, we also tested another alternative model that replaced meaningful work with work motivation as the outcome variable. In this model work volition and social class predicted meaningful

work, which in turn predicted internal regulation, external regulation, and amotivation. This model had significantly worse fit than the structural model, χ^2 (111) = 424.23, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.91, and RMSEA = 0.09, 95% CI [0.8, −0.10]; χ^2 (4) = 52.74 and $p < 0.001$. Because neither alternative model significantly improved the fit of the model or the understanding among the study variables, we retained the structural model.

DISCUSSION

The goal of the current study was to advance the literature on meaningful work by examining how core variables within SDT (Ryan and Deci, 2002) and the Psychology of Working Framework (Blustein, 2013) predict meaningful work and, in turn, the degree to which these variables are predicted by socioeconomic constraints. Both social class and work volition predicted amotivation whereas only work volition predicted internal regulation and only social class predicted external motivation. All three types of work motivation significantly predicted meaningful work. However, when all three variables were included in the same model, internal motivation emerged as the largest predictor. The strength of this path coefficient provides initial evidence that being internally motivated at work may be essential to experiencing meaningful work.

In the current paper internal regulation was represented by intrinsic motivation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation. All of these motivation styles refer to being internally motivated but differ with regards to the degree of self-direction amongst behaviors (Ryan and Deci, 2002). Despite this difference our factor analysis demonstrated these four styles were best represented by one underlying internal regulation construct. The overlap of internal regulation and meaningful work was so high that it could imply a construct overlap. However, when examining the internal regulation instrument items, it is clear that these are less about meaning and more about viewing work as satisfying, enjoyable, and connected to one's present and future self. When work is approached in this way, our findings indicate that, as hypothesized, there is an extremely high likelihood of experiencing meaningful work. Although previous studies have found strong correlates of meaningful work (e.g., living a calling, career commitment, person environment fit; Duffy et al., 2013, 2015), none have approached the level found in the current study with internal regulation, suggesting it may be an necessary predictor variable.

Also supporting hypotheses, external motivation and amotivation were each negatively related to meaningful work, even when accounting for the high amount of variance contributed by internal motivation. Although the strength of these path estimates were small, they are still important to consider, because people who were extrinsically motivated to work (e.g. for income, security) or who had a lack of motivation (e.g., unsure why they are working at all) were less likely to experience their work as meaningful. This latter motivation category is especially important to consider when assessing the role of socioeconomic constraints in the overall model.

Our findings indicated that although neither work volition nor social class directly predicted meaningful work, their indirect effects were evident through internal regulation, external regulation, and amotivation. As hypothesized, work volition was a strong, positive predictor of internal regulation and a strong, negative predictor of amotivation. Specifically, people who felt more in control of their career decision making were more likely to have high levels of internal regulation and low levels of amotivation, which in turn predicted meaningful work. These findings demonstrate the freedom of choice-motivation link, which is an underlying principle of SDT. When individuals feel autonomy and choice in a certain life domain they will be more likely to feel motivated and engaged in that domain, resulting a positive appraisal of that domain (e.g., meaning, satisfaction, and persistence; Ryan and Deci, 2002). Importantly, the converse is also true: people with little choice in their careers will likely feel lower levels of internal regulation, higher levels of amotivation, and in turn less meaningful work.

Finally, there were small but significant positive links from social class to amotivation and external regulation. Bivariate relations among these variables were not significant, and only in the full model do these paths become significant, implying that greater social class is linked with greater external regulation and amotivation. This counterintuitive finding implies that people from higher social class backgrounds are more likely to demonstrate an attention to extrinsic rewards and a lack motivation toward work. However, this was evident only when work volition was included alongside social class in the model, which likely suppressed the relations from social class to external regulation and amotivation. In other words, those from higher social class backgrounds were more likely to be externally regulated and amotivated once their degree of work volition was accounted for. It is possible that without the higher work volition associated with higher social classes, people are more vulnerable to external regulation (e.g., working for money) and amotivation. This may represent findings from a small group of people in higher social classes who are privileged but feel stuck in their jobs. Although this is speculative, future studies may wish to further investigate this surprising result.

Limitations and Future Directions

The results and conclusions from this study need to be considered in light of a number of limitations, each of which offer directions for future research. First and foremost, the data gathered for this study were cross-sectional, and we were unable to make causal assertions of how these variables affect one another over time. For example, a longitudinal study could provide more information about whether or not social class and work volition are best positioned as correlates or if work volition is an outcome of social class over time (Allan et al., 2014). Additionally, it may be that meaningful work predicts or has recursive effects on work motivation, another area that could be examined with longitudinal data. Second, data for this study were collected only from US participants. Although large-scale studies have documented how SDT works cross culturally (Church et al., 2013), it is necessary to understand

if the setup of variables in this study's model also hold across cultures.

Third, this study contains SDT variables related to motivation but does not include variables related to need satisfaction, such as autonomy, relatedness, and competence. These are theoretically proposed to proceed motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2002), and it would be important to test a more complete model which includes these variables as potential mediators connecting aspects of social class to work motivation. Fourth, future research in this area might expand outcomes to include variables related to overall well-being. For example, it would be relevant to understand how meeting needs at work predicts life meaning and satisfaction in addition to meaningful work. Doing so would allow for a more complete picture of predictors and outcomes of SDT constructs in the work domain. Fifth, it will be important for future researchers to connect results from the current study to other variables within the PWF. Specifically, there is little empirical data on decent work. The construct of decent work represents a much of the real world applicability of research on work and life meaning, given the lack of access to decent work for many people. Future researchers might strengthen the knowledge base in this area by linking decent work to SDT motivation and need satisfaction variables.

A final limitation of this study illustrates the PWF's criticism of vocational research in general (Blustein, 2001). Our sample was largely White, had more income than average, and was highly educated. This is partially a problem with online data collection in that it reflects disparities in who uses and has most access to the internet (Etter and Perneger, 2001; Rhodes et al., 2003) and could bias our results in favor of people with relatively more power and privilege. Therefore, our results should be tested and replicated with samples that proportionally reflect different groups in the United States. Relatedly, future studies should actively recruit members of diverse groups, whether participants are being recruited online or from the community.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

BA and KA conceptualized the study, chose the theoretical framework, chose measures, designed the questionnaire, and collected the data. BA analyzed the data and wrote the methods and results. KA wrote the introduction. RD read the paper, provided suggestions for revisions, and wrote the discussion after revisions were made. All authors read and revised the manuscript several times.

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A Thematic Analysis of Career Adaptability in Retirees Who Return to Work

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Retirement can no longer be conceptualized as disengagement, as the end of a person's career, as it is in the life-span, life-space theory. Increasingly, retirees are returning to work, in paid, and unpaid positions, in a part-time or full-time capacity, as an act of re-engagement. Vocational psychology theories are yet to adequately conceptualize the phenomenon of retirees' re-engagement in work. The research reported in this paper is the first attempt to understand re-engagement through the theoretical lens of career construction theory (CCT) and its central construct, career adaptability. The study involved intensive interviews with 22 retirees between the ages of 56 and 78 years ($M = 68.24$), who had retired no less than 1 year prior to the study. Participants were engaged in a discussion about their reasons for returning to the world of work. Thematic analysis of interview transcripts extracted evidence of the four career adaptability resources: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. In addition, the influence of family and making a contribution were discerned as important themes. These findings are the first evidence that the CCT and career adaptability provide a new conceptual lens to theorize and conduct research into the phenomenon of retirement.

Keywords: retirement, bridge employment, career adaptability, career construction theory, career development

INTRODUCTION

Retirement may be an existential transition that prompts many individuals to become temporarily introspective, giving pause to question past accomplishments and current life situation (Malette and Oliver, 2006). Psychological research into pre-retirement planning and post-retirement intentions and activity can make a positive contribution to policy and programs for older workers (Adams and Rau, 2011; Earl et al., 2015; Griffin, 2015), particularly the generation now exiting the workforce en masse: the Baby-Boomers (Quine and Carter, 2006; Shultz and Wang, 2011). It is against this backdrop—the putative exodus of skilled workers—that the notions of "encore career" (Figgis, 2012) and "bridge employment" (Wang and Shultz, 2010; Pleau and Shauman, 2013; Wang and Shi, 2014) became the focal points of the current research. Bridge employment is a substantial topic of research into retirement (Shultz and Wang, 2011; Beehr, 2014; Wang and Shi, 2014; Beehr and Bennett, 2015), particularly given that bridge employment may be beneficial to retirees' health and well-being (Zhan et al., 2009) and organizations' access to a flexible labor supply (Wang and Shi, 2014). The notion of bridge employment is usually associated with transition into retirement; it is not associated with transitioning out of retirement, back into the world of work. This ostensibly

inverse phenomenon is under-theorized and there is a need to conceptualize re-engagement from a vocational psychological perspective.

The current research is a product of the zeitgeist to reform of career development—to make its ways of being, knowing, and doing, as a collection of disciplines and professional activities, relevant to a post-industrial world of work in which "decent work", in context of the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015), is posited as a human right for all (Blustein, 2006, 2013; Guichard, 2013). These scholars of decent work reflect on a world of work that is precarious and devoid of the benefits of traditional psychological contracts between employer and employee (e.g., mutuality, loyalty). The psychology of working framework (PWF; Blustein, 2006, 2013) posits three sets of fundamental needs that may be met by decent work: survival and power, social connection, and self-determination. With respect to older workers in need of decent work, one may ask, "What are the psychological dimensions of decent work for a retiree who returns to work?" PWF scholars (Sterns and Sterns, 2013) have identified issues associated with older workers (e.g., decline in physical and cognitive performance) and argued for workplace adjustments, including ergonomic enhancements to workspaces and equipment so as to prolong the worker's productive years.

Toward the objective of conceptualizing retirees' returning to work, the current research uses the career construction theory (CCT; Savickas, 2002, 2005, 2013) as an extension of the developmental life-span life-space theory (Super, 1980, 1990). A specific aim of the research is to explore the relevance of the CCT's construct *career adaptability* to retirees' experiences of working. Thus, the research explores the psychological factors that may contribute to an older person being actively productive in the workforce.

There are several general theories of adult development (Levinson et al., 1978; Erikson, 1993) and models of retirement (Shultz and Wang, 2011), including retirement as decision-making, an adjustment process, and a career stage (Wang and Shi, 2014). Notwithstanding their qualities, we focus on the vocational psychology perspective for two reasons. First, the volume of empirical research and professional applications of Super's theory (Super, 1980, 1990) to working life and career is significant, extending over six decades (Hartung, 2013), and outweighs that of other theories, such as that of Levinson et al. (1978; Sharf, 2010). Second, from a developmental perspective on career, adjustment to career and working life is seen as central to and continuous with self-concept (Super, 1988, 1990).

The life-span, life-space theory comprises five stages (i.e., life-span) of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement/decline, with each stage addressing career development tasks and roles (i.e., life-space). Retirement occurs in the final developmental stage of disengagement. Readiness and successful transition from one life stage to the next involves physical and psychological adjustment, representative of career maturity. Deceleration from employment and entry into retirement are activities included within the disengagement stage. Super acknowledged life events as a cause for a person to revisit earlier career life stages such as a retiree deciding to re-enter employment in a worker role. Accordingly, an individual

who returns to work may be thought about as going through a process that Super described as a mini-cycling, whereby interests, abilities, and values are reappraised using processes seen in an earlier developmental stage such as the maxi-cycle stage, crystallization.

Recent research by Wang (2007) confirms the presence of three growth patterns in retirees' transitions: the maintaining pattern (i.e., life satisfaction remains stable), recovering pattern (i.e., life satisfaction increases after leaving work), and U-curve pattern (i.e., life satisfaction initially dips after retirement and then recovers with an adjustment). Variations in these curves arise from "job characteristics (i.e., physical demands and work stress), job attitude (i.e., job satisfaction), health attributes (i.e., objective health declines), transition characteristics (i.e., retirement planning and timing), and family context variables (i.e., marital status, spouse working status, and marriage quality)" (Wang, 2007, p. 470). These patterns may be interpreted as variations of the stage disengagement and point to potential correlates of re-engagement in work.

The life-span, life-space theory does not, however, offer sufficient theoretical perspectives on the psychological processes associated with mini-cycling in post-retirement. Thus, the current research offers a conceptual and empirical response to the existential question posited in the broader literature of planning for retirement, that is, "What will I do?" (Adams and Rau, 2011). More specifically, the research addresses the question from the perspective of the CCT (Savickas, 2002, 2005, 2013): How does career adaptability manifest in individuals who return to work after several years of full-time retirement?

In formulating the research questions we attended to how CCT extends on the life-span, life-space theory (Savickas, 1997, 2002) and earlier renditions of the notions vocational maturity (Super, 1977), adjustment (Super, 1988), and adaptability (Super and Knasel, 1981), which evolved into CCT's core construct, career adaptability (Savickas, 1997, 2005). Career adaptability comprises four resources: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. Savickas (2013) summarized the qualities of these resources:

- Concern: planning, awareness, involvement, and preparation.
- Control: as decisiveness, assertiveness, discipline, and willfulness.
- Curiosity: inquisitiveness, exploration, risk taking, and an inquiring approach.
- Confidence: is expressed as efficacy, problem solving, and industriousness. (p. 158).

Recent research classified the behavior of retirees: continuers, adventurers, easy gliders, searchers, and retreaters (Maggiori et al., 2014). Continuers evince the maintaining pattern; they retain their occupational identity, may continue working at reduced hours and/or use their skills in a voluntary capacity. Adventurers enjoy the boon in time and use this resource to learn new skills and take on new projects. Easy gliders take a moratorium on commitments and leave all their options open. Searchers explore all that is available to them, try new

opportunities, and frequently change their commitments. These three types may reflect Wang's (2007) recovering or U-curve pattern. Adventurers, for example, may experience heightened life satisfaction in the joy of knowing what time is available to them to pursue rewarding activities; whereas searchers may experience a U-curve dip in satisfaction until they begin to choose and then engage in rewarding activities. Retreaters disengage and withdraw from life and could not be seen as adaptively adjusting to retirement in terms of Wang's three patterns. Apart from retreaters, it is possible that all of these types may return to work but for very different reasons.

Subjective life expectancy (SLE) is a person's estimate of the number of years of life he or she has remaining. Griffin (2015) suggests that an employee's motivations turn toward social and emotional goals rather than learning and work goals, as a function of consciousness of years remaining and inevitable death. In a longitudinal study of older workers ($M = 62$ years), SLE not only predicted decision to retire, but also predicted return to work after retirement by those individuals who had already retired at Time 1 (Griffin et al., 2012). These findings suggested that a greater SLE is positively associated with return to work. Thus, the existential question "What will I do?" in retirement (Adams and Rau, 2011) is partly answered by the greater existential question, "When will I die?" These findings correspond to longitudinal research indicating that relatively younger retirees, who, ipso facto, expect more years of life, are more likely to engage in bridge employment (Wang et al., 2008).

Feeling tired of work predicted pre-retirees' and retirees' preference for not continuing work, paid or voluntary, and, although a pro-active behavioral style and feeling overloaded in work predicted pre-retirees intention to undertake paid or voluntary work in retirement, these qualities did not predict retirees' intentions (Griffin and Hesketh, 2008). These findings are consistent with research that found physical and psychological health, and the quality of retirees' exit from the workforce (e.g., choice, timing), predicted their adjustment to retirement (Wong and Earl, 2009; Donaldson et al., 2010) and engagement in bridge employment (Wang et al., 2008). Conversely, retirees who experienced involuntary exit from the labor market may experience difficulty in securing bridge employment (Dingemans et al., 2015). Furthermore, retirees who experienced strain in their career job have been found to take bridge employment in a different field (Gobeski and Beehr, 2009).

Donaldson et al. (2010) found that a psychological sense of mastery (Pearlin and Schooler, 1978) was equivalent in magnitude to conditions of exit as a predictor of adjustment to retirement and stronger than health. Thus, retirees who believe they have independence, choice, and control in their lives are better adjusted. Conversely, recent research revealed a disturbing finding that some individuals evinced the stark contrast in their beliefs that they would never be able to retire out as act of choice because of chronic illness and earning a low income (Schofield et al., 2013). Individuals in this situation return to work as a matter of survival rather than choice and control.

Models of retirees working after retirement (e.g., Beehr and Bennett, 2015) are consistent with the latent and manifest benefits (LAMB) of employment perspective (Jahoda, 1982) that focuses on the social and psychological benefits of employment (e.g., friendship, routine). Financial security, missing the social aspects of the workforce, or a wish to upgrade skills are reasons given for returning to work (Schlosser et al., 2012). Social contact and friendships provide a conducive context for retirees to consider returning to work post-retirement (Wöhrmann et al., 2013) and this is evident in findings of retirees experiencing aging as social loss (i.e., feeling loneliness) or growth (i.e., continuing to make plans) who were, respectively, 1.8 and 2.10 times more likely to return to work (Fasbender et al., 2014). Conversely, experiences of aging as learning more about oneself reduced the chances of employment (Fasbender et al., 2014). Notwithstanding the potential psychosocial benefits (Wang and Shi, 2014), it should be noted that there is evidence of psychosocial harm in the form of discrimination against older workers (Hippel, 2011; Adair et al., 2013).

The social and economic context of the current research is a response to alarming reports into the aging Australian population (e.g., Productivity Commission, 2005; Department of the Treasury, 2010; Actuaries Institute, 2012). So pressing is the need to retain individuals in the labor force that the Australian Government Intergenerational Report (Department of the Treasury, 2010) called for removal of barriers to workforce participation as a requirement to encourage the growing mature age population to remain within or re-join the labor market. Initiatives recommended by the Australian Government (Department of the Treasury, 2010) and the Productivity Commission (2005) aim to retain individuals in the workforce longer (e.g., raising the qualifying age for retirement). Beyond material incentives and disincentives recommended in these reports, there is a need to identify the psychological factors that motivate or de-motivate a retiree to return to paid or unpaid work. The most recent research by the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] (2013a) found that in individuals 45 years and over who had retired and returned to work did so because of financial need or as a way of combating boredom.

Career adaptability in older workers not yet retired is positively associated with job satisfaction; however, the effect is significantly stronger in relatively younger workers (Zacher and Griffin, 2015). Furthermore, older workers' motivation to continue working did not moderate the relationship between career adaptability and job satisfaction (Zacher and Griffin, 2015). For the current research, we aimed to explore the psychological reasons and benefits for retirees returning to work, viewed from the perspective of the CCT (Savickas, 2005, 2013). In particular, we sought to explore how retirees expressed their career adaptability with respect to the directionality of its effects. That is, we aimed to explore whether career adaptability is associated with returning to work as a potentiating factor for returning to work, or as an outcome benefit of returning to work. Thus, career adaptability is yet to be explored among retirees and the current study is the first to qualitatively explore retirees' expression of career adaptability

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Epistemological Assumptions

This research project was formulated on the basis of the post-positivist paradigm (Morrow, 2005). Accordingly, we proceeded on the basis that each participant's narrative is an idiographic assessment, yet psychological experiences may be discerned from the data and interpreted as themes that subsume meanings common to the participants as a group.

Researcher-as-Instrument Statement

Again, following Morrow's (2005) recommendations for conducting and reporting qualitative research, here we present a précis of our characteristics as researchers so that the reader may better understand our different perspectives and potential biases. All three researchers have postgraduate degrees; thus, creating a research team comprising a transdisciplinary admixture of adult education, career development, and psychology. The first two authors have worked in aged-care settings, retirement, and mental health, respectively. There were meetings between the first and second authors to discuss data collection and analysis, and, similarly, there were regular meetings between the second and third author to discuss the same, except with the third author acting as an objective auditor separated from data collection and analysis. The university's Human Research Ethics Committee approved the research.

Participants

The participants were 22 retirees, 13 male and 9 female, whose ages ranged from 56 to 78 years ($M = 68.24$ years, $SD = 6.41$, $Mdn = 69$). Participants were invited to participate by use of a promotional message distributed via the social network of retirees who had an association with the aged care service at which the first author worked on a part-time basis. The key recruitment criteria stipulated that each participant be self-identified as a retiree who had retired up to 1 year prior to the study ($M = 6.72$ years, $SD = 4.17$, $Mdn = 6.25$), and currently engaged in some form of paid or unpaid (i.e., "volunteer") employment. There were no recruitment conditions set on the type of work completed during the participants' lifetime. Participants reported a mix of high-skill and semi-skilled occupations. Their work included higher-level corporate management occupations in Industrial Relations, Finance, Information Technology and Manufacturing, as well as school teachers, a church minister, an academic professor, administrators, a TV/radio technician, agricultural workers, and a small business person. Just one participant had solely worked along one career path throughout pre-retirement working life as a high school teacher before becoming a Department Head. All other participants reported a mixture of different work throughout their careers. Nonetheless, there was at least one participant in each of the major industry categories recognized by the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] (2013b).

Procedure

Data collection comprised individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews, with a maximum time limit of 1 h per interview. Each interview started with the researcher asking the participant to describe their career history from their first job through to the time of retirement. Interviews were conducted within a participant's home or a location they nominated and agreed upon with the researcher. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for later data coding and analysis. To enhance the trustworthiness of the data and its subsequent interpretation, the interviews were conducted in two phases. The first author conducted 17 interviews in the first phase of the research. Following the initial data analysis, described below, the second author conducted another five interviews to ascertain if similar results would be drawn from different interviews by a different interviewer. This audit procedure (Yardley, 2007) was conducted to ensure the credibility and dependability (Morrow, 2005) of the data and data analysis.

During the course of the interviews, participants were encouraged by the interviewer to discuss their employment history, reasons for their decision to "un-retire", career adaptabilities, and their retirement adjustment and planning. These interview topics were further broken down into additional subtopics that were asked when opportunities for further exploration emerged in the conversation between a participant and the researcher. The majority of participants did elaborate on many of these additional questions that covered subtopics such as their feelings toward working with younger colleagues, their perceived idea of what the younger generation felt toward them, their social support base and their personal level of control over their current life situation. Overall, each participant actively involved themselves in their individual interview with the researcher and spoke about their past career history and their current experiences as a retiree who returned to either paid employment or volunteer work.

Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2013) was applied to the qualitative data collected from participant interviews and this allowed transitions in interpretations from a broad reading of the data to a more focused discovery of patterns and developing themes.

First stage: Data Familiarization

The first stage of the thematic analysis involved the researcher transcribing each of the digitally recorded interviews, then reading and re-reading through the transcripts to ensure accuracy and to also become familiar with and immersed within the data.

Second Stage: Generating Initial Codes

Developing and assigning coding categories that represented identified topics and themes were then completed during the second stage. Each interview transcript was re-read with initial codes added to any word, sentence or paragraph that the researcher considered as noteworthy to the overall analysis and relevant to the research scope. The initial codes are shown in **Figure 1**.

Third Stage: Searching for Themes

As a third stage, the coded data identified from the interview transcripts were gathered together and then the codes were organized into groupings of higher level themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest the development of a thematic map or network to aid the generation of themes. While conducting this form of analysis, the interviewer produced a thematic map shown in **Figure 1**, which assisted in identifying emerging themes by linking and grouping initial codes into overall themes.

Fourth Stage: Reviewing Themes

This stage involved checking the themes against the interview transcripts to determine that they told a convincing story of the data and answered the research question. A refinement of the thematic map highlighted that a number of initial codes were now being shared with more than one theme, which illustrated to the researcher that relationships were forming between themes. To bolster the study's credibility and dependability, the second author frequently reviewed the first author's interviews, reactions to interviews, and formulation of results, and also engaged in co-analysis of results with respect to theory. Furthermore, the second author conducted a set of independent interviews to ascertain the credibility and dependability of the findings. Confirmability was addressed by detailed reporting of results, inclusive of verbatim statements, and revelation of researchers' biases.

Fifth Stage: Defining and Naming Themes

This stage involved developing a detailed analysis of each theme as well as working out the scope, focus and story of each. The final naming of each theme was completed with consideration made to names that would convey an immediate understanding of a theme's reasoning and relevance to the research scope. At this stage, the analysis process became recursive as the researcher ensured the final themes selected were integral to the overall research goal. Theses five stages were reiterated for the data collected in the second phase (i.e., the audit). Thematic analysis of the second set of interviews was conducted in the same way as the first set. Saturation was quickly evident in the same themes being extracted from the secondary interviews.

Sixth Stage: Producing the Report

This final stage involved weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts, and contextualizing the analysis in relation to existing literature. This involved selecting quotes from the interview transcripts that were poignant and most represent the research findings. By using thematic analysis, the researcher was able to link the various concepts and opinions of the participants and compare these with the data that have been gathered from the literature review.

RESULTS

Twenty-two initial codes were identified during the first stage of the thematic analysis of the interview transcripts. Five key themes were identified on collation of the initial codes of the data: career adaptability resources, reasons to disengage (i.e., retire), reasons

FIGURE 1 | Map of themes derived from initial codes.
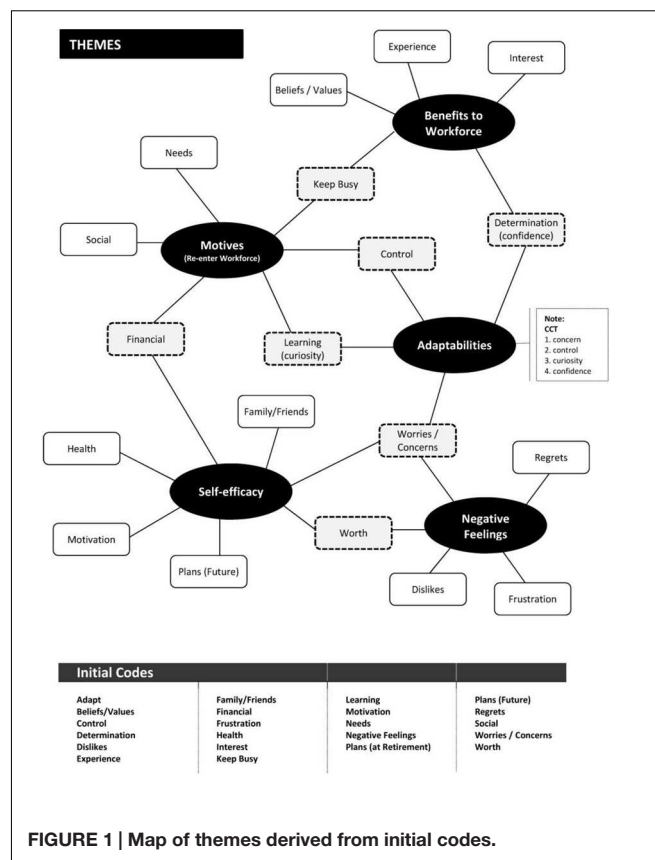
to re-engage (i.e., rehire), family, and benefits to workforce. There were aspects of the participants' interview comments that caused many initial codes to overlap across more than one of these five themes. A mind-map depiction of the themes is presented as **Figure 1**.

Here, the results are reported in terms of the career adaptability resources posited in the CCT (i.e., concern, control, curiosity, and confidence). To conceptually enrich the interpretation, the results are reported in terms of the PWF with respect to work fulfilling needs of survival and power, social connection, and self-determination (i.e., relatedness, autonomy, competence).

Career Adaptabilities

Concern for the future, sense of control, curiosity of opportunities, and confidence in adapting to future occupations are four career adaptabilities (Savickas, 2013) and each appeared within the interviews when the researcher asked participants to describe their current post-retirement employment situation and future plans. Participant #009 was particularly clear on the theme of adapting by stating that "you adapt or you don't survive". Considering retirement as a career transition for each of the participants who returned to paid employment, participants such as #003 stated reasons such as "social interactivity keeping you healthy and active" while participant #005 believed that "contributing to the workforce is about self-worth".

Concern

Keeping busy was a strong need that ran through many of the interviews, making it one of the first initial codes used by the researcher to categorize transcripts. Over half of the participants admitted to 'semi-retiring' in that they did retire from their full time employment but immediately went looking for work again as they didn't want to stop. Three of these participants with ages ranging between 61 and 70 are now working full time hours as high school teachers and a quote from one of them (participant #016) sums up the sentiment they all expressed regarding the reason to keep working. "Unless you're really committed to retiring and retire. I don't know if people really want to retire when they do".

Regarding concerns for the future, participant #005 who is a recently retired high school teacher, expressed worry that her entry into retirement would stop opportunities for her to "grow as a person" both professionally and socially. This fear has made the participant more determined to build on her confidence in adapting to future opportunities or occupations. Participant #016 who is a retiree that returned to employment as a high school teacher noted that many of the younger teachers he works with "are insular and think they know it all". Instead of arguing against this attitude and showing concern, the participant decided to adapt to the situation and understand how better to approach his teaching colleagues as peers.

Future plans were addressed to participants to gauge how strong their motivation was in regards to planning future use of their skills and experience. Participants such as #011 spoke of having "simplified the goals section" of their life in retirement and would rather react to a situation as it occurs. With a third of the participants identifying previous work within a Christian ministry, participants such as #013 stated that his faith would lead him in future decisions and "will not worry himself into an early grave as he has seen others do".

Curiosity

The curiosity of opportunities was strongly shown by many of the participants in their spoken desires to keep learning new skills. The retired teachers or retirees who returned to teaching were the most vocal during their interviews when the question of further learning opportunities was broached. Participant #009 was open to learning further skills in teaching but not "go out of my way to do something that will be a waste on me". He made this statement when explaining that he believed additional skills training was better suited to his younger colleagues as he'd already been through this same training over and over again.

Computer skills in particular were highlighted as a necessity with participant #005 believing "you must be computer literate" as it "keeps you in good stead with work related researching" and participant #001 acknowledged that though he is concerned that he is not up to date on computer skills, he understands it is a necessity for him to learn as part of his role as a teacher. Informal learning by gathering skills and knowledge via working with colleagues was also highlighted by a number of participants with participant #010 interested in learning new skills but preferably in a work environment where she can actively learn from other workmates instead of attending a course. This participant has

learnt from younger workmates and reciprocated by passing on her experience in a "give and take" gesture. Participant #005 also acknowledged that she enjoys working with younger colleagues in her post-retirement sales role as they have various experiences in the workplace and she "likes to learn from them". Participant #014 saw retirement as being a chance to try different things and do what he wants to do. This focus leads into the fourth adaptability of control.

Control

All participants were asked how much control they felt they had over their retirement lives, with responses ranging from control over finances, time flexibility to family situations. The majority of participants responded that they felt they had a fair amount of control over the course their retirement path followed, though there were a couple of participants who did not. In particular, participant #010 stated that at her current age there were a lot of outside influences such as family that gave her a lot of responsibility but not really any sense of control. Similar to the first explored theme of Motives (to re-enter Workforce), there were a large number of responses that referred to the reasons for re-employment being due to having control over personal timetables and enjoying a flexibility not experienced pre-retirement.

Participant #011 enjoys having the flexibility to work to the hours he wants now with no pressing obligations while participant #012 initially retired due to health issues but decided to only semi-retire from a high level corporate career. Moving into consulting work gave him the freedom to still work in his area of expertise but not have the stress of tight schedules and heavy responsibilities that were experienced beforehand. Participant #011 also spoke of the necessity to adapt to his post-retirement employment due to financial reasons but added that he still wanted control because "when you get past your 60's, there are private entitlements that you're entitled to and mine is to keep my privacy and basically run my life as I want to at this particular time." This statement also highlights the beliefs and values of this participant and leads into the last theme explored for this research, that is, how retirees can be a benefit to the workforce.

Confidence

Confidence was explored in depth with each of the interview participants through questioning that focused on their personal belief in their abilities, how it motivated them to return to employment, and also how they persevere in any setbacks to their post-retirement employment and goals.

Participants expressed how they perceived the younger generation would view them as work colleagues. Responses focused on a concern that there would be an ageism issue directed at them by these colleagues. Participant #014, a retired teacher, personally believed that younger workers want things done quickly, which is not how he acts now as a retiree. He believed he would clash with the younger generation if he had to work with them because of this reason. Participant #002 related her fear of having younger colleagues believe she was only working again due to financial hardship and that she would be seen as "elderly". Participant #004 admitted that after retirement

from his work as a pastor he had investigated out of interest, whether it was viable to return to his first career path within the electrical industry. When advised that he would have to undergo further training he decided that being a "white haired apprentice" turned him away from the idea. This same participant though also spoke of his sense of worth and of feeling comfortable in being himself when saying he "Doesn't believe in trying to act young when you're not. Comes across as artificial".

The worth of their skills and abilities in the workforce was explored. Participant #005, though very confident in her abilities, admitted that 12 months after retirement, her confidence level is probably lower and that others would judge her ability if she returned to classroom teaching. Similar to this statement, participant #013 also has faith in his skills and abilities but believed that if he returned to his first career as a mechanic, he would not be quick enough to pick up the needed updated skills and that it would be "too stressful and time consuming". Past experience tainted the thoughts of another participant who believed that Australia had the attitude of not being interested in employing a person in their 60's. This experience led the participant to work in the UK for a number of years after retirement, where he felt himself and his skills were more accepted. Another interesting comment was made by participant #010 in saying that with all the various jobs she has completed either paid or voluntary over the years, she did not realize that these could all be collated into her résumé or curriculum vitae. This admission, illustrated that she did not recognize the amount of skills she already possessed and of which would be of interest to an employer. Besides a personal non-recognition of skills, a fear of being seen as lesser than others was also highlighted by a considerable number of participants with the following statement particularly descriptive in explaining the underlying worry. "If they hit me with technical questions, I would have a great deal of trouble and they would look at me and think I was nothing" (participant #015).

When focusing on the motivations to succeed in their post-retirement work and how they keep a self-belief in their abilities, there was a range of responses from participants. Participant #014 expressed his excitement for the volunteer and paid employment work he does, as it gives him a feeling that his skills and abilities are contributing to the community in a positive and helpful way. Participant #001 who had previously explained his frustration at being "overlooked" by colleagues, interestingly provided an explanation to how he does maintain his self-belief in his abilities. "People still keep expecting me to fall off the perch, not literally as in dying but as in retiring. I have no intention of doing that". This participant felt that everyone just expected him to give up and go away into retirement. His frustration in this constant attitude toward himself (whether perceived or not) makes him more determined to stay and show everyone how wrong they are about him, as he knows he has the ability and skill to succeed. This determined attitude or stubbornness fed his confidence.

Psychology of Working Framework

With the primary aim of discerning evidence of career adaptability now complete we turn to the paradigmatic PWF with

the aim of revealing evidence of working as a means of fulfilling psychological needs.

Survival and Power

Consistent with Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] (2013a) research that found financial reasons for returning to work in Australian retirees over 45 years of age, the current research affirmed financial exigencies in this much older cohort. Though a number of participants stated that they received a minimal pension or had a small "nest egg" they depended on (i.e., savings, superannuation), it was of interest to find that only six of the twenty-two retiree participants clearly identified financial concerns as a motive for re-seeking employment. Participant #003 spoke of "still working to provide financially... to keep control" while participant #002 was concerned about a dwindling nest egg and not being eligible for full government assistance due to assets. Participant #003 explained further that he did not wish to continue working but it was required at this time to fulfill the retirement plans both he and his wife had currently on hold. At the other end of the scale in regards to financial motives there was one participant who identified time flexibility over money as the main motivation while another stated that "financial need not be the important issue" and is happy to live a life of small expenses and happier for it.

The National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre surveyed mature age Australians about their experiences and perceptions of age discrimination in the labor market (Adair et al., 2013) with the fear of age discrimination and age stereotypes being highlighted as the main perceived threats. Hippel (2011) argued that a person does not necessarily have to believe a stereotype is personally true for it to create a threat to their self-belief or self-efficacy. With this in mind and with reference to the research question asking to what extent friends, family, colleagues, and mass media influence a retired person's perceived capabilities and interest in returning to work, the research identified where real or perceived threats became apparent in many of the participants' interview comments. With the initial codes of Dislikes, Frustration, Regrets, Worth and Worries/Concerns being associated with these comments, they were collated under the overall theme of Negative Feelings.

Social Connection and Relatedness

When participants were asked to what extent family and friends influenced their confidence and decision making, there was a strong leaning toward the attitude of "putting the family before yourself" as participant #010 explained. As a single parent, participant #011 spoke of how he took a large pay cut and left a high-end corporate life for a career that followed a more flexible path that accommodated his family commitments. This path followed him until retirement and now he works very flexible hours as a handyman so as to be available for his now adult children when needed. Similarly, participant #006 also explained both her and her husband made decisions on where to live in retirement based on the needs of their adult children. This line of thinking ran through a number of participant interviews, highlighting the strong family commitment many retirees factor into their living situation, which of course would

also impact on what type of post-retirement employment they aimed for. Children were not the only family members that retirees considered in their retirement plans though. Participant #009 plans to soon look after his wife's parents in a shared living arrangement, while participant #013 explained that his initial responsibility when he retired was to care for his elderly widowed father. These examples of family commitment illustrate that family, no matter what generation can impact greatly on the decisions of retirees and can impact on their motivation and decisions when looking at re-employment options.

Many of the participants also spoke of the social aspect of their work and acknowledged it as something they missed initially at retirement and became a strong motivator for them to stay active. Participant #008 did not miss the pressure or responsibilities of her previous management job but did miss the public customer service side of her job immensely. Within a few days of retiring this participant was actively looking for volunteer work and found a club that she could become a part of. A number of years later, this participant is still actively involved in the management side of the club and appreciates the constant support from her social and volunteer circles. Participant #011 spoke about self-responsibility and referred to the social aspect as most important in providing motivation to keep working as well as being available to provide advice if required. Similar in providing advice, participant #004 hopes to open up communication and foster a grandparent/grandchild relationship with the younger generation that he ministers too in a voluntary capacity. In each of these situations, the participant has seen the social element outweigh any other motive to continue working into retirement.

Autonomy

Frustration with their current situation was a strong feeling that surfaced in a small number of the interviews, particularly amongst the male retirees interviewed. Financial, as mentioned under the Motivation theme was one cause of frustration but a more insidious issue was that of not feeling their worth and their past experience not being acknowledged. As a highly qualified and experienced teacher, participant #001 described in detail how he felt in his post-retirement teaching role at a school by stating that "I'm sort of stuck in the predicament where I'm enjoying what I'm doing here but only half my skills are being tapped into". Feeling there is no way to fix this issue of being overlooked, this participant expressed how "fed up" he was in doing courses and burning himself out, with no promotional outcomes. Similarly, participant #009 strongly believes he was considered an "old grump" at his final school, which caused him to make the drastic decision to retire out of anger. This issue was linked back by the participant during the interview to a sense of frustration he felt at the time within the school and one he regretted following into the path of retirement. In both accounts, these participants highlighted the dislikes, regrets and frustrations they experienced as older workers and how their personal feelings of worth were shaken due to how they felt their colleagues treated them. "Initially retired due to not feeling appreciated and validated" (participant #009). Self-responsibility with a job that gave a flexible timetable attracted participant #011 to continue with some form of employment after retirement.

Both of these examples highlighted personal for autonomy over financial needs as the motivation to work post-retirement.

Six of the participants worked solely as volunteers with no financial incentive and with none of them identifying financial concerns. A participant who volunteers his time as a retired pastor stated that the small pension he does receive is seen "as a bonus" and not what he relies on solely. Instead of the financial benefits, it was more about the idea of control being the motivation and he saw retirement as the chance for leaving behind the feeling of compulsion and now allowing himself to be involved "when he wants and because he decided to". Many of the participants expressed the desire of selecting work in retirement that gave them the flexibility or control over when and where they worked with participant #011 best describing the decision as being able to enjoy work that is now "more comfortable and you don't have people breathing down the back of your neck".

Competence

With a father "who grew up in the Depression and made do", participant #013 explained his attitude toward always recycling and reusing resources being the link to his feeling of still wanting to be active in retirement and reuse the abilities he has. Participant #012 who is an industrial chemist and engineer that moved into senior management then consulting roles stated that from experience he believed that anyone in consulting work had to have a very clear understanding of their industry or "they won't be asked again". Initially after retiring he was "headhunted" by corporations for his technical expertise that even after 25 years he still found "was fresh" in regards to his skills and knowledge. Participant #007 had a similar experience post-retirement in that his previous high level management work in Information Technology and the Finance industry made him a sought after trouble-shooter consultant for corporations and government agencies. In both these examples, the participants' experience and knowledge was still relevant to their respective industries and an asset to the following generation. Participant #013 also follows these examples by stating that he "sees the younger generation bringing the enthusiasm and technology… and he brings experience and knowledge".

Transferring previous skills into a new career path post-retirement was also highlighted by a selection of participants. In particular, participant #005 now works post-retirement as a part-time salesperson for a well-known kitchen appliance brand but previously to this her work as a high school teacher focused on home economics and catering subjects. During the interview with the researcher, the participant acknowledged that she was carrying on her teaching specialty into her new sales work without having realized it. Again, this example shows how industry skills and experience are still relevant into retirement and sought after by the workforce.

While speaking of their career histories, all participants whether they were aware or not, automatically included an explanation of their work ethic with responses including terms such as "self-worth", "staying focused", "responsible", "you adapt" and "good communication". Participant #013 mentioned that his early career life in the military prepared him "to make sacrifices and not be selfish" which he sees as an advantage he

has over the younger generation. The majority of participants spoke of experience being a major advantage they had in regards to their previous careers and many have been involved in and seen "huge changes in technology". Communication and people skills were also mentioned as highly valuable by a number of participants when noting their worry about the younger generations. Participant #010 highlighted that younger colleagues she worked with "did not know how to approach people" and she believed she could teach them by example. All of these competencies mentioned by participants are writ large in the literature on employability as being in demand in the workforce (Rothwell, 2015).

DISCUSSION

This research discerned a group of retirees' reasons to re-engage in working, to seek "rehirement". The motives for a retiree to re-enter the workforce, the negative feeling they experienced during this life transition, the self-efficacy issues they now experience, how they adapt to this new stage of their life and finally what benefits they bring to the workforce. The research found participants expressed the need to be re-hired was about keeping busy and wanting to experience a feeling of self-worth. For these research participants, a post-retirement job represented a chance to contribute to society, interact with co-workers and/or keep their minds and bodies active. In this way, the current study found results that are consistent with the argument that working meets psychological needs, as posited in the PWF (Blustein, 2006, 2013). As for the primary objective, this study reveals the presence of the four career adaptability resources with retirees.

Methodological Trustworthiness and Limitations

This qualitative study used thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to investigate career adaptability in a bounded sample of retirees who had returned to work. The design and analytic protocol of this study ensures trustworthiness with respect to the criteria of sound qualitative research according to Morrow (2005). For the sake of establishing credibility of the results, this study followed the published and established protocol for thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The iterative process of discussions between the three authors (i.e., 1 with 2, and 2 with 3) during the coding and development of themes ensured that the findings were credible and dependable. This iterative process operationalized an audit, following the recommendations by Yardley (2007).

With respect to transferability of the findings, it is important to note that the participants were relatively well resourced with respect to capital—financial, social, and psychological. Therefore, the results of this study should not be taken as transferable to retirees who lack such capital. Thus, the results may be used to inform considerations of the experiences of retirees who return to work several years after their separation from the full-time workforce and who enjoy a relatively secure financial and social status.

Implications for Theory and Research

Exploring retirement from the perspective CCT (Savickas, 2005, 2013) is novel, if not ironic, because career theories are predominantly focused on career in the traditional sense (i.e., a person's working life) and not so much retirement, which is the transition representative of the putative final stage in a career, namely, disengagement/decline (Super, 1980). The findings of this research add to current body of empirical research that pertains to the notion of career adaptability in the CCT (Savickas, 2013). The participants expressed concern with respect to their future; they expressed control with respect to keeping active and engaged; they expressed curiosity with respect to learning new skills and knowledge; and, they expressed confidence in knowing that they could make a positive contribution. Thus, the current study provides evidence that career adaptability is not only a psychological dimension of emerging adults and mid-career adults in the workplace. This research indicates that career adaptability may be a life-long psychological resource for all people interested in working. Finding manifestations of career adaptability in retirees demonstrates its potential as a developmental theory (Savickas, 2002) that conceptually challenges current conceptualizations of the stage disengagement/decline.

The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS; Savickas and Porfeli, 2012) has been designed specifically to align with career adaptability as defined in the CCT. However, extant research into career adaptability and its measurement is focused predominantly on youth and relatively younger adults, and not retirees. Given this limitation, the findings of this study are reason to explore the psychometric properties of the CAAS in older adults, both those in the transition of retirement and those returning to work after retiring. Such research may provide evidence of convergence with other psychometric measures that tap psychological dimensions of retirement, such as the Retirement Resources Inventory (Leung and Earl, 2012) or the Transition to Retirement Questionnaire (Maggiori et al., 2014). For example, measures of social support in the Resources Retirement Inventory may moderate a relationship between Career Adapt-Ability and engagement in bridge employment. Alternatively, there may be different levels of Career Adapt-Ability within the different types of retirees (e.g., Adventurers, Retreaters) differentiated by the Transition to Retirement Questionnaire.

Career adaptability can be conceptually associated with the notion of employability (Fugate et al., 2004; Rothwell, 2015) and intrapreneurship (Di Fabio, 2014). Although a retiree may want to decent work, his or her desire may not correspond with his or her employability in the labor market at any point in time, particularly given issues of age-related biases (Guilbert et al., 2015). Thus, it is appropriate to investigate if the factors that constitute young workers' employability are similar to the factors for older workers. Accordingly, exploring the measurement properties of scales of employability (e.g., Fugate and Kinicki, 2008; Rothwell et al., 2008, 2009) across different age groups may bear conceptual and pragmatic fruits.

Senescence is associated with changes in cognitive performance, which has been highlighted by PWF scholars as an issue of concern for retaining older workers in the labor market (Sterns and Sterns, 2013). Although, there is some debate about the conceptualization and measurement of emotional intelligence (Mayer et al., 2008), there is an emerging body of research that reveals relations between academic cognitive performance and emotional intelligence (Qualter et al., 2012; Perera, 2015). Given the association between career adaptability and emotional intelligence (Coetzee and Harry, 2014) it is tempting to speculate that emotional intelligence may have a compensatory effect on cognitive decline older workers'. Indeed, there is a promising program of vocational psychology research that demonstrates that emotional intelligence contributes above and beyond cognitive ability to resilience (Di Fabio and Saklofske, 2014; Di Fabio, 2015) and career decision-making (Di Fabio and Kenny, 2011; Di Fabio et al., 2013; Di Fabio and Palazzeschi, 2014) in younger people. Thus, there is scope to explore how best to utilize older workers' emotional intelligence to enhance their employability in association with resilience and career decision-making.

Implications for Practice and Policy

Employability is of central concern to career development practitioners and policy makers (Guilbert et al., 2015) and there is scope to design programs to assist retiree job seekers to recognize, rebuild, and reuse their expertise to refresh the labor market. Such interventions may be incorporated in retirement planning that takes a psychological perspective, not just a financial perspective (e.g., Donaldson et al., 2010; Adams and Rau, 2011). Career intervention programs could be developed to incorporate relevant constructs, such as career adaptability, so that employment and training services, and financial planning services, can appropriately support retiree job seekers (Earl et al., 2015). Despite the ostensible benefits of planning for quality of life in retirement (Adams and Rau, 2011), some caution is warranted because there is evidence that neither pre-retirement nor post-retirement planning contributes to adjustment (Donaldson et al., 2010).

It is important to note that the developmental needs of younger workers and students are different to the needs of older workers and students. Therefore, PWF scholars have argued that holistic career development and employment services for adult workers should be visible, accessible, and designed for their specific needs (Juntunen and Bailey, 2013). Indeed, there is a lack of specificity evident in the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015). The wording of the Goals is sufficient to cover older people with respect to diminishing poverty (i.e., Goal 2) and improving city design (Goal 11); however, Goal 8 (viz., Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full, and productive employment and decent work for all) does not specifically address the unique needs of older workers. The wording is directed at young people and people with a disability. Perhaps, as the Goals are progressively implemented by various nations, older workers will be given more of a presence in subsequent revisions of their wording, particularly as governments clamber to fill gaps in the labor market.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that it is possible for an aged person to continue to be concerned and curious about work, in control of opportunities and resources, and confident that they may thrive and make an authentic contribution. We suggest that the notion of career adaptability can be an important focus of research and development so as to foster retirees' healthy re-engagement in the world of work.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors were involved in conceptualization of the research problem, research design, and interpretation of data. JL and PM collected data from interviews with participants, and HP acted as the auditor of results and interpretation. All authors contributed to the final writing process.

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Assessing Workplace Relational Civility (WRC) with a New Multidimensional "Mirror" Measure

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This article first introduces a new psychological construct and then presents the psychometric properties of a new multidimensional measure for assessing workplace relational civility (WRC). This new self-report mirror measure has two specular sections (Part A—Me with others; Part B—Others with me) that can assess individuals' relational patterns regarding civility and that can help reduce the bias in the assessment process. The results of exploratory factor analysis revealed a factor structure with three robust dimensions [relational decency (RD), relational culture (RCu), and relational readiness (RR)] exhibiting good values of internal consistency. Confirmatory factor analysis showed, in turn, a good fit of the model to the data. The correlations between the sections of the measure and the 11 instruments used were significant and in the expected directions. These results suggest that this new, brief mirror measure for assessing WRC can be easily employed in different organizational contexts to open different typologies of actions on the basis of the three dimensions, thereby facilitating the construction of a safer and more decent relational work environment.

Keywords: workplace civility, decent work, relationships and work, relational civility, relational theory, relational decency, relational culture, relational readiness

INTRODUCTION

Positive psychology is being used more frequently these days to improve the quality of work life and organizational effectiveness. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) maintain that the purpose of positive psychology is "to begin to catalyze a change in the focus of psychology from pre-occupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities" (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5). Positive psychology aims at helping individuals develop their potential and make the best choices for their personal and professional lives (Seligman, 2002; Ryff and Singer, 2008; Waterman et al., 2010; Savickas, 2011; Guichard, 2013).

In other words, positive psychology helps individuals develop effective and lifelong self and relational management (Di Fabio, 2015a) across the numerous personal and professional transitions and complex challenges of the 21st century (Blustein, 2011; Di Fabio and Maree, 2013; Di Fabio, 2014a; Di Fabio and Kenny, 2015).

This effective and lifelong self and relational management (Di Fabio and Kenny, 2016) can impact directly and indirectly on the sphere of professional life and help develop and improve psychological resources and talents. It can also promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equality, security, and human dignity (ILO, 1999). According to the United Nations (1948), everyone who works has the right to just and

favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection (United Nations, 1948). The concept of decent work is thus characterized by dignity and decency in the workplace, which are part and parcel of equality of opportunity, social protection, social security, and quality of work (Faioli, 2009). Quality of work, in particular, is the basis of decent work and can be linked to the quality of relationships in the workplace; in other words, decent work is linked to positive relational outcomes (Blustein et al., 2016; Di Fabio and Kenny, 2016; Kenny et al., 2016). It then follows that quality of work and quality of relationships influence each other. In fact, some authors see work and relationships as major social constructs (Blustein, 2011; Richardson, 2012).

The relational theory of working (Blustein, 2011) provides a framework for understanding how working is embedded in external and internal relational contexts and how it can be viewed as an inherently relational act. Thus, on the one hand, the psychology-of-working framework seeks to explore the impact of intrapsychic, relational, social, economic, political, and historical factors on people's work lives, and, on the other hand, it seeks to identify three human needs that working optimally can fulfill: the need for survival and power, the need for social connection, and the need for self-determination (Blustein, 2006, 2011). The theory also emphasizes the importance of creating optimal conditions for the development of adaptive relationships among peers and supervisors at work (Blustein, 2011): relationships that need to be characterized by civility.

Traditionally, the work and organizational literature has focused on workplace incivility (WI) rather than civility at work. Andersson and Pearson (1999) define WI as "low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms of mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others" (p. 457). Cortina et al. (2001) refer to it as a form of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace characterized by violence, aggression, bullying, tyranny, harassment, deviance, and injustice (Cortina et al., 2001). Other authors talk about physical forms of aggression (VandenBos and Bulatao, 1996; Griffin et al., 1998; Leather et al., 1999) or psychological forms of aggression that intentionally cause injury (Baron and Neuman, 1996; Folger and Baron, 1996; Neuman and Baron, 1997; Glomb, 1998).

This article seeks to go beyond the conceptualization of incivility at work and to focus rather on the utility of models that include positivity and early interventions as forms of prevention (Hage et al., 2007; Kenny and Hage, 2009). These are more effective when efforts to increase resources and competencies (Boyatzis et al., 2002, 2015a; Di Fabio, 2006; Boyatzis and Saatcioglu, 2008; Di Fabio and Bernaud, 2008; Boyatzis, 2009; Di Fabio and Palazzeschi, 2012, 2015a, 2016a; Di Fabio et al., 2013; Di Fabio and Saklofske, 2014a,b; Di Fabio and Bucci, 2015) are combined with efforts to decrease risks, in line with recent advances reported in the positive psychology literature (Di Fabio and Kenny, 2012a,b; Kenny et al., 2014). So, given the importance

of the concepts of relationality and civility, we move from the idea of decent work and well-being at work—through relationality—to the idea of respect and caring for the self and others and the relationships between people (Blustein, 2006; Di Fabio and Maree, 2012, 2016; Maree, 2013; Di Fabio, 2015b; Di Fabio and Bucci, 2016a). To this end, we developed a new construct: the relational civility (RC) construct.

RELATIONAL CIVILITY: CONSTRUCT DEFINITION

Civility has been defined in different ways, but almost all definitions state that this construct is characterized by respect and courtesy and a general awareness of the rights of others (Elias, 1982; Carter, 1998).

The *Random House Dictionary* defines civility as "courtesy and politeness toward fellow human beings" (2015). Civility has also been defined as a source of power, a means of gaining favor and asserting cultural superiority, attaining social advantage (Elias, 1982; Morris, 1996), and "the sum of the many sacrifices we are called to make for the sake of living together" (Carter, 1998, p. 11). Some researchers stress the virtue aspects of the moral implications of civility (Elias, 1982; Carter, 1998) while others emphasize the "way of signaling the existence of self-control" in civility (Wilson, 1993, p. 83). Most researchers agree, however, that the need for civility becomes greater when the interaction among people increases in complexity and frequency (Goffman, 1967; Elias, 1982; Chen and Eastman, 1997; Carter, 1998). To paraphrase Blustein (2006), we could say that civility is intrinsically relational.

We developed the concept of RC on these premises as a form of relational style characterized by respect and concern for the self and others, interpersonal sensitivity, personal education, and kindness toward others. RC also includes civil behaviors such as treating others with dignity and respecting social norms to facilitate peaceful and productive cohabitation.

RC underlines the importance of interpersonal behavior and is based on the assumption that people with their own expectations, cognitive schemas, and cultural backgrounds interact and influence each other. In other words, RC is a dynamic concept that can be adapted to different contexts. For example, we can refer to RC at work, RC in sport, RC in academia, and so on. This construct can thus be adapted to many spheres in our lives.

The definition of the construct covers many factors related to civility and many factors related to relationality which can be grouped into three principal dimensions: relational decency (RD), relational culture (RCu), relational readiness (RR).

RD, a new concept in the psychology literature, is inspired by positive psychology (Fredrickson and Losada, 2005) and concerns optimal relational functioning characterized by decency in relationships, respect for the self and for others, being able to express opinions freely, being assertive, and being tactful. Having a high level of RD means being able to understand the relational dynamics in a situation and integrating them in order to devise and promote constructive relationships. In other words, RD enables individuals to have positive and decency-based

relationships characterized by assertiveness, freedom to express ideas, respect for others, and tact in sustaining convictions. RD can thus contribute to relational well-being and happiness.

RCu, another new concept in the psychology literature, is inspired by relational cultural theory (Miller, 1976; Miller et al., 2004). It concerns the complexity of human relationships in terms of connection and disconnection and also recognizes and explores the social implications of psychology theory and the influence of culture on the quality and nature of relationships and the subsequent effect on healthy coexistence (McCauley, 2013). RCu thus comes from a distance and can vary across cultures. People with good RCu are able to communicate with kindness and deal with others in a polite manner through effective diversity management (Harris et al., 2013; Di Fabio, 2016b).

RR, a further new concept in the psychology literature concerns speed in understanding the feelings of others and showing proactive sensibility. People with good IR are thus able to read the emotions of others easily and to demonstrate delicacy, empathy, compassion, and attention to their reactions.

RC can be seen as a collection of relational factors that are central to developing satisfactory relationships with others and promoting well-being among people.

The need for greater civility is evident when interactions among people become more complex requiring them to attune their behavior to that of others (Andersson and Pearson, 1999) in order to prevent misunderstandings (Elias, 1982) and to promote well-being (Boyatzis, 2009). In line with these premises, the present study aimed at presenting a much-needed new multidimensional measure to assess workplace relational civility (WRC).

Differences and Similarities With Similar Constructs

When developing a new construct it is essential to compare it—in this case WRC—with other similar constructs in order to identify and analyze the similarities and the differences.

In the field of work and organizational psychology, constructs similar to WRC are organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and prosocial organizational behavior (POB). First of all, we can speculate that WRC is a prerequisite for prosocial and citizenship behaviors; in fact, when there is a high level of WRC, it can be assumed that there will also be high levels of prosocial and citizenship behaviors. Because WRC precedes these other two constructs and is necessary for the development of healthy attachments, some specific differences must exist.

OCB is defined as "an individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization" (Organ, 1988, p. 4). Here, the variables that may most frequently overlap between WRC and OCB are the courtesy, the altruism, and the civic virtues.

Regarding the courtesy virtue of the OCB, emphasis is placed on keeping colleagues and superiors informed about organizational matters and working conditions. The courtesy virtue of the WRC, on the other hand, seems to be broader and to concern a general lifestyle and consequently a way of being, a relational modality geared to education, kindness, and courtesy

in the workplace. The courtesy of the WRC may thus subsume the courtesy of the OCB.

There could also be similarities between the RCu factor of the WRC and the altruism factor of the OCB. RCu is a relational style that is polite, kind, and courteous, and because of the high level of education and politeness of people with a high level of RCu, it is generally easy for them to behave altruistically. In OCB, the altruism factor is restricted to helping people in their work activities whereas in RCu, it is more specifically focused on being comfortable with and recognizing other people as human beings. Civic virtue (CV), defined as having an interest in the organization as a whole and a willingness to participate actively in its governance, may have links with some aspects of RR, particularly regarding interest in others. CV can also be linked to RCu in respect of the subcategory of level of education, which, in turn, is linked to CV.

POB, defined as the behavior of a member of an organization who provides services to co-workers, customers, teams, or the organization itself (McNeely and Meglino, 1994) on a voluntary basis (Clary et al., 1998), can be considered part of civility at work. However, POB seems to refer to relevant aspects of work and not necessarily to relationships in general, unlike WRC. Also, the self-improvement aspect of POB can be linked to some aspects of WRC, particularly in relation to the evolution of the self; but POB does not include the ability to express opinions and ideals and a decency-based relationship at work, which are aspects of WRC.

WRC goes beyond the concepts of citizenship and prosocial behaviors as it is a dynamic concept that combines a sense of relationality (Blustein, 2011) and respectivity (Maree, 2012) in civility at work (Di Fabio, 2015b). WRC refers to behavior in the workplace that is decent, prosocial, polite, careful, and that involves relational style patterns that are in line with one's involvement with others. In other words, we could say that WRC is positioned at the meta-level compared to these above constructs.

WORKPLACE RELATIONAL CIVILITY (WRC): SCALE DEVELOPMENT

In developing the WRC construct, we considered the specific components of workplace behavior discussed earlier.

These components are:

1. Relational decency (RD) at work (decency in relationships, respect for the self and others, assertiveness, ability to express convictions, relational capacity);
2. Relational culture (RCu) at work (politeness, kindness, high level of education, courteousness);
3. Relational readiness (RR) at work (sensibility towards others, ability to read the emotions of others, concern for others, delicacy, empathy, compassion, and attention to the reactions of others).

In devising the process of measurement, we selected various items for each subcategory of our theoretical model. The response format adopted was a Likert scale with five answer options (1 = not at all; 2 = a little; 3 = somewhat; 4 = a lot; 5 = a great deal).

Based on the assumption that WRC is relational, we developed a new "mirror" kind of measurement that assesses a concept from one's own perspective and, at the same time, assesses the same concept from the perspective of others. In other words, the participants in the study were first asked to describe their relationship with others over the past 3 months, and then to respond to statements, with the same content, that describe the relationship of others with them over the same time period (the past 3 months). This kind of measurement enables a better assessment of the interpersonal patterns and identifies the discrepancies between how the subject looks at himself or herself during the interaction with others and how the subject views the other persons in their interaction with him or her. This "mirror" measurement can lead to a more balanced evaluation by helping to reduce bias in the assessment process. This kind of measurement can place a person in a position to reflect on his or her own actions and to analyze the behavior of others, thereby making him or her more aware of the relational dynamics.

A measure consisting of two specular parts (A and B) was developed. In the first phase of the study, we tested the factor structure of the preliminary version of the WRC scale. A convenience sample consisting of 80 students (60 women, 20 men) enrolled in various psychology courses at the University of Florence and 26 employees (12 women, 14 men) completed this preliminary version. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to verify the factor structure of the scale. Velicer's minimum average partial (MAP) criterion and the inspection of the scree plot suggested a three-factor solution for the two parts (A and B) of the measure. In order to obtain a clear, robust factor solution, and on the basis of the factor analysis criteria, we decided to eliminate the items with communalities under 0.30 and reached a version with 13 specular items for each part.

METHODS

Participants and Procedure
The participants in the study were 115 workers (79.1% male, 20.9% female) with a mean age of 43.96 years (*SD*, 12.74). The participants first completed the WRC scale and then, in order to assess some aspects of the concurrent validity of this new mirror measure, filled in 11 instruments that assessed similar as well as different constructs. All the instruments were administered in accordance with the norms regarding the privacy and anonymity of participants.

Written informed consent was received from each of participants after a full description of the study. The participants were told also that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time and that there would be no payment for participating. With regard to ethical standards for research, the study adhered to the latest version of the Declaration of Helsinki revised in Fortaleza [World Medical Association (WMA), 2013].

Measures
Workplace Relational Civility (WRC)
The WRC measure is a self-report mirror instrument of 26 items that assesses RC at work. The WRC measure has three dimensions: relational readiness (RR) at work, RCu at work, and

RD at work. The sum of these dimensions gives an overall score for WRC for each part (Part A and Part B). The response format adopted was a Likert scale with five responses (1 = not at all; 2 = a little; 3 = somewhat; 4 = a lot; 5 = a great deal) (see Appendix).

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB; Podsakoff et al., 1990)
The OCBs measure is an instrument that assesses the dimensions of civic virtue defined as "behavior on the part of an individual that indicates that he/she responsibly participates in, is involved in, or is concerned about the life of the company" (Podsakoff et al., 1990, p. 115). Podsakoff et al. (1990) developed a 24-item instrument with five dimensions of OCB: altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue. Examples of these items: altruism "Helps others who have heavy work load"; conscientiousness "Attendance to work is above the norm"; sportsmanship "Always focuses on what's wrong, rather than the positive side"; courtesy "Takes steps to try to prevent problems with other workers," and civic virtue "Attends functions that are not required, but help the company's image." A seven-point scale was used in the OCB with response categories ranging from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree). In this study, we used the Italian version of the measure (Di Fabio and Palazzeschi, 2016b), which showed good values of internal consistency (altruism = 0.84; conscientiousness = 0.81; sportsmanship = 0.84; courtesy = 0.83; civic virtue = 0.80).

Prosocial Organizational Behaviors (POB; McNeely and Meglino, 1994)
McNeely and Meglino (1994) developed a measure of POB asking respondents to classify items into one of the three categories of prosocial behavior. Based on this process, they selected the 20 items with the lowest level of ambiguity regarding the classification (McNeely and Meglino, 1994). These 20 items, used to evaluate prosocial behavior, were grouped into three main factors: Factor 1 = prosocial organizational behavior (e.g., "Speaks favorably about the organization to outsiders"); Factor 2 = role-prescribed prosocial behavior (e.g., "Arrives at work on time"); Factor 3 = prosocial individual behavior (e.g., "Assists co-workers or students with personal problems."). A five-point scale was used with response categories ranging from 1 = never to 5 = always. The psychometric properties of the Italian version of this measure used in this study were good (prosocial organizational behavior = 0.81; role-prescribed prosocial behavior = 0.84; prosocial individual behavior = 0.83; Di Fabio and Bucci, 2016b).

Intrapreneurial Self-Capital Scale (ISCS; Di Fabio, 2014b)
Intrapreneurial self-capital is defined as a core of individual intrapreneurial resources that are used to cope with career and life construction challenges and that include dimensions of core self-evaluation, hardiness, creative self-efficacy, resilience, goal mastery, decisiveness, and vigilance (Di Fabio, 2014b). The Intrapreneurial Self-Capital Scale (ISCS) was developed by Di Fabio (2014b) to measure the intrapreneurial self-capital construct. The ISCS uses a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree,

4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) and consists of 28 items (e.g., "I am able to deal with most of my problems," "I'm able to improve the ideas produced by others," "I'm able to achieve objectives despite obstacles," "One of my goals in training is to learn as much as I can"). In the present study, we used the Italian version of this measure, which showed good internal consistency ($a = 0.86$; Di Fabio, 2014b).

Psychological Self-Capital Questionnaire (PSQ; Luthans et al., 2007)

Psychological capital is a new construct measured with the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ). This questionnaire consisting of 24 items has four subscales: (1) hope (e.g., "I feel confident contributing to discussions about the organization's management"), (2) optimism (e.g., "I can think of many ways to reach my current work goals"), (3) optimism (e.g., "I'm optimistic about what will happen to me in the future regarding work"), and (4) resilience (e.g., "I usually take stressful things at work in my stride"). Each of these subscales has six items with response options on a six-point Likert scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to six (strongly agree). The PCQ has good psychometric properties also in the Italian version that was used in the present study: (hope = 0.75; efficacy = 0.78; resilience = 0.70; optimism = 0.77; the overall scale = 0.81; Alessandri et al., 2015).

Flourishing Scale (FS; Diener et al., 2010)

The Flourishing Scale is a self-report measure consisting of eight items that assesses respondents' self-perceived success in important areas of their lives such as relationships, self-esteem, purpose, and optimism. Examples of the items: "My social relationships are supportive and rewarding," "I lead a purposeful and meaningful life," "I am optimistic about my future." This scale provides a single total score (Diener et al., 2009). In this study, the Italian version of the scale was used ($a = 0.88$; Di Fabio, 2016a).

Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS; Cortina et al., 2001)

The Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS) is a seven-item scale that assesses the frequency of respondents' experiences of disrespectful, rude, or condescending behavior from supervisors or co-workers during the past five years (Cortina et al., 2001). Examples of the items: "Put you down or was condescending to you," "Doubted your judgment on matters over which you have responsibility," and "Paid little attention to or showed little interest in your opinion."

The response format is a five-point Likert scale ranging from one (never) to five (often). In this study, the Italian version of the scale was used ($a = 0.91$; Di Fabio and Ghizzani, 2010).

Positive Relational Management Scale (PRMS; Di Fabio, 2015b)

The Positive Relational Management Scale (PRMS) is a measure consisting of 12 items with responses on a five-point Likert scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). This scale assesses three dimensions (respect, caring, connection) and gives a total score. Examples of the items: respect: "I keep

a balance between respect for others and for myself"; caring: "I often take care of others"; connection: "I have good relationships with my family"). The psychometric properties of the scale are good also in its Italian version. (respect = 0.81; caring = 0.79; connection = 0.80; PRMS total = 0.84; Di Fabio, 2015b).

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985)

The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) is a self-report instrument that measures global life satisfaction. It consists of five items with responses on a seven-point Likert scale with higher values corresponding to a higher degree of life satisfaction. Examples of the items: "I am satisfied with my life," "The conditions of my life are excellent." The psychometric properties of the SWLS are good, with different studies reporting a unidimensional structure of the measure (Diener et al., 1985; Vera-Villarroel et al., 2012). In this study, the Italian version of the scale was used ($a = 0.85$; Di Fabio and Gori, 2015).

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965)

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) is a 10-item scale for assessing global self-esteem with the items answered on a four-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Examples of the items: "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself," "I have a positive attitude toward myself." The psychometric properties of the RSES have been reported as good in several studies (Corwyn, 2000). In this study, the Italian version of the scale was used ($a = 0.84$; Prezza et al., 1997).

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS; Zimet et al., 1988)

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) is a 12-item scale for assessing perceived social support with the items answered on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree that measures perceived support in three main domains: family, friends, and a significant other. Examples of the items: "My family works very hard to help me," "I can speak about my problems with my friends," "When I need someone, there is always a special person who stands by me." Higher scores indicate higher levels of perceived social support. The psychometric properties of the MSPSS have been reported as good in several studies with different samples (Zimet et al., 1988, 1990). In the present study, the Italian version of the scale was used and reported excellent internal consistency for the three factors: family ($\alpha = 0.91$), friends ($\alpha = 0.93$), and a significant other ($\alpha = 0.88$), and the total score ($\alpha = 0.92$; Di Fabio and Palazzeschi, 2015b).

Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire—Short-Form (TEIQue-SF; Petrides and Furnham, 2006; Cooper and Petrides, 2010)

The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) is a 153-item self-report measure that measures 15 dimensions, four factors, and a global trait for EI. The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire—Short form (TEIQue-SF) is a 30-item questionnaire also designed to measure global trait

emotional intelligence (trait EI). It is based on the full form of the TEIQue. Two items from each of the 15 dimensions of the TEIQue were selected for inclusion, based primarily on their correlations with the corresponding total dimension scores (Petrides and Furnham, 2006; Cooper and Petrides, 2010). The questionnaire provides a total score as well as scores for four principal dimensions: well-being (e.g., "I feel that I have a number of good qualities," "On the whole, I'm pleased with my life"), self-control (e.g., "I'm usually able to calm down quickly after I've got mad at someone," "I would describe myself as a calm person"), emotionality (e.g., "I often find it difficult to recognize what emotion I'm feeling," "I find it difficult to tell others that I love them even when I want to"), and sociability (e.g., "I can deal effectively with people," "If I wanted to, it would be easy for me to make someone angry"). The Italian version of the scale has been shown to have good internal consistency coefficients for well-being ($\alpha = 0.83$), sociability ($\alpha = 0.84$), self-control ($\alpha = 0.81$), emotionality ($\alpha = 0.82$), and for the total score ($\alpha = 0.85$; Di Fabio and Palazzeschi, 2011).

Data Analysis

Factor analysis was used to identify attachment dimensions, with the objective of assessing the validity of the hypothesized construct (WRC). A series of exploratory factor analyses (EFAs) together with maximum likelihood (ML) analyses were conducted to verify the factor structure of the WRC.

As suggested in most of the relevant literature, the number of components extracted was based on the percentage of variance accounted for, the Kaiser-Guttman method, and the scree plot (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994; Giannini et al., 2014).

We then performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and, to evaluate the model's goodness of fit, a number of indexes were used. Since the chi-square fit index depends on sample size (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003), two relative fit indexes were considered because they can generally be used in large as well as small samples: the TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index) and

the CFI (Comparative Fit Index; Bentler, 1990). Values of these indexes higher than 0.90 indicate satisfactory fit. In addition, the SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual) and the RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) were used because they are currently two of the most popular measures of model fit and provide fundamental indications of how well a proposed theory fits the data (Hooper et al., 2008; Giannini et al., 2011; Craparo et al., 2015; Di Fabio and Gori, 2015; Gori et al., 2015). Reliability for each scale was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1951), several aspects of concurrent validity were verified using Pearson's r coefficient, and statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS 18.0 and AMOS 6.0.

RESULTS

Construct Validity

Examination of the scree plot (Cattell, 1966), the percentage of variance accounted for, and the structure matrix (Horn, 1965; Zwick and Velicer, 1986; Glorfeld, 1995) indicated that as many as three factors should be retained for rotation. The results of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) (Promax rotation) showed a factor structure with three principal dimensions for both Part A and Part B of the WRC construct. So, on the basis of the factor analysis criteria, we extracted three factors accounting for 60.44% of the total variance for Part A (eigen-values > 1; 5.26, 1.51, 1,10), and, likewise, we extracted three factors accounting for 71.22% of the total variance for Part B (eigen-values > 1; 6.74, 1.37, 1.15). The factor structure matrix shows the three independent and specular factors of the two parts of the WRC construct (see **Table 1**).

In order to verify the factor structure, we performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on the basis of the EFA results that indicated three main factors. The goodness-of-fit indexes showed an excellent fit of the model to the data for Part A (see **Table 2**). As regards Part B, although the chi-square was significant ($p < 0.001$), and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and

TABLE 1 | Factor structure matrix for the two parts of WRC.

Items	WRC part A			Items	WRC part B		
	Relational readiness	Relational culture	Relational decency		Relational readiness	Relational culture	Relational decency
12	0.955			10	0.905		
13	0.823			12	0.840		
10	0.794			13	0.730		
9	0.393			9	0.624		
11	0.353			11	0.488		
6		0.932		6		0.898	
7		0.787		5		0.769	
5		0.472		7		0.753	
8		0.445		8		0.534	
2			0.806	1			0.829
1			0.651	4			0.726
4			0.650	2			0.714
3			0.580	3			0.545

the Comparative-Fit Index (CFI) showed acceptable values and confirmed the three-factor solution for Part B of the WRC, the value of the root mean error of approximation (RSMEA) indicated poor fit (see **Table 2**).

Reliability

The internal consistency of the WRC scale, calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, showed excellent internal coherence of the instrument for the total score of both Part A and Part B of the WRC (Part A, $a = 0.87$; Part B, $a = 0.92$). Cronbach's alphas for the three factors extracted for Part A were: Factor 1A = relational readiness ($a = 0.83$); Factor 2A = relational culture ($a = 0.76$); Factor 3A = relational decency ($a = 0.75$); while for Part B they were: Factor 1B = relational readiness ($a = 0.86$); Factor 2B = relational culture ($a = 0.88$); Factor 3B = relational decency ($a = 0.85$). Calculations of item-total correlation indicated that all the items correlated significantly and in a positive direction with the total score of both Part A and Part B of the WRC, with the correlations ranging from a minimum of 0.48 to a maximum of 0.78 for Part A and from a minimum of 0.55 to a maximum of 0.81 for Part B.

Convergent and Divergent Validity

In the present study, WRC showed strong correlations with the Italian version of the following measures: the OCBs scale, the POBs scale, the flourishing scale, the positive relational management scale, the intrapreneurial self-capital scale, and the psychological self-capital scale. Correlations between WRC and these instruments were positive and statistically significant, attesting to a good convergent validity (see **Table 3**). Also,

correlations between WRC and the other instruments described in the Measures Section of this article were in the expected directions and showed a good divergent validity of the WRC construct (see **Tables 4, 5**).

DISCUSSION

The aim of this article was to introduce the novel multidimensional construct of WRC on how individuals interface with and act toward others in the workplace, and also the construct's mode of assessment. Thanks to this mirror assessment procedure, people can describe how they used to relate to each other, and, at the same time, how others related to them in a work environment. This assessment procedure helps subjects reduce assessment bias and better evaluate their interpersonal style by identifying the discrepancies between how they look at themselves during interactions with others and how they view others during their interactions with them. This new way of measurement promotes the growth of an awareness process through the analysis of three main dimensions conceptualized as relational readiness (RR), RCu, and RD. These dimensions are globally related to an optimal range of relational functioning that identifies a level of growth and relational capacity that is characterized by decency in relationships, respect for the self and others, being able to express opinions freely, assertiveness, good taste, empathy, compassion, and awareness of the effect that their words can have on others. People with these characteristics are generally able to communicate with others with kindness and to attune their expressions and behaviors to those of others to promote a climate of mutual respect. WRC is thus important because it can promote a climate of decency, respect, and awareness between people, thereby inspiring others through civility (Boyatzis and McKee, 2006).

The results of this study showed good psychometric properties for the WRC instrument. In order to verify its dimensional structure, we carried out confirmatory factor analysis through structural equation modeling. On the basis of the results of the EFA and the CFA, the final model consisted of three independent, robust factors with a good fitting model for the two parts of the

TABLE 2 | Summary of CFA fit indices for WRC (Part A and Part B).

Sample ($n = 115$)	$\chi2/df$	TLI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA
WRC (Part A)	$1.14, p = 0.210$	0.977	0.982	0.033	0.038
WRC (Part B)	$1.93, p = 0.001$	0.915	0.932	0.046	0.096

TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, Comparative Fit Index; SRMR, Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation.

TABLE 3 | Summary of correlations among the two parts of WRC, OCB, and POB factors.

	Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)					Prosocial Organizational Behavior (POB)		
	Conscientiousness	Sportsmanship	Civic virtue	Courtesy	Altruism	POB	RPPB	PIB
Relational readiness	0.257**	−0.036	0.295**	0.216*	0.349**	0.312**	0.256**	0.194*
Relational culture	0.248**	0.124	0.213*	0.248**	0.298**	0.131	0.214*	0.014
Relational decency	0.317**	0.149	0.340**	0.378**	0.436**	0.312**	0.290**	0.244**
WRC part A	0.332**	0.082	0.345**	0.333**	0.438**	0.313**	0.309*	0.188*
Relational readiness	0.177	−0.062	0.151	0.131	0.173	0.389**	0.327**	0.289**
Relational culture	0.139	0.105	0.169	0.233*	0.203*	0.336**	0.380**	0.113
Relational decency	0.159	0.014	0.051	0.113	0.120	0.315**	0.314**	0.133
WRC part B	0.184*	0.017	0.144	0.181	0.191*	0.402**	0.392**	0.211*

**$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$. POB, Prosocial Organizational Behavior; RPPB, Role-Prescribed Prosocial Behavior; PIB, Prosocial Individual Behavior.

TABLE 4 | Summary of correlations among the two parts of WRC, ISC, PSC, F, TEIQue-SF, PSR.

	Intrapreneurial self-capital (ISC)	Psychological self-capital (PSC)	Flourishing (F)	Trait emotional intelligence questionnaire—SF	Positive relational management (PRM)
Relational readiness	0.450**	0.564**	0.403**	0.284**	0.372**
Relational culture	0.433**	0.452**	0.430**	0.289**	0.352**
Relational decency	0.440**	0.476**	0.512**	0.439**	0.435**
WRC part A	0.538**	0.614**	0.540**	0.403**	0.469**
Interpersonal readiness	0.305**	0.397**	0.351**	0.166	0.320**
Relational culture	0.465**	0.356**	0.420**	0.278**	0.330**
Relational decency	0.315**	0.334**	0.383**	0.193*	0.300**
WRC part B	0.413**	0.420**	0.442**	0.242**	0.365**

$**p < 0.01$; $*p < 0.05$.

instrument. In particular, the results showed that the SRMS and the RMSEA were generally below 0.05, except for the RMSEA value for Part B (i.e., 0.096). Regarding this RMSEA result, while some researchers (Browne and Cudeck, 1993; MacCallum et al., 1996) have used 0.01, 0.05, and 0.08 to indicate excellent, good and mediocre fit respectively, other researchers consider 0.10 as a reasonable cutoff for good versus poor fitting models if the other indexes used to verify the model fit are good or acceptable, which was the case in this study (Kenny et al., 2015). All the fit indexes indicated the goodness of the hypothesized model (Hu and Bentler, 1999) thus confirming the three-dimensional factorial structure. Reliability analysis showed values ranging from acceptable to excellent for all the factors in line with the following rules of George and Mallery (2003): "$\alpha > 0.9$ = Excellent, $\alpha > 0.8$ = Good, $\alpha > 0.7$ = Acceptable, $\alpha > 0.6$ = Questionable, $\alpha > 0.5$ = Poor, and $\alpha > 0.5$ = Unacceptable." The minimum value of alpha was for the Factor 3A = relational decency ($a = 0.75$), and even it was in the range between acceptable and good, also bearing in mind the restricted number of items for each factor.

Correlations between the two parts of the WRC construct and the measures used to verify some aspects of concurrent validity showed good values: all the relationships among the variables under investigation were in the right direction with the right significance.

In line with these results and in the spirit of positive psychology, we should talk about WRC rather than WI in order to promote effective and lifelong self and relational management (Di Fabio, 2015a) across the numerous personal and professional transitions and complex challenges of the 21st century (Blustein, 2011; Di Fabio and Maree, 2013; Di Fabio, 2014a; Di Fabio and Gori, 2016). Indeed, focusing on WRC gives significant value to the preventive approach in psychology (Hage et al., 2007; Kenny and Hage, 2009), specifically in endeavoring to increase resources and, at the same time, decrease risks. This new brief, mirror measure (WRC) thus promotes positive behavior in a framework of primary prevention (Hage et al., 2007; Kenny and Hage, 2009; Di Fabio and Kenny, 2015; Di Fabio et al., in press), and helps build a relational work environment that is safer and more decent.

TABLE 5 | Summary of correlations among the two parts of WRC, SWLS, RSES, MSPSS, WI.

	SWLS	RSES	MSPSS	WI
Relational readiness	0.299**	0.106	0.311**	−0.020
Relational culture	0.344**	0.230*	0.308**	−0.054
Relational decency	0.407**	0.204*	0.319**	−0.036
WRC part A	0.420**	0.210*	0.381**	−0.042
Interpersonal readiness	0.337**	0.013	0.202*	0.032
Relational culture	0.344**	0.175	0.137	−0.131
Relational decency	0.336**	0.178	0.147	0.038
WRC part B	0.391**	0.135	0.189*	−0.020

$**p < 0.01$; $*p < 0.05$. SWLS, Satisfaction with Life Scale; RSES, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; MSPSS, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support; WI, Workplace incivility.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The study had a number of shortcomings: first of all, the number of participants was small because of the difficulty of recruiting subjects with the required features. Future studies should therefore examine this novel construct (WRC) and its mirror measurement assessment using a bigger sample. It would also be interesting to examine the construct and the assessment in a cross-cultural context in order to investigate the role of the complexity of human relationships from a cultural point of view. Future research should also examine WRC in relation to other promising variables in organizational contexts such as ability-based emotional intelligence and trait emotional intelligence as well as other variables such as positive affect for hedonic well-being, meaning in life for eudaimonic well-being and also competency based perspective (Boyatzis et al., 2002, 2015a,b; Boyatzis and Saatcioglu, 2008; Boyatzis, 2009; Hazy and Boyatzis, 2015). WRC could be also studied in relation to objective outcomes of performance in organizational contexts.

However, on the basis of the results of the present study, we can affirm that the WRC scale is a brief mirror measure with good psychometric properties that can promote individuals' strengths and also the growth of decent work.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

AD conceptualized the study and choose the theoretical framework. AD and AG conceptualized the new scale and realized it. AD and AG collected the data. AG analyzed the data and wrote the methods and results. Then all authors wrote the paper together and read and revised the manuscript several times.

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APPENDIXS

WORKPLACE RELATIONAL CIVILITY (WRC)

Annamaria Di Fabio and Alessio Gori

INSTRUCTIONS

Characteristics that affect the ways of being and relating to people are shown below. The statements refer to people's interpersonal relationships at work. In the first part (A), please describe how you acted or behaved toward others (colleagues and /or superiors) over the past 3 months. In the second part (B), please describe how others (colleagues and superiors) acted or behaved toward you (in the past 3 months). Please mark with a cross all statements expressing your preference, choosing from: (1) Not at all; (2) A little; (3) Somewhat; (4) A lot; (5) A great deal. Please complete Parts A and B.

	(A) Me with others			(B) The others with me	
1	I was able to express my values and my beliefs calmly to others	1 2 3 4 5	1	Others were able to express their values and their beliefs calmly to me	1 2 3 4 5
2	I was able to express my point of view without being disrespectful toward others	1 2 3 4 5	2	Others were able to express their point of view without being disrespectful toward me	1 2 3 4 5
3	I respected the opinions of others	1 2 3 4 5	3	Others respected my opinions	1 2 3 4 5
4	I communicated my disagreement with others without being aggressive	1 2 3 4 5	4	Others communicated their disagreement with me without being aggressive	1 2 3 4 5
5	I was polite toward others	1 2 3 4 5	5	Others were polite toward me	1 2 3 4 5
6	I was generally kind toward others	1 2 3 4 5	6	Others were generally kind toward me	1 2 3 4 5
7	I always behaved mannerly toward others	1 2 3 4 5	7	Others always behaved mannerly toward me	1 2 3 4 5
8	I made comments that valorized others	1 2 3 4 5	8	Others made comments that valorized me	1 2 3 4 5
9	I was interested in the emotional condition of others	1 2 3 4 5	9	Others were interested in my emotional condition	1 2 3 4 5
10	I was sensitive about the difficulties of others	1 2 3 4 5	10	Others were sensitive about my difficulties	1 2 3 4 5
11	I realized the effect of my words on others	1 2 3 4 5	11	Others realized the effect of their words on me	1 2 3 4 5
12	I was attentive to the needs of others	1 2 3 4 5	12	Others was attentive to my needs	1 2 3 4 5
13	I easily recognized the feelings of others	1 2 3 4 5	13	Others easily recognized my feelings	1 2 3 4 5

Preparation for Meaningful Work and Life: Urban High School Youth's Reflections on Work-Based Learning 1 Year Post-Graduation

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The challenges confronted by low-income high school students throughout school and across the transition to higher education and employment are well-documented in the US and many other nations. Adopting a positive youth development perspective (Lerner et al., 2005), this study reports findings from interviews with 18 low-income, racially and ethnically diverse graduates of an urban Catholic high school in the US. The interviews were designed to shed light on the post-high school experiences of urban high school graduates and to understand how students construct meaning about the value of school and work-based learning (WBL) in their preparation for meaningful work and life. The interviews highlight the perceived value of the academic and non-cognitive preparation students experienced through high school and WBL in relation to the challenges they encountered along the pathway to post-high school success and decent work. Overall, the findings suggest the potential of WBL for low-income youth in facilitating access to resources that build academic and psychological/non-cognitive assets, while also illustrating the role of structural and contextual factors in shaping post-high school transitions and access to meaningful work and life opportunities.

Keywords: work-based learning, post-high school transition, school to work transition, college access, decent work, employability of low-income youth

INTRODUCTION

Within the US, low-income youth of color, many of whom reside within and attend schools in large urban centers, have long experienced barriers in accessing decent work that offers a living wage and opportunities for advancement. In recent years, opportunities for stable employment have diminished, along with increases in underemployment and growing income disparities between the rich and the poor. Across the globe, 75% of workers are employed in temporary or short-term positions, contributing to the widening income inequality between those who are more affluent and highly educated and those who are not (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2015). The International Labour Organization [ILO] (2008), an agency of the United Nations, maintains that all workers should have access to decent work that is integral to personal and family well-being and to social and economic advancement. According to the International Labour Organization [ILO] (2008, 2012), decent work should offer a fair income, protection from wage loss, safe

working conditions, access to health care, respect for social and family values, and opportunities for social dialog and worker organization. Although the ILO purports that sufficient decent work opportunities should exist, such that everyone who wants to work has the opportunity, decent work is diminishing while temporary and part-time work are increasing (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2014).

As decent work opportunities in the US workforce shrink as a result of technological change and turbulence in the economy worldwide, young people from low-income backgrounds, who have less education, and who belong to a racial or ethnic minority group are often marginalized from the economic, academic, and social resources needed to compete for the stable and decent work opportunities that do exist (Casey, 2012). Indeed, while many young people across the globe are challenged in their efforts to secure decent work, those who are poor and from marginalized groups worldwide experience the greatest obstacles (Blustein et al., 2014; Quintini and Martin, 2014). This study focuses on elucidating the post-high school experiences of graduates of a US high school designed to prepare young people from urban and low-income families for successful futures through work-based learning (WBL) and entry into higher education and decent work. By asking high school graduates from low-income backgrounds to reflect on how their high school experiences prepared them for life and work, we hope to gain insights into how students construct meaning about school and work, and the perceived value of school and WBL in their preparation for the future. These insights might inform further research and efforts to enhance the life chances and access to decent work for those young people most disenfranchised due to economic and social barriers.

Education at the high school level and beyond is a precursor to attaining gainful employment and access to associated economic, health, and social benefits. Within the US and globally, persons with higher educational status are less likely to be unemployed and more likely to enjoy physical and psychological well-being across the life span (Fouad and Bynner, 2008; Kenny and Walsh-Blair, 2012; OECD, 2014). Technological change in the workforce and the elimination of many unskilled jobs due to automation and outsourcing means that advanced education is increasingly critical for entry and advancement in the world of work (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2015). Despite the importance of advanced education, 19% of US high school students do not graduate on time with a traditional high school diploma (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2014) and 20% of those who do graduate, enter college needing remedial courses (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2013). Academic under-attainment is most prevalent among young people growing up in a context of economic poverty, who often attend schools staffed with less experienced teachers and with high teacher turnover (Reardon, 2011). These students experience an "opportunity gap" in comparison with more affluent students and are more likely to drop out of high school, reap less income over their lifetime, and belong to the ranks of the unemployed for longer periods of time (Cauthen and Fass, 2008; Reardon, 2011). Among high school graduates, lower-SES youth are also less likely to apply to and enroll in

postsecondary education and are less likely to complete a 2 or 4-year degree than students from high-income families (Walpole, 2007).

In addition to academic and technical skills, a host of non-cognitive or soft skills, are recognized as important for success in finding and retaining a job, advancing at work, and attaining a higher income and greater work security (Lippman et al., 2015). Indeed, an individual's employability, or capacity to obtain and retain suitable employment, entails not only vocational or job-related knowledge and skills, but an array of psycho-social skills that enable individuals to adapt to the changing demands of the world of work and to identify and realize work opportunities (Fugate et al., 2004; McArdle et al., 2007; Rothwell, 2015). A growing body of evidence across the fields of psychology, sociology, economics, and positive youth development (PYD) attests to the importance of this array of varied but interrelated non-academic skills for doing well in work and school settings, achieving desired goals, and relating effectively with others (Richardson et al., 2012; Lippman et al., 2015). This broad set of skills has been conceptualized and studied based on varying frameworks and rubrics such as developmental assets, life skills, character, grit, career adaptability, emotional intelligence, social-emotional learning and 21st century skills, among others (Farrington et al., 2012; Savickas and Porfeli, 2012; Kenny and Minor, 2015; Rothwell, 2015). While each of these frameworks is unique, some shared constructs emerge that relate to self-control, social and communication skills, self-awareness, self-confidence and positive attitudes for the future (Watts, 2006; Lippman et al., 2015; Rothwell, 2015). Despite the variety of skills and inconsistencies in defining and naming the constructs, a converging body of research suggests that these skills are malleable in the adolescent years and have an impact on academic success, engaged citizenship, PYD, career decision-making, workplace success, and life quality in general (Di Fabio and Kenny, 2011; Di Fabio and Maree, 2012; Richardson et al., 2012; Di Fabio and Saklofske, 2014; Lippman et al., 2015). Evidence is also emerging that these varied non-cognitive skills are especially important for sustaining career progress and maintaining personal well-being during times of economic and social uncertainty (Guilbert et al., 2015; Kenny and Minor, 2015; Di Fabio et al., in press). Moreover, employers in the US and other nations are expecting employees to be ready for the workplace equipped with non-cognitive assets as well as academic and vocational skills (Casner-Lotto and Barrington, 2006; Watts, 2006; Rothwell, 2015).

While we maintain that broad systemic change is important for reducing the range of structural inequities that create barriers to decent work, we also believe that high quality school and out-of-school experiences can help to equip young people with the academic and non-cognitive skills vital for establishing a trajectory of positive academic, social, and vocational development. The PYD perspective (Lerner et al., 2005), which is anchored in developmental systems theory (Lerner, 2006), emphasizes the important role of schools and other youth-serving settings in offering experiences and supports that enable youth to develop the individual assets and competencies needed to thrive throughout adolescence and into adulthood. According

to developmental systems (Lerner, 2006) and PYD (Lerner et al., 2005) frameworks, positive development results from an alignment between contextual and individual assets. With regard to individual assets, PYD recognizes the importance of academic and non-cognitive skills for young people to thrive in school, work, and life (Lerner et al., 2005). Schools represent one vital context that can play an essential role in teaching academic skills and providing opportunities to develop the non-cognitive skills and social and emotional competencies that are vital for lifelong success (Watts, 2006; National Research Council, 2012).

Work-based learning, which encompasses learning in the workplace through internships, apprenticeships, informal learning on the job, and other vocational-specific curricula, has engaged interest in many countries around the globe for its potential to facilitate transitions from school to work, to ensure that training is aligned with labor market needs, to provide opportunities for the ongoing development of transferrable skills to meet the needs of the changing workplace, and to help students understand and adapt to the realities of the workplace (Falconer and Pettigrew, 2003; OECD, 2014; Hoffman, 2015). Although WBL programs are more often offered across higher education and vocational training, WBL has also demonstrated promise at the secondary school level as a model for connecting academic learning to work preparation, enhancing positive student attitudes, academic motivation and goal articulation for school and career, and equipping young people with both academic and non-cognitive work readiness skills for the transition from high school into meaningful work and life (Visher et al., 2004; Blustein, 2006; Kenny et al., 2010; Bempechat et al., 2014; Quintini and Martin, 2014). WBL programs thus represent one youth setting that can potentially complement the academic learning environment to develop personal, social, and work readiness competencies. Although some countries, such as Switzerland, Germany, Singapore, and the Netherlands, have highly developed or comprehensive WBL programs at the secondary school level, WBL programs are not typical or systemic in the US (Hoffman, 2015).

In response to the concern for improving the academic achievement of youth growing up in poverty, the Cristo Rey network, an association of 26 Catholic high schools across the US, emerged, with the intent to "transform urban America, one student at a time" (Sweas, 2014). The schools, which serve only youth from low-income families, integrate a number of unique features, with the intent to provide a holistic education that fosters academic, social, civic, moral, and spiritual development. In addition to offering a faith-based education, they provide an academically rigorous college preparatory curriculum coupled with WBL. In the Cristo Rey WBL model, students engage in real work that the corporation would otherwise pay another individual to do, with the salary paid by the corporation going toward the student's high school tuition (Thielman, 2012). Typically one full-time entry-level position is split among four students from the school with each student working 1 day each week. Every student works across all 4 years of high school in a corporate or non-profit setting, with a focus on developing non-cognitive work readiness skills, rather than the development or transfer of vocational or technical skills to the workplace.

The present qualitative study is designed to enhance understanding of students' perceived academic and non-cognitive skills, the perceived value of their high school experiences, and their experiences across the post-high school transition to higher education and work. Underlying this study is an ethical stance that builds on the Jesuit origins of the Cristo Rey Network (Kearney, 2008) and analogous movements in psychological studies of education and work, which collectively affirm the importance of establishing equality and social justice in the systems that frame students' development. When considering the Cristo Rey ideology in conjunction with recent calls for justice in scholarship and program development efforts in career development (e.g., Psychology-of-Working framework; Blustein, 2006), the commitment to unpacking sources of marginalization and resources that help students counter these oppressive forces serves as a cohering aspect of our project. Among students who graduated from an urban Catholic high school affiliated with the Cristo Rey Network, we explored graduates' perceptions of their adaptations to education, work, and life 1 year post-high school and the meanings they ascribed to their high school academic and WBL experiences in relation to their current lives. Students' perceptions of their challenges and the value they assigned to their high school experiences may provide valuable insights on how low-income urban youth understand their personal pathways toward higher education and the adult world and the types of experiences they view as facilitating and impeding their progress. This study will help to advance knowledge about the potential of intentional WBL as a viable means of promoting access to decent work among a population of youth who are often marginalized from the resources needed to find meaning and purpose in their adult work lives.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

A total of 18 low-income racially and ethnically diverse high school graduates (12 females; six males; eight Black, nine Latino, and one White) of Cristo Rey Northeast (a pseudonym) participated in this qualitative study. The WBL model at this school includes weekly one full-day per week in the workplace, a weekly holistic reflection seminar at the school during which students discuss their workplace experiences, and quarterly student evaluations by work site supervisors. The participants in this study had worked during high school in WBL positions in a variety of settings, including a biogenetics laboratory, a high school administration office, the computer lab at a major university, the corporate offices of a national retailer, a public aquarium, and a homeless shelter. Although many students enter this high school with academic skills significantly below grade level based on standardized tests, they often make substantial academic gains during high school, with most graduates being accepted to 2 or 4-year college programs (Thielman, 2012). Although the 18 participants in this study are a volunteer sample of high school graduates, they achieved varied levels of academic success in high school. The average cumulative high school academic grades for these graduates, obtained from school

records, ranged from 1.22 to 3.98 on a four-point scale (with 4.0 reflecting an A), with a mean of 2.37, which is very close to the 2.41 mean for all students from the same graduating class.

Procedure

All 60 members of the prior graduating class were invited by mail to an alumni event held at the high school on graduation day, 1 year after their graduation. The research team spoke to the approximately 40 alumni in attendance, explained the research study, and invited graduates to participate in interviews about their post-high school experiences. Those willing to share their experiences were individually interviewed for approximately 30–45 min. The procedure was approved by the high school administration and by the university committee that reviews and approves faculty research to ensure the safe and ethical treatment of research participants.

Interview and Analysis

The interview consisted of open-ended questions that tapped students' perceptions of their transition from high school to college/vocational program/work, as well as their reflections on their high school and WBL experiences. The complete interview is provided in the Appendix (Supplementary Material). Interviews were taped and transcribed verbatim, and subsequently coded by the research team using thematic coding and content analysis (Bempechat et al., 2013), which is described more fully in the following paragraphs.

Research team members read the first interview individually to identify emerging categories and then met as a group to compare initial codes. This process was repeated with other interviews and distinct categories were identified through the use of constant comparison (comparing the text of interviews in a category for similarities and differences; Glaser and Strauss, 1967), resulting in a codebook with category definitions and examples. Coding was both deductive, using the structure of the interview questions and existing theory to identify meaningful themes, and also inductive, with the research team members looking for nuanced and context specific themes that may not have been directly elicited by the structure of the interview or highlighted in existing literature. As new categories emerged, the research team re-coded the interviews as part of an iterative process, resulting in a total of 23 categories. The initial 23 codes are closely aligned with the interview questions and include student activities in the first-year post graduation; their major responsibilities across the past year; their expectations prior to graduation; their actual experiences in the past year with subcodes for difficulties, surprises, and other; their perceived preparation from their high school, with subcodes for the educational program, religious orientation and WBL work site experience and holistic reflections seminar at the school; their perceptions of social support across the post-high school year; student perceived growth in post-high school year; comparison of their maturity to peers; their future goals, among other codes. (A copy of the complete coding booklet is available from the authors by request).

The 23 categories were reviewed and grouped individually and then collectively by the research team into four broad themes: students' actual experiences post-graduation, their future goals, their perceived challenges and assets, and their perceived academic and personal preparation from their high school and WBL experiences. The categories and content organized under each theme was synthesized into four memos or summaries. The research team members wrote, reviewed, and discussed the summaries and met to further clarify, refine, and elaborate on the overarching themes and to determine descriptive labels for these themes and subthemes. For example, the memos and the codes aligned with each memo were reviewed individually and collectively by members of the research team, who identified perceived post-high school challenges, the varied and specific personal qualities that students felt that they had developed during high school that helped them to navigate these challenges, and their attribution of these personal qualities to the academic, WBL experience, or holistic-reflection components of their high school program as overarching themes that, in addition to their stated post-high school activities and future goals, spanned the four memos. The consensus on the overarching themes apparent across all interviews was reached through a process of review and discussion among the team members.

The interviewers, transcribers, and coders included three university faculty and graduate- research assistants from three collaborating colleges and universities in the metropolitan area surrounding the participants' high school. Members of the core research team identified as four White women and four White men, with two Asian–American women, one Latina woman, and one Black woman also involved in various phases of this study. The researchers continually addressed possible biases and evaluated inter-rater agreement by having two-person teams code the same interview individually, and then meet to compare codes. In addition, the team members were cognizant of the ethical stance that underscored their work on the project, which helped to ensure that the interpretation of the findings incorporated a clear vision of how social and economic forces shape students' experience. Furthermore, a knowledgable auditor was present at the weekly meetings to review interviews, facilitate critical discussion, challenge assumptions, pose alternative interpretations, ensure all opinions are considered and facilitate consensus (Morrow, 2005). When considered collectively, these procedures are designed to contribute to the validity of the results.

RESULTS

Overview

The interviews revealed that the alumni had engaged in a variety of school and work activities since their graduation. Although all of the graduates had been accepted into some form of higher education, not all graduates actually enrolled and some left before completing their first year. The post-high school transition was relatively smooth for some, while others encountered life events that altered their immediate plans.

Across the 18 interviews, several broad themes emerged, which describe the ways in which students viewed their development and preparation for the future as emerging through their unique high school experiences and their experiences in the

transition from high school to work and/or higher education. Although not all graduates were enrolled in higher education at the time of the interviews, all described a sustained focus on pursuing further education and felt that their high school had helped prepare them in important ways for post-high school life. That is, in addition to the academic preparation provided by their high school, all students described personal qualities developed over the course of high school that prepared them for school and work post-high school. The narratives reveal furthermore how students perceived those qualities as having been fostered through the unique education and WBL settings in which they were immersed.

Post-High School Experience

The fall following high school graduation, 11 of the 18 alumni enrolled in college programs varying in level of selectivity. Of the 11 college students, two were also working full-time to support themselves. One was working full-time as a collections officer and the other was working in retail sales in a shoe store. Two left college after one semester. One left to due to the medical complications of a pregnancy and financial concerns, but planned to enroll in a community college the next fall, with another leaving for financial reasons. The latter was a very strong student academically in high school who had made a successful academic adjustment to a 4-year college while working part-time in a real estate office. She left after the fall semester, obtained her real estate license and was then working full-time in real estate sales with plans to return to college in the fall after saving some money. Three graduates were enrolled full-time in vocational or technical preparation programs for training as a massage therapist, a pharmacy technician, and an electrician. Four graduates had delayed their plans for post-high school study and were working at the time of the interview, yet expressed a firm commitment and evidence of active planning to enter college. One of the graduates delayed attending college in order to care for her mother who became ill and to look after a younger sister. She was working full-time as a sales supervisor in a small department store. Another delayed college for a year because she was undecided on a course of study. She was working at a jewelry counter in a department store, with plans to attend college in the fall. Another graduate delayed his plans to enroll in college after her parents decided to return to their county of origin. This graduate was now working in food services and living with siblings who remained in the US, with plans to attend community college in the fall. The final graduate, who was working full-time as a waitress and at the counter in a restaurant, had always planned to attend college, but did not think she could afford to go at this time. A summary of graduates and their post-high school experiences is provided in **Table 1**.

Future Orientation

Although not all of the graduates were enrolled in post-high school study 1year following graduation, all described a future orientation that included continuing their education. Twelve of the 18 alumni described a clear career goal that was grounded in a direct route from high school through college or vocational

TABLE 1 | Summary of graduates and their post-high school (post-HS) experiences.

Post-HS experiences	Student	Gender	Race/Ethnicity
Direct to 4-year college			
1	Vanessa	Female	Black
2	Marcos	Male	Latino
3	Alberto	Male	Latino
4	José	Male	Latino
5	Karen	Female	Black
6	Linda	Female	Black
7	Jessica	Female	Black
Direct to 4-year college part-time (simultaneously with full-time employment)			
1	Sebastian	Male	Latino
2	Leyla	Female	Latina
Direct to 4-year college (interruption in enrollment)			
1	Maya	Female	Latina
2	Judy	Female	Black
Direct to community college, vocational, or technical school			
1	Cassandra	Female	Latina
2	John	Male	White
3	Roman	Male	Latino
Direct to full-time employment (no higher education)			
1	LaToya	Female	Black
2	Janet	Female	Black
3	Monica	Female	Latina
4	Maria	Female	Latina

school. The remainder expressed more uncertainty or the presence of life events that altered the clarity of their path.

Karen (all names are pseudonyms), studying health science at a 4-year college, exemplified those alumni expressing a clear career focus and pathway toward her goals. She stated:

> Right now my goals are pretty simple. My goal for school is to keep going at the rate I'm going. I want to get my GPA (academic grades) up. After that I want to get to med school by the end of the 3 years that I have left. My goal for summer is just to get a job, and get a permit for my car.

Roman described a clear sense of direction through vocational training:

> It's like a 9-month program just to get the apprentice license and then after that I have to join a company for 4 years, get my hours to go to my journeyman's license, then one more year to get my master's license and then I can be a master electrician, own my own business.

Vanessa, attending a 4-year college and studying biochemistry, felt that her career direction was stronger than other students at her college. She explained:

It's really strange to me to see the people even in my science classes right now telling me that they want to go to med school, but not exactly knowing how to get there...I think that internship here, the work study fills in that gap.

Although all of the alumni were not as clear about their career direction, they nevertheless expressed a firm commitment to post-high school study and future planning.

Maria, who was working full-time in food services to save money, described her strategy for getting to college:

Yeah, I am going to get another job because I want to save as much money as I can to pay for college, because I always felt that when I went to college I wanted to have a part-time job, and I would just be studying and study hard and that's what I really want to do.

Jessica, who was attending college full-time, discovered that she no longer wants to be a nurse, but expressed a commitment to continuing in college and identifying a new career goal:

I went in as a nursing major, but quickly found out that's not what I want to do. So, I continued as an undergrad student, and now I'm taking summer school to kind of find my niche as to what I really want to pursue as a career.

In considering possible options for the future, Jessica reflects on her WBL experience at an aquarium during high school: "I liked to do ... work there [at the aquarium], so I could have that type of experience when I try to pursue my career as a veterinarian..."

Alumni's Perceptions of Challenges and Preparedness

The alumni noted varied challenges in their post-high school year as well as ways in which their high school and the work-study programs helped to prepare them for life after high school. With regard to challenges, alumni commonly mentioned the need to hold themselves responsible with less adult supervision and the amount of work required in higher education. Judy, who left college to have a baby and planned to return the following fall, described the challenge of adult responsibilities. She explained:

A lot of work to live life after high school. Like I said before, you know, you have to grow up. You're an adult now you're not just a student. You have to try to, like some people have to live on campus and try to make it on their own, you don't have your mother there at all times.

Leyla, who was working full-time and attending college part-time, commented, "I mean it really isn't easy. You get a lot of free will, you're not forced to go to class, you're not forced to be there, but you need to know the consequences if you're not." In comparing the demands of her life in high school and college, she noted that she is "working every day of the week, not just 1 day. So it's a lot harder."

Among those who enrolled in higher education, all students felt prepared academically, although several identified the increased workload and higher expectations as challenging. With regard to academic preparation for college, Vanessa stated:

Northeast prepared me really well for it...I give most of my credit to ...the English department [at Northeast]. Science was not tough at all like I thought it was going to be...It was all very much like stuff I had learned here.

Roman found the academic work at the technical school easier than in high school, so he enrolled in community college to take more advanced math coursework in pre-calculus. Maya, who left college for financial reasons after one semester, found the academic work manageable: "I thought in my mind that it would be a lot harder...but I guess I was well-prepared and it got me in a good position in college. For me, it wasn't hard at all."

Linda, a college pre-med student, felt prepared academically, but was among those who commented on the work volume. She noted:

I was prepared because of the way Northeast prepared us. Um, we not only went about going to school, but we also, basically had jobs while we were here. So as far as me being prepared to work, I felt like that, I felt like that I was. The only thing I wasn't prepared for was the amount of work, because obviously in high school we don't get as much work, and as time-consuming work as you would call it.

In addition to academic preparation, alumni highlighted their preparedness for post-high school life as encompassing three sets of interrelated non-cognitive skills, including a sense of self-control and self-regulation, self and other awareness, and social skills and professionalism. Although all of the alumni articulated ways in which their high school experience had prepared them for the year following graduation, they highlighted different benefits.

Self-control and Self-regulation

More than half of the graduates spoke about their preparedness in relation to qualities of self-control and self-regulation. These qualities were viewed as important with regard to persistence, time management, and relational management in their current post-high school, work, and education.

Alberto, enrolled in a 4-year college, was one of the graduates who spoke about the importance of hard work and persistence, stating, "Nothing comes easy. You have to work for everything you want. In college, in school, in anything. Anything you want, you have to work for." Cassandra, who was enrolled in a massage therapy program, had struggled academically during high school, but described how she persisted toward completing her degree:

I wasn't like the best, the best of grades and everything, but I hung on by a thread. And you know, I got to the point where my thread snapped and I wasn't able to graduate with my class, but I did not let that stop me....So, I came back here and did what I had to do and passed the work and I just continued on with my mission.

Marcos, a 4-year college student, was among the alumni who described the WBL program as instrumental in fostering his maturity. He stated:

And then I just look at the factors to my level of maturity and, I see, like any experiences in life and then I see my high school and the [WBL] program. That really helped my level of maturity. And then I just think, some of these students probably didn't go to a corporate work-study program. The odds are that a lot of them probably haven't and that could be a reason why their level of maturity is different from my level of maturity.

[. . . Northeast] helps students. . .learn so many things. You learn responsibilities. You learn time management. You learn all these things that can make a young adult a very good adult.

Self-regulation was also exemplified in social relations and choice of friends. Sebastian, who was studying computer science, commented, "I try and find people who are the same as me. You know, outgoing, but somewhat compatible to me. I don't hang around people who smoke and drink, and what-not. And if they do, I just leave." He noted how the work experience exposed graduates to a set of rules and consequences in the world outside of school:

Here [at Northeast], you're like we're following rules and [if] you messed up, this is what happens and, you know, it's a guideline. When you step out of here you have to make your own guideline and you have to follow your own rules and you know the consequences of work, it's not just detention anymore. But I like it. I feel I was well prepared.

Some graduates also noted, how the WBL experience had prepared them to manage multiple responsibilities. Maya, who left college after one semester to work full-time and save for her return to college, stated:

Having an outside job and going to school and having all other responsibilities helped me manage my life so much. And that taught me so much, like when I moved out of my parents' house, I was prepared already because I knew that it's not easy working and going to school, doing all that and paying bills. So I had an idea already.

Maya also described how the WBL program played a role in fostering personal strength: "The training that they gave us in the beginning (to prepare for the WBL experience), that definitely helped me so much. It gave me more character, personality, and I became, like, a stronger person."

Self-reflection and Other Awareness

The majority of the graduates described themselves as possessing a level of self and other awareness, which differentiated them from their college and work peers. As they described their self-awareness, 14 of the 18 graduates made frequent reference to their high school WBL experience, and to the holistic reflection seminar that was designed by the school to accompany the WBL program.

Roman, in technical school training to become an electrician, described the WBL program as fostering awareness of self and the world beyond high school:

I mean, a lot of the kids here were just kinda closed off to what the real world was and then. . .now with the internship program, it kinda opens up, you know, everyone's minds, how it actually is out there, and I kinda like seeing that.

Monica, who took a year off to earn money to pay for college, also viewed the WBL experience as fostering awareness of the larger world. She stated:

But if you work outside the school, you're working with new people with different attitudes, different people that don't know you. And they're starting to know you each day. . .each day that you go there . . . You see what I mean? It's like stressful, it's really stressful. But if you work in a different place, your mind's gonna think differently, you're gonna do things differently, you're gonna be with different people.

Other graduates commented on how the weekly holistic reflection seminar held at the school taught them how to be self-reflective and learn from past experiences, thereby enhancing self-awareness and self-understanding. For example, Sebastian, studying computer technology at a 4-year college, commented, ". . .when we did the reflections about work and stuff. It helped me a lot to think about the way I deal with certain situations at work now."

Liz, who was working full-time in retail, also spoke of the benefits of the holistic reflection seminar:

It was just good to talk about work and just reflect on everything that happens. And sometimes I needed that if I had a long week at work. Sometimes I just need to sit back and think about. . . oh maybe I should have done this, or maybe I should have done that. But, it did, it was pretty good. It did help somewhat.

Karen, studying health science at a 4-year college, also valued the lessons associated with the reflection seminar. She commented:

They had a lot of quotes, and a lot of things that told you to step back from the situation and look at it or like, you know, focus. Things like that help you realize that when things get really hectic, step back, look at what's really going. And then deal with it. Kinda like small steps, is what I feel I took out of reflection.

Jessica, attending a 4-year college and undecided about her major, commented:

I love the holistic reflections. Um, they helped a lot, um, they're very strategic in the way that they made the sessions . . . the questions that they asked us were very, very good. They help you think basically and helped you figure out ways to go about situations concerning school or the work study, how to go about it in a better way, a more constructive way, a more respectful way, and stuff like that. So it helped you to be more mature basically, it kind of helped me that way.

Cassandra, training as a massage therapist, appreciated the opportunity through the reflection seminar to express herself and get feedback from students and teachers. She said:

> Being able to speak up, being able to be heard, being able to have people comment on what your issue is, being able to have somebody to relate to you who's been there before, so you don't feel like you're alone. . .that helped me a lot too.

She also valued the personal and social knowledge she had learned from her teachers and the service experiences at the school:

> There are two teachers here that I can say truly taught me the meaning of peace and community. . .there's things I never knew I would do, like volunteer and get into the community, and just for them to put me at a homeless shelter. I was like, now I see things differently.

Cassandra developed a personal philosophy that helped her to persist when challenged. She explained:

> There's lessons in life that you got to learn. . .and you got to do something different. You gotta approach things differently. When you are in a situation, you look at both sides, put yourself in that person's shoes. . .It's certain things I ask myself just to get through.

Monica, who was working full-time with the intention of enrolling in community college in the fall, described her experiences in the reflection seminar and in interactions with teachers within the seminar and beyond:

> They teach you to be proud of who you are, to become better at what you're doing and what you do, to become good and feel prepared. They don't want you to be ashamed. . .if you're Latino. . . They want you to be a human being who makes a mistake and you're able to learn.

Monica also attributed a heightened sense of self-awareness and confidence to her religion teacher, explaining:

> She's a really good teacher. . . she was always pushing me, like, "Roll through, just don't get scared." Maybe she's more of a model for my life because she's so self-confident. She's not scared what people are thinking about her. Like she's really strong religiously as a person. So, I learned that. . . that you need to be strong and fight for what you want and. . .that's in my mind most of the time. So I really appreciate what she did for me.

Social Skills and Workplace Communication

Many of the graduates described confidence in their social skills and communication for the workplace. Vanessa, a 4-year college biochemistry major, explained, ". . .I think like you're always professional even though you don't try to be. It's just there. It's just there, and I think they kind of ingrained that a lot in school. . ."

Relatedly, Cassandra commented on how she learned to communicate professionally through WBL. She reported:

> . . .being able to be out there in the corporate world, being able to have, like, corporate communications, knowing how to be professional and knowing when to tone down your attitude. You know, once you step in the door, you know what I'm saying, like I said, it's not about you anymore. It's about who's the client for the day.

The majority of the graduates commented explicitly on how the WBL experience had equipped them with valuable skills related to workplace communication. Jessica, enrolled at a 4-year college, gained an understanding of the value of a substantive resume through the WBL program. She stated:

> I just want to express that the [WBL] program did help me a lot, um, I just filled out my resume, and when I was looking back at it, and really thinking about all the firms that I have been to, it's just really a blessing to have experienced that.

Several students noted how the experience prepared them to interact with adults. Roman, studying to become an electrician, commented:

> Like socially, it just helped me talk to adults, because I was so used to talking with people my age, and my boss was like fifty and I had no idea how to really approach her. . .but after the 2 years, we really became close and she was almost like a second mother to me because she gave me a lot of advice.

Marcos, a 4-year college student, reflected similarly:

> . . .working at a corporate work-study program. . . helped me learn how to speak and how to communicate with adults . . . I need to know how to speak to an adult, how to like, say things in a way that an adult would understand. I can't just use, I can't just speak to adults the way I speak to my friends.

Graduates noted the importance of the social skills they learned while in high school for post-high school employment. Liz, who was working full-time in retail, while also caring for her ill mother, commented:

> That is what [this school] is for, to prepare you for the future. . .Yeah, the working, and the dress code and how we all have to act professional and it is just a good set up for what is supposed to come after high school.

LaToya, who was working full-time with plans to enroll in college in the upcoming fall, also commented on the preparation she had received for the workplace, "I knew what to do and what not to do and being here they showed you how to dress for the corporate stuff, for the workplace."

DISCUSSION

During the year after their high school graduation, the 18 young people interviewed in this study experienced varying levels of school and work successes and disappointments. They encountered many of the developmental challenges typical of young people their age, along with additional challenges, more common among young people who have limited access to

economic resources and social capital as a result of their social status. While the transitions to higher education and work were relatively smooth for some of the high school graduates, for others the transition was marked by postponements and altered plans following unexpected life events. All of the alumni, however, maintained focus on further education and described a range of academic and non-cognitive skills that have been associated with workforce preparation and positive developmental trajectories (Watts, 2006; Lippman et al., 2015; Rothwell, 2015).

While growing up in low-income neighborhoods has been shown to have a profoundly deleterious effect on high school graduation rates (Wodtke et al., 2011), the young people in our sample exemplified some level of success through their completion of high school, acceptance into post-high school education, and entry into either higher education, employment or both. While statistics indicate that 15% of high school graduates in the US and 23% of those with less than a high school diploma between the ages of 16 and 24 are neither in school or employed (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014), all of the alumni we interviewed were engaged in school, work, or both. The percentage of young people who are neither in school or work is as high as 50% in countries with emerging economies (Quintini and Martin, 2014). In contrast to the prevailing criticism of high schools as not preparing young people for college and career (e.g., National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education and Southern Regional Education Board, 2010), these young people described their high school and WBL experiences as equipping them with varied academic and non-cognitive skills that they valued in navigating post-high school challenges.

The non-cognitive skills described by these young people are similar to those identified as valuable in prior research. Self-control, intentional self-regulation, and future orientation, for example, are highlighted in PYD research (Lerner et al., 2005). They are also similar to those identified by vocational psychologists as related to employability (Fugate et al., 2004; Rothwell, 2015), career adaptability (Savickas and Porfeli, 2012), and as critical for navigating life and work in a time of uncertainty (Di Fabio, 2014; Di Fabio and Kenny, 2015; Kenny and Minor, 2015). Conceptually related but distinct concepts, such as grit and perseverance have also received significant attention in recent research on youth academic and life success (Duckworth and Gross, 2014). In a broad sense, our alumni fit the descriptions of "gritty" youth, who demonstrate the capacity to regulate their time, attention, emotions, and social interactions, and sustain perseverance, despite ongoing life challenges. In addition to the intrapersonal skills associated with self-control and self-awareness, many of these young people described confidence in their social and interpersonal competencies, as well as capacities for self-reflection and self and other awareness, which have been identified as important competencies in research on social and emotional learning and for career decision making (Watts, 2006; Durlak et al., 2011; Di Fabio et al., 2013; Di Fabio and Saklofske, 2014; Rothwell, 2015). In this sense, these young people appear to be equipped with a number of the 21st century skills, which many employers observe as lacking in young people today (Casner-Lotto and Barrington, 2006).

Given the paucity of knowledge concerning the contextual bases for the development of non-cognitive skills (Farrington et al., 2012; Brown et al., 2013; Rothwell, 2015), the narratives offer insight into how some young people perceive their schools and specific aspects of their school programs as preparing them for life after high school. While the level and source of their non-cognitive skills are not verifiable from our data, these young people directly attributed many of these skills to the programs and relationships experienced in their high school. The idea that positive development for these young people stems from an alignment between their strengths and the assets of their context is consistent with the developmental systems perspective and PYD model (Lerner et al., 2005). The narratives of these youth reflect an understanding of human development as a dynamic interactive process in which the environment and the individual are both key in shaping outcomes. Recent attention to the role of "grit" (Duckworth et al., 2007) or perseverance toward long-term goals has been challenged by some critics, who maintain that that a focus on individual qualities may overlook the role of structural and systemic barriers that lie at the roots of the "opportunity gap" (Riele, 2010). Our findings serve to contextualize the understanding of non-cognitive skills, as alumni describe how real-world learning experiences in the workplace, the presence of caring adults at school and work (as well as in their families), and a space in the school curriculum to reflect on and give meaning to their work experiences contributed to their perceived non-cognitive strengths and preparation for the future.

Also consistent with developmental systems and PYD frameworks (Lerner et al., 2005), our findings reveal how contextual factors beyond the individuals and their school present substantive challenges for entry into and success in higher education and decent work. Youth with low economic resources often experience unique and complex hurdles in the transition to college (Rowan-Kenyon, 2007). Some of the graduates in our sample, for example, delayed post-high school study or dropped out of college for reasons less typical of the middle class college student, such as the need to support oneself when parents return to their country of origin or due to the complications of an unplanned and medically difficult pregnancy. Postponing college entry to care for a sick mother and sister was also cited as a reason for delaying college, perhaps associated with low economic resources and/or cultural values emphasizing family commitment and gender-based valuing of personal care work over market based employment (Richardson, 2012). Lack of economic resources, along with uncertainty regarding major or course of study, were also noted as reasons for not entering college immediately after high school. The life stories of the Northeast alumni are thus consistent with prior research revealing that low-income high school graduates may change their plans to enroll in post-secondary education over the summer months as a result of complicating life events and concerns about the costs and the economic benefits of higher education (Goldrick-Rab and Han, 2011). While the experiences of these students are uniquely embedded in the US context, they are consistent with global evidence documenting how economic and social barriers impede the academic and work achievements

of young people growing up in low resource settings (Quintini and Martin, 2014).

The findings have relevance to exploring the challenges that face many youth as they transition from school to the world of work, and then optimally to an adult life that includes decent work. Their stories illustrate the inevitable interrelation of work and non-work experiences (Blustein, 2006) and the ways in which social, cultural and economic factors shape the journey from school to decent work (Guilbert et al., 2015). As reflected in the ILO's contributions (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2008), many of the antecedents of decent work occur at the macro level, involving access to education, safe neighborhoods, good health care, and a host of other economic and social factors. However, individual and more proximal systemic factors also play a major role in the complex array of factors that promote decent work. As the narratives suggest in this study, the graduates of the WBL program at Northeast Cristo Rey faced numerous challenges once they left high school. However, some managed to make adaptive transitions to post-secondary training, while others struggled. The prevalence of external barriers seemed to overwhelm some of the participants, which underscores the need for equitable systemic solutions that will allow people to thrive and flourish in their educational and vocational lives. For many of the participants, though, the WBL experience was key in exploring the meaning of work in relation to their own values and to the development of a future orientation and an array of non-cognitive skills, which offered important internal resources in the struggle for meaningful work and life.

Although the alumni interviewed in this study highlight the capacity of schools and WBL programs to foster the development of non-cognitive skills in addition to academic development, the limitations of the study must be considered. With regard to generalizability, the participants represent a select sample of the high school graduates who chose to attend an alumni event. Although our participants experienced various levels of academic success during and after high school, it is likely that those students who felt disconnected from the high school did not attend the alumni event. The generalizability of our findings is also limited by the nature and structure of this particular school. This is a private, Catholic school in the US Northeast that serves only low-income students. The specific qualities of the students who choose to attend this school and the emotional support they receive from their families to enroll in and persist at this challenging high school are not clear. Although the findings from this study may be generalizable to other Cristo Rey high schools in the US offering a similar WBL model, the applicability for students in other WBL programs in the US and in other nations is not clear. The retrospective nature of students' comments is, of course, subject to revisionist bias, and should be viewed with caution. The interviews were conducted only 1 year after graduation, so that the long-range post-high school success and career attainment of the graduates is unknown.

Further research is needed to address limitations of the current study. Follow-up of a random sample of graduates over a longer period of time is necessary to provide an understanding of their immediate and long-range experiences along a pathway to decent work. Future research should include the perspectives of key

stakeholders from the high school, higher education, post-high school employment, and family contexts. Including individuals within these overlapping spheres of influence (Reschly and Christenson, 2009) can overcome the limitations of reliance on individual self-report and inform a broader understanding of how contextual and individual factors interact in creating and limiting access to decent work. Although, we found the PYD framework to be helpful in guiding this study, further research can serve to deepen understanding of role of socio-cultural, contextual, and structural factors in preparation for meaningful work and life and access to decent work for low-income youth. Varied stakeholders might further illuminate the internal, proximal and distal resources that young people might access in gaining entry into decent work. Further research at the distal level is needed to understand how workplace and broader economic policies interact with individual skills in impacting access to decent work. Comparing the experiences of graduates of this high school to graduates of other schools in the network across the US and other secondary school WBL models in the US and across the globe will also be important in gaining a broader understanding how students understand their high school experiences as preparing them for the future of decent work.

Given the limitations of this study, implications for policy and practice are considered tentative. In the context of ongoing educational policy debates in which creating a culture of college and career readiness is a priority in the US (Office of the White House Press Secretary, 2010), our study participants were able to reflect thoughtfully on how their high school and WBL experiences contributed to academic and non-cognitive skills that they have relied on to navigate myriad subsequent challenges. While we cannot infer causality and more research is needed, positive features of the WBL program and supportive and reflective learning experiences at school may be applicable in other school settings as vehicles to prepare low-income youth academically, socially, and motivationally for the ongoing challenges of young adult life. These characteristics have been noted in previous reviews of high school reform efforts in the US that highlight the importance of addressing the social, emotional, and motivational capacities youth, as well as their academic skills (Kenny, 2013) and have been noted in international research on effective WBL programs (OECD, 2014; Hoffman, 2015).

Beyond the high school and WBL contexts, our overall findings suggest the need for a multifaceted and systemic approach for enhancing access to decent work for low-income youth. Employability depends not only on well-developed individual skills, but also on organizational and broader contextual factors, such as the status of the labor market (Guilbert et al., 2015; Rothwell, 2015). Blustein et al. (2014) have labeled interventions that seek to enhance non-cognitive skills as promising micro-level initiatives potentially relevant in removing barriers to upward mobility, but acknowledge the necessity for further macro-level initiatives for work preparation, poverty reduction, and the expansion of decent work. The types of work in which most of the alumni were engaged reflect retail and food services positions that offer little long term security or room for advancement. Consistent with the PYD perspective, efforts

to enhance resources across school, work, and public policy contexts are needed. The type of public-private partnerships exemplified by WBL might, for example, be expanded in creating more effective decent work pathways and opportunities for all young people (Blustein et al., 2014). WBL programs might also be enhanced, consistent with best practice in countries such as Switzerland and Germany, to provide a direct pathway from internships or apprenticeships to meaningful employment and to offer a system of ongoing career guidance beyond secondary school (OECD, 2014; Hoffman, 2015). Although recent US national initiatives suggest that all students who graduate from high school should be prepared for college and career (Office of the White House Press Secretary, 2010), our analysis suggests that some graduates may not have the interest or vocational clarity to pursue higher education immediately after graduation, such that enhanced and ongoing career counseling and post-high school employment might make sense for those figuring out a goal or course of study.

Although further research is needed to address limitations of the current study and to more fully understand the role of contextual influences, our findings give voice to the meaning that urban high school students ascribe to their high school and post-high school experiences, and offer insights concerning their varied pathways from high school toward higher education and meaningful work and life.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

MK, CC, JB, DB, and JS were involved in the original review of the literature, design of the study, data collection and analysis, interpretation of the findings, and writing of the manuscript. KM and CO were involved in data analysis, interpretation, literature review, and writing of results and discussion.

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Career and Self-Construction of Emerging Adults: The Value of Life Designing

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This article describes a potential way of counseling emerging adults from a life design perspective to construct a self that could enable them to be agents of both their own development and the development of others. Theoretical issues relating to a dynamic, developmental and systems framework of the understanding of wellbeing are described and the process involved is delineated. The research design was qualitative and comprised case studies. Six participants who subscribed to the definition of "emerging adults" and were comparatively representative of the ethnic diversity of South Africa, were selected purposively from a group of individuals who applied for career counseling in a private practice context. The intervention involved life design counseling and occurred over a period of 6 weeks. Information related to participants' self-construction was gathered using qualitative techniques, including the *Career Interest Profile*, the Career Construction Interview, a timeline, video clips, a collage, and semi-structured interviews. Following the intervention, the participants revealed heightened insights with regard to aspects of their sense of a relational-moral self. Results indicated that life design counseling could enhance elaborative personal development (enhancing self-awareness and reaping the benefits of developing an improved relational-moral self) and the promotion of an awareness of the importance to promote social justice in work-related contexts.

Keywords: life design counseling, emerging adult, self-construction, narrative identity, spiritual development, interpersonal adaptability, future consciousness, citizen-leadership

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about the ripple effect of multiple changes in the world at large (and especially in the workplace), as well as the tremendous impact of change on humankind in general and on workers in particular (Guichard, 2013). Work environments are becoming unstable, while lifelong employment in one organization and regular promotion in that organization are no longer guaranteed. Therefore, employees no longer feel compelled to remain loyal to any one organization throughout their working lives (Maree and Di Fabio, 2015). While Krumboltz and Chan (2005), contend that it is crucially important to embrace change, Blustein (2006, 2011) has made repeated requests for a wide-ranging psychology of working. It is important for career counselors in particular to prepare their clients to not only *accept*, but in fact *welcome* change: "Expecting people to decide on a lifetime career and commit to that choice is a formula for personal disaster. Circumstances change, economic cycles have their booms and busts, technology advances, and

people's interests change over time. Remaining ever open-minded is the smartest way to adapt to change" (Krumboltz and Chan, 2005, p. 351). The field of career counseling has no choice but to stay abreast of changes if it is to remain relevant (Blustein, 2011). Assessment and intervention should therefore be aimed at improving people's employability, enhancing their career adaptability, and helping them assume authorship of their career and life stories.

This view is consistent with the opinion expressed by Bernaud (2014, p. 36), namely that "career choices faced by individuals inevitably raise the question of the meaning that they intend to give their lives. To choose their work or sector in which they want to evolve, is also to consider the purpose of their existence, the priorities (physical, spiritual, social, aesthetic, etc.) that they want to give, the choices that they wish to operate, the overall style of life that they wish to give themselves" (Bernaud, 2014, p. 36). Clearly, career-related transitioning requires an awareness of the self so as to show a greater openness to the deeper dimensions of humaneness (Maslow and Lowry, 1968). Lombardo (2007) explains that although the concept of "wisdom" is often associated with knowledge constructed in the past—to be more specific, from wise men and philosophers—these "wise" people use such accumulated knowledge to deal with current and perceived future challenges and transitions related to career life. Career counseling, seen from this perspective, requires career counselors to equip their clients to act wisely. Wisdom, seen thus, strongly relates to a stronger future-oriented awareness and requires a profound understanding of behavioral tendencies and patterns. Lombardo (2007) regards wisdom as the highest expression of self-development, the synthesis and application of the virtues of an enhanced future awareness. It is the perpetually developing understanding of and fascination with both the bigger picture and the personal dimensions of life, of what is important, ethical and meaningful, and it involves the desire and creative ability to apply this understanding to design a better life (which includes finding a decent job) so as to benefit the self and others.

Rationale for the Study

While the need to help people become more career resilient and employable is a common topic in the educational research literature, very little has been written about the role of clients' spirituality in career-life counseling. In this article, the emphasis is therefore on the cardinal (yet largely neglected) importance of permanent spiritual values and ideals that clients should steer personally so as to enable them to construct their own identity, find decent work and design successful lives.

INTRODUCING A MORATORIUM PHASE FOR EMERGING ADULTS

Major work-related changes, as well as social and cultural changes over the past number of decades have spawned a postponement or "moratorium" phase among young people in the more well-off communities between the ages of 18 (when most of them complete their school careers) and 30 (before they enter the adult phase). They take longer (compared to the young persons of a few decades ago) to find their feet as far as stable accommodation,

work and intimate relationships in particular are concerned (Harter, 2012; Facio and Resett, 2013). This period (18–30 years old) is considered the period of budding or emerging maturity, in imitation of authors such as Arnett (2012) and Smith et al. (2011).

An example of an initiative that correlates with the above scenario is the Western Cape Development Strategy (2013) that was launched by the Western Cape Department of Social Development (South Africa) in September 2013. The Western Cape Provincial Government recognized that local youths (14- to 25-year-olds) were part of a "youth bulge" that constituted the vast majority of the population in the province. Moreover, it realized that this group could be regarded either as a demographic asset or as a demographic time bomb, and therefore projected that within the next decade these youths would be either an asset or a threat to social stability, depending on the extent to which their current restrictive life opportunities would be optimalised via the development processes they go through. Plans were purposefully made and are being carried out to ensure that these youths take their rightful place in society instead of simply swelling the ranks of the unemployed. In terms of this strategy, the development of youth leaders is core to the handling of long-term challenges. Youth leadership, as understood in terms of social development, does not deal with narrow-minded "role model" definitions of leadership, but rather with the improvement and increase of a variety of services, support structures and different opportunities that are available to youths as leaders of change in their communities—initially as youths and later as adults. Moreover, the development of youth leaders is regarded as essential for youth participation in their own development processes, their communities and society at large. It is assumed that as the leadership capabilities and powers of youths are developed, this will over time have a fundamental impact on the social institutions with which they interact. This will cumulatively lead to the transformation and change of the negative local landscapes and settings that contribute so much to the different challenges currently faced by young people.

The designers of the Western Cape Development Strategy (2013) declare that well-grounded theoretical frameworks offer a good springboard and conclude that "the needs for evidence-based means to address the challenges of the twenty-first century will coalesce to make Lewin's (1951, p. 169) quote that 'There is nothing so practical as a good theory' an oft-proven empirical reality." They argue that the science of development as a means of promoting social justice may well become the most significant lens through which to consider the future contributions of such science. They also contend that counseling should promote a moral orientation in the emerging adult in such a way that good will be created by way of contributions to positive person-context relationships. When emerging adults see themselves as people who are morally bound to and involved in the establishment of civil society, and when they consequently start to gain a transcendent sense of the importance of life as a commitment to something of an enduring nature or lying beyond the constraints of their own existence, they are empowered to be agents of both their own development and of the positive promotion of other persons and elements of

society. A commitment with regard to spiritual action in a world outside of the self will encourage these young persons to bequeath to future generations a society characterized by social equality and democracy, as well as a world in which youths may flourish and stand a fair chance of finding a decent job.

Considering that the context of emerging adults is ever-changing, ongoing, and characterized by an interplay of forces, the complex context of emerging adults makes self-construction (Guichard, 2005, 2009) an appropriate avenue or lens by means of which to view, investigate, and interpret their idiosyncratic contextual situatedness. In cohesion with the above, it seems that career construction theory (Savickas, 2011) supports individuals with a new perspective on their life-career constructions, which prepares them to make wise choices and become involved in specific activities. More specifically, life design counseling promotes the deliberate and intentional preparation of emerging adults for an emotionally strong and healthy and a socially secure, satisfactory, and productive life (Maree, 2013).

Self-construction and life design counseling will now be discussed briefly.

Self-Construction Theory

Self-construction theory regards people as proactive agents whose main activity is self- organization to maintain stability and continuousness in their career lives instead of being passive objects, subjected to the whims of external forces (at the mercy of fate; Mahoney, 2002). On a related note, Guichard and Lenz (2005) emphasize the importance of individuals' contexts by explaining that people construct themselves in a specific manner, which depends on the way in which they relate to themselves as entities subsisting at particular moments in time in specific societies. As multidimensional human beings in a postmodern society, people join their different career-life domains at any given time and structure them according to various projections (Guichard and Dauwalder, 2010). In life design counseling, the focus in terms of context is on the relationship between the individual and his/her environment, as well as on the interaction that occurs within this system with its subsystems (Zunker, 1998).

Life Design Counseling

For the purposes of the current article, we focus on the life design framework and approach recently developed by Savickas et al. (2009).

The Life Design Counseling Framework of Savickas et al. (2009)

The use of narratives lies at the heart of life design counseling. Clients' narratives are utilized by the career counselor to understand their career-life experiences and events in life contexts (Maree, 2013). Clients use their own language (obviously shaped by life contexts) to construct narratives. Maree (2013) states that career counselors act as co-constructors of clients' life stories and facilitate the narration of their career-life stories by drawing attention to poignant themes and tensions in their career-life storylines. Furthermore, they teach them the skills they need to write and perform the next episode in their

career-life story. By doing this, the career counselor augments clients' vocabulary, effectively equips them with the language they need to express themselves and elucidates their interpretation of their own environments. Savickas (2013) maintains that individuals' experiences in their families help them to devise and shape their social roles as actors. These roles are modified continuously as the need arises and as clients "act" out such roles on various career-life stages or theaters such as the family, school, community/society, tertiary training institution, and work-life contexts. During this process, clients in reality write and advance their autobiographical stories, which provide them with autobiographical bridges to deal with multiple transitions. Clients' career-life stories subsequently shed light on and facilitate stability and constancy in their lived experiences in work-life and related environments.

Life design counseling blends self- and career- construction (Savickas et al., 2009). Based on social constructionism, it recognizes that social interaction produces awareness of the self and an understanding of one's situatedness, while it also promotes identity formation. Moreover, conversation facilitates the co-construction of meaning in the lives of people. Life design counseling equips career counselors with the *savoir faire* to help their clients deal with the challenges and needs that they encounter and experience in their unique contexts. Significantly, the life design process not only focuses on the importance of deciding which career to choose; it also supports clients in devising adaptable career lives that can be reshaped as and when life experiences ensue and changes occur (Campbell and Ungar, 2004).

The ultimate aim of life design counseling is to bring about change in clients' career lives in respect of their adaptability, narratability, intentionality and, ultimately, action orientation. Whereas adaptability speaks of one's ability to deal with change, narratability alludes to continuousness in one's career-life story. Taken together, adaptability and narratabilty ensure suppleness and constancy of the sense of self and indicate an ability to participate in meaningful activities, to flourish in the twenty-first century knowledge society (despite having to make transitions on multiple occasions) and, ultimately, to move forward by dealing with existent activities. In doing so, clients uncover abilities and interests they would prefer to execute (Savickas et al., 2009). The value of life design counseling as such is implied in a counseling process that fulfills two functions at the same time, namely a reflection function and a design function.

Life design counseling promotes heuristic development by harnessing and merging client-centered, psychodynamic, and (aspects of) cognitive-behavioral approaches (Hill, 2009) to facilitate self-reflection and reflexivity (Guichard et al., 2011) and, ultimately, advance people's career-lives. The aim of exploring and building on the magic in the life stories of individuals is to compile a life portrait that does not only transform the individual's life, but also makes a difference in the broader context. Such a "relational-moral self" is probably described best in Buechner's (1993, p. 119) distinctive statement and the observation made by Savickas (2006, 2011, p. 33). Buechner considers man's life journey as a response to a calling and states: "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness

and the world's deep hunger meet," while Savickas remarks, in support, that something special (magic) occurs when there is movement: "Magic happens when we move [forward]."

It seems that life design counseling may contribute to a situation in which emerging adults can play a role in creating a favorable environment in which young persons may flourish. Exactly how this initiation should take place is uncertain and this was indicated as a shortcoming in the literature. The working assumption is that life design counseling (with the narrative as the vehicle that helps to extend the autonomous self to a "self-in-context" that displays a "self-others" orientation—in other words that contributes to the greater good) lends itself to bridging this gap.

Goals of the Study

Our goal was to explore the value that life design counseling holds for the career construction and self-construction of emerging adults. Our specific research questions were:

a. How is life design counseling experience by emerging adults who seek career counseling?
b. How can life design counseling enhance the personal development of emerging adults (enhancing self-awareness and reaping the benefits of developing an improved relational-moral self) in a way that enhances career and self-construction?

METHODS

Research Design

The research design was of a qualitative nature and involved an intrinsic, instrumental, collective case study. An interpretivist paradigm was utilized, which expedited a thorough understanding and profound interpretation of meanings revealed during our interactions with clients. An explorative, descriptive, collective case study was implemented to facilitate an in-depth investigation of the outcomes of life design counseling with regard to the self-construction of emerging adults (McMillan and Schumacher, 2009). The reason for our choice was that we believed it would enable us to study the constructs of life design counseling and career adaptability from

multiple perspectives within the context in which it occurred (Creswell, 2013).

Case Description

Selection criteria called for participants in the "new life phase" group (the so-called emerging adults) so that we would be able to understand the relational-moral relationships of emerging adults by obtaining a holistic picture of the interaction between the subsystems (life roles and different life contexts) at play during self-construction. Multidimensional data regarding the emerging adult as a relational-moral career constructor and community citizen or community leader was gathered and analyzed.

Given that it was our aim to examine the career-related challenges faced by people with some degree of choice in their lives, the following selection criteria applied. First, participants had to be between the ages of 18 and 30. Second, they had to come from the middle- and higher-income environment (and therefore had some degree of choice in their lives). Third, participants must have displayed a need for career counseling. Fourth, participants had to be literate and verbally developed enough to make a constructive contribution to the research project (academic performance and an interview were used to determine whether the candidate was suitable or not). Fifth, an equal number of participants who speak Afrikaans, English, and an African language had to be involved. Lastly, participants had to agree to participate in the life design counseling intervention. The objective was to investigate the value of life design counseling in the construction of a relational-moral self for each of these six emerging adults. **Table 1** contains a summative overview of the background information regarding the participants.

Despite the fact that the participants apparently wanted help "only" with their choice of a suitable occupation, they frequently put forward broader issues that they wanted to sort out. These broader issues implied an approach that necessitated the design of a life career and that further highlighted an investigation into the possible value of life design counseling.

Participant 1 had already completed a degree, but she also wanted to specialize in a medical field (area still to be discerned)—something that would require many more years of training. She wished to reconcile her vision of a satisfactory and fulfilling life career with a bigger picture that could reveal a

TABLE 1 | A summative overview of the background information regarding the participants.

PARTICIPANT	1	2	3	4	5	6
Age	22	28	20	19	30	29
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Female	Female	Male
Ethnicity	White	White	Colored	Colored	Black	Black
Mother tongue	Afrikaans	Afrikaans	English	English	Southern Sotho	Yoruba
Highest qualification	BA with French and German	Matric (needs one subject for degree in architecture)	Matric	Matric	BTech Auditing	National Diploma in Banking and Management
Student, employee, entrepreneur or unemployed	Student	Employee and entrepreneur	Employee	Unemployed	Unemployed	Employee and entrepreneur
Accommodation arrangements	Independent from parent	Lives with parents	Lives with parents	Lives with parent	Lives with parent	Independent

potential that had previously been obscured to her. Participant 2 wanted to eliminate potential traps from his thought processes since he considered sacrificing the security of an existing job opportunity in order to strengthen his position as entrepreneur. Participant 3 requested help with his career choice, but at the same time wished to gain greater self-knowledge that would support him with his plans for the future. Participant 4's need for life career counseling involved the choice of a suitable occupation, since it was a year since she matriculated and she had still not managed to take a clear course. Despite having already been well-qualified, Participant 5 experienced a search for herself, which she defined in more detail as a lack of specific sense and meaning (being productive, constructive and creative). Participant 6 probably experienced a lack of focus, since he not only had numerous interests, but also was particularly eager to learn. Hence, it transpired that he wished to align his passion or vocation with a suitable occupation in order to conclude the entire process in a focused manner.

Various strategies were used to ensure crystallization, while trustworthiness was ensured through the use of triangulation during the data collection and analysis phases (McMillan and Schumacher, 2009; Creswell, 2013).

Credibility
To ensure credibility of the data and appraise contradictory data, we used triangulation, and crystallization (we focused on the emergence of multifaceted patterns and themes). Moreover, we ensured peer review by collaborating with a colleague who was indifferent and impartial to the study. She (our external coder) coded all data independently to make sure that the identified themes were a true representation of the data. In addition, participant review was facilitated in that we made sure that the participants had the opportunity to decide whether the results and inferences were correct. We cleared up any possible misunderstandings and concepts discussed with the participants before interpreting and analysing the data.

Transferability
We based our research on comprehensive descriptions of the case study and made no attempt to generalize. We ensured that any inferences were supported by sufficient evidence from the data. We documented detailed descriptions of the research setting and the techniques used to ensure that sufficient information existed on the context of events.

Confirmability
We avoided selective use of data and fully documented the methods used and the decisions made during the study.

Dependability
The data was reported verbatim. Information was presented in as much detail as possible (including information potentially contradictory to the identified themes, subthemes, and subsubthemes). We maintained an audit trail by carefully recording all communications, and we communicated with participants in their language of communication.

Triangulation and Crystallization
Richardson (1997) advocates the use of the term crystallization rather than triangulation in qualitative research. Different qualitative data-gathering methods were therefore used to facilitate crystallization and enhance the trustworthiness of the study.

Intervention
The intervention (individual narrative career counseling) comprised six life design sessions. Each session comprised 45–60 min each over a period of 6 weeks.

The intervention is described in **Table 2**.

Data Analysis
The data analysis strategy (data reduction and interpretation) consisted of the following seven phases: organizing the data; absorbing the data; generating deductive categories and themes; coding the data; offering interpretations by means of analytical notes; searching for alternative insights, and presenting the research in the form of a report (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). The themes and subthemes implemented in the research were determined deductively (a priori). Examples of such themes are the concepts "own autonomy" and "commonality," which were embedded in the construct of the relational-moral identity. However, note was taken of the view held by Bernard and Ryan (2010, p. 107), namely that "no matter how hard we try, there are no purely inductive (or deductive) studies." Our style of data analysis can therefore best be described as deductive-inductive. Unsurprisingly, a number of additional subsubthemes emerged inductively during the analysis of the data.

Subsubthemes that emerged inductively and were engaged with in an integrated manner, demonstrated that a balanced oscillation between self-centeredness and "other"-centeredness could be negotiated. In addition, it became clear that deliberate diversification (which comprises the combination of virtues and meaningful activities—including a profession) could be fundamental to spiritual or relational-moral identity formation. Crucially, the oscillation between self-centeredness and self-transcendence and the application of core *sparks* (deep-seated passions or interests (Benson, 2008; Benson and Scales, 2009) emerged inductively as fundamental to identity work with the emerging adults in our study. Scales et al. (2010) believe that *sparks* are people's idiosyncratic traits that give evidence of positive values and can be implemented to ignite fires in them to promote prosocial and generative values. In reality, *sparks* indicate "a passion for a self-identified interest, skill, or capacity that metaphorically lights a fire in an adolescent's life, pro-viding energy, joy, purpose, and direction. Thriving is … the combination over time of sparks, and the action that the youth and others take to support, develop, and nurture those sparks" (Scales et al., 2010, p. 264).

Ethical Issues
Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Education. We implemented standard measures to ensure participants' wellbeing and to protect them from harm

TABLE 2 | Description of the intervention.

Sessions	Life design intervention	Proposed content of sessions	Expected outcomes
1	The problem was defined and the results that the participant hoped to achieve, were identified.	Maree's (2010) *Career Interest Profile* (*CIP*) with its 19 occupational categories was handed out and explained, after which the questionnaire was completed together with the participant. The completed questionnaire was subsequently used as the basis for a conversation about provisionally favored occupations, while at the same time the issue of meeting the ongoing needs of the greater good was touched upon.	Firstly, by creating an "appealing" environment, participants were motivated to participate in the life design intervention programme. Furthermore, the purpose of the activity was the identification and exploration of participants' interests, as well as the role of benevolence/goodwill (based on their opinion and understanding of their own life experiences). It was hoped that the participants would gain both self- and occupational knowledge through their deeper insight into matters that could be meaningful to themselves as well as in the broader contex.
2	The participant and researcher together investigated the participant's current scenario.	The career interview (the five primary domain questions) was used to start with the co-construction of an occupation (in the form of a new life story). During this process, the self-concept was linked to a preferred occupational environment, and at the same time core life problems and fixations dating from childhood were sorted out. A life slogan was employed to serve as leverage for launching a new chapter in the participant's life story. The ethical aspects were explored co-constructively with the help of life-counseling techniques.	
3	New scenarios were revealed as the researcher told the participant's story from a new perspective and revised it together with him or her.	The researcher expanded the participant's moral horizon by way of a timeline (covering the evolution of human consciousness—from caveman to postmodern mindfulness) and video inserts. While the first four (brief) video clips highlighted current and future socio-cultural and ecological crises, the next four dealt with the need to extend the self to others, the need for leaders who would be willing to become involved in finding solutions to socio-cultural and ecological crises as well as the value of cultivating and practicing wisdom. The focus was on possible contributions to meet current needs and serve the greater good, as well as on solutions for future society. The researcher made a connection between the meanings drawn from the participant's career story interview as well as further assessments and the initial reason for counseling: The initial career story was converted into a clear character sketch with an occupational theme.	Participants were given the opportunity to provide sense and meaning to their own lives. By taking into account the past and present (of their own lives as well as that of humankind), they were able to identify life themes that could be intertwined with future career-life ideals and that involved addressing the needs of the greater good, as well as providing solutions for the dilemmas of society.
4	The problem was placed within a new story.	Based on the information obtained from previous sessions, a collage was used to create—jointly and within the framework of a macro-narrative or life portrait—a new career and life story that is significant and meaningful. Contributions to the greater good were encouraged from the perspective of a relational-moral self (with occupation as the central point). In this way it was attempted to construct a relational-moral self that would be unique to each participant.	The purpose of this activity was to create an opportunity during which the participants could narrate their new career-life stories. Inherent life themes were linked to issues that provided personal as well as social meaning.
5	Activities that the participant could convert into concrete action were specified.	The plan concentrated on actions that would address those issues that had initially compelled the participant to seek counseling. Super et al. (1990) [in Savickas' (2011) model] refer to the consecutive actions involved as crystallization (the match between self and a possible profession), specification (a more advanced examination of specific bits of information) and actualization (the choice is actually made by the participant trying it out).	The purpose was to mobilize participants to take steps to sort out their reason for reporting for counseling within the framework of the more holistic picture (life portrait) that had been negotiated by the participant and counselor.
6	Follow-up.	Short-term and long-term follow-up actions were planned, based on (if required) the revision of the exploration outcomes and provisional future decisions.	The purpose was to monitor the progress made by participants and, if necessary, to render further support in respect of Item 5 above.

(Continued)

TABLE 2 | Continued

Sessions	Life design intervention	Proposed content of sessions	Expected outcomes
1–6	Journal entries.	The participants were requested to reflect on aspects of their experiences with regard to the intervention programme and to jot down these thoughts (i.e., an upsurge of emotions while they were completing any of the tasks; as well as thoughts and images that arose about themselves and their lives).	The aim of the reflections during journal entries was to give the participants more profound insights into their career-life stories and contexts. In this way they could identify their life themes and thus eventually sculpture a more coherent and meaningful image of themselves and their career lives.

throughout the research. Written informed consent was obtained from participants, and privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity were maintained throughout. Feedback was given to participants at all stages and during all the phases of the research. Moreover, we released our research findings in an acceptable and responsible manner (Piper and Simons, 2005). Since some participants could perhaps manifest behaviors and emotions that would warrant counseling during the course of the research, arrangements were made for counseling to be provided by a fellow educational psychologist who agreed to offer this service should it be required. This was done to ensure the integrity of our role as researchers in this study and to avoid any role confusion.

RESULTS

Themes and Subthemes

Themes and subthemes (which emerged from the literature study and were used deductively during the research) as well as subsubthemes (which emerged inductively during data analysis) appear in **Tables 3**, **4** below.

Life design counseling enabled the researchers to confirm the existence of participants' autonomous self (also referred to as the "own actual self"). This "self" functions in a (daily) relational matrix (complex and mutual; also known as the "commonality aspect" or common/relational self). Aspects of the autonomous self were further differentiated (by means of the deductive confirmation of aspects obtained from the data analysis) into the participants' world views (ideologies); the highlights, lowest points and turning points in their life stories; their own unique characteristics; and their plans, linked to dreams and goals. These differentiated aspects served as subthemes. Subsubthemes that emerged inductively were integrated with the deductively derived themes and subthemes. All the issues were therefore condensed into a framework that enabled the researchers to compare the data in greater detail with contemporary research conducted into the participants' "self-formation," as well as their growth and development.

In the next paragraphs the findings are presented within the framework (and as example) of the autonomous self on the one hand—and its associated differentiation—in a (daily) relational matrix (complex and mutual) of family and friends; intimacy; work or study role; and the civil and cosmopolitan self (the common self) on the other hand. The findings are subsequently related to the aim of the research in the form of a discussion.

Own Autonomy (The Autonomous or Own Actual Self)

Ideology or World View (as Background to the Life Story)

The ideologies or world views of the participants were self-fulfilling (self-centered) and/or self-transcending. The following is an example of a self-centered world view taken from the study: *What I want to do with my life is ... I want to live my life doing what I want to do. I want to travel. I want to enjoy my life as a human being. I want to live a fulfilled life.* In contrast—an example of a self-transcending world view is the following: *The day we realize that we are living not for ourselves but for the people and the generations to come, is the day we are all free.*

Key Scenes (Highlights, Lowest Points, and Turning Points in the Life Story)

Participants were able to apply self-regulation, which proved in some cases to be self-assertive (self-fulfilling or self-centered) and self-transcending in other cases. The following is an example (translated from Afrikaans) of self-fulfilling orientation: *I think that bankruptcy had a very serious effect on my life. (Ek dink daardie bankrotskap het 'n baie groot effek op my lewe gehad.) It also caused my business thinking to change drastically. (Dit het ook my besigheidsdenke baie verander.) Such as how to tackle things ... how to avoid putting everything in one basket ... things may go wrong ... and to start asking the right questions. (Soos hoe om goeters aan te pak ... hoe om alles nie in een plekkie te sit nie ... goed kan verkeerd gaan ... en die regte vrae te begin vra.)* An example of self-transcending orientation is the following: *"I don't really value money too much, neither do I value materialistic things as prerequisite for my success. But I do value service to other ... I would rather achieve my goals at the service for people, not at the expense of others."*

Own Unique Characteristics and Plans, Linked to Dreams and Goals in Life

Participants displayed idiosyncratic characteristics that imply positive values (also known as *sparks*) that some of them applied randomly in respect of contributions to society. By deliberately focusing the participants' attention on the presence of their *sparks* and indicating the latter's potential with regard to constructive contributions to society, the concept of deliberate/purposeful diversification was raised. An example of purposeful diversification is the following remark that one of the researchers made toward a participant who shared her personal vision regarding her medical career with this researcher. *So*

TABLE 3 | Theme 1 and its subthemes and subsubthemes.

THEME 1: OWN AUTONOMY (Identity formation of the autonomous "self")

Subtheme 1.1: Ideology or world view (background to the life story)
Subsubtheme 1.1.1: A self-fulfilling world view
Subsubtheme 1.1.2: A self-transcending world view

Subtheme 1.2: Key scenes (highlights, lowest points, and turning points)
Subsubtheme 1.2.1: A self-assertive plasticity
Subsubtheme 1.2.2: A self-transcending plasticity (example of a citizen leader included)

Subtheme 1.3: Key images (that promote the vitality of the story line)
Subsubtheme 1.3.1: Intrapersonal diversity
Subsubsubtheme 1.3.1.1: Prosocial objectives
Subsubsubtheme 1.3.1.2: Generative values

TABLE 4 | Theme 2 and its subthemes and subsubthemes.

THEME 2: COMMONALITY (Relational-moral identity formation)

Subtheme 2.1: Family (relatives), friends, and intimacy
Subsubtheme 2.1.1: Recentring of the emerging adult
Subsubtheme 2.1.2: Family as the primary "context" for spiritual development
Subsubtheme 2.1.3: Organized youth groups as additional context for spiritual development
Subsubtheme 2.1.4: The tendency to make choices (in respect of life roles) in terms of where the force of gravity is

Subtheme 2.2: Work or study role
Subsubtheme 2.2.1: Spiritual goals (deeper meaning of the career) that are supplementary to defined measures of success

Subtheme 2.3: Civilian self
Subsubtheme 2.3.1: Community-oriented aspects
Subsubtheme 2.3.2: Political aspects

Subtheme 2.4: Cosmopolitan self
Subsubtheme 2.4.1: Socio-political literacy
Subsubtheme 2.4.2: The importance of systemic reflection on a global level

for me, the 'ideal self' that I see in you, is the following: That you are more than able to make a supreme and (researcher repeated the participant's own words) *actually in your own words: 'making a supreme and startling, and prominent contribution to the development and improvement of mankind'.*

Prosocial and generative actions never take place in isolation—always in context. The latter was categorized in the current research as family, friends and intimacy, work or study role, and the civil or cosmopolitan self. A brief description and examples of the prevalence of prosocial and generative values in the different contexts follow next.

Commonality (The Common or Relational Self)

Family and Friends

Family appeared to constitute the primary context for spiritual development. Furthermore, it seemed that an organized youth group (consisting of friends, mentors and youth leaders) could well provide an additional context for spiritual development. An example of the parental home as primary context for spiritual development is the following: *It will also be my father. Because everything that he did when he was young is now a light to my path.* The following is an example of an organized youth group that serves as an additional context for spiritual development: *We are a few young people that have a home cell together every week on Wednesdays and Fridays where we discuss spiritual topics and encourage one another.*

Intimacy

Intimacy among emerging adults was found to be fragile/delicate and fragmented. An example of the above is the following remark by a participant (translated from Afrikaans): *The girl with whom I was …we were together on and off for seven years and then in April … everything eventually came to an end. (Die meisie saam met wie ek was ... ons was aan-en-af vir sewe jaar en ons het toe in April ... toe nou uiteindelik tot 'n einde gekom.) I am sad about it, because it is like, I was very down because it had been seven years of my life, and it is someone whom I really love and still love her, but it just didn't work. (Dis vir my sad, want dis soos, ek was baie down gewees want dit was sewe jaar van my lewe, en dis iemand vir wie ek regtig lief is en ek is nog steeds lief vir haar, maar it just didn't work).*

Work or Study Role

A spiritual approach or orientation seemed to be beneficial for employees, especially in view of the fact that emerging adults are experiencing challenges to stabilize themselves economically. The following comment by a participant is an example of a spiritual approach or orientation: *I also like working with customers and sometimes I would go the extra mile helping them and there are customers who always ask for me when they want to buy something. There is also some staff that has been in the company for years even before me. But the manager always calls me instead for information.*

Civilian Self

It became evident that participants displayed a generous degree of community-oriented attitudes and objectives. The following is an example: *Like in my culture we used to say, 'umutu abantu omuntu' …it means we must learn how to share with other people. That way we can help one another to go far.* According to participants, community-oriented activities could be far more effective if the government were to become involved in a meaningful manner: *Everyone must be involved in these issues of contributing and the government should facilitate the project.* The participants also indicated that they did not trust politics as it was being practiced at present: *I don't have any interest in politics. They don't have a mission or vision. They are just stagnant. They are in the parliament to benefit themselves, not for the interest of the country.*

Cosmopolitan Self

Findings with regard to the effect of globalization on emerging adults showed that participants were aware of the interconnectedness of the world: *Yes, we are interconnected. With*

technology, you can be anywhere and anytime. [And] for example, if one country is going through challenges, we will also experience the same thing because we are dealing with one another. The participants also indicated that they possessed a critical social awareness: *If you say to them, 'Angola, panga and diamonds', then they also look at you in a strange way. (As jy vir hulle sê, 'Angola, panga en diamante,' dan kyk hulle jou ook snaaks aan.) Then they also don't know what you are talking about ... only 'they do this and this and this'. (Dan weet hulle ook nie waarvan jy praat nie ... net 'hulle doen dit en dit en dit.') They do not realize that they don't even have a notion of what happened earlier. (Hulle besef nie hulle het nie eers 'n idee van wat vooraf gebeur het nie.)* Emerging adults furthermore seem to be aware of the value of greater collaboration among and involvement of individuals on a cosmopolitan level: *... but the same thing happened in Egypt and Syria.... 30 years ago it would have been impossible for those rebellions to happen, because those people did not know it was possible. (... maar dieselfde ding het gebeur in Egipte en Sirië... daai opstande sou nie 30 jaar terug kon gebeur het nie, want daai mense het nie geweet dit is moontlik nie.) 'We thought we were living in Egypt and we are being oppressed' and that's it ... but now they have seen on the news and on Facebook and such places that it is possible to stand up. ('Ons het gedink ons bly in Egipte en ons is onderdruk' en dit is so ... maar hulle het nou op die nuus en op Facebook en op sulke plekke gesien dit is moontlik om op te staan).*

DISCUSSION

Our findings suggest that life design counseling enhances emerging adults' self-awareness and relational-moral self. The finding with regard to an "autonomous-relational" participant corresponded with the findings of other researchers (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Bakan, 1966; Deci and Ryan, 2000, 2008; Kagitcibasi, 2012; Inguglia et al., 2014). All these researchers found that autonomous behavior (which involves mainly self-management) and relational behavior (commitment to others in a commonality sense) are fundamental needs experienced by all people. These needs are considered as highly complementary motives and the integration of the two are regarded as essential for optimal psychological well-being. The notion of the "autonomous (own actual) self" is extended to autonomous "self"-identity formation, while the "relational self" is extended to relational-moral identity formation (McAdams, 1985; Gadow, 1999; Parker, 2007; Barrett, 2013; Roberts and Côté, 2014). The concepts "own autonomy" and "commonality," coupled with "autonomous self" identity formation and "relational-moral identity formation" served as the two main themes in the current research.

McAdams and Cox (2010) further differentiated own autonomy as a "self' operating in three aspects, namely: the self as *author* (of the own narrative identity) who is able to ponder and reflect on the self as *actor* (with his/her unique properties as obtained from the key images of the participants" life stories) and the self as *agent* (the autonomous self with future plans and goals). The autonomous self (as agent) operates from a specific ideology or world view and with a particular resilience (as

obtained from the key images of the participants' life stories) in a daily (relational) matrix. In summary, the participants' ideologies or world views, together with the key images and key scenes from their life stories, served as subthemes.

As stated previously, a number of subsubthemes emerged inductively. It became apparent that the ideologies or world views of participants could be negotiated as a balanced oscillation between "self-centredness" and "other-centredness," and that that purposeful diversification or the combination of sparks (Benson, 2008) (especially idiosyncratic traits that confirm the presence of positive values) and meaningful activities (including the pivotal actions of choosing and executing a career) may be fundamental to spiritual identity formation. In terms of an occupation, it seemed that when participants consider work a calling, this may boost the dynamic interaction (mutually beneficial and adjustable relationship) between employee and the workplace—in other words, both employee and context may benefit from the interaction. This finding supports the findings of Adams (2012), Colozzi and Colozzi (2000), Dik and Duffy (2009), and Dik et al. (2009), who confirm the powerful influence of the belief that one has a "calling" for a career or that one's career is meaningful or useful or beneficial to others.

The family proved to be the primary context for spiritual development. Shulman and Connolly (2013) argue in this regard that the increased investment of energy by emerging adults in work or study may perhaps exert pressure on their relationships, which culminate in the postponement of marriage, instability in relationships and the hesitation to conclude agreements. These aspects seem to be characteristic of the moratorium phase of emerging adults, during which romantic commitments and life plans—more specifically, the different facets of the lives of emerging adults—are co-ordinated. Their choices of life roles therefore incline toward the place where gravity lies during this phase (Shulman and Connolly, 2013).

Although it seemed that the participants had a generous degree of community-orientated attitudes and goals, "political" involvement was labeled as "atomized" activity. Thus, the possibility that the social capital of emerging adults could be wasted is becoming an increasing and alarming reality. In this regard it seems that organized youth groups could perhaps provide a temporary context within which the need and potential of emerging adults to become involved in community projects could be stimulated.

All things considered, Flum (2015) contends that being in the world does not only imply relational and contextual connotations [the actor and agent suggested by McAdams and Cox (2010)]; it also involves a retrospective and prospective view of the self (McAdams and Cox's, 2010 author). Lombardo (2007) refers to a positive and informed narrative vision or picture that can be converted into action—an issue that was discussed as "life design counseling."

In brief, it seems that the self cannot be independent of the own social-historical existence (the relational and contextual aspects of the own life story). By means of a retrospective as well as a prospective view of the self, a map of possible roles and potential roles may be provided within which new thoughts, actions and self-definition are desired, allowed, feasible, wanted,

and essential (Flum, 2015). By making the intertwined mutual relationship among the self, the proximal and distal community more explicit, the individual is more inclined to exercise own autonomy in favor of commonality (a relational-autonomous relationship), to which the spiritual dimension of prosocial and generative actions may be added (a relational-moral autonomous self).

We found no evidence that the deliberate promotion of a balanced oscillation between "own autonomy" and "commonality" by way of life design counseling has been reported before. More specifically, no evidence was found of the mutualistic design of a life career within the larger framework of the purposeful promotion of own autonomy (the stimulation of a balance between self-fulfillment and self-transcendence through the purposeful and intelligent application of *sparks*, both for own wellbeing and for the wellbeing of the community) and commonality. These findings underscore the importance of using career guidance- and education-related dialogues to promote oscillation between emerging adults' "own autonomy" and "commonality"and to advance their career-life-design within the larger framework of the purposeful promotion of own autonomy and commonality in service of fair and sustainable human development globally (Guichard, 2013). Given the increasing feeling of isolation among many workers, and emerging adult workers in particular, as well as the belief and experience that their needs are not being met to a satisfactory extent in work contexts, we believe that research on this topic is vitally important.

Limitation of the Study

The somewhat bounded social class of the sample represents a limitation.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of our study may have important implications for career counseling in other contexts. Firstly, it is important to conduct research on possible ways in which this type of counseling can be administered in group-based contexts. Second, longitudinal research to trace the medium- and longer-term effect of life design counseling on participants is essential. Third, it is essential to ensure that this type of intervention is made available to the millions of people who are currently denied virtually any kind of career counseling related intervention. Lastly, researchers should be wiling to alter and adapt the intervention described here to see which intervention works best in different contexts and to report on their findings.

CONCLUSION

Our findings further the view expressed by Taylor (1989, p. 197), who remarked that "in order to make minimal sense of our lives, in order to have an identity, we need an orientation to the good, and we see that this sense of the good has to be woven into my understanding of my life as an unfolding story." Moreover, our findings support Lombardo's (2007) timeless observations that wise individuals regard their own identity formation as an ongoing construction, that the core of their being involves a creative force and that they see the future as an opportunity for further growth, but also as an opportunity to advance the growth of "others." Promoting these sentiments is particularly central in the context of the construction of a relational-moral self, and associatively, in the construction of a career-life identity. Dik et al. (2012) rightly argue that career counseling should strive to involve individuals in meaningful work that offers them opportunities to promote social harmony directly and indirectly.

The findings pertaining to community-oriented aspects in this article further the observation of Arnett (2013, p. 5), who argues that "today's emerging adults are not Generation Me but Generation We, an exceptionally generous generation that holds great promise for improving the world." These findings are accurately represented by the concepts *iSintu* (beholding the "self-identity" in the "other") (Nussbaum et al., 2010), as well as the term *ubuntu*, which suggests the human commitment and interdependence experienced in neighborhoods, organizations and the global community (Le Grange, 2012).

In a nutshell—this article suggests that the value of life design counseling can be summarized by combining the remarks made by Buechner (1993, p. 119) and Savickas (2006, 2011, p. 13), namely: *The magic in one's career life happens where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.* Harnessing life-design counseling (for career construction) to help all people (emerging adults in particular) challenged by unemployment and poverty become employable, find decent work and enhance their sense of self offers society its best chance to achieve this laudable aim, and, in doing so, to promote the idea of a fair and just society (Maree and Di Fabio, 2015).

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

JM and AT conducted the research, while JM wrote the manuscript and received substantial input from AT.

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Green Positive Guidance and Green Positive Life Counseling for Decent Work and Decent Lives: Some Empirical Results

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This article discusses green positive guidance and green positive life counseling for decent work and decent lives. From a green guidance perspective, the connectedness to nature construct is important both in terms of the meaning of work and life construction. The study discussed in this article analyzed the relationship between empathy and connectedness to nature, controlling for the effects of fluid intelligence and personality traits. In this connection, the Advanced Progressive Matrices, the Big Five Questionnaire, and the Interpersonal Reactivity Index were administered to 144 Italian high school students. The study revealed that connecteness to nature was not associated with fluid intelligence and was only moderately associated with personality traits. It was empathy that showed the highest association with connectedness to nature. The results open new opportunities for future research and interventions in green positive guidance/life counseling and green positive decent work.

Keywords: green positive guidance, green positive life counseling, green positive decent work, decent life, empathy, connectedness to nature

INTRODUCTION

Green guidance is concerned with sustainable development (Plant, 2013), environmental conscientiousness (Career Development Association of Australia [CDAA], 2010), and responsibility for the ecosystem (Barham and Eagleson, 2013). It deals with the choice of work and jobs that minimize environmental harm and that heighten awareness of the importance of green careers (Career Development Association of Australia [CDAA], 2010). It encourages individuals to consider the environmental implications of their career choices (Plant, 2013) and to balance work and other aspects of their lives (Guichard, 2013a; Plant, 2013), thereby sustaining a way of life that promotes health, economic security, and social justice (Career Development Association of Australia [CDAA], 2010). Green guidance also encourages organizations to pay more attention to sustainability issues and to recruit staff who understand these concerns on the one hand, and, on the other hand, it encourages job applicants to consider organizations that view their social responsibilities seriously and that implement enlightened human resource policies (Career Development Association of Australia [CDAA], 2010).

Green guidance focuses on sustainability issues, especially sustainability in career practices and career interventions aimed at promoting a balance between individual aspirations and societal and global needs (Guichard, 2013a; Plant, 2013). It thus underlines the importance of aligning

individual needs with the needs of society, the environment, and the common good (Barham and Eagleson, 2013; Guichard, 2013a). It promotes ethical values in career guidance and counseling that contribute to building efficient, wealthier, and more just societies (Guichard, 2013a).

In relation to green guidance and career practice, the concept of ecological well-being can be used as a measure of how successful an ecological system is in managing, distributing, and sustaining environmental resources (Center on Education and Work [CEW], 2015). Green guidance focuses on ecological well-being that becomes a "natural" way of thinking, that is closely linked with people's lives, and that is embedded in career guidance delivery (Barham and Eagleson, 2013).

A green challenge for career practitioners is how they engage their clients in considering the kind of world they want to live and the role they want to play in it (Guichard, 2013a; Plant, 2013). Clients are citizens in the present and have a role to play in constructing the future, which they can discuss with their career advisors (Guichard, 2013a; Plant, 2013).

Green guidance can also help move career practice away from the constraints of the dominant economic discourse toward a professional discourse that enables practitioners to assist clients achieve a fulfilling life in a more socially just, sustainable society (Barham and Eagleson, 2013). It is important to consider positive, individually satisfying ways of contributing to society not measured solely in monetary terms (Blustein, 2006, 2011).

Just as green guidance has to attend to wider ecological concerns, career practice has to take into consideration individual well-being, organizational well-being, community well-being, and the well-being of the planet. Individual well-being is concerned with responsibility for one's own future, inclusion, and evaluation by society (Irving, 2013); psychological well-being (Kenny et al., 2014); adaptive functioning (Di Fabio and Kenny, 2015); and securing a sense of dignity and a livable wage (Blustein, 2006; Guichard, 2013a; Guichard and Di Fabio, 2015). Organizational well-being is concerned with the fulfillment of individual and organizational potential (Di Fabio, 2014a); effectiveness (ILO, 2015); productivity (ILO, 2015); customer and employee satisfaction (ILO, 2015); and workforce preparation (Di Fabio et al., in press). Community well-being is concerned with the fulfillment of individual and community potential (Wiseman and Brasher, 2008); connectedness (social networks) (Wiseman and Brasher, 2008); livability (infrastructures) (Wiseman and Brasher, 2008); and equity (values of diversity, social justice, and individual empowerment) (Wiseman and Brasher, 2008). Well-being of the planet is concerned with the achievement of an acceptable standard of living for all resulting from economic growth, capital accumulation, excess production, and unimpeded free market development (Irving, 2013). In terms of green guidance, career practice has to take these four kinds of well-being into consideration.

Green guidance also stresses the importance of the fundamental aims of career interventions (in line with the UNESCO Chair on Lifelong Guidance and Counseling, Guichard, 2013a) but from a "green" perspective, affirming the relevance of contributing to the good of humanity, contributing to the development of decent work in a sustainable and fair

world economy (Guichard and Di Fabio, 2015), promoting more and better jobs and social inclusion (ILO, 2015), and reducing poverty (Di Fabio, 2014a). If "decent work" enhances sustainable development and sustainable careers (ILO, 2015), "green decent work" (Di Fabio, 2016) goes further by meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development [WCED], 1987) by achieving human development goals while preserving the resources of the environment and the ecosystem (Commission of the European Communities, 2009), by developing sustainable and green careers (Anand and Sen, 2000), by promoting a better quality of life and careers (International Institute for Sustainable Development [IISD], 2015). Green decent work (Di Fabio, 2016) also stresses the importance of connectedness with the natural environment (climate, resources, . . .) and environmental sustainability (Barham and Eagleson, 2013; Guichard, 2013a); the importance of the relational environment between people (Blustein, 2011) and social networks (Wiseman and Brasher, 2008); and ethical values (justice, equity, and fairness) (Barham and Eagleson, 2013).

A green positive guidance perspective (Di Fabio, 2016) can be introduced in respect of individual concerns as well as environmental concerns. Individual concerns are concerns for one's own future in line with one's own aims, and one's own talents, potential, and relationships with significant others. Environmental concerns are concerns not only for one's own future but for the future of others too and can be linked to fairness institutions, social justice, environmental well-being, beneficial exploitation of resources, and the preservation of a healthy planet and environment for future generations. Green positive guidance (Di Fabio, 2016) stresses the importance of designing one's own future on the basis of sustainable development and careers, and also considering the future of others and of the planet.

Connectedness to nature is an important feature of green positive guidance and life counseling (Di Fabio, 2016) as the inclusion of nature in one's representation of oneself is integral to the meaning of work (Blustein, 2006, 2011) and life construction (Guichard, 2013b).

Connectedness to nature was originally defined as "the extent to which an individual includes nature within his/her cognitive representation of self" (Schultz, 2002, p. 67). The definition later included the individual's affective and experiential connection with nature (Mayer and Frantz, 2004). People who have such connectedness tend to perceive themselves as members of the broader natural world and community. They have a sense of affinity with it, considering themselves as belonging to the natural world as much as it belongs to them, and believing their well-being is linked to the well-being of the natural world (Mayer and Frantz, 2004).

Regarding environmental issues, there is a growing literature on ecological dimension of intelligence in terms of social development and cognitive patterns of human development (Gifford et al., 2011; Salahodjaev, 2016). A recent study (Salahodjaev, 2016) offers for example new statistical evidences of a negative link between intelligence and deforestation. Besides, the study underlines that

psychological aspects such as intelligence are regularly ignored in statistical modeling of deforestation and focuses on intelligence as predictor of social and human capital (Salahodjaev, 2016) concerning environmental issues. Furthermore in previous studies individuals with higher IQ scores emerged more available both to favor cooperation and to have longtime horizon (Shamosh and Gray, 2008; Jones and Podemska, 2010). So, intelligence seems to be a psychological aspect we have to take into account to control its effect regarding environmental themes.

A green career choice (Bauer and Aiman-Smith, 1996) is updated for many reasons. We have to consider that organizations are "going green" highlighting as a proactive company interest for environment was also positively related to perceived company attractiveness, intentions to pursue employment with that company, and acceptance of a job offer. Individuals consider a "premium green" paying attention to environment al concerns, and willing to make changes in their lives in order to protect the environment (Fergnsen, 1993). Moreover in an environmental psychology perspective environmental issues as for example energy conservation, recycling, fresh water, and pollution are considered everyday commons dilemmas and intelligence and other personal characteristics have to take into consideration to resolve them (Gifford et al., 2011). On the other side, regarding personality, in previous studies a relation between personality traits and connectedness to nature emerged (Hirsh and Dolderman, 2007; Nisbet et al., 2008; Hirsh, 2010), showing in particular associations with agreeableness and openness. Very cooperative, friendly and generous individuals perceived themselves as more connect to nature (Hirsh and Dolderman, 2007; Nisbet et al., 2008; Hirsh, 2010). Also individuals who are interested in new and different experiences, opened to contact with different cultures and customs showed a highest connectedness to nature (Nisbet et al., 2008; Hirsh, 2010). These individuals have also a general sense of respect for nature and for other people (Nisbet et al., 2008).

Regarding the relationship between empathy and connectedness to nature, Schultz (2000) stresses concern for environmental issues. However, very few studies have actually analyzed this relationship (Berenguer, 2007; Cheng and Monroe, 2012; Liefländer et al., 2013). Berenguer (2007) shows the effect of empathy on pro-environmental attitudes and behavior, while Cheng and Monroe (2012) have found that children who enjoy nature generally have empathy for all living creatures. Liefländer et al. (2013) contend that an increase in such empathy will result in increased inclusion with nature. According to the previous considerations, the present study analyzed the relations between empathy and connectedness to nature, also controlling for the effects of fluid intelligence and personality traits. The relationship between empathy and connectedness to nature has not been studied extensively in the literature, and it has never been controlled for the effects of fluid intelligence and personality traits.

Aim and Hypotheses

On the basis of the theoretical framework presented above, this study analyzed the relationship between empathy and connectedness to nature, controlling for the effects of fluid intelligence and personality traits on connectedness to nature. The following hypotheses were formulated.

H1: A relationship exists between empathy and connectedness to nature (Schultz, 2000; Berenguer, 2007; Cheng and Monroe, 2012; Liefländer et al., 2013).

H2: Empathy explains a significant percentage of the variance in connectedness to nature beyond that explained by the effects of fluid intelligence and personality traits.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

The research participants were 144 high school students who were attending the last year of a high school in Tuscany. All the high school students in their final year of school were invited to participate in the study, of whom 94% agreed to participate. Sixty-six (45.80%) of the participants were males and 78 (54.20%) were females. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 20 years ($M = 18.61$, $SD = 0.51$).

Measures
Advanced Progressive Matrices (APM)
The Advanced Progressive Matrices (APM) test by Raven (1962) in the Italian version by Di Fabio and Clarotti (2007) was used to evaluate fluid intelligence. The APM comprises two series of items: Series I has 12 items, and Series II has 36 items. Participants have to choose one of the alternative answers for each item. Each item has eight possible alternatives. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient in the present study was 0.93.

Big Five Questionnaire (BFQ)
The Big Five Questionnaire (BFQ, Caprara et al., 1993) was used to evaluate personality traits. The questionnaire has 132 items with response options on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from $1 = $ *Absolutely false* to $5 = $ *Absolutely true*. The questionnaire measures five personality traits. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were: 0.82 for Extraversion (example of item: "I think that I am an active and vigorous person"), 0.76 for Agreeableness (example of item: "I understand when people need my help"), 0.83 for Conscientiousness (example of item: "I tend to be very thoughtful"), 0.91 for Emotional Stability example of item: ("I do not often feel tense"), and 0.77 for Openness (example of item: "I am always informed about what is happening in the world").

Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI, Davis, 1980)
The Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI, Davis, 1980) in the Italian version by Albiero et al. (2006) was used to evaluate empathy. The IRI has 28 items with response options on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from $1 = $ *Never true* to $4 = $ *Always true*. The questionnaire measures four dimensions: Fantasy, Empathic concern, Perspective taking, Personal distress. The Cronbach's

alpha coefficients were: 0.83 for Fantasy (example of item: "I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel"), 0.86 for Empathic concern (example of item: "I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me", 0.84 for Perspective taking (example of item: "I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both"), 0.81 for Personal distress (example of item: "In emergency situations, I feel apprehensive and ill-at-ease").

Connectedness to Nature Scale (CNS)

The Connectedness to Nature Scale (CNS, Mayer and Frantz, 2004) in the Italian version by Di Fabio (2016) was used to evaluate connectedness to nature. The scale has 14 items with response options on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *Strongly agree* to 5 = *Strongly disagree*. Examples of items are: "I often feel a sense of oneness with the natural world around me", "I think of the natural world as a community to which I belong", "I have a deep understanding of how my actions affect the natural world". The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.91.

Procedure and Data Analysis

The administration of the instruments was carried out in groups in the classrooms by trained psychologists to counterbalance the administration sequence of the instruments to control for the possible effects of presentation. The administration adhered to the requirements of privacy and informed consent in Italian law (Law Decree DL-196/2003) and the ethical standards for research of the Declaration of Helsinki revised in Fortaleza (World Medical Association [WMA], 2013).

Descriptive statistics, Pearson's *r* correlations, and hierarchical regressions were carried out. Gender differences were examined for the studied variables in separate regressions for gender but no differences emerged. For this reason, only regressions for the entire sample are reported in the results session.

RESULTS

Means, standard deviations, and correlations between the APM, BFQ, IRI, CNS are reported in **Table 1**. Significant correlations emerged of connectedness to nature with personality traits (particularly with Agreeableness) and with empathy (particularly with Fantasy and Empathic concern).

The results of hierarchical regression analysis with connectedness to nature as the criterion measure and with fluid intelligence at the first step, personality traits at the second step, and empathy dimensions at the third step are reported in **Table 2**.

At the first step, fluid intelligence did not account for any variance in connectedness to nature ($R^2 = 0.01$, n.s.). At the second step, personality traits accounted for 23% of the variance, and, at the third step, empathy dimensions accounted for 18% of the incremental variance. The regression model, in turn, accounted for 42% of the variance. The results show as empathy dimensions explain a significant percentage of the variance in connectedness to nature beyond that explained by personality traits. Fluid intelligence did not explain variance in connectedness to nature.

DISCUSSION

The study examined the relationship between empathy and connectedness to nature, controlling for the effects of fluid intelligence and personality traits on connectedness to nature. The two hypotheses of the study were confirmed as a relationship emerged between empathy and connectedness to nature (H1), also when taking into consideration the effects of fluid intelligence and personality traits (H2). It is important to state that fluid intelligence did not explain any of the variance in connectedness to nature. Even if relations between intelligence and environmental issues were sustained in some studies (Jones and Podemska, 2010; Salahodjaev, 2016), fluid intelligence didn't emerged related to connectedness to nature in this study. Regarding personality, in the present study connectedness to nature was associated to personality traits, particularly to Agreeableness. In line with the literature (Hirsh and Dolderman, 2007; Nisbet et al., 2008; Hirsh, 2010), individuals who are cooperative, friendly, and generous perceived themselves as more connect to nature

TABLE 1 | Means, standard deviations, and correlations relative to fluid intelligence, personality traits, empathy dimensions, connectedness to nature.

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Fluid intelligence	35.47	5.82	—										
2. Extraversion	75.98	10.54	0.10	—									
3. Agreeableness	76.74	8.69	0.05	0.07	—								
4. Conscientiousness	79.10	9.52	0.02	0.26**	0.11	—							
5. Emotional Stability	61.92	13.97	0.03	0.02	0.27**	0.04	—						
6. Openness	79.13	9.32	0.12	0.36**	0.35**	0.27**	0.10	—					
7. Fantasy	19.27	3.78	0.05	0.02	0.25**	0.17*	0.13	0.39**	—				
8. Empathic concern	23.51	3.22	0.01	0.09	0.23**	0.18*	0.05	0.31**	0.40**	—			
9. Perspective taking	13.48	2.48	0.12	0.08	0.34**	0.14	0.34**	0.32**	0.34**	0.30**	—		
10. Personal distress	18.45	2.34	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.13	0.12	0.02	0.11	0.16	0.10	—	
11. Connectedness to nature	45.74	7.94	0.08	0.03	0.32**	0.19*	0.07	0.28**	0.33**	0.43**	0.13	0.03	—

*N = 144. *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01.*

and have also a general sense of respect for nature as well for other people. Furthermore the results relative to the second hypotheses showed, however, that empathy explained a significant percentage of the incremental variance with respect to personality traits in relation to connectedness to nature. The study thus highlighted the relationship between empathy and connectedness to nature in line with other findings reported in the literature (Schultz, 2000; Berenguer, 2007; Cheng and Monroe, 2012; Liefländer et al., 2013), underlining as individuals that perceived themselves more close to other people and being able to take the point of view of others, also perceived a greater connectedness to natural world. More specifically, the empathy dimensions most closely associated with connectedness to nature were Fantasy and Empathic concern. The participants with a higher tendency to identify themselves with characters in movies, novels, plays, and other fictional situations (Davis, 1980), and with greater feelings of warmth, compassion, and concern for others (Davis, 1980), seemed to have a higher connectedness to nature (Mayer and Frantz, 2004). The close association between empathy and connectedness to nature suggests that individuals sensitive toward other people could also be sensitive toward nature. This could mean that nature is, on the one hand, accorded human qualities, and, on the other hand, it represents something that needs to be taken into consideration in the construction of professional and personal lives.

Although the study clearly showed the relationship between empathy and connectedness to nature, its limitations need nevertheless to be noted. The participants in the study were a group of Italian high school students in the Tuscany

TABLE 2 | Hierarchical regression.

	Connectedness to nature
	β
Step 1	
Fluid intelligence	0.11
Step 2	
Extraversion	0.09
Agreeableness	0.28**
Conscientiousness	0.19*
Emotional stability	0.17*
Openness	0.10
Step 3	
Fantasy	0.32***
Empathic concern	0.42***
Perspective taking	0.12
Personal distress	0.05
R^2 *Step 1*	0.01
ΔR^2 *Step 2*	0.23***
ΔR^2 *Step 3*	0.18***
R^2 *total*	0.42***

The contributions of Fluid intelligence (First step), Personality traits (Second step), and Empathy dimensions (Third step) to Connectedness to nature. N = 144.
*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001.

region who were not necessarily representative of all Italian high school students. Future research should therefore include participants more representative of Italian high school students of the different geographical areas in Italy. Future studies should also include participants from other international contexts.

Despite the limitations of the present study, the findings add to and extend the literature because no relations emerged between fluid intelligence and connectedness to nature, relations emerged both between personality traits, particularly agreeableness and connectedness to nature (Hirsh and Dolderman, 2007; Nisbet et al., 2008; Hirsh, 2010), and between empathy and connectedness to nature (Schultz, 2000; Berenguer, 2007; Cheng and Monroe, 2012; Liefländer et al., 2013) but emphaty was able to add a percentage of incremental variance with respect to personality traits in relation to connectedness to nature.

If the results of the present study are confirmed by future research, new intervention approaches could be introduced. It is widely recognized that empathy is a trait that can be increased through specific training (Herbek and Yammarino, 1990; Hatcher et al., 1994) and also in its relationship to connectedness to nature (Liefländer et al., 2013). It may therefore be possible to utilize empathy to promote connectedness to nature and also green positive guidance and green positive life counseling.

Connectedness to nature is an important element in the meaning of work (Blustein, 2006, 2011) and life construction (Guichard and Di Fabio, 2010; Guichard, 2013b) in terms of green positive guidance and green positive life counseling (Di Fabio, 2016). Green positive guidance endeavors to provide support to individuals regarding the construction of their own futures in line with their aims and authentic selves (Di Fabio, 2014c), the expression of their own talents and potential, the enhancement of positive relationships with significant others, and building individual strengths (Boyatzis et al., 2002, 2015; Boyatzis and Saatcioglu, 2008; Di Fabio and Palazzeschi, 2008a,b, 2009, 2012; Di Fabio and Blustein, 2010; Di Fabio and Kenny, 2012a,b; Di Fabio et al., 2012, 2013; Amdurer et al., 2014; Di Fabio, 2014b, 2015a; Di Fabio and Saklofske, 2014a,b; Kenny et al., 2014; Di Fabio, 2015b). At the same time, green positive guidance endeavors to respond to environmental concerns, fairness institutions, social justice, the environment, and the exploitation of resources (Guichard and Di Fabio, 2015; Di Fabio, 2016).

In this green positive guidance and counseling framework (Di Fabio, 2016), a new perspective is opening up in relation to decent work that could be considered green positive decent work (Di Fabio, 2016), that is, decent work not only for the self but also for others, not only for the present moment but also for the future (Guichard, 2013a) – work that is focused on resources, promoting the sustainability of nature and the environment for future generations too. These considerations can extend the ILO's (2015) definition of decent work by adding that it cannot produce effects that are damaging to human life or the environment Guichard (2013a). The achievement of green positive decent work could be the real challenge for the 21st century.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

AF conceptualized the study, choose the theoretical framework, chose measures, designed the questionnaire. OB helped in the collection of the data. AF and OB analyzed the data and wrote the methods and results. Then all authors wrote the paper together and read and revised the manuscript several times.

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Marginalization and Precariat: The Challenge of Intensifying Life Construction Intervention

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This article discusses the case study of a graduate student who, at the time of the study, was doing an internship, considered in the literature as a new form of precariat (temporary or insecure employment). The student participated in a life construction intervention during which he completed two new qualitative instruments: the Life Adaptability Qualitative Assessment (LAQuA) and the Career Counseling Innovative Outcomes (CCIO) before and after the life construction intervention. The results are discussed in the article. The life construction intervention helped the participant understand himself better, develop his life and career paths, and construct his identity. The study confirmed the value of enhancing life construction interventions using a preventive approach, particularly for precarious people (people in temporary or unstable jobs), with early interventions starting with young internees in organizations.

Keywords: marginalization, precariat, life construction intervention, decent work, case study, Life Adaptability Qualitative Assessment (LAQuA), Career Counseling Innovative Outcomes (CCIO)

INTRODUCTION

The concept of marginality first appeared in the field of sociology in the early 20th century, more particularly in Park's (1928) essay, "Human migration and the marginal man." The "marginal man" is someone "on the margin of two cultures and two societies which never completely [interpenetrate and fuse]" (Park, 1928, p. 892). He is someone with "spiritual instability, intensified self-consciousness, restlessness, and malaise" (Park, 1928, p. 893). The concept of marginality is important in sociological thinking and has a multiplicity of meanings (Billson, 1996). Since 1928, there have been three forms of marginality: cultural marginality, which is determined by differences in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, and other cultural indicators; social marginality, which occurs when an individual is not considered part of a positive reference group owing to age, timing, situational constraints, or occupational role; and structural marginality, which results from the political, social, and economic powerlessness of specific disadvantaged groups in societies (Billson, 1996).

In the psychology field, a shift has occurred from sociological marginalization to social psychology marginalization (Young, 2000; Mullaly, 2007). Young (2000) maintains the most dangerous form of oppression occurs when the labor market does not enable everyone to have a job. On an individual level, this kind of exclusion prevents people from participating meaningfully in society (Young, 2000). Mullaly (2007) contends that minority groups (e.g., those with disabilities, women, racial minorities, elderly individuals) can experience marginalization due to dominant discourses in society. In community psychology, marginalized people have little control over

their lives and available resources, limited opportunities to make social contributions, low self-confidence, and low self-esteem (Burton and Kagan, 2003). Marginalized people are also often stigmatized, leading to a vicious circle marked by a lack of supportive relationships and the ability to participate in community life, resulting in further isolation (Burton and Kagan, 2003).

A marginalized workforce was recently analyzed by the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP; Maynard and Ferdman, 2015). In the analysis, the workforce defined what it meant to be marginalized, stressing the exclusion from access to power and resources and being on the periphery of society (Maynard and Ferdman, 2015). Marginalized workers are, generally speaking, categorized as including the working poor, immigrant/migrant workers, young workers (school leavers, victims of child labor), chronically unemployed individuals, groups that have minority or lower social status (e.g., ethnic minorities, older workers, workers with disabilities), and victims of human trafficking (Maynard and Ferdman, 2015). Marginalized workers are also defined by the work they do as revealed by recent research on "dirty work" (Bergman and Chalkley, 2007) including temporary/contract, seasonal, and intermittent work (Connelly and Gallagher, 2004; Ashford et al., 2007). Marginalized workers face many difficulties: cultural differences, low motivation and self-efficacy, difficulty in accessing organizational resources, difficulty in identifying and taking advantage of developmental opportunities, and work-family conflicts (Maynard and Ferdman, 2015). Industrial and organizational psychological research has not adequately covered the diversity of the working population, particularly marginalized workers, therefore making it necessary to carry out more research on this category of workers (Maynard and Ferdman, 2015). Industrial and organizational psychologists can help marginalized workers meet the challenges they face by "(a) assisting with social and organizational assimilation and conflict prevention/resolution; (b) promoting coaching, mentorship, career development, and job initiatives; (c) finding ways to increase acceptance of these groups within the organization; (d) identifying factors that reduce the real or perceived risk in hiring workers from traditionally marginalized groups" (Maynard and Ferdman, 2015). These steps can help merge business needs and interests with the needs and talents of marginalized workers (Maynard and Ferdman, 2015).

The precariat can be defined as a form of worker marginalization in the 21st century. The ILO (2015) comments on the changing nature of the world of work and reports that global unemployment figures reached 201 million in 2014, over 30 million higher than before the start of the global crisis in 2008. The challenge is to provide jobs to the more than 40 million additional people who enter the global labor market every year. Employment relationships are also becoming less stable in terms of the ILO's standard employment model (ILO, 2015). Policies need to be adapted to the changing nature of work just as labor norms need to be adapted to the new and different kinds of employment (ILO, 2015).

In the post-modern era, characterized by globalization and more flexible labor relations, the number of people with insecure jobs is increasing (Guichard, 2013). Standing (2014) states that many working people today are experiencing "a precarious existence [precariat]. Friends, relatives, and colleagues would also be in a temporary status of some kind, without assurance that this was what they would be doing in a few years' time, or even months or weeks hence. Often they were not even wishing or trying to make it so" (Standing, 2014, pp. 6–7). The term precariat was first introduced by French sociologists in the 1980s in reference to temporary or seasonal workers. In Italy, the term "precariato" means not only people with temporary work but also people with a "precarious" existence, whereas in Germany the term denotes people without job who have difficulty in integrating socially and not only temporary workers (Grimm and Ronneberger, 2007). In Japan, precariat is synonymous with "the working poor," but it refers also to young activists who fight to obtain better working and living conditions (Obinger, 2009). Standing (2014) identifies five kinds of precariat: (1) precariat as those with limited citizenship rights; (2) precariat as those having temporary jobs; (3) precariat as those in part-time employment; (4) precariat as those who work in call centers; (5) precariat as those working as interns. This last form of precariat can serve as a channel for conducting young people into other precariats. Alongside the precariat is the concept of peripheral workers (Guichard, 2009), that is, marginalized workers. These forms of precarious and insecure work do not allow people to build proper identities and careers (Guichard, 2009).

The foregoing indicates the need for life construction intervention among the different types of precariat workers in order to promote sustainable decent work. A preventive approach (Hage et al., 2007; Kenny and Hage, 2009; Di Fabio and Kenny, 2015; Di Fabio et al., in press) stresses the importance of building the strengths of individuals (Di Fabio and Palazzeschi, 2008a,b, 2009, 2012; Di Fabio and Blustein, 2010; Di Fabio and Kenny, 2012a,b; Di Fabio et al., 2012, 2013, 2014; Di Fabio and Saklofske, 2014a,b; Di Fabio, 2014b, 2015a). Life construction intervention should be administered to precarious people in particular, with early interventions starting with the earliest form of precariat (i.e., precariat as the internship of young people in organizations) and moving to all other forms of precariat.

This article discusses the case study of a graduate student who, at the time of the study, was doing an internship (considered in the literature as a new form of precariat) and who participated in a life construction intervention.

Aim of the Case Study

The case study describes the process and usefulness of a life construction intervention in helping the research participant (client) to better understand himself, to develop his life and career paths, and to construct his own identity. The case study is characterized by working with a unique participant in a one-to-one research setting and it is based on a qualitative, interpretive paradigm (Patton and McMahon, 1999). The case study enhances participant's involvement in his process of life construction facilitating the process of construction, deconstruction, reconstruction, and co-construction of his life story (Savickas, 2011; Maree, 2014). The case study also helps in describing the changes related to the intervention. The client

of this case study is a graduate student who was doing an internship, considered in the literature as a new form of precariat (Guichard, 2009; Standing, 2014) because it is temporary or insecure employment. This case study is a way to deepen process involved in life construction intervention in a precariat situation.

The study attempted to answer the following two research questions.

- How was the life construction intervention administered to a young Italian man with a degree in forest and environmental sciences and who was doing an internship (considered a new form of precariat)?
- How did the life construction intervention help the young man to enhance his self-awareness, to develop his life and career paths, and to construct his own identity?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participant and Context

The participant in the study, Christian (a pseudonym), was a young man who had graduated in forest and environmental sciences at the University of Florence in Italy and was doing an internship at the Municipality of Florence for 6 months to monitor the state of the trees in the city. He asked to participate in a life construction intervention at the career counseling center of the university. Christian was 23 years old at the time of the study and requested the intervention because he was not sure about what career he should follow or whether he should do a second-level Master's degree or other postgraduate course.

Qualitative Measures

Life Adaptability Qualitative Assessment (LAQuA)

The Life Adaptability Qualitative Assessment (LAQuA; Di Fabio, 2015b) is a new qualitative instrument developed to qualitatively assess the effectiveness of life construction interventions. In particular, this instrument evaluates adaptability, assessing change or lack of change in individuals' lives in narratives before and after the intervention. The LAQuA consists of 12 written questions with three questions for each dimension (Concern, Control, Curiosity, Confidence) of the Career Adapt-Abilities Inventory – International Version 2.0 (Savickas and Porfeli, 2012). The 12 written questions are the following:

Concern: (1a) What does it mean to you to be oriented toward your future? (1b) Do you think you are oriented toward your future? (1c) Why?

Control: (2a) What does it mean to you to take responsibility for your future? (2b) Do you think you do take responsibility for your future? (2c) Why?

Curiosity: (3a) What does it mean to you to be curious about your own future? (3b) Do you think you are curious about your future? (3c) Why?

Confidence: (4a) What does it mean to you to have confidence in your own ability to build your future? (4b) Do you think you have confidence in your ability to build your future? (4c) Why?

The comparison of the answers to the 12 questions before and after the life construction intervention is done using 24 qualitative indicators in respect of each of the four dimensions (Concern, Control, Curiosity, and Confidence) of the Career Adapt-Abilities Inventory – International Version 2.0 (Savickas and Porfeli, 2012), which is structured in the LAQuA coding system. The LAQuA coding system detects change or lack of change for each dimension of Adaptability at different levels of reflexivity (Increased Reflexivity, Revised Reflexivity, Open Reflexivity, Enhanced Reflexivity, and No change).

Career Counseling Innovative Outcomes (CCIO)

The Career Counseling Innovative Outcomes (CCIO; Di Fabio, 2016) is a new qualitative instrument that assesses life construction intervention outcomes and evaluates the effectiveness of interventions. The CCIO was inspired by the innovative moments coding system used in psychotherapy (Gonçalves et al., 2011) and its application in career construction counseling (Cardoso et al., 2014). Whereas the innovative moments coding system is used to monitor the process of change during psychotherapeutic intervention (Gonçalves et al., 2011) and career construction counseling intervention (Cardoso et al., 2014), the CCIO was developed specifically to analyze narratives before and after life construction interventions. The CCIO consists of seven questions developed on the basis of the narrative paradigm (Savickas, 2011) that are asked before and after the intervention: (1) In which ways can this intervention be useful/was this intervention useful to you? (2) What are your most useful resources? (3) What are the main obstacles you encounter? (4) Who do you think can be useful to you? (5) What do you think can be useful to you? (6) What are the main challenges you face? (7) What are the main objectives you are hoping to achieve?

The narratives elicited by these seven questions are coded using the five categories system developed by Gonçalves et al. (2011). The five categories are: Action, Reflection (type I and type II), Protest (type I and type II), Reconceptualization, Performing change.

Procedure

The LAQuA and the CCIO were administered before and after the life construction intervention, actually, a life meaning intervention (Bernaud, 2015). The LAQuA and CCIO were administered by a psychologist trained in the administration of these two qualitative instruments. The participant's initial and subsequent responses to the written questions of these two narrative instruments were compared by three independent, trained expert reviewers (raters). An interrater reliability analysis using the Kappa statistic was carried out to establish the level of consistency among the raters.

The study was conducted according to Italian laws on privacy and informed consent (Law Decree DL-196/2003), which are in line with the latest version of the Declaration of Helsinki revised in Fortaleza (World Medical Association [WMA], 2013).

The participant (Christian) took part in a life meaning intervention (Bernaud, 2015) divided into three 1-day sessions (8 h a session) in a group context using the modality of the power

of an audience. The aim of life meaning interventions is to permit participants to ask themselves questions about the meaning of their lives both at work and outside work thereby offering them new awareness on how to construct their lives.

Criteria for Quality Assurance

The application of the following quality assurance criteria is fundamental to guarantee the trustworthiness of the results using of different modalities for the data collection and analysis: credibility, confirmability, transferability, and dependability in the data collection and analysis process can help guarantee the trustworthiness of research results (Maree, 2012). Credibility of data refers to "factors such as the significance of results and their credibility for participants and readers" (Maree, 2012, p. 141). Credibility in the present study was guaranteed by external verification of the results by other researchers. Confirmability refers to "the objectivity of the data and the absence of research errors. Results can be regarded as confirmable when they are derived from the participants and the research conditions rather than from the (subjective) opinion of the researcher" (Maree, 2012, p. 142). Confirmability was assured by external researchers who assessed whether the methods and procedures of the study had been described sufficiently clearly to enable verification. Transferability refers to "the extent to which the results can be 'exported' and generalized to other contexts" (Maree, 2012, p. 142). Transferability in the present study was obtained through the accurate description of the participant's situation and the methodologies used to obtain the narratives. Detailed information was given also on the context of the study to enable other researchers to evaluate the applicability of the results to other contexts. Dependability refers to "the stability and consistency of the research process and methods over time and influences the degree of control in a study" (Maree, 2012, p. 141). Dependability was assured by the independent analysis of the participant's narratives by three expert raters.

RESULTS

Below are given the participant's responses to the written questions of the LAQuA before and after the life construction intervention as well as the results of the analysis obtained through the LAQuA qualitative indicators and the different levels of reflexivity (Increased Reflexivity, Revised Reflexivity, Open Reflexivity, Enhanced Reflexivity, and No change).

The participant's response to the first LAQuA question before the life construction intervention was: "*To me to be oriented toward my future means considering that the choices that I make today can shape my future*"[1] (qualitative descriptor: Predicting); and after the life construction intervention it was: "*To me to be oriented toward my future means to pay attention to the choice I'm taking in this period of my life. After the intervention, I confirmed that my field of interest is forest sciences. Also my internship experience is allowing me to be more aware of this*

interest. I understand also that I need to extend my knowledge and competence in forest sciences, so I want to find a specialized university course in this field. I want to begin to gather information on a second-level Master's degree and post-university specialized courses and then evaluate the different possibilities*" (identical qualitative descriptor but more in-depth reflexivity: Predicting; Increased reflexivity: in the narratives produced after the life construction intervention, there were identical descriptors, but they were presented with more in-depth reflexivity).

The participant's response to the second LAQuA question before the life construction intervention was: "*To me, to take responsibility for my future means taking decisions by myself, without being influenced by others, particularly by my parents*" (qualitative descriptor: Autonomous); after the life construction intervention it was: "*To take responsibility for my future means deciding by myself on what I want to do in my future. My parents don't understand that it is important for me to continue studying, but I think that my preparation is not sufficient to enter the world of work. I understand this also thanks to my internship experience*" (identical qualitative descriptor but more in-depth reflexivity: Autonomous). "*If my parents don't financially support my choice to continue studying, I will find some work to pay for my training*" (new, different qualitative descriptor: Responsible). "*I will do what I think it is right for me*" [new, different qualitative descriptor: Honest; Enhanced reflexivity (E): in the narratives produced after the life construction intervention, there is an identical descriptor/s but presented with more in-depth reflexivity plus a new, different descriptor/s].

The participant's responses to the third LAQuA question before the life construction intervention was: "*To me, to be curious about my future means gathering information about postgraduate training possibilities in relation to forest sciences and evaluating positive and negative aspects of each different option before choosing*" (qualitative descriptor: Inquisitive); after the life construction intervention it was: "*To be curious about my future means informing myself about postgraduate courses in forest sciences by analyzing different options before making a choice* (identical qualitative descriptor: Inquisitive) *and observing different ways of doing things during my internship as a way to learn from direct experience* [new, different qualitative descriptor: Recognizing/Discovering; Open reflexivity (O): in the narratives produced after the life construction intervention, there is an identical descriptor/s – with the same level of reflexivity in presenting the descriptor – plus a new, different descriptor/s].

The participant's response to the fourth LAQuA question before the life construction intervention was: "*To me, to have confidence in my own abilities to build my future means believing I can overcome the difficulties and the obstacles that I could encounter during my path*" (qualitative descriptor: Resilient); after the life construction intervention it was: "*To have confidence in my own abilities to build my future means to be engaged in learning new knowledge and skills. I think it is fundamental to become increasingly more specialized in the field of forest science*" [new, different qualitative descriptor: Innovative; Revised reflexivity R: in the narratives produced after the life construction intervention, the previous descriptor/s has disappeared, and a new, different descriptor/s has appeared].

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[1]The verbatim responses of the participant have been lightly edited to preserve their authenticity.

Below are shown the participant's responses to the seven questions of the CCIO before and after the life construction intervention as well as the results of the analysis in terms of the five categories (Action, Reflection, Protest, Reconceptualization, and Performing change) of the CCIO coding system (Di Fabio, 2016).

The participant's response to the first CCIO question before the life construction intervention was: "*I hope that this intervention will help me better understand what I want to do in this period of my life. I have graduated in forest and environmental sciences, and I'm doing an internship at the Municipality of Florence for six months to monitor the state of the trees in the city. I don't know what I really would like to do now, particularly whether I should do a second-level Master's degree or a postgraduate course, or whether it would be better to begin working immediately*"; after the life construction intervention it was: "*This intervention was useful to me because it allowed me to clarify what I really want to do. I understood not only that the activities that I'm doing during my internship are interesting to me, but above all I understood that preserving the trees and the nature in general has a profound sense for my life because it also constitutes an important value for me*" (Reflection Type II IM). "*Before the intervention, I was not sure that working to protect trees and forests was the right choice for me, because I always thought that this choice was the choice that my parents made for me and so not completely my choice, now I realize that the care of trees and nature is what I really want to do because it is fully in line with my ideals*" (Reconceptualization IM).

The participant's response to the second CCIO question before the life construction intervention was: "*Actually, I don't know precisely what my resources are*"; after the life construction intervention it was: "*When I began this intervention one of my principal concerns was that I did not have sufficient knowledge and skills to start a profession as an agricultural consultant. Furthermore, I wasn't sure if working in the field of agricultural or forest sciences would really give me a satisfactory life. During the intervention, I started to think about using my internship in a different way, and I asked my supervisor about the knowledge and skills that I had, and if he could indicate the best way to improve them. Now I was reassured and more confident in myself also recognizing the need to find a specialized postgraduate path and to gather information about different possibilities*" (Action IM). "*Furthermore, in particular, the intervention made me aware of my principal resource in terms of my personal awareness that I have a mission to protect plants and nature. This mission gives a sense to my life and it is also important for my work*" (Reflection Type II IM). "*So I'm starting with the new project of continuing my studies in the field of forest sciences. It is a project that I had thought of abandoning because my parents wanted me to find a job immediately*" (Performing change IM).

The participant's response to the third CCIO question before the life construction intervention was: "*I have two principal obstacles. The first obstacle relates to the fact that I'm unable to decide if I would like to start working immediately, or if I would like to continue studying. The second obstacle relates to the fact that my parents are pressing me to start to work immediately, and they probably won't support me financially if I continue to study*"; after the life construction intervention it was: "*I understood that*

I have to worry less about the opinions of other people. I always listened a lot to the opinions of my parents, but now it is time to build my life on my own" (Protest Type I IM). "*Now that I really understand that the choice to study forest sciences was not casual and that it is linked to important values that I sincerely believe in, I don't intend to give up because life satisfaction is crucial to me*" (Protest Type II IM). "*Now I'm starting to gather information about various second-level Master's degrees or postgraduate courses so that I can evaluate different possibilities and make a choice*" (Action IM).

The participant's response to the fourth CCIO question before the life construction intervention was: "*I think you* [the life construction counselor] *could be useful to me by helping me understand what I really would like to do; if I would like to continue studying by doing a Master's degree or a postgraduate course, or if it would be better to begin to work immediately*"; after the life construction intervention it was: "*If before the intervention I thought that you as a professional could be useful to me to give me advice on my future, now I understand that you were useful to me because you helped me become aware of what I really would like to achieve in my life*" (Reconceptualization IM). "*My internship supervisor was also useful to me because he helped me realize that in the future I would prefer to work as an agricultural technician in a public institution rather than as an agricultural freelance consultant. In my life, I would like to make a contribution to my community and to environmental protection*" (Performing change IM).

The participant's response to the fifth CCIO question before the life construction intervention was: "*I think that it can be really useful to me to understand if I would like to continue to study by doing a Master's degree or a postgraduate course, or if it would be better to begin working immediately*"; after the life construction intervention it was: "*I think that it can be really useful to me to gather information on Master's degrees or postgraduate courses related to forest sciences, and also to speak to professionals working in this field to better understand the lives they lead, and then to determine how to construct my life*" (Action IM). "*After collecting this information, I can better evaluate which path will help me to realize myself most fully. I'm also thinking of the possibility of paid internship, similar to what I'm doing at the Municipality of Florence. I could then study and work at the same time without having to ask my parents for help. Even if the internship can be considered a precarious working condition, this kind of experience will help me understand if I would really like to continue studying to enter the profession I desire*" (Performing change IM).

The participant's response to the sixth CCIO question before the life construction intervention was: "*The main challenge that I feel I'm facing at the moment is to understand what I really what to do, what kind of job really satisfies me, and if it is possible to obtain this kind of job in the current economic crisis. Understanding all these things is necessary for me to construct my future life*"; after the life construction intervention it was: "*Before the intervention I was confused about what I really wanted to do in my life; after the intervention I'm sure that I would like to work in the field of the forest sciences and that I would like to continue studying in this field*" (Reconceptualization IM). "*Making this choice of continuing to study won't necessarily disappoint my parents who may perhaps*

understand the importance of this choice for my life" (Reflection Type II IM).

The participant's response to the seventh CCIO question before the life construction intervention was: "*The main objective that I hope to achieve is to clarify what I want to do in my life*"; after the life construction intervention it was: "*Now my main objective is to finish this period of internship at the Municipality of Florence, to gather information on Master's degrees or postgraduate courses in the forest sciences field, and to look for other possibilities of internship to earn money to pay for my studies*" (Action IM). "*I think that even if paid internship is a form of precarious work, it gives me an opportunity to earn money for my studies to help me construct a more significant life and also to gain experience in different contexts*" (Reflection Type II IM). "*My main objective in my life is to realize my mission of protecting plants and nature through my work*" (Reflection Type II IM).

DISCUSSION

This case study showed the value of enhancing life construction intervention using a preventive approach (Hage et al., 2007; Kenny and Hage, 2009; Di Fabio and Kenny, 2015; Di Fabio et al., in press) toward precarious (vulnerable) people, beginning with early interventions for young internees in organizations. Internship can be considered a first form of precariat work that can have consequences for the construction of a desirable identity and a desirable career (Guichard, 2009; Standing, 2014). Helping young people during the transitions in their early careers in the 21st century means promoting positive career outcomes and decency in their lives. Life construction counseling (Guichard, 2013) is an intervention specifically developed to help people cope with transitions and design new chapters in their lives (Savickas, 2011). In this case study, the evolution of the participant could be seen through the analysis of the narratives before and after the career construction intervention by means of the LAQuA (Di Fabio, 2015b) and the CCIO (Di Fabio, 2016).

The LAQuA analysis revealed changes in the participant's reflexivity regarding adaptability in the narratives before and after the life construction intervention. The increase in the level of reflexivity applied to all four dimensions of adaptability (Concern, Control, Confidence, and Curiosity). Regarding Concern, the participant realized that today's choices could determine his future; regarding Control, the participant understood that it was important to make decisions by himself and to trust himself; regarding Curiosity, the participant realized the relevance of investigating different options before choosing a particular post-degree study course and of observing different ways of doing things, particularly during his internship; regarding Confidence, the participant realized the importance of learning new skills and of being able to overcome obstacles in constructing his life and career (Di Fabio, 2015b; Sartori et al., 2015).

The analysis using the CCIO of the five dimensions: Action, Reflection, Protest, Reconceptualization, and Performing revealed changes in the participant's narratives before and after the life construction intervention. This was seen in terms of Action where he actively explored solutions (Gonçalves et al.,

2011; Di Fabio, 2016) by gathering information on Master's degrees and other postgraduate courses on forest sciences, by speaking with professionals working in this field to better understand their lives, and by looking for other internship possibilities to earn money to pay for his studies. There were also changes in his narratives in terms of reflection regarding the choice to continue studying by doing a second-level Master's degree or other postgraduate course or to begin working immediately and to come to terms with his new emerging identities (Gonçalves et al., 2011). The participant engaged in adaptive self-instruction after his increased awareness that preserving trees and nature had a profound value for him. The main objective of his life was therefore to realize his mission of protecting plants and the environment through his work. The analysis of the narrative also raised the issue of the difference between what a person really wants to do compared to what others would like him to do in his life, the so-called protest innovative moment (Gonçalves et al., 2011; Di Fabio, 2016). Two types of "protest innovative moments" emerged from the analysis. The first was the participant's awareness that it was now the time to build his life himself and to stop following the wishes of his parents. The second was his stated intention to continue studying forest sciences because it was in line with his authentic self and not just a casual choice for him (Di Fabio, 2014c).

The analysis of the narratives also revealed a "reconceptualization innovative moment" concerning the transition between two positions (past and present; Gonçalves et al., 2011; Di Fabio, 2016). The participant went from a position where he did not know if really wanted to continue studying forest sciences to a position of greater awareness of the importance of his mission to protect plants and nature because in this way he could give sense to his life and construct his career path accordingly. Finally, the analysis of the narratives revealed a "performing change innovative moment" in terms of the participant's investment in new projects as a result of the change process (Gonçalves et al., 2011; Di Fabio, 2016). More particularly, he was thinking of looking for other possibilities of paid internship so that he could study and work at the same time without having to ask his parents for help. Even if the internship could be considered a "precarious employment condition," after the life construction intervention, the participant described this kind of precariat as a way to acquire new competences and to understand if he really liked the job he was doing and also if he really wanted to continue studying to enter the profession and live the life he desired. The internship experience also made him realize that, because of his desire to serve his community, he would prefer to work as an agricultural technician in a public institution rather than as an agricultural freelance consultant. Overall, the analysis of the narratives before and after the life construction intervention indicated changes in the narratives, showing that this kind of intervention enabled the participant to understand himself better, to develop his life and career paths, and to develop his purposeful identitarian awareness (Di Fabio, 2014c) and authentic self (Di Fabio, 2014c).

The case study also showed that through life construction intervention, internship (considered a form of precariat, Standing, 2014) could be transformed into a framework where young people could gain new knowledge and competences, could experience new contexts and different roles, could prove their interests, could individuate role models to construct a desirable identity and, consequently, a desirable life and career. It seems that early life construction interventions for young people doing internships could obviate the negative consequences of precariat such as difficulties in constructing a desirable identity and a desirable career (Guichard, 2009; Standing, 2014).

Although this study showed changes in the narratives produced by the participant before and after the life construction intervention, the effectiveness of the intervention needs to be confirmed by further studies and research with larger samples. The trustworthiness and credibility of the study were guaranteed, but a limitation could be the subjective interpretation of the researchers. A follow-up session 6 weeks after the intervention showed that the participant's new intentions were being implemented as he had started to gather information on Master's degrees and other postgraduate courses in the forest sciences field and to look for other internship possibilities to earn money to pay for his studies himself. He had also spoken to his parents about the possibility of studying again, and they agreed, especially if he would be able to pay the studies himself. Nevertheless, a follow-up assessment 6–12 months after the life construction intervention would be useful to confirm the results obtained in the study.

Despite the mentioned limitations, the study did indicate the value of enhancing life construction intervention using a preventive approach, particularly for young people doing internships to help them construct desirable identities and lives. Life construction interventions can be expanded to all forms of precariat from internships done by young people in organizations to workers in call centers. The extension of life construction interventions to all "precarious workers" could help them construct more desirable identities promoting self-realization (Blustein, 2006) and the development of a purposeful identitarian awareness (Di Fabio, 2014c) based on the authentic self (Di Fabio, 2014c). "Decent" work could be enhanced by activities experienced as authentic and motivating (Blustein, 2006) and also by nutritive relations at work (Blustein, 2011; Di Fabio, 2014a), preventing marginalization and precariat. This can be achieved with the assistance of counselors who can identify and develop the talents in young people on the threshold of early careers, thereby helping them enhance their self-awareness, self-efficacy, and employability.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

AD conceptualized the study and choose the theoretical framework. AD and LP qualitatively analyze the case study. AD and LP wrote methods and results. Then the two authors wrote the paper together and read and revised the manuscript several times.

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The Work of Cultural Transition: An Emerging Model

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In today's uncertain, fluid job market, transnational mobility has intensified. Though the concept of cultural transition is increasingly used in sport and career research, insight into the processes of how individuals produce their own development through work and relationships in shifting cultural patterns of meaning remains limited. The transnational industry of sports, in which athletes' psychological adjustment to cultural transitions has implications for both performance and meaningful life, serves as a backdrop for this article. This study applied the life story method to interviews with 15 professional and semi-professional athletes, focusing particularly on the cultural transition aspect of their transnational athletic careers. The aims of the study were to identify the developmental tasks of cultural transitions and strategies/mechanisms through which cultural transitions were enacted. Three underlying mechanisms of the transition process that assisted athletic career adaptability were social repositioning, negotiation of cultural practices, and meaning reconstruction. Based on the data analyses, a temporal model of cultural transition is proposed. The results of this research provide professionals working in the fields of career counseling and migrant support with a content framework for enhancing migrant workers' adaptabilities and psychological wellbeing.

Keywords: athletic career, career construction, transitions, adaptability, migration, transnationalism, decent work

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary mobile society, relatively recent technological advances in transportation and communication have intensified people's cross-border activities and experiences. The growing opportunities of linking migrant workers with transnational and local communities, as well as the diversity and fluidity of these ties, point to the emergence of new modes of transacting that require regular cultural transitions and sustained contact across national borders (Portes et al., 1999). The transnational field of sport industry arguably accentuates the new forms of cross-border exchanges, fostering a wider flow of athletes, coaches, sport tourists, artifacts, and value systems. The geographical movement of highly skilled amateur elite and professional athletes characterizes athletic career development today, which makes transnational mobility into a highly valuable commodity (Maguire and Falcous, 2011; Agergaard and Ryba, 2014). The production of mobility and adaptation to a changing context in cultural transition are crucial for initiating and maintaining the transnational career. That is, in addition to being able to establish mobility, it is important for athletic migrants to sustain their performance, which is often predicated on athletes' adapt-abilities to create and maintain social relations and situated knowledge in the

different localities they settle in, as well as those they leave behind. Although vocational psychology researchers have acknowledged that culture frames relational and working experiences, and the ways in which people respond to life events (e.g., Stead, 2004; Blustein, 2011), there seems to be a limited understanding of the processes activated in cultural transition that produce development through work and relationships in shifting cultural patterns of meaning.

As stated in the International Labour Organization (ILO) report that launched the concept of 'decent work' in 1999, the "rapid change in the global economy, engendering heightened competitive pressures, and reduced job security for many, has injected new uncertainties into the world of work" (International Labour Organization [ILO], 1999, p. 9). Roderick (2006, p. 261), for example, asserted that professional football/soccer players "exercise virtually no control over entry to the occupation, they have no monopoly over relevant bodies of knowledge, they cannot lay down standards of work or control the labor process." Although each country has different deficits and needs in the decent work schema, the recent International Labour Organization (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2016) report further suggests that the concerns with social exclusion, employment quality, and security persist also at higher income levels. It has been estimated that each season one fifth of professional football players in the UK need to migrate to a new team nationally or internationally, or to find alternative work (Roderick, 2012). While professional and elite athletes' mobilities cannot be compared to the experience of those confronted with involuntary migration due to war conflicts and extreme poverty, common themes including work insecurity and human dignity have emerged in previous studies with athletes (McGillivray et al., 2005; Roderick, 2006; Agergaard and Ryba, 2014). As indicated in literature on careers and migration, mobility necessarily involves perceptions of insecurity in terms of financial status, future career prospects, and inclusion and exclusion, which concern not only the lead migrants but also their spouses and families (Cohen et al., 2011). It has been reported that athletes' conditions of work place profound emotional and economic constraints on their partners and spouses, who must cope with frequent geographical relocations, lack of stable social support network, and the partner's frequent absence due to matches and competitions (Gmelch and San Antonio, 2001; Roderick, 2012; Ryba et al., 2015a). Injury and threat of de-selection from the team are additional career contingencies that athletes must navigate in order to sustain their status in the professional ranks. Studies indicate that many professional athletes compromise their health and continue playing despite pain and injury due to fear of de-selection, team pressure, guilt, or professional pride (Roderick et al., 2000; McGannon et al., 2013). Therefore, the concerns for decent work as outlined by the International Labour Organization (International Labour Organization [ILO], 1999, 2016), specifically in relation to job security, competitive pressures, and lack of social protection, are relevant also for careers in sport. Appropriating from this Research Topic's call the notion of meaningfulness "in terms of cognitive, emotional, and relational domains of functioning," the present research contributes to the debates on decent work by putting a spotlight on the relatively under-researched population of athletic migrants and the ways they construct meaning about work and lives in cultural transitions.

This article is based on the life stories of professional and semi-professional athletes whose athletic careers had been developed transnationally. Portes et al. (1999) distinguish between transnationalism 'from above' and 'from below' (see also Smith and Guarnizo, 2006). The highly successful athletes in high revenue sports construct their transnational careers predominantly through activities conducted by powerful sporting corporations, such as the National Hockey League (NHL) or the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) World Tour. However, most athletes' transnational careers are the result of grass-roots activities, established channels of athletic migration, and initiatives facilitated by trans-local networks of their home country counterparts and friends of friends. Whilst both professional and semi-professional athletes engage in market work, there are considerable differences in the job arrangement between and within these groups. For methodological reasons, our analyses center on transnational athletes and their support networks; that is, the experiences of athletic migrants on a term-fixed contract/athletic scholarship typically based on performance outcomes, who travel extensively for training camps and competitions, maintain relationships and family life across national borders, and also develop relational ties within local communities.

CULTURAL MODE OF BEING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT

This research is situated within cultural developmental psychology, which argues for the fundamentally cultural constitution of self in human development, and is informed by career development and cultural adaptation literature. Our theoretical starting point rests on the position developed by Vygotsky and Luria (1930/1993) that psychological processes are the *emergent* outcome of the transactions between an individual's ontogenetic history in a particular sociocultural framework, and characteristics of the immediate tasks confronting the individual. Emphasizing historical development, cultural mediation and practical everyday activity, this approach considers individual traits as constructed by and also entwined with a specific medium of human development, which includes language, norms, customs, values, and artifacts (Vygotsky and Luria, 1930/1993; Stead, 2004; Markus and Kitayama, 2010). It is essential for our theorizing to understand the medium of human development as a set of symbolic resources, accumulated and transmitted across generations, which conveys its normative meanings in social practices and sociocultural institutions. One of the key symbolic resources of culture that is externalized in social interaction concerns the nature of the self and its relationship with others (Bruner, 1994; Adams and Markus, 2001). The acquired cultural patterns of interdependence between self and sociality is expressed in collaboratively constructed intersubjectivity— an implicit understanding "that is to some extent shared" (Moghaddam, 2010, p. 466). It is generally acknowledged that

people with similar (sub)cultural background derive a common interpretation in social interactions (Locke, 2004).

In keeping with the aforementioned understanding, Kitayama et al. (2007) conceptualize self as a psychological system for behavioral regulation that is not merely an organization of conceptual schemas, but provides a principle for one's spontaneous mobilization of thoughts, feelings, and actions, thus constituting the person's mode of being. The mode of being is gradually formed in the dynamics of social interaction with significant adults (e.g., in the family, school, and sport) and is attuned to numerous characteristics of the surrounding physical and sociocultural environment. Because the self as a psychological system of self-regulation is generally maintained by intersubjectivity of shared norms in a given community, it is reasonable to anticipate cross-cultural variations in the ways of feeling, thinking, and acting in relation to oneself and others. The rupture of meanings and, indeed, of the cultural mode of being in transnational migration occurs because cultures and social contexts create diverse meaning systems as well as provide different opportunities and imperatives for developing and expressing individual psychosocial competencies, which form inner resources that individuals use to self-regulate and to direct their adaptive behaviors in psychological encounters with the environment (Savickas, 2005; Markus and Kitayama, 2010). Moreover, as Blustein (2001) and Blustein et al. (2004) assert, the ways individuals experience life aspirations, career motivations, and meaningful working life are rooted in relationships—thus, transforming vocational behavior into an inherently relational act.

Previous sport research provides the basis for suggesting that a cultural transition has important implications for migrant athletes' adjustment to sport processes, such as playing style, team interaction, and coach–athlete relationship, and may create difficulties in their lives outside of sport (Duchesne et al., 2011; Schinke et al., 2013; Stambulova and Ryba, 2013; Ronkainen et al., 2014; Khomutova, 2015; Ryba et al., 2015b). Brandão and Vieira (2013), for example, indicated that Brazilian footballers' poor adaptability hampers their professional careers inasmuch as 66% of 1029 players sent to foreign teams in 2010 returned to Brazil before completing their first season. Many players report inability to cope with loneliness and unfriendly climate, and to adapt to a new lifestyle. According to Schinke et al. (2013), who studied acculturation experiences of immigrant athletes and coaches in Canada, the key issues concern 'navigating two world-views' and 'acculturation loads.' The first theme refers to the ways in which immigrants navigate the shifting meanings of sport experiences in home and host countries. It also illustrates how the contextual contingency of meanings may present obstacles for migrating athletes as they seek to adapt within new cultural and sporting communities. The second theme highlights the salience of social environments in constituting acculturation either as shared with others (e.g., teammates and coaches) or as the sole responsibility of the migrated athlete to learn the norms and adapt to new contexts with no adjustment from the hosts. In a similar vein, Ryba et al. (2012) discussed acute cultural adaptation of Finnish female swimmers in their temporary migration to Australia as a process of negotiation of meanings between 'here' and 'there,' as well as of the extent to which athletes participated in daily social practices while developing a relationship with the new environment. The authors emphasized the constitutive role of culture in psychological adjustment to a cultural transition by demonstrating the ways in which team relatedness formed a discursive cultural space that provided security mediating the swimmers' engagement with the Australian context. The latter argument resembles the proposition put forward by Blustein (2011, p. 11) that "culture functions as a form of holding environment for individuals" and "can serve as an essential relational resource as they cope with work-based transitions."

RATIONALE AND AIMS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The refocusing on the fluidity of adaptive processes and the emphasis on career adaptabilities in the vocational research literature is significant in revealing a socially constructed, relational nature of work-based experience (Blustein et al., 2004; Savickas et al., 2009; Schultheiss et al., 2011). Yet very few career studies have applied a transnational lens to migrant athletes' life stories to discern the adaptive practices constituted within transnational mobility and career development. The transnational athletes' intent for mobility in pursuit of professional and financial opportunities paired with often-strong identifications with professional qualifications and competencies, suggests that athletic migrants take an active role in designing their life through sport (Carter, 2011; Engh and Agergaard, 2013; Ryba et al., 2015a). This view is related to Bernaud's (2014) observation that individual career choices are grounded in existential questions about the meaning that people give to their lives. With no intention to downplay agency, our previous research in this area has also conveyed an argument that athletes' decision-making about the career and life course in general derives meaning in social interactions and take shape within a particular cultural and historical landscape that radically contextualizes the push and pull factors of migration (e.g., Stambulova and Ryba, 2014; Ryba et al., 2015b; Ronkainen et al., 2016). Taking into consideration the migrant workers' need for adapting to a meaningful working life in transition, the question becomes how psychological tendencies for career adaptability are mobilized through daily practices in transient cultural contexts. The purpose of this study therefore was to understand what dynamics are particularly critical in cultural transition and what impact the time has on these processes. Our specific research aims were to identify the developmental tasks of cultural transition and basic psychological mechanisms underpinning the transition that assisted athletic career adaptability.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is situated in narrative psychology (Bruner, 1990; McAdams et al., 2001) and generally characterized as

being exploratory. Our goal was to be sensitive to the diversity of individual experiences while, nevertheless, to analytically search for the basic psychological mechanisms underlying culturally patterned performativity. We have adopted life story interviewing as our methodological framework, which encourages participants to construct autobiographical narratives with minimal intervention from the researcher (Atkinson, 1998). Although life stories may be very different from one another, they reveal complex ways in which meanings are negotiated in the creation of a coherent life narrative as well as common social processes that have shaped people's lives in similar circumstances (Bruner, 1994; Liversage, 2009). The benefits of a narrative approach for understanding career transitions, migration and displacement, vocational identity, and possible empowering of marginalized individuals have been widely acknowledged in vocational research (e.g., Cohen, 2006; Liversage, 2009; Schultheiss et al., 2011; Savickas, 2012). As Del Corso and Rehfuss (2011) suggested, the what, how, and why are inextricably connected through narrative. That is, *what* athletes do in career transition is based in part on their *why*, expressed in life-theme motives, and also *how*, which is indicative of their adaptive self-regulation processes. As career narrations provide a primary means of bringing meaning to sporting experiences, they can be analyzed for the psychological processes associated with transitions and patterns of career decisions (Carless and Douglas, 2009, 2013).

Participants

Participants of this study were 15 professional and amateur elite (semi-professional) athletes in various sports. One athlete was Black, one athlete was mixed-race, and the rest were Caucasian. Four athletes were from ice hockey, two from basketball, two from soccer, two from handball, and one each from archery, orienteering, athletics, alpine skiing, and sport dance. Seven were male and eight were female, their ages ranged from 18 to 37 (median age was 26) and all of them experienced a cultural transition in association with various transnational mobilities. At the time of the interviews, two athletes were retired from competitive sport (aged 30 and 37) and one athlete (aged 26) considered herself as 'temporally retired.' Their educational background varied from high school dropouts to university graduates. The participants' countries of origins included Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, Nigeria, Slovakia, and Sweden; all were fluent in the English language. For 13 athletes, athletic career development was a life-theme motive for migration. Two athletes' transnational career was initiated by following a spouse/partner to another country, offering additional insights into the process of a cultural transition paired with an unassisted athletic career transition. Participants had numerous geographic migrations across and within different countries in the course of their transnational athletic careers, including the Nordic countries, UK, USA, Russia, Korea, China, and Australia. The diversity of transnational career pathways provided a rich comparative context for accentuating the psychosocial content and underpinning the processes animating cultural transition.

The participants were identified and contacted through personal networks. In selecting transnational athletes to interview, we followed Atkinson (1998, p. 27) suggestions to search for uniqueness and "someone who intrigues, inspires, fascinates, or perplexes you" in addition to being accessible. In line with 'good' interpretivist research, we relied not solely on the quantifiable prevalence of voices, but rather on those voices whose narrations captured something new and insightful in relation to investigated phenomena (Smith and Sparkes, 2009). Because the majority of the participants are easily identifiable in their countries of origin and current localities, we do not provide the specific details of each athlete's mobilities.

Data Collection

This study was funded by the Danish Ministry of Culture and was carried out in accordance with the recommendation of Danish Data Protection Agency. All participants gave written informed consent prior to the interview. The life story approach typically involves a series of interviews with each participant, allowing for flexibility to gain a rich and holistic understanding of participants' experiences (Atkinson, 1998; Liversage, 2009). Participants of this study were interviewed in a series of two or three 2-h interview sessions, depending on athletes' availability, and the richness of their stories. The individual interviews were conducted in different countries and locations, such as local cafes and hotel business centers, participants' homes and at their work places, and university meeting rooms.

In our preparation for the interviews, we followed basic interview guidelines proposed by Atkinson (1998), including preparing background information on the athletes' lives and generating questions for the person to be interviewed. The main purpose of contextual preparation for the life story interview is to be able to guide participants to a deeper understanding of their own experiences. As shown by Schultheiss et al. (2011), within the relational cultural framework life stories, co-constructed in the process of telling and being heard, provide a means for making meaning out of work-life experiences of migrants and how these experiences shape their lives.

A semi-structured interview guide was developed to provide a chronological framework for the inquiry. However, since historical reconstruction was not our primary concern, it was only used as a flexible, supportive tool and athletes were encouraged to follow their own preferred order in telling their stories. At the beginning, we asked participants to tell their career story in ways that were meaningful to them. The probing questions aimed to trigger memories from childhood, family, schools, and sports. From there, stories shifted into youth and adulthood, often focusing on career development in sport, education, kinship, and various transitions in athletes' lives. In the second interview, the participant was given a chronological map that was drawn based on the first interview. This was used as an invitation to expand and further reflect on major turning points and themes identified in the first interview in order to glean additional insights into how athletes saw

themselves at various points in their lives and wanted others to see them. Throughout the interviews, we were probing into shifting discourses of sport, culture, and gender, and the ways in which transnational athletes negotiated their life fit into different cultural contexts.

Data Analysis

While emphasizing empirical data as the basis for generating knowledge, we recognize that a researcher's *priori* conceptual understandings trickle down into the production of knowledge. To avoid diminishing the participants' knowing by imposing conceptual categories on their experiences, we utilized abductive reasoning in our reflexive interaction with the data (Atkinson and Delamont, 2005; Sparkes and Smith, 2014). In our understanding, abductive reasoning involves a creative process of interpretation when applying conceptual frameworks adopted in this study while also acknowledging that the analytic processes were ongoing in giving meanings to first impressions as well as final product. The first step in our engagement with the transcripts was a thematic narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008; Smith and Sparkes, 2012) to map a shifting content of the cultural transition from a temporal perspective. In thematic narrative analysis, the focus is on the *whats* of the stories (content of the speech), seeking to identify common elements across participants' experiences. The periods before and immediately following relocation emerged as common themes across the participants' stories. The third theme was linked to prolonged engagement with a sociocultural context and was common for athletes in a long-term migration. The identified themes were related to participants' chronological maps as transitional phases. Drawing on relevant literature, we labeled them pre-transition, acute cultural adaptation, and sociocultural adaptation.

In the second step, we worked with both structural and performative analyses (Riessman, 2008; Bamberg, 2012). In the holistic narrative analysis of structure, we sought to identify the plot of each individual life story and the central storyline that organized each athlete's experience of cultural transitions. This approach was integrated with performative analysis to better understand *how* the process of cultural transition was enacted. According to Riessman (2008, p. 105), a performative analysis "interrogates how talk among speakers is interactively (dialogically) produced and performed as narrative." In the performative analysis, our focus shifted to examining how transition was constructed in the athletes' telling of their stories, including emotional responses, and the performative elements that formed psychological continuity and change in the flow of a life narrative. This involved considering the agency of transnational athletes and the transitory social field—that is, how participants positioned themselves in relation to various cultural discourses, gendered life scripts, and exemplary sport narratives—as well as gleaning insights from the reciprocal relationship between the teller and the intended audiences (Riessman, 2002; Smith and Sparkes, 2009). We identified three common performative processes that penetrated through multiple layers of unique storylines—repositioning in social networks, negotiation of daily practices and meaning reconstruction. Serving the adaptive functions, these processes

were mobilized around the key developmental tasks at each phase of the transition and appear to be the underlying mechanisms through which cultural transition was enacted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to understand the dynamics of cultural transition and the ways in which time shapes the transition process. Our specific aims were to identify the developmental tasks and underlying psychological mechanisms, set in motion by the cultural transition, which facilitated career adaptability.

Consistent with previous research on athletic migrants, the cultural transition process was constituted in social practices and shifting modes of participation within and between sport/work and other contexts, such as school and private life. Changes in daily practices occurred both on and off the sporting field as transnational athletes experienced rupture of meanings (Hall, 1990) and social networks (Smith and Guarnizo, 2006). However, they also developed new social relations in their country of settlement while maintaining public and private engagement in their countries of origin and/or previous settlement.

Despite intensified cultural homogenization of globalized elite sport, in which a transfer to a new team/club may be viewed as a within-culture transition due to athletes' expertise in the given sport, experiences of the athletic transition rather than transition to a new society dominated participants' stories. On one hand, there seems to be a taken-for-granted belief in the universal language of sport, as articulated by athlete 1: "Even if there are different cultures, the hockey language is the same, like, on the ice it doesn't matter where you come from…on the ice everything is just hockey." On the other hand, when athlete 1 was asked to describe how he had experienced his cultural transition to the USA, he stated:

> Of course, they have a different style of hockey, 'cause here the ice rink is a little bit bigger than in the States…so it means that there is less time to do something with the puck, a lot more hitting, a little bit faster game so it took a while to get used to that hockey over there. But I think everything else just went…'cause I was there for hockey and of course at the same time I was learning hockey, playing hockey, and outside of hockey learning to do the things how they are done in the States.

This player also reflected on how "hockey is such a big business in the States so it's not just sport" and "there is much more bigger gap between the team and the coach," concluding that "here, of course, coach is the coach but you can talk to the coach more easily in Finland than in the States. The coach is more kind of the big boss there." In their unique ways, athletes were candid about differences in 'doing sport' and the local nuances in organizing knowledge and living routines for athletes, which points to the culturally intertwined underpinnings of the transnational athletic transition due to its embeddedness in social relations and practices.

FIGURE 1 | Cultural Transition Model.
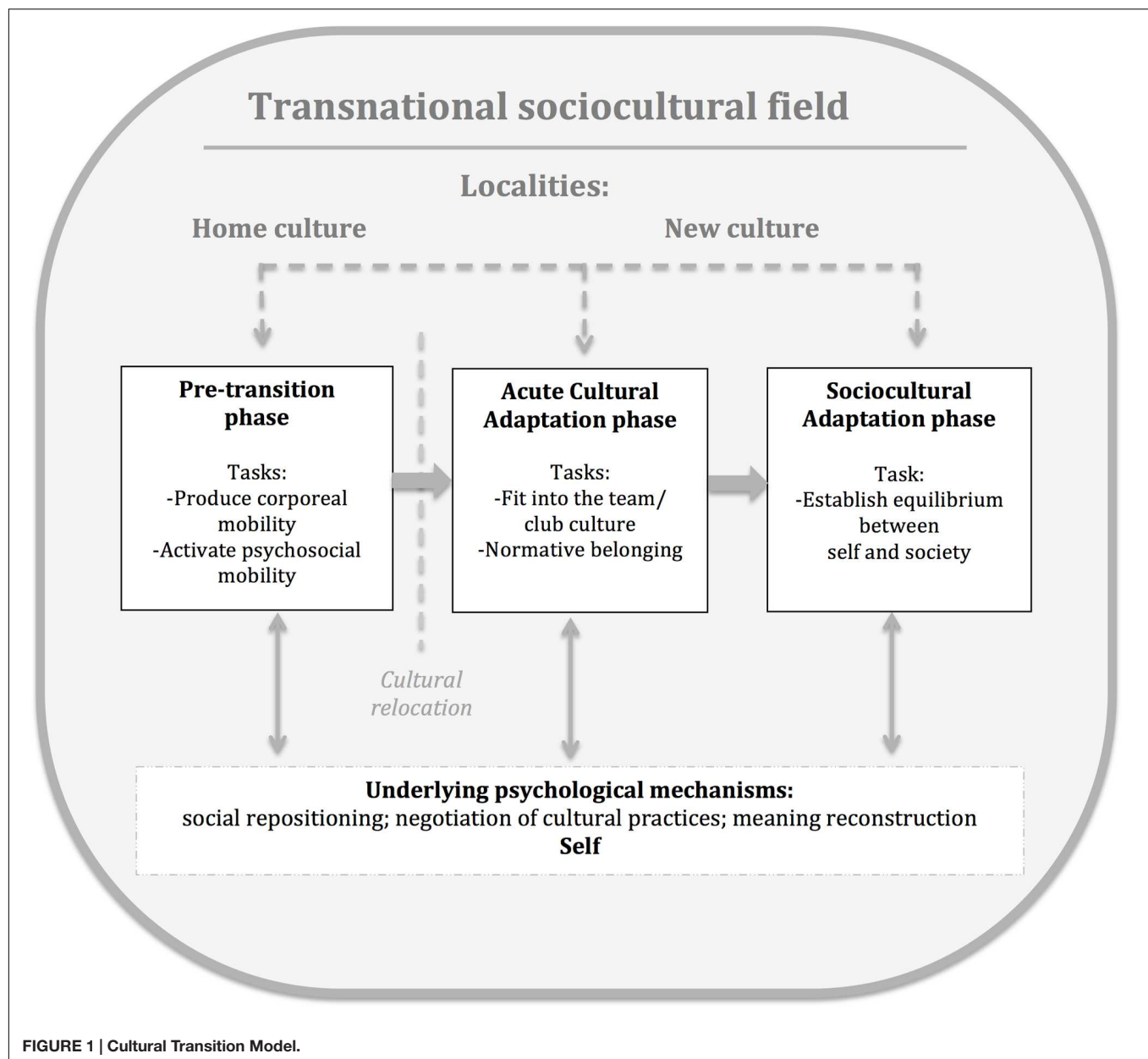
The organizational field of sports, by means of social networks and logistical support, mediated the athletes' cultural transition process into a new society in other domains, such as public health, school, and housing. This was in contrast to the experiences of athletes who migrated for non-sport related reasons. Therefore, stemming from the data, the Cultural Transition Model (**Figure 1**) represents the developmental tasks of a cultural transition constructed in and through work-based relationships and discursive career practices in elite sport.

In this section, we first present an empirically derived model of transition. After that we provide a thick description of the cultural transition's phases and discuss the athletes' accounts of living through that process.

Cultural Transition Model

The model in **Figure 1** shows that the cultural transition process consists of three phases, two of which occur post relocation. While the temporal phases were extracted from the data by means of analytical abstraction and are presented in a sequential progression, they should not be interpreted as unfolding in a simplistic linear manner. We suggest that the transition process is relational, meaning that it does not merely unfold, but is rather constructed within a transnational sociocultural field dynamically and subjectively adjusted by individuals to the multiplicity of cultural contacts in various localities. The psychological domain is embedded in the fluid trans-local cultural field of social practices that constitute and sustain daily functioning and relational experiences of athletic migrants.

Although individual experiences are unique and "cultures play infinite variations during the course of development and daily activity" (Berry, 2009, p. 364), our data analyses suggest that the athletes interviewed possessed common developmental tasks that mobilized the adaptive strategies/mechanisms in cultural transition. As **Figure 1** demonstrates, we propose three underlying psychological mechanisms through which cultural transitions are enacted. These basic processes are adaptive responses that might be hidden beneath an array of culturally patterned behaviors and discourses that, in turn, may or may not lead to a successful task resolution in a particular cultural context. It seems important to reiterate that we identify the underlying psychological mechanisms as adaptive because they are mobilized to regulate one's mode of being in cultural transition.

Phases of Cultural Transition

Athletes' narrations encompassed various temporal and spatial vantage points—reflecting on their past experiences, they would make connections with their lives today and expectations for the future. The ways in which narrators navigated between 'here' and 'there' also highlighted the fluidity of their adapt-abilities to modify affective responses, interpretations and behaviors in various locations.

In the following description of the cultural transition process, we have attempted to add a nuanced analytical depth to our representation of the ways in which athletes' (a) repositioning and calibration of social relations and networks, (b) negotiation of living cultural practices, and (c) decoding and reconstruction of meanings animated the psychological continuity and change at each phase. It is important to note that the aforementioned adaptive mechanisms had a varied degree of experiential saturation along the transition timespan, all shaping, nevertheless, the psychological functioning of the self in cultural transition.

Pre-transition

This phase became visible in athletes' stories as they talked about the time when they had been contemplating a transnational migration. In professional and high revenue college sports, gathering basic information about teams, coaches, and locale through various social networks (e.g., intermediaries and friends of friends) appears to be a common practice as attested by athlete 4, "I think everybody that go [migrate], have talked to somebody that'd been there." Reflecting on his decision-making to sign abroad, pro hockey player 15 recalled, "since 2000 there had been many Finns who went to play in Sweden, so there was the culture of going to Sweden." Transnational athletes do the groundwork of learning about coaches and team practices, fans and club culture, living and groceries, so that "lots of guys know beforehand what to expect" (athlete 4, ice hockey).

Often players get a chance to meet coaches and teams either virtually (e.g., Skype/conference calls) or to visit the place before relocation for try-outs, which assists them in making a more informed decision about mobilizing their athletic career and life course in general. For example, it was important for

athlete 11 to develop her game by playing on a highly technical football/soccer team. Selecting a team that was coached by a Latin American coach known for his meticulous attention to footwork dominated the player's decision-making when accepting an athletic scholarship in an American university. Moreover, several Skype sessions with the coach reassured her of the right fit within the team and school. The constitutive dynamics of agency and networks in animating a potentially successful transnational career transition was further exemplified by a young African footballer:

> I wanted to play in Portugal, but the coach when I went [to Portugal for try-outs] couldn't speak English. He spoke Portuguese to me. I don't understand Portuguese…so I don't understand what he's saying. Then I called my agent and said I want to leave….That's why I came to [Scandinavian country] to play. They said that the coach is used to speaking English.

In addition to being able to produce transnational mobility, the crucial task of a pre-transitional phase is to activate psychosocial mobility that is necessary for navigating diverse meaning systems and negotiating cultural practices. Although not many athletes talked about crossing the symbolic boundaries of various cultural discourses, most of them looked for possibilities to experience something new and were open-minded about the diversity of social and cultural forms of being-in-the-world. This was effectively summarized by athlete 4 (ice hockey):

> You need to have an open mind that things are going to be different. Different countries have different kind of cultures, so you have to be ready for the different personalities or different ways of living. Those are big things, I think, to adapt to.

Importantly, by tapping into transnational networks and learning about a new cultural site, athletes initiated a process of psychological disengagement with familiar people and places while developing a relationship with the new locale. As observed by Ronkainen et al. (2016) in the study of transmigrant runners' negotiations of their serious leisure practices in migration to China, the Western skilled migrants planned to stay there for a limited period of time and viewed their challenging experiences as temporarily. Similarly, despite considering transnational mobility either as an opportunity for upward mobility or a necessity, the participants in the present study constructed migration as temporal before returning home.

For married or cohabited participants, it was also the period of making decisions whether or not their partners and children would migrate with them. While the traditional gendered life-script was taken for granted by some athletes (e.g., "for me it felt very normal that she [girlfriend] would come with me," athlete 1), the need for negotiating alternative ways of keeping romantic and family ties alive was voiced by several athletes, who narrated reconstructing meanings of canonical scripts. For example, professional athlete 4 faced a dilemma whether to sign an overseas contract although his wife wanted to stay at home for her child's perceived benefit. Despite his

relatives' intense disapproval of the wife because "she knew what she was marrying into," the athlete started narratively repairing the biographical rupture caused by transnational migration. First of all, they "were okay because [he] defended her" and then when he signed the contract, he continued negotiating family life in migration as the following quote illustrates:

I feel guilty – in a way I love what I do. I chose to do this as a living [. . .] but I still have guilt for not being there for the kids all the time. I guess the comfort in knowing that my wife is doing such a good job helps me a lot to cope with everything. I know she has my back.

To summarize, the pre-transition phase is indispensable in physically and mentally preparing for the challenges in undertaking a cultural transition, which often means searching for opportunities as well as decoding and reconstructing established life scripts and career narratives. In this sample, poor or incorrect expectancy of the cultural differences which awaited the athletic transmigrants in their host environment and neglecting to expand on normalized ways of being were linked to confusion, resentment, emotional disconnection, and social withdrawal at the subsequent stage. The mobilization of sporting trans-local networks was the key for engendering mobility as part of the transnational career development. Moreover, since geographical mobility puts a strain on family life (Gmelch and San Antonio, 2001; Roderick, 2012) and potentially can prompt family disruption and conflict, the pre-transition phase may provide the athlete and their families with time to negotiate necessary adjustments toward work-family balance.

Acute Cultural Adaptation

For many athletes, the acuteness of this phase was lived and felt through loneliness and attempts to fit in with the cultural patterns of group life. Athlete 9 (football/soccer), who was interviewed 8 months following migration, immediately evoked these themes by recalling, "when I came, it was very difficult for me. I'm just lonely. I just live alone. I don't have friends. I don't have any place to go." He also struggled with the cold weather and hard training, trying simultaneously to make sense of "running in the pitch" without the ball, "we just use the cones, so it's very different [from home]." His coach was not happy but understanding, "he just said I should look. I would just sit looking but not train because of the weather." The footballer confessed, "I play better when I see the sun." This athlete's experiences were concurred by others, who missed family and friends as well as familiar spaces, landscapes, and ethnoscapes, attesting further to the felt rupture of their daily life, inner meaning, and established routines.

The symbolic structure of the meaning domain became visible in feelings of loneliness amidst people and alienating experiences as exemplified by a mixed race Scandinavian athlete, who was positioned simultaneously as 'other' and 'black' in the USA. English was not her first language and when she moved to live with her extended family, "everybody made fun of [her] accent. . .but then, in school people were saying, 'you talk like a black person.'" Her response was, "how does a black person talk?

What does that mean?" Reliving her poignant story, the athlete kept raising that question throughout her narration:

I remember when I was walking to school with my oldest cousin—the first day of school—she's like 'all the boys are going to like you 'cause you're light-skinned and you have a big butt.' And I was like, 'what does that mean?' I didn't understand, and she was like, 'you also have good hair.' I didn't understand what she meant by that because in [Scandinavia], well, in [Scandinavia] having a big butt isn't necessarily a good thing.

Having lived the trajectories of meaning embedded in a particular sociocultural context, most athletes had to learn the ways of navigating, negotiating, and evolving their own understandings within cultural patterns of a new site. Those who struggled to repair the mismatch between their own mode of being and social context (e.g., due to culture distance, marginalization, and exclusion) were likely to feel the loss of self as exemplified by athlete 12, "I'm just lost in translation. I don't know who I am."

The highly dynamic reconstruction of meaning and social repositioning intricately worked together with the negotiation of daily practices on and off the field. Religious athletes, for example, first sought a church or congregation to which they belong, but often had to come to terms with inability to attend worship (e.g., Sunday games) or to relate to ceremonies because they were conducted in a language they did not understand. Albeit investing time and energy to orienting themselves in a new cultural locality, it was the sporting social context that was of most importance to transitioning athletes as they recounted learning and trying to understand the team norms and practices: "I was quiet and I was watching. I think I was, in my way, trying to learn the other players by watching them – or by watching how they act" (athlete 6, basketball). Responding to the question of what was his strategy to facilitate entry into the team, athlete 15 (ice hockey) shared, "stay open, talk to the guys, just be normal and do what they do." Player 9 (football) agreed, at first "it was so odd for me, very hard. I didn't understand the training so I would just look at my teammates. . .now I have the experience. I understand the training. I understand what I'm doing now. . .I play the way they play."

Whilst some behaviors were not difficult to compromise in order to feel part of the team—"I laughed at a lot of stupid jokes" (athlete 4), other practices were deeply ingrained in cultural meanings and symbols associated with age, class and prestige, to name a few, creating inner conflict and external misapprehension. For a young African footballer, who 'made it in Europe,' it was incomprehensible to accept a bicycle as a means of transportation because "bike is for kids." When the interviewer reassured him that it is okay to use a bike, the athlete responded:

Yeah, that's what they [in the club] told me. But I said, 'it's not okay.' They said, 'it is okay.' I see a lot of people using a bike. Even the coach, you know, sometimes uses his bike. So I said 'maybe I will do that,' but I don't know the day.

Explaining what bicycle meant for him, the footballer was shifting his subject position between 'here' (e.g., my teammates use the bike) and 'there' (e.g., ahhh, look at [his name]!) in an effort to reconcile his uneasiness and tension: "I don't care if they see me. I don't care if they…so I will just bike, but I don't know the day."

As already indicated, sport social networks mediated the transnational athletes' cultural transition into a new society by providing logistic support (e.g., visa, housing, healthcare, and taxes) and acting as cultural guides. High-revenue sports clubs and teams had resources to offer formal support and hired help, such as interpreters, drivers, and ethnic cooks, in return for immediate results, as suggested by a pro hockey player, "they expect big things from imports…if you're an import from outside, I don't think they are very patient." A female orienteer on a pro contract for the competitive season echoed, "there were very many foreigners there, so it was competitive. You had to have these good results, otherwise they would just kick you out from the club." Athletes from less commercial sports relied more on personal networks, coaches and teammates. This was evident in the story of athlete 3 (dance), who shared the cultural background with one of his coaches, as he stated:

> She had been living here for a long time so she, when I needed something or didn't know how things work here, I could always ask her and she always helped me with those things. So I had a feeling of security that I'm not left alone to deal with it.

The team/club's culture was intertwined with athletes' perception of whether their psychological needs were met and how well their own goals and values were fitting in the group patterns, which in turn impacted their performance as well as motivation to stay and adapt to social life in the country. For example, while a Scandinavian soccer player in the USA felt that "it was very easy for [her] to go there because it's exactly the same way that it is here [home country]," she credited her Brazilian coach for subtly creating a cultural space that facilitated learning and co-construction of shared experiences and norms. Similar to previous cultural transition research (e.g., Ryba et al., 2012; Schinke et al., 2013), this athlete reflected how her teammates formed a safety net of belonging that enabled her athletic development while simultaneously providing pre-constituted 'experiencings' of social life outside soccer. In contrast, the aforementioned orienteer (athlete 12) was "kicked out" for underperforming and was relieved to return to the country of previous settlement in which orienteering "is on high level but also fun" and "nobody expects you to win all the competitions." Comparing her experiences in the two teams in two Nordic countries, the participant attested to the constitutive relationship between sociocultural processes and individual processes:

> In Denmark, they took me as a person. In Finland, they took me only as an athlete. It's very different. So, in Finland, I kept my relationship at the very basic level—I do what I'm asked, but that's it. But in Denmark was friendship, so I wanted to do it—to get along with others and do well. I didn't talk about that

to the team leaders [in Finland] because I was already thinking that they don't care about runners. They only care about your results.

This experience made her realize that although her lifestyle was that of a professional athlete, she was more content in mobilizing her life course through a semi-professional athletic career and work to support herself and her athletic pursuits. The provided examples also reveal the ways in which psychological responses to the cultural transition's tasks are embedded within relational contexts; thus, mutually constituting a career pattern to fit sport/work into the athlete's life design (Richardson, 1993; Savickas et al., 2009).

To summarize, migration experiences involve intense feelings of loss and loneliness on the one hand, but also excitement and hope of new opportunities on the other. Stemming from Kitayama et al.'s (2007) presupposition that a self-system provides a culturally grounded principle for spontaneous mobilization of thoughts, feelings, and actions, acute adaptation is characterized by a dynamic psychological work of calibrating adaptive responses to new social contexts. The decoding and reconstruction of meanings is central in the process of self-transformation and is stimulated by social repositioning and negotiation of cultural practices in daily living. Although emotional intensity of the acute phase is temporal, it may last for several months and encroach into the subsequent adaptive phase. Athletes unable to establish an affective and cognitive connection with the new locality by integrating new cultural meanings, and consequently expanding their own mode of being, were dissatisfied with their professional development and had to look for new possibilities of constructing the life-course.

Sociocultural Adaptation

In contrast to intermittent mobilities, the sociocultural adaptation phase is associated with the migration that has connotations of permanency or long-term stay (Koser and Salt, 1997). For example, athlete 10 (alpine skiing) relocated to Sweden for training as she felt that female athletes were not given same opportunities as boys and men in her home country. Although the athlete did not articulate any emigration intent at the interview, she had been living in Sweden for several years and was planning to combine her semi-professional athletic career with further education in an athlete friendly Swedish university. In our study of the transnational athletes' dual careers (Ryba et al., 2015b), we have demonstrated that despite agency playing a central role in the ways through which athletes navigate social structures to bring authenticity and meaning to their life in dual career pursuits, the discursive and material conditions in different locations in which athletes are situated nevertheless enable or constrain mobility (see also Carter, 2011).

Athletes in this sample, who expressed intent to stay in the country of settlement, communicated their content with *both* their athletic environment and society at large. These participants seemed to feel congruency of their own values and lifestyles with the local cultural norms animated through daily

discourses and practices in various social contexts. In line with the findings of a recent satisfaction study of mobile employees on international assignments (Tretyakevich et al., 2015), athletes who considered themselves psychologically adjusted to the new culture, reported higher levels of satisfaction with non-sport related aspects of everyday life. As exemplified by pro hockey player 4:

. . .where I grew up and Finland, culturally, it's very similar. . . our health care is the same as here, our taxes are the same as here, we have lots of similarities, it's incredible. I felt – yeah, that's why I fit in so well here with my cultural upbringing, here rather than elsewhere.

Furthermore, this and other participants were cognizant of how sport and non-sport contexts were interdependent as well as interlinked with the self or agency in producing adaptability of their careers. Most of them took advantage of their simultaneous embeddedness in several locations to change clubs or teams in pursuit of a better fit. The argument presented by Savickas (2005) that career is enacted by expressing self concepts in relational contexts was infused with life by athlete 4 as he attested:

I rely on my hard work, and being team player, that's what I love about here. There's no BS and it's straightforward—that's not everywhere in Finland, but here, that's the culture that's here. As an older player, I think that's an important thing to have, a place you can admire the style and the kind of people that reflects who you are and how you were brought up.

Albeit considering themselves well adjusted at this phase, the participants also exhibited variations in their acculturation and life-theme motives, which in part directed their performative talks and actions. Many athletes had plans to return home after a fixed-term contract, graduation from a university or athletic retirement, and therefore had mixed feelings about their belongingness, often exacerbated by the fact that their families were not permanently living with them. For example, while athlete 15 liked Sweden—"I actually learned to like Sweden a lot as a country and even nowadays I still go to read some news on internet just to see what's going on in Sweden"— and understood the local language to function competently and autonomously in daily social situations (e.g., housing and taxes), most of his time outside hockey was spent online in Skype sessions with his wife and children as he confessed, "Sweden was a temporary place. . .I guess I just missed things outside ice hockey." For this athlete, a sense of home was strongly connected to a physical place and the people in this specific locale. Therefore, after 2 years in Sweden, he returned home to maintain a professional hockey career as well as sustainability in his personal life.

Previous research on labor migration indicates that it is precisely the athletic migrants' transnational and multiple embeddedness that serves as a catalyst of their mobility (Engh and Agergaard, 2013), facilitating also career continuity. The transnational athletes' active management of their careers appeared to be linked to affective and normative commitment

to various relational contexts inasmuch as most of them had established a sense of transnational belonging—feeling at home in multiple localities through transcultural forms of social engagement. Yet developing transnational identity was a process of challenging the self, as asserted by a Southern European basketball player (athlete 7):

It was challenging to come to Denmark, first. Then it was challenging to go to [a Nordic country], definitely. Then it was challenging going to the USA. It was so far and it was just a completely different culture—then going to [another American state], it was challenging. The first year. And then maybe the second and third year it was better, but then coming [back] to Denmark was challenging. So it was all challenging. I mean, I've been challenging myself all the time. . .just being outside of my comfort zone, in a way, it was everything— language, culture, people.

The gradual molding of self, as illustrated by athlete 7, forefronts the idea that psychological processes are emergent outcomes of interaction with experience derived in a myriad of social practices in a given cultural locality (Vygotsky and Luria, 1930/1993; Markus and Kitayama, 2010). The transnational athletes' acquired abilities to continuously re-position themselves in transient contexts, calibrating their social relations and practices while navigating shifting meanings, further highlight the constitutive link between the developmental tasks of cultural transition and career adaptability. That is, the work of transition is a psychological repairing of the cultural rupture of daily life that results in a more expansive and fluid psychological self-system. The underlying mechanisms of transition identified in this research (see **Figure 1**) were uniquely mobilized in response to the tasks at each phase of cultural transition furthering growth through work and relationships in shifting sociocultural landscapes.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this article, we did not explore issues surrounding gender and sport sub-culture in mobilization of the transnational athletic career. Our focus was on sport-based cultural transitions of athletes who had a various degree of relocation support through sports organizations and athletic clubs. Therefore, it is reasonable to anticipate a different set of challenges facing athletes in unassisted cultural transitions, such as restricted athletic team/club membership and limited access to training facilities at the host site. Moreover, although some participants felt they had to migrate in order to secure their athletic careers, the athletes in this study can be characterized as skilled migrants and had more agency in negotiating their relocations and sport contracts. Hence it is important to consider power relations and immigration policies between the dominant culture and transnational migrants when applying the proposed framework to cultural mobility issues, especially in career counseling with marginalized and dislocated groups. While we believe that the Cultural Transition Model is applicable across different

sports and potentially can be appropriate for developing psychological support of skilled migrants and their families, further research is needed to test the model in different contexts.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The athletic migrants' life stories clearly suggest that cultural transition has important implications for the direction of their careers and also their opportunities to have a meaningful life. Their transnational career accounts revealed a lack of psychosocial support available for transitioning athletes in sport organizations and, therefore, call for the need to make career and life design counseling available for them. The findings of this research offer some important insights for sport psychologists and career counselors regarding the ways in which they can assist their clients with the psychological work of mending cultural rupture. We believe that these recommendations can, moreover, be applicable in counseling with other groups of high-skilled workers who pursue work-related migration.

Firstly, the temporal model of cultural transition presents a succinct overview of the transition process, including the developmental tasks that change with time. The theme of time served as an important but highly subjective context in athletes' experiences of cultural transition and should therefore be approached from an idiosyncratic felt-sense framework in individual counseling. While there are also large variations in a culturally contingent repertoire of attitudes and behaviors through which individuals engage with the transition process, we propose that the underlying mechanisms of cultural transition discussed above are common to adaptively sustain human functioning.

Secondly, our findings highlight the importance of activating the psychosocial mobility pre-transition. As Bimrose and McNair (2011, p. 330) argued, "migrants represent a client group for whom adaptability and identity are crucially the key tasks for career intervention"; from a narrative perspective, career counseling with athletes prior to transnational migration could involve helping them to become aware of their established career narratives and life scripts and the potential need to reconstruct these narratives in cultural transitions.

Thirdly, transmigrants often move alone and might experience intense loneliness, especially at the acute cultural transition phase. As Stuewe-Portnoff (1988, p. 548) asserted, relational connection with people requires not only a physical proximity, but also a shared meaning domain wherein "the world means the same thing to others that it means to me." Our findings suggest that receiving organizations assessed rather poorly the extent of how cultural rupture of daily life impacted athletes' wellbeing. Organizational and sport psychologists working in teams could increase staff awareness of the challenges faced by transnational athletes and the ways of supporting them through transition, thereby decreasing the 'acculturation load' faced by incoming athletes.

Fourthly, athletic transmigrants' economic success and social status does not depend exclusively on rapid acculturation and assimilation into the host society that opens the possibilities for new, still unexplored adaptation pathways. It is important for career counselors to recognize that there are numerous ways to incarnate a transnational career, which may contain multiple intermittent mobilities and/or transnational migrations. While simultaneous embeddedness in several localities and cultivation of social networks are integral for maintaining transmigrants' mobility, certain career transitions may be decisively transient. Consequently, as our findings indicate, athletic migrants may rather invest time and energy into learning English than a (marginal) local language and may be reluctant to embrace culture of another society while, nevertheless, being eager to adapt to it instrumentally.

Fifthly, for migrants actively engaged in transnational networks and activities, transnational belonging is essential for the formation of identity and self-concepts. In line with previous transnational studies (e.g., Colic-Peisker, 2010; Ryba et al., 2015a), the findings of this study indicate that highly skilled migrants identify strongly with professional competencies. Therefore, their career–life identities may derive meaning from a culturally hybrid transnational field rather than the country of origin. Extrapolating from Blustein's (2011) proposition to consider culture as a form of holding environment that serves adaptive functions, the transnational community may serve as a vital holding environment for migrant workers as they cope with cultural transitions.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study enrich the International Labour Organization's (International Labour Organization [ILO], 1999, p. 7) concept of decent work by grounding the ILO's themes of "working conditions," "balancing work and family life," "equal recognition," and "enabling women to take control over their lives" in the psychological dimensions of work-based movement and transnational mobility. Drawing on a transactional approach, which views social-historical influences as constitutive at the level of individual experience, our research findings provide a compelling support for the sociocultural constitution of transition and relational construction of career adapt-abilities. Given the limited opportunities for long-term contracts, fierce competition and global flow of talent in the sport industry, today's athletes are often put in compromising situations where mobility is required at the expense of stable social networks, local belonging and family life. As the study indicated, host organizations were often prepared to assist in practical arrangements, but less likely to offer psychological support in adaptation to cultural transition. Hence it is important to consider whether individual difficulties in the cultural transition to specific organizations are a personal failure or an indication of organizational problems. This claim resonates with previous arguments that, although in the new economy individuals must take responsibility for their own career

development, there are also highly interactive mutual dynamics between organizational and individual career development, "in which both parties are at once the agent and the target of career influence" (Lips-Wiersma and Hall, 2007, p. 771).

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

TR developed the study concept. TR and NS designed the study. TR and NR conducted the interviews and data analyses. TR and NS developed the cultural transition model. TR wrote the manuscript and received substantial input from both co-authors. All authors approved the final version of the manuscript for submission.

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Perceived Work Conditions and Turnover Intentions: The Mediating Role of Meaning of Work

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Perceived working conditions lead to various negative outcomes for employee behaviors, including turnover intentions. Although potential mediators for these relationships were previously identified, the importance of meaning of work has not yet been investigated. This study examines the role of this psychological resource as a mediator for the relationships between perceived working conditions and turnover intentions in a sample of 336 French workers from different job contexts. Results show that adverse working conditions were positively and significantly associated with turnover intentions. Meaning of work is negatively related to both perceived working conditions and turnover intentions. Mediation analyses for meaning of work demonstrated indirect effects of several adverse working conditions on turnover intentions. The role of meaning of work as a psychological resource for employees facing adverse working conditions is discussed, especially regarding its implications for research and practice within organizational contexts.

Keywords: meaning of work, work conditions, turnover intentions, mediation, French workers

INTRODUCTION

The fifth European survey on working conditions (Eurofound, 2012) conducted in 34 countries on a sample of 44,000 workers, showed the essential role of relation to work in the individuals' lives. According to this study, exposure to physical risks in the workplace has not decreased since 1991 and psychosocial risks may have harmful health consequences in the current socioeconomic situation, which is characterized by high demands, work intensification, lack of autonomy, insufficient social ties, and a sense of insecurity toward work. Several studies have shown that the collateral effects of such work stress and psychosocial risks could have societal, organizational, sectoral, and individual costs (Hoel et al., 2001; European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2014). In particular, 20% of workers report a poor mental well-being and 18% of them a poor work-life balance. Moreover, the Eurofund study points out the limited changes in working conditions over the last 20 years and the fact that unfavorable working conditions tend to affect disproportionally some groups of workers.

Research has shown the links between poor working conditions and intentions to leave. Workers in hazardous workplace conditions are indeed more likely to leave their current employers voluntarily and in case the employer does not take the necessary measures in order to improve the work conditions, workers will not give up their withdrawal intentions (Cottini et al., 2011). As a result, the importance of the relation to work conditions cannot be underestimated. One

of the benefits of this research is in labor relations, especially for organizations that attempt to retain some of their employees because, according to Bertrand et al. (2010, p. 214), companies must also "ensure talent retention" and "maintain and develop the expertise." Indeed, a major challenge for organizations is the significant cost of staff turnover in terms of recruitment and training of personnel. The financial loss caused ranges from a few thousand to more than double the individual's salary and the adverse effects on organizational performance and group motivation are significant (Singh and Loncar, 2010).

The present contribution considers the impact of working conditions on the intention to leave a job. It then successively examines the concepts of meaning of work. Assuming the influence of work conditions on turnover intentions, it then explores the consequences of working conditions on meaning of work that lead to suggest mediating effects of meaning of work on these two variables.

Effects of Work Conditions on Turnover Intentions

Working conditions may have various positive and negative impacts on employees' outcomes such as turnover intentions. Different research on various working samples have shown that perceived work conditions may affect turnover intentions (Houkes et al., 2001; Huang et al., 2007; Podsakoff et al., 2007; Poilpot-Rocaboy et al., 2011; Burakova et al., 2014). Mueller and Price (1990) have established that the determinants in voluntary turnover are of a psychological, sociological, and economic nature. Their explanatory model of voluntary turnover integrates different types of determinants, such us working conditions, environmental conditions, and employee characteristics. The authors point out that if employees' expectations toward the organization are not fulfilled, the consequences for job satisfaction and commitment to work result in the employees deciding to leave the organization.

In this regard, Dawis and Lofquist (1984) argue in their model that the degree of satisfaction from the perspective of the employee as well as of the employer predicts the extent to which the individual is likely to stay. In case of a mismatch between the person and the working environment, this model predicts forms of adjustments between the two. Thus, active adjustment on the part of the individual implies that he or she is trying to change the working environment. Adjusting reactively, individuals may also change their behavior to better match the environment. When no more adjustment proves possible, the person leaves the job. According to Mobley et al.'s (1978) model, that explains the withdrawal process, cognitive behavioral variables are mediators of the relationship between satisfaction and employee's turnover. This conceptual model describes the cognitive process in which job dissatisfaction leads the individual, at first, to think of leaving, and then to intend to leave, which is accompanied by the active search for another job, resulting in the decision to leave if an interesting job offer arises.

Mobley (1977) distinguishes the intention of seeking a new job and the intention to leave and says that the intention of seeking and the resulting job search generally precede the intention to leave and actual turnover except in cases of impulsive behavior. Work dissatisfaction is a factor that leads the individual to explore new alternatives (Peake and McDowall, 2012). Mobley et al. (1979) mention the negative relationship between turnover and the age, position, job content, intention to stay in the current position, commitment, and job satisfaction. They point out that less than 20% of the turnover variance is explained. Other explanatory factors have been identified. Mitchell et al. (2001) explained withdrawal intentions with new processes, adding factors that influence the decision to leave, such as satisfaction and commitment, the comparison between the current situation and the future situation, and the occurrence of particular life events. Several studies have confirmed the influence of job satisfaction and organizational commitment on withdrawal intentions (Cossette and Gosselin, 2009). Various authors have highlighted the moderate negative correlation between job satisfaction and turnover, as well as the negative relationship between commitment and turnover (Porter and Steers, 1973; Mobley et al., 1979). In his study based on a sample of maintenance technicians, Maghni (2014) shows that the variance of the withdrawal intention is explained by 34.7% work satisfaction (intrinsic and extrinsic) and 12.6% by organizational commitment.

While some studies have reported on the deleterious effect of adverse working conditions on health (Conne-Perréard et al., 2001), many authors have highlighted the protective role of certain psychological resources in facing difficult working conditions. For example, some authors (Marc et al., 2011) identified professional isolation as a psychosocial risk factor. In a study on psychosocial risk factors, Bué et al. (2008) emphasized the protective effect of social support when facing difficult working conditions while other authors (Caron and Guay, 2005) demonstrated the link between social support and mental health. If satisfaction is a mediator of withdrawal intentions, it would be relevant to analyze whether the meaning of work could act as a mediator between perceived work conditions and intentions to leave, which to our knowledge, has not yet been explored. None of the existing studies have considered meaning of work as a mediator variable.

Conceptualizing Meaning of Work

The concept of meaning of work features a variety of definitions. It usually refers to a subjective experience that has a personal meaning for the individual (Rosso et al., 2010). Steger et al. (2012, p. 323) define the meaning of work not only as "all that work means for individuals" (*sense*) but also as having "significant and positive valence" (*meaning*). If it is a subjective and personal experience, sense refers primarily to the experience of coherence, cohesion, balance, or wholeness. According to Morin (2006), it corresponds to an experience of coherence and balance between the features that the individual seeks in the work and those he or she actually finds in the work. For Frankl (1969), the meaning of work is associated with the purpose and the reason for living as well as with the vocation.

One common idea is that the emergence of meaning requires the presence of a goal or a cause that transcends the life of the individual (Frankl, 1969). From the perspective of spirituality,

Seligman (2003) expresses the idea that finding meaning leads to make a connection with a sphere that extends beyond us. Individuals transcend themselves; that is to say, go beyond themselves to find meanings that are distinct from themselves (Frankl, 1959). According to Ashmos and Duchon (2000), the expression of spirituality at work requires accepting the idea that employees want to be involved in work that gives meaning to their lives. In general, there is a link between the overall level of the meaning of life and of the meaning of work (Steger and Dik, 2009). On the whole, such meaning, through the direction and consistency it gives to the actions of the individual, thereby conveys a structuring framework.

Meaning of Work as a Mediator

Some studies have highlighted the role of the meaning of life as a mediator in difficult life situations. Thus, in their study of adolescents from poor families, Machell et al. (2015) show the moderating role of the meaning of life on antisocial behavior such as disobedience and bullying. These authors consider the meaning of life as a structured framework for young people that enables them to resist anti-social behavior. Hence the idea arises that meaning could act as a framework or a protective firewall, especially in adverse situations.

By extension, one could consider the meaning of work as a firewall in the work context in terms of the structural framework, coherence, and objectives that meaning gives to work activities and that transcend the individual. Moreover, meaning of work is a more salient concept than meaning of life within an organizational context, and thus has a direct influence on employees' behaviors and subjective experiences of work (Ardichvili, 2005; Rosso et al., 2010; Steger et al., 2012). To that extent, the job characteristics model (JCM) developed Hackman and Oldham (1976) suggested that meaning of work can act a mediator between job characteristics (variety of skills, tasks, characteristics, autonomy, and feedback) and the various employee's outcomes such us motivation, satisfaction, and in particular, turnover intentions. This result was confirmed by the meta-analysis conducted by Humphrey et al. (2007). Indeed, they identified meaning of work as the most important mediator between working conditions and turnover intentions. Consequently, we wanted to reexamine these relationships among a sample of French workers.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The present study extends prior research on meaningful work by exploring its potential mediating effects on the relationships between organizational context and employee outcomes following the JCM (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). More specifically, our focus was to examine how the relationships between working conditions and turnover intentions are mediated by meaning of work among a sample of French workers (see **Figure 1**). Consequently, four hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Adverse working conditions are positively associated with high turnover intentions (path *c*).

Hypotheses 2 and 3: Meaning of work is negatively related to adverse working conditions (path *a*) and high turnover intentions (path *b*).

Hypothesis 4: The effects of adverse working conditions on turnover intentions are partially mediated by meaning of work (path *c'*).
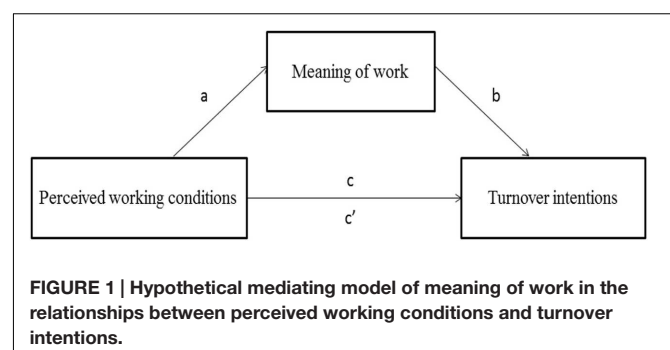
MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

Participants were 336 employees from different organizations and institutions. The sample included 98 males and 238 females (M_{age} = 42.38, SD_{age} = 10.47). A large majority of respondents reported being engaged or married. In terms of education level, 43 respondents had the equivalent of a high school diploma or less (13%), 92 had attended or completed a bachelor's degree program (27%), and 201 had attended or completed a graduate degree program (60%). Various occupations were represented but administrative or managerial positions were more common (60%). Social services (15%), public administration (14%), education (13%), and scientific and technological activities (7%) were the most occupations mentioned by respondents. Among the participants, 240 were full-time employees (71%), 90 were part-time employees (27%), and six did not report their contract status. Most of respondents were in permanent position (75%), 33 were in temporary position (10%), 32 were self-employed (9%), and 19 reported non-standard employment such as interim or State-aided contracts (6%). Their work experience ranged from less than 1 year to over 40 years, while mean job tenure in their current position was 7.09 years (SD = 7.01).

Measures
Adverse Work Conditions
The Questionnaire of Adverse Work Conditions Experience (Bertrand et al., 2010) includes 45 items that measure employees' experience with various adverse work conditions. Initially, the authors identified eight aspects of adverse work conditions among French-speaking Belgian workers by conducting exploratory factor analysis. These factors consist of work pressure (nine items, e.g., unforeseen workload), lack of resources (six items, e.g., lack of social support when needed), job insecurity (six items, e.g., unacceptable aspects of employment

FIGURE 1 | Hypothetical mediating model of meaning of work in the relationships between perceived working conditions and turnover intentions.

contract), organizational changes (seven items, e.g., changes in working conditions), lack of personal development (five items, e.g., routine job), personal reasons (five items, e.g., health problem), work climate (five items, e.g., hostile atmosphere among colleagues), and public image of the company (two items, e.g., poor public perception). The questionnaire prompts participants to respond "yes" or "no" as to whether or not they experience such a situation in their current job. Following the instructions provided by the original authors, eight adverse work conditions indexes were built by calculating the average number of "yes" responses. For instance, if a participant answered "yes" to six of the nine items from the work pressure dimension, an index of 0.67 was obtained. Kuder–Richardson coefficients of reliability or K–R 20 were unacceptable for job insecurity (K–R 20 = 0.40) and for work climate (K–R 20 = 0.42; Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). These results can be explained by the low variation that was observed. Indeed, few employees experienced very adverse working conditions. Then, K–R 20 for the personal reasons dimension and for public image of the company were acceptable, with scores of 0.60 and 0.67, respectively. For the other factors, K–R 20 scores were good ranging from 0.73 (lack of resources) to 0.76 (lack of personal development). After excluding the two factors below 0.60, the K–R 20 coefficient for the total scale in this study was 0.85.

Turnover Intentions

The Questionnaire of Turnover Intentions (Bertrand et al., 2010) consists of five items that measure employee turnover intentions using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 4 (*Strongly agree*). One example item is: "I have the intention to leave my company." The original authors also conducted an exploratory factor analysis among the same sample providing evidence of the unidimensionality of the scale. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.84 in this study.

Meaning of Work

The Meaning of Work Inventory (Arnoux-Nicolas et al., 2016) is a 15-item scale that assesses meaning of work using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). It consists of four dimensions: importance of work (e.g., "My current job gives meaning to my life"), understanding of work (e.g., "I understand the value of my work"), direction of work (e.g., "My work has a clear and specific direction"), and purpose of work (e.g., "I frequently don't understand the purpose of my work"). A higher-order factor was also found suggesting that the total score can be used as an overall measure for meaning of work. Since the mediating role of meaning of work was investigated, this global indicator was preferred for the current study. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.90.

Procedure

In order to collect data among employees with different job status and from a range of organizations, participants were recruited in two ways: using our personal and professional networks; and, for employees located in the Paris region, by in-person contact. The former were directly contacted by e-mail, while the latter were given a flyer advertising our survey. In both cases, an electronic link was provided to access the online survey. All respondents were required to review legal information and provide their consent before participating in the survey. This research is not invasive, is anonymous and voluntary. Using a snowball sampling strategy, potential participants were encouraged to forward this link to their acquaintances. A similar approach was applied by Steger et al. (2013) to increase their pool of participants.

The project and ethical features of this research were approved by the Doctoral School Abbé Grégoire of the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers in Paris, France. Furthermore with regard to ethical standards for research, the study adhered to the latest release of the revised Declaration of Helsinki in Fortaleza, Brazil (World Medical Association, 2013). The initial page of the online survey contained a consent form and legal information. The two inclusion criteria for respondents were to be employed and to be at least 18-year-old.

RESULTS

All the data were computed using SPSS (version 23). Following the recommendations of Baron and Kenny (1986), prior to performing a mediation analysis, it was necessary to analyze correlates of adverse working conditions and turnover intentions with meaning of work. In line with this approach, mediation analyses were conducted only among the significant relationships.

Descriptive Statistics

Means, standard deviations, and correlations of the study variables are presented in **Table 1**. Mean scores of adverse working conditions, and turnover intentions were in the low to moderate range while meaning of work was in the high range.

As can be seen, adverse working conditions were significantly and positively correlated with turnover intentions, ranging from $r(336) = 0.13$, $p < 0.05$ for public image of the company to $r(336) = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$ for lack of personal development ($mdn = 0.31$). These results suggest that as adverse working conditions increase, turnover intentions also increase. With the exception of work pressure, meaning of work was negatively and greatly associated to adverse working conditions, ranging from $r(336) = -0.25$, $p < 0.01$ for public image of the company to $r(336) = -0.63$, $p < 0.01$ for lack of personal development ($mdn = -0.28$). A negative and significant correlation between meaning of work and turnover intentions was also observed [$r(336) = -0.62$, $p < 0.01$]. That effect is particularly important indicating that as meaning of work increases, turnover intentions decrease. Accordingly, the first hypothesis—that adverse working conditions are positively associated with turnover intentions—was confirmed while the second—that meaning of work is negatively related to adverse working conditions and turnover intentions—was also supported.

Predicting Turnover Intentions

To examine the predictors of turnover intentions, two hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed.

TABLE 1 | Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations for all variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
(1) Work pressure	–	0.28**	0.26**	0.04	0.13**	0.08	0.20**	−0.03
(2) Lack of resources		–	0.51**	0.54**	0.31**	0.25**	0.42**	−0.42**
(3) Organizational changes			–	0.33**	0.25**	0.39**	0.27**	−0.27**
(4) Lack of personal development				–	0.36**	0.26**	0.57**	−0.63**
(5) Personal reasons					–	0.13*	0.34**	−0.28**
(6) Public image of the company						–	0.13*	−0.25**
(7) Turnover intentions							–	−0.62**
(8) Meaning of work								–
M	0.46	0.30	0.30	0.28	0.21	0.20	1.96	5.19
SD	0.28	0.30	0.28	0.31	0.24	0.35	0.67	0.99

$N = 336$. **$p < 0.01$ (one-tailed), *$p < 0.05$ (one-tailed).

For the first model, a three step hierarchical multiple regression was conducted, in which demographic data was entered at step 1, adverse working conditions at step 2, and meaning of work at step 3. For the second model, demographic data was also entered in the first step of the equation while meaning of work were included in the second step. Regression results are presented in **Table 2**.

For Model 1, after entering gender, age, education level (i.e., graduate degree level vs. non-graduate degree level), types of occupation (i.e., administrative or managerial positions vs. non-administrative or managerial positions), contract status (i.e., permanent position vs. non-permanent position), types of contract (i.e., full-time position vs. non-full-time position), and job tenure, adverse working conditions uniquely accounted for a significant 36% variance in turnover intentions [$\Delta R^2 = 0.36$,

$F(13,314) = 16.95$, $p < 0.01$]. Meaning of work added an incremental and significant 10% in turnover intentions [$\Delta R^2 = 0.10$, $F(14,313) = 23.73$, $p < 0.01$]. More specifically, for the final step, the standardized regression coefficients were significant for contract status ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$), work pressure ($\beta = 0.14$, $p < 0.01$), lack of personal development ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$), personal reasons ($\beta = 0.14$, $p < 0.01$), public image of the company ($\beta = -0.11$, $p < 0.05$), and meaning of work ($\beta = -0.43$, $p < 0.01$).

For Model 2, after including the same demographic variables, meaning of work contributed significantly to the regression model [$\Delta R^2 = 0.36$, $F(8,319) = 28.18$, $p < 0.01$], and accounted for an incremental 36% of turnover intentions. Contract status ($\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$) and meaning of work presented a significant standardized regression coefficient ($\beta = -0.62$, $p < 0.01$).

TABLE 2 | Hierarchical multiple regression analyses predicting turnover intentions.

	Model 1			Model 2		
	β	p	ΔR^2	β	p	ΔR^2
Step 1: Demographic data			0.05			0.05
Gender	0.01	0.79		0.00	0.93	
Age	−0.07	0.15		−0.07	0.18	
Education level	−0.01	0.89		0.01	0.88	
Types of occupation	0.07	0.16		0.03	0.65	
Contract status	0.15	<0.01		0.16	<0.01	
Types of contract	−0.00	0.94		0.03	0.56	
Job tenure	−0.03	0.59		0.02	0.70	
Step 2: Adverse working conditions			0.36			
Work pressure	0.14	<0.01				
Lack of resources	0.06	0.29				
Organizational changes	0.00	0.97				
Lack of personal development	0.24	<0.01				
Personal reasons	0.14	<0.01				
Public image of the company	−0.11	0.02				
Step 3: Meaning			0.10			0.36
Meaning of work	−0.43	<0.01		−0.62	<0.01	
R^2_{Total}	0.52			0.41		
R^2_{Adjust}	0.49			0.40		

Testing the Mediating Role of Meaning of Work

To examine the role of meaning of work as a mediator of the relationships between adverse working conditions and turnover intentions, the procedure described by Preacher and Hayes (2008) was followed. Thus, based on 5,000 bootstrapped samples using bias-corrected and accelerated 95% confidence intervals, standardized path coefficients and point estimates of indirect effects was calculated for meaning of work. As shown in **Figure 1**, the significant product of the coefficients for the relations between adverse working conditions and the mediator (path *a*) and for the relations between each mediator and turnover intentions (path *b*) was used to determine the significant difference between total effect (path *c*) and indirect effect (path *c'*) as $a \times b = c - c'$ (MacKinnon et al., 2002). A mediational model for meaning of work was presented in **Table 3**.

Meaning of work was found to be a significant mediator for the relationships of lack of resources ($Z = 6.87$, $p < 0.01$), organizational changes ($Z = 4.87$, $p < 0.01$), lack of personal development ($Z = 7.29$, $p < 0.01$), personal reasons ($Z = 5.01$, $p < 0.01$), and public image of the company ($Z = 4.51$, $p < 0.01$) with turnover intentions. For these four first adverse working conditions factors, mediation effects ranged from 47 to 61% of the overall effect while meaning of work fully mediated the effects of the public image of the company on turnover intentions. Only the effect of work pressure on turnover intentions was not significantly mediated by meaning of work ($Z = 0.62$, $p = 0.53$). These results support the third hypothesis—that effects of adverse working conditions on turnover intentions are partially mediated by meaning of work.

DISCUSSION

Our study attempted to extend the current literature about the mediating effects of meaning of work, and about the consequences of adverse working conditions on employee outcomes, particularly on turnover intentions. Accordingly, we hypothesized that increased levels of adverse working conditions would lead to increased levels of turnover intentions. As predicted, adverse working conditions were positively and significantly associated with high turnover intentions, showing correlations at different ranges. These results support previous studies that found similar relationships among diverse working groups (Houkes et al., 2001; Huang et al., 2007; Podsakoff et al., 2007; Poilpot-Rocaboy et al., 2011; Burakova et al., 2014). However, Podsakoff et al. (2007) found working conditions related to task accomplishment to be better predictors of turnover intentions than working conditions related to personal development. Such differential effects between these two categories were found among our sample, for lack of resources and personal development were greatly associated with turnover intentions. As postmodernist societies encourage individuals to take full responsibility for their personal development (Guichard et al., 2012), we can argue that lack of personal development within an organizational context is becoming a more and more critical factor for turnover intentions (Freund, 2005).

Secondly, we postulated that high levels of meaning of work would be associated with low adverse working conditions and turnover intentions. All these predictions were confirmed. A previous study also found a strong correlation between meaning of work and turnover intentions (Steger et al., 2012).

Finally, our study explored the role of meaning of work as a mediator of the relationships between adverse working conditions and turnover intentions. The mediating effect of meaning of work was clearly demonstrated for four adverse working conditions (i.e., lack of resources, organizational changes, lack of personal development, and personal reasons). These findings are convergent with the JCM postulating the job characteristics influence critical psychological states, with in return have significant and various impacts on employee's work outcomes (Hackman and Oldham, 1976; Humphrey et al., 2007). It supports meaning of work as a significant psychological resource for mediating the negative effects of working conditions on turnover intentions, in addition to other previously identified psychological resources (Aryee and Chay, 2001; Loi et al., 2006; Humphrey et al., 2007; Podsakoff et al., 2007; Kim and Stoner, 2008; Vandenberghe and Tremblay, 2008; Collins, 2010). In their meta-analysis, Humphrey et al. (2007) underlined the importance of meaningful work as the most important psychological resource to prevent negative employee's work outcomes.

TABLE 3 | Bootstrapped point estimates and bias corrected and accelerated confidence intervals for indirect effects of adverse working conditions on turnover intentions through meaning of work.

Independent variables	Point estimate	Product of *ab* coefficients			Percent mediated	Bootstrapping 95% CI	
		SE	**Z**	**p**		**Lower**	**Upper**
Work pressure	0.05	0.08	0.62	0.53	—	−0.12	0.22
Lack of resources	0.51	0.07	6.87	<0.01	53.6	0.37	0.68
Organizational changes	0.39	0.08	4.87	<0.01	60.7	0.24	0.57
Lack of personal development	0.60	0.08	7.29	<0.01	48.8	0.44	0.81
Personal reasons	0.45	0.09	5.01	<0.01	47.1	0.29	0.65
Public image of the company	0.31	0.07	4.51	<0.01	—	0.18	0.46

N = 336. Percent mediated was calculated following the formula: (1 − c'/c) × 100.

Limitations

The findings of this study should be considered in the light of several limitations. Adverse working conditions were measured by calculating indexes derived from dichotomous observed variables. Nearly all reliability coefficients of adverse working condition factors were satisfied, but some factors presented tolerable or even unacceptable values. Indeed, despite the relevance of job insecurity (Sverke et al., 2002) and hostile work climate (Carr et al., 2003) as decidedly adverse working conditions, these factors were excluded from the analyses due to their limited internal consistencies. Further analyses revealed that few respondents concurrently encountered multiple situations related to each factor. For instance, among our sample, only 10% of participants reported experiencing "assault at work" (item 16 in the adverse working conditions questionnaire), which was significantly marginal in relation to the majority of respondents [$\chi^2(1) = 213.76$, $p < 0.01$]. However, we should consider that every employee experiences each situation at work on a certain level. Thus, assessing working conditions or work events by use of a continuum rather than dichotomous scoring may enhance reliabilities (for examples, see Cohen et al., 1993; Van Os et al., 2001; Stöber et al., 2002). Consequently, continuous variables may also provide opportunities to further examine the implications of rare adverse working conditions on employee outcomes.

In addition, only turnover intentions were investigated in our study. Because turnover intentions are considered as antecedents of turnover (Podsakoff et al., 2007), the mediating effect of meaning of work between working conditions and actual turnover could differ. Indeed, turnover intentions more describe a psychological state whereas turnover represents an effective decision and behavior taken by employees. Accordingly, longitudinal research designs may provide further information about the underlying process. Overall, understanding turnover intentions may lead to decreased turnover.

Another concern is the nature of our sample, which mainly consisted of respondents who had attended or completed a graduate degree program and who held administrative or managerial positions. This composition may potentially explain the high level of meaning of work that was observed in our study. Indeed, as demonstrated by Allan et al. (2014), employees from higher social classes tend to experience higher meaning of work than employees in lower social classes. Nevertheless, we conducted additional analyses which revealed that demographic data accounted for a negligible amount of variance in meaning of work and that none of these variables significantly predicted turnover intentions. In sum, future studies among large representative working samples are needed to better understand the implications of both job and personal characteristics. Special attention

is also required to include individuals living in extremely precarious conditions, who may not be readily accessible for researchers (Rhodes et al., 2003), but who may represent a promising area for understanding the relationships between adverse working conditions and meaning of work. An intriguing and paradoxical example was provided by Arvidsson et al. (2010) among Milan fashion industry employees who experienced their work as meaningful despite poor working conditions.

Perspectives

In the range of the JCM's perspectives (Hackman and Oldham, 1976), our study makes a significant contribution to understanding the role of meaning of work as a significant psychological resource for reducing turnover intentions while employees are facing adverse working conditions. Future research should further explore its implications on other negative employee outcomes (e.g., absenteeism, burnout, and turnover), as well as on positive employee outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment). Despite the growth of substantial literature about the benefits of meaning of work for both workers and organizations (see Rosso et al., 2010; Steger et al., 2012), the mediating role of meaning of work—in the negative context of poor working conditions and psychosocial risks for employee outcomes—remains unclear. This research topic seems promising since ongoing changes in work organization, marked by constant flux, job insecurity, and flexibility, increase the importance and relevance of considering meaning of work as a critical psychological resource among workers (Hartung and Taber, 2013; Bernaud et al., 2015). Finally, in addition to promoting decent working conditions, organizations should encourage programs and interventions that help employees to develop positive psychological resources, including meaning of work.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All the authors (CA-N, LS, LL, AF, and J-LB) substantially contributed to the conception and the design of the work. CA-N, LS, LL, and J-LB participated to the acquisition of data. The two first authors (CA-N, LS) analyzed and interpreted the data. The first author (CA-N) prepared the draft and the contributing authors (LS, LL, AF, and J-LB) reviewed it critically and gave important intellectual content. All the authors (CA-N, LS, LL, AF, and J-LB) worked for the final approval of the version to be published. All the authors (CA-N, LS, LL, AF, and J-LB) are accountable for all the aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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