The idea of life calling: From religious and philosophical concepts towards a psychological construct

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Abstract

The idea of life calling attracts people's attention since ancient times. Originating in religion and philosophy, at present it gains momentum in both academic and general public discourse. In today's fragmented and informationally dense world calling could serve as a thread that maintains coherence in life, while simultaneously inspiring creativity and change. The present article traces the emergence of that ancient idea in religious and spiritual traditions, describes its development in different philosophical concepts, as well as early psychology. Finally, it delineates the present state of the art and defines further lines of research.

Keywords: calling, vocation

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Modern people find themselves in a situation of freedom unthought-of of before. Victor Frankl emphasized that when humans lost their base instincts they have forever forfeited their unity with nature, but gained a capacity for choice in exchange. In recent times another source of regulation, traditions, is also losing its power (Frankl, 2006). Modern people have to make choices and organize their lives on their own. At the same time, the lack of opportunities for self-realization and meaningful interaction with other people twists this freedom into unbearable uncertainty and leads to a phenomenon called "an escape from freedom" by Erich Fromm (1941). The contemporary world is also in a state of flux, meaning that people are perpetually experiencing challenges in navigating the endless flow of events and information. Something is needed to guide them and sustain coherence in life while simultaneously leaving space for creativity and change. This role can be played by an ancient idea of calling or vocation that recently seems to have regained the interest of the general public, as well as the research community. However, prior to finding its way to scientific discourse, it came a long, sometimes thorny, way as an important element of religious tradition and a topic of philosophical investigation; its adventures on this way are quite illuminating in themselves. Those adventures are the topic of the present paper.

Calling in Christianity

Prevalent modern views of calling in the West are rooted in the Christian tradition. Calling has initially been understood as an appeal of God to certain people for the realization of a specific mission through them, or, in later Christianity, to humanity as a whole as calling to the new life in Christ. One of the most well-known examples is the calling of Moses. When he arrived at Mount Sinai while leading his father-in-law's sheep and goats, he was called by God, appearing in a form of a

burning bush, whereupon Moses was entrusted with a mission to free the Israelites from the Egyptians (Exodus 3:1–4:16 New International Version). Another well-known example from the New Testament is the call of Saint Paul the Apostle. In this story a man named Saul of Tarsus was blinded by "the light of heaven" and heard the voice of Jesus on his way to Damascus, where he travelled for prosecution of Christians. He was so moved by the experience that he converted to Christianity, changed his name to Paul, and was further canonized by the Catholic Church (Acts 9:1–20). Eventually, "a road to Damascus" became an idiomatic expression indicating turning points in one's life accompanied by a significant change of ideas or beliefs.

Another view of calling, as an occupation, meant dedication to isolated monastic life until the Reformation. Rooted in the late Antiquity, as a philosopher's refusal to pursue social ambition, it evolved into the renunciation of society itself in Christianity (Kirschner, 1984). In the Middle Ages, the dedication of one's life to serving God was considered nobler than daily labor (Dawson, 2005). One illustrious example was the 13th century theologian Saint Julian of Norwich, who lived in a church as an anchoress for more than 20 years. Little is known about her life before her spiritual awakening that occurred during a serious illness. This experience was so profound that Julian turned into solitary life of prayer in a tiny cell attached to the church. There she provided counsel to people in need of spiritual guidance, and wrote a theology book for lay people called *A Revelation of Love* (Kempster, 2015). In present day Catholicism calling is still understood first and foremost as work in the ministry (Cahalan, 2016). One well known modern example is Roger Visker, who successfully pursued a career in law enforcement for 14 years, until he was called (literally, by hearing God speaking to him) to leave his current work for the ministry. Roger was given a list of people to talk to in order to embark on his new occupation, and each of them provided him with guidance or offered encouragement. He

further received appropriate education and pastored several churches, stating his deep love for the church (Dik & Duffy, 2012).

During the Reformation, the idea of calling expanded to encompass the entirety of life. Martin Luther, a German theologian, is considered to be one of the key figures in this transformation. His views were influenced by the transition from the agrarian feudal economy to urban development and entrepreneurship. Luther criticized the organization and principles of the Catholic Church and argued that not only work in the ministry, but any other occupation, was divine (Dawson, 2005). In his sermons he preached: "How is it possible that you are not called? <…> Are you a husband, and you think you have not enough to do in that sphere to govern your wife, children, domestics, and property so that all may be obedient to God and you do no one any harm?" (Koldren, 1983, p. 386). Calling *from* the world transformed to calling *to* the world, to earthly life. From this perspective all Christians were called to serve the sacred mission of purifying the mundane life from within (McGrath, 1999). Thus, calling extended outside of the church walls; one could now serve God through fulfilling one's mundane duties defined by social status. This thesis provided the basis for the Protestant work ethic and was further developed by the French theologian John Calvin: "lest all things should be thrown into confusion by our folly and rashness, he has assigned distinct duties to each in the different modes of life. And that no one may presume to overstep his proper limits, he has distinguished the different modes of life by the name of callings" (Calvin, 2002, p. 444). Calvin and his disciples distinguished between universal calling (the call of all Christians to salvation) and personal calling (the call to fulfillment of one's social duty). Unlike Luther, Calvin also acknowledged changing one's calling, given that a new occupation allowed one to bring more value to society. Protestantism also maintained the idea of absolute predestination, meaning that God predestined some people to salvation and others to damnation; such virtues as hard work, industriousness, and ascetics

in fulfillment of calling distinguished the chosen ones from the damned. It is no wonder that, driven by the urge of belonging to the group destined to salvation, people strove to demonstrate those qualities. As the world grew and developed, other additions were made to this particular line of thought. During the seventeenth century, rapid trade developments in both England and New England inspired the theologians of late Puritanism to add their own thesis: God rewarded virtuous people with material success in their deeds, thereby sanctifying the accumulation of wealth (Michaelsen, 1953). According to Max Weber, this belief system played a crucial role in the formation of the "spirit of capitalism" and the development of modern Western society (Weber, 1950).

While calling is usually described as a predominantly Christian concept, there are similar ideas in other major religions. In the next section we will describe related concepts in Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism.

Calling in other religious and spiritual traditions

In Islam, calling is designated by an Arabic word *nada*, to call. In the Quran we can also see two other notions close to calling in its broader sense: *da'wa* (calling, including calling for admission of Islam) and *hidayah* (guidance). Their meaning is interpreted by the tenth century sheikh Sufi Abu Nasr Al-Sarraj in *Kitab al-Luma* (The Book of Brightness). He refers to the following Quran verse: "…and Allah invites to the Home of Peace and guides whom He wills to a straight path" (10:25 Sahih International) and states that, "since the call is general and guidance is particular to the one who is graced by it, he reflects the divine will in whatever he is guided towards" (Hermancen, 2004, p. 80). Thus Allah guides humanity to faith and shows a specific way of service to specific people. We also see the concept of *niyya*, intention preceding the action, in Islam which allows us to distinguish between pious and impious actions that, at first glance, may look identical. For example, choosing the

profession of doctor might be guided by different intentions: making money or to help people, and thus must be appraised differently (Hermancen, 2004).

Within Judaism the idea of calling seems foreign at first, for the Rabbinic tradition maintains that direct communication of God with people has stopped with the last prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Also, there is no such thing as calling for ministry in Judaism, since one becomes a rabbi not by God's call, but by attaining profound knowledge of Judaism, and this role does not make a rabbi "higher" than other Jews. However, Jewish tradition contains a range of notions comparable to calling in a broader sense. The main way of serving God in Judaism is adhering to the 613 *Mitzvoth* (directions) and *Halacha* (traditional law regulating and sanctifying all spheres of life, based on the directions of the Torah, Talmud, and Rabbinic literature). Rabbinic sources also point to the idea of *bat col* (voice from heaven) which provides instructions for interpretation and/or implementation of the law in ambiguous cases or in rabbinic discussions. Moreover, despite the collectivistic nature of Judaism, some writings indicate that there are practices to help align one's individual actions with God's will. In Hasidic sources, for example, there is a practice called *devekut* (union with God) which dictates that one should make God the center of one's life, guiding and directing every action. The Jewish philosopher Martin Buber holds a particular position regarding the collectivistic character of Judaism. He is convinced that collective *Mitzvoth* deprive people from direct, personal meeting with God. However, his views are regarded as heretic and non-traditional by many Jewish leaders (Eilberg, 2016).

Looking further within the overall concept, spiritual traditions stemming from India and Far East differ from Abrahamic religions. However, ideas pertaining to calling are conspicuous. Despite the diversity of traditions constituting this earliest religion, we can trace several concepts in Hinduism related to calling, especially as it is understood in the West. Within Hinduism, there is an idea about

the cosmos and society as an organism whose parts are dependent on each other. Each part functions according to its inner nature (*swabhava*), nourishing the whole organism and at the same time feeding on it. Thus, the best occupation for each person is the one expressing their *swabhava* (Rambachan, 2016). Indian spiritual leader and philosopher Sri Aurobindo maintains that in the past, the concept of *swabhava* was associated with Indian caste system. In particular, it was implied that people should live by certain ethical boundaries, perform certain social functions, and occupy a certain place in society according to their individual nature, tendency, and temperament. Each person was seen primarily as a spiritual being in process of formation and development and their social life and temperament, and social functions were considered as means and stages of spiritual formation (Aurobindo, 2000). Aurobindo continues by stating that "thought and knowledge, war and government, production and distribution, labor and service were carefully differentiated functions of society, each assigned to those who were naturally called to it and providing the right means by which they could individually proceed towards their spiritual development and self-perfection" (Aurobindo, 2000, p. 50). Modern Hinduism gradually dropped this concept and allowed for the change of *swabhava* not only with rebirth in a new life, but also in the current life (Rambachan, 2016). The idea of interdependence also imposed moral duties, from the universal duties (*samanya dharma*) which usually included nonviolence, truthfulness, compassion and self-control, to specific duties for each stage of life (*ashrama dharma*). Bhagavad-Gita states that the purpose of life for all humans lies in the celebration of God through each and every action they perform (*svakarmana*): "One attains perfection by worshipping the Supreme Being, from whom all beings originate, and by whom all this universe is pervaded, through performance of one's natural duty for Him" (18:46 translated by Ramananda Prasad). The highest purpose of life in Hinduism is considered *moksha*, liberation from endless rebirth (Rambachan, 2016).

Somewhat differently, Buddhism distinguishes between two types of spiritual calling: books (*gantha-dhura*) and meditation (*vipassana-dhura*). For the former, in addition to meditation devotees study sacred texts and transfer this knowledge to their disciples. By contrast in the latter, adherents completely devote themselves to the practice, often living in remote, solitary places in the mountains or in forests (Prebish, 2015). In a more general sense universal calling lies in liberation (*nirvana*) which can be achieved through renunciation of the concept of "self" (*anatman*) and the realization of emptiness (*sunyata*) as the nature of all things. In Nikaya (or Hinayana) Buddhism, the one who achieved liberation starts to teach it to others. Mahayana Buddhism, on the other hand, accepts that those close to liberation (*bodhisattva*) deny it until all living things also achieve it, therein demonstrating compassion and empty nature of everything. Thus, there is no border between *bodhisattva* and other beings because everything is emptiness (Unno, 2016).

Confucian tradition is based on the idea of harmony, in which not only individual human needs are satisfied, but the potential of relations among people is realized, thereby cultivating order and harmony in society and leading to perfection. The way of developing harmony lies in the idea of *tianming,* which can be translated as both a call from Heaven, and destiny, endowed to a person by Heaven. Somewhat analogous to the idea of God's call to salvation to all people in Christianity, *tianming* can be interpreted as Heaven's call to follow the Way of humanity. Confucius himself strongly felt the call to propagate the teaching of *Tao* (the Way) to the world (Redse, 2015). The implementation of calling is achieved by means of self-cultivation through adherence to rituals, learning, and striving towards perfection in the fulfillment of each life role (Berkson, 2016). *Tianming*, in the sense of destiny, means accepting those aspects of life which one cannot control, instead of resenting Heaven. A third meaning of *tianming* is that there is a mandate to fulfill one's moral duties, which somewhat resembles the Protestant view of calling. For example, a dynasty's mandate is to

exercise its authority. If the call is not answered properly (as in the case of Xia and Shang dynasties), the mandate is withdrawn (Redse, 2015).

Unlike Confucianism, where self-development is the main purpose of life, calling in Taoism lies in liberation from the self as a mental construct, primarily resulting in the mind becoming as clear as a mirror. Zhuang Zhou advised the use of meditation techniques, namely "to be in forgetfulness" and "the fasting of the mind", to shed negative mental patterns, such as labeling and judging things according to certain norms. In addition to meditation, this development can occur via skillful activity and physical labor, known as the *wu wei*, or effortless action. Once this state is attained, the border between master and activity ceases to exist. The source of calling in Taoism is *Tao* (the Way) which, unlike in Confucianism, means nature or the essence of a being, somewhat similar to *swabhava* in Hinduism. The nature of every being is unique, with great variation in spontaneous inclinations, desires and capacities. The universal calling is to clear the way from the mental constructs and let *Tao* move naturally, allowing for one's nature or personal calling to emerge and manifest (Berkson, 2016).

Thus, various religious and spiritual traditions bear ideas related to the concept of calling in Christianity. In the next section we will explore how Christian calling was further developed in Western philosophy, and then in psychological science.

Concepts of calling in Western philosophy

During the Enlightenment the ideas of Protestant work ethic coalesced with humanistic ideals of education and development of human potential which summarily influenced the concept of calling. In the works of the philosophers of that time, the concept of calling became teleological and acquired a new meaning regarding the achievement of moral perfection. The German Protestant theologian and philosopher Johann Joachim Spalding was the first to implicitly discuss the concept of calling during that period. Spalding maintained that the universal human calling lies in eternal happiness brought by

virtue and morality. This idea was subsequently developed by Immanuel Kant who considered calling with regard to not only separate persons, but to the whole of humanity (Cavallar, 2015). In *Lectures on Ethics* he stated that the purpose of the human race is the achievement of moral perfection, accomplished through human freedom, and "the destiny of man is therefore to achieve his greatest perfection by means of his freedom" (Kant, 1997, p. 221). Freedom, according to Kant, is brought by reason which marks the independence of humans from natural cause and effect laws. By allowing humans to act out of pure will and adhere to the moral law, freedom ultimately leads to perfection. What factors are needed to accomplish this? Kant argued that there were three important things: moral behavior, cultivation of prudence, and development of skills. He also emphasized the importance of having not only a righteous goal in one's work, but as the existence of compulsory tasks to compel one to work. Together, these enable us to find purpose in motivating oneself to overcome idleness, exercise self-discipline, and to achieve a sense of satisfaction, merit, approbation, and self-praise (Kant, 1997).

In his early works, the German philosopher Johann Fichte supported Kant's idea of calling as striving to moral perfection, yet later leaned towards the Christian understanding of life. In *The Vocation of Man* he emphasized subordination of rationality to faith in the fulfilment of one's calling in morality driven actions. He came to this conclusion after facing unsurmountable limitations of rational thought because, in search of definite, consistent knowledge, he questioned every thought, coming to a more accurate one and them questioning it again. After some time had passed, he finally stated that this process was infinite and would not lead to the understanding of truth. He then questioned himself regarding what was above knowledge and concluded that it was faith, or voluntary acceptance of the truthfulness of naturally evolving beliefs. Thus, it is faith that allowed to fulfil one's calling, with reason acting as a means to it (Fichte, 1931).

Unlike Kant and Fichte who saw the realization of calling in rising above nature, Georg Hegel maintained that nature itself embodied the "world spirit" which strived towards "finding itself — coming to itself — and contemplating itself in concrete actuality" (Hegel, 2001, p. 39), and reached its pinnacle of consciousness in human reason. Human calling consists in fulfilling the will of the world spirit, while individual desires, interests, and acts, perceived by the individuals as their own, are its embodiments. Thus, calling, according to Hegel, originated from historical necessity, perceived by separate individuals as their own interests and desires. This is especially visible in the lives of great people whose personal objectives include vast programs constituting the will of the world spirit. Like all other people they act out of their own interests but understand what is needed and appropriate at a certain historical stage better than others (Hegel, 2001).

Between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, several coexisting philosophical concepts treated the idea of calling differently. Together with the rise of materialism and pragmatism and the development of science, calling as a divine directive was discarded by some philosophers. Ludwig Feuerbach, for example, maintained that there was no such thing as mystical calling; from his point of view, the purpose of each person was simply to be a human being which included base activities, such as eating and sleeping as well. As for personal callings, Feuerbach argued that they also existed, but had nothing to do with supernatural forces either and were simply occupations that people chose according to their inclinations and character (Ajouri, 2015). John Dewey also provided secular definitions of both universal and personal calling. To him, the universal calling everybody laid in intellectual and moral growth. Personal calling was a course of action in one's life which one considered important due to its consequences and the value it could bring to other people. Whereas calling, according to Dewey, could and should span across various areas of life and interests, employ one's abilities to a large extent, and systematize experience, facts, and information that one

accumulated in life. By living one's calling, you could derive maximum satisfaction with minimum effort and deliver the highest quality work to society (Dewey, 2004).

Another approach to calling developed during the same period in the USA, thanks to two main factors. There was a boom in work opportunities in urban industrial centers and combined with a substantial increase in professional mobility, they helped to create demand for vocational counseling services, which in turn beget the development of a new discipline called *vocophy*. Vocophers used the methodology developed by Lysander S. Richards (1881) to help their primarily working class clients to find a job that fit their skills and needs in the new economy. Such an approach narrowed the concept of calling even more, reducing it to a mere occupation, devoid of any sacred meaning and not encompassing other life areas (Myers, 2013).

Predictably, the rapid advancement of pragmatism and increasing secularization induced an acute counter-reaction in the social thought. In literature its quintessential example was Fyodor Dostoyevsky and in philosophy, it was Søren Kierkegaard and his disciples. Kierkegaard criticized Hegel for seeing faith as just an initial step to a higher level of philosophical knowledge. Faith, according to Kierkegaard, could be a higher calling, advancing further than basic moral principles; the Biblical episode about Abraham being called upon by God to sacrifice his son Isaac is the example that best embodies his rationale (Kierkegaard, 1983). In his cycle of works, *Edifying Discourses in Diverse Spirits,* he demonstrated the limitations of the ethical concept of calling, as well as people's tendency to systematic evasion from their true Christian calling which is inseparably tied to suffering. Kierkegaard also reckoned that after the Reformation the concept of calling lost its initial meaning and degraded into selfish striving to material success (Nelson, 2006). The search for calling also concerns Kierkegaard with regard to his own life. In his diary from August 1, 1835, he wrote that he considered that his main challenge was to pursue the purpose of his existence, an idea which he could

live and die for; otherwise, any knowledge and activity would lose their meaning (Kierkegaard, 1996). The same was also true for his fellow philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche – he too considered self-knowledge the main existential difficulty. To him, discernment of the true self, a detachment from the crowd, was the primary purpose of man (Nietzsche, 1913). Furthering the responses during this period was Carl Jaspers and his central aspect of self-knowledge. Jaspers called the highest form of self-knowledge *existenz*. For him, this could be described as endless potential, an opportunity being realized in the act of choice which brings it to being or dissolves it into nothing. It cannot be understood with either empirical research, or ontological and ethical doctrines, but it can be grasped through experiencing borderline situations, such as death and suffering, or through existential communication in intimate, close relationships with another (Salamun, 2006).

Throughout the twentieth century calling continued to be developed. However, philosophers did so under the term of "self-actualization." José Ortega y Gasset treated the concept of calling as synonymous to destiny. He insisted that each man was a life project, waiting to be realized, created before all the ideas of the human mind and every decision of the human will. An attempt to act against one's project leads to substitution, falsification of life, and suffering, while living according to one's projects brings joy. Discerning one's project requires effort, overcoming challenges and resistance. In absence of challenges, in security, and when easy opportunities are abundant, "I" remains unrealized (Ortega y Gasset, 1956). Emmanuel Mounier, a leading proponent of the philosophy of personalism, maintained that calling can be revealed in the wholeness of personality, in search for the true self among distracting motives. Calling, according to Mounier, communicated with us in a subtle language that could take a whole life to understand. Even when its directives are enacted, tried in battle and against uncertainty, one can never be sure that he or she grasped their true meaning (Mounier, 1952).

In the second half of the twentieth century sociologists and social philosophers attempted to explain the phenomenon of calling in rational rather than existential terms and introduce it into scientific discourse. In this vein, Pierre Bourdieu put the concept of calling in the context of social interactions and explored the role of other people in the formation of calling. He argued that the activity of a person results from the interaction of their subjective calling, i.e. something that they felt born for, and their objective mission, or what other people expect from them. In other words, between what history molded them and what it requires them to do. If those vectors are unidirectional, they result in making a person feel that they are in the right place, doing what they were meant to do. Otherwise, with less joy, in obedient certitude that it is impossible to do anything else, they yield to the thought that they were born to do what they do (Bourdieu, 1980).

Calling as a psychological construct

In earlier psychology the idea of calling could be found mainly in philosophical reflections in psychoanalytical and existentialist schools, as well as in Russian developmental psychology and pedagogy. A few empirical studies on calling were carried out in the 1980's and 1990's, followed by a rapid growth of this research area from the beginning of 2000's onwards.

Erich Fromm maintained that although the humanity solved the problem of production, the question of the purpose of human life remained unanswered. He proposed the following answer: the purpose of man is first and foremost to remain a living being, actualize the potential given by nature, and develop one's personality (Fromm, 2013). Fromm postulates that a person themselves is the center of their universe and the meaning of their existence, with no other meanings such as political ideologies purporting to greater importance above their self-realization (Fromm, 1941). In his other works Fromm argued that the desire to constantly demonstrate both inward and outwardly that one's life has meaning, comes from separation from nature (banishment from paradise), accompanied by

the urge to restore the sense of wholeness and overcome the feeling of separation from nature, other people, and themselves. That sense could be recovered in a triumvirate of love, meaningful connections with others, and oneself (Fromm, 1941). Carl Jung used the notion of calling within the context of personality development and defined it as an "irrational factor" that destined a person to search and act upon what they had found. Jung also mentioned two conditions that made this change possible: acute causal necessity (such constellation of "inner or outer fatalities" that does not leave any chance to think and act as one used to) and a conscious moral decision to turn away from the herd and follow one's own path (Jung, 2014, paragraph 300). Callings could be very specific and bright, as evidenced in the lives of so-called "great people", or blurred. Living in accordance with calling led to the attainment of wholeness but also caused opposition to the herd, loneliness, and constant battling with one's demons that reflected the demons of the nation and the whole humanity (Jung, 2014). On the other hand, Victor Frankl argued that every person possessed her own calling (or mission) to fulfil a certain life task. In this sense each person is irreplaceable and every life is unique. He also emphasized that life forced us to determine the meaning of our lives, and not vice versa; it encouraged us to take responsibility for the existence we lead. He saw the need for meaning as the main motivating force which, when unsatisfied, led to an existential vacuum, causing neurosis (Frankl, 2006). Furthermore, the Russian psychologist Mikhail Rubinstein developed the concept of calling as professional activity. According to him, youth seeks more than a mere job, but rather a profession with the potential to turn into one's calling. The main characteristics of calling are constant affection and interest to the activity, understanding of talent and fit, considering not only profit that could be gained from it, but also meaning and value for oneself and the society, as well as understanding perspectives for the future. He argued that when a profession was turned into calling, it revealed not

only a path to make a living, but also how to live in the fullest sense imaginable (Rubinstein & Ignatiev, 1928).

Empirical investigation of the idea of calling is relatively new, but one of the breakthrough studies was carried out in 1985 by Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, and Tipton. Their goal was to undertake a sociological study of the life of Americans, especially about the role work played in devising the meaning of life. Upon completion of this study, they concluded that there were three distinctive work orientations: job, career, and calling. Work as a job was seen as a means to earning money and obtaining other material rewards, as well as a sense of security and economical success. As a career it was regarded as a source of self esteem, reflecting professional advancement and achievement and bringing a sense of social success, power and competency. Unlike jobs and careers, work as a calling was not seen as a means to other ends, but rather an end in and of itself – an integral part of life and a path to serving the greater good. Further empirical investigation of the phenomenon of calling were subsequently inspired based on the results of this study. At the present, there are several concepts of calling and corresponding measurement instruments. Although they emphasize different aspects of calling (transcendent character, person-job fit, passion towards the domain of calling), they all converge in considering meaning as the main component of the sense of calling. Interestingly, the components that were considered integral to calling in the not so distant past (i.e. moral duty and religious base) are barely present in modern empirical studies (Myers, 2013). This could be an indication of real cultural shifts in society towards secularization and individualization, as hypothesized by Baumeister (1991). However, it could also be caused by the predominant current paradigm limiting the scope of research (Myers, 2013). It should be noted that calling is a relatively new topic in psychology, and researchers have not yet reached an agreement regarding its very definition, let alone measurement instruments and its connection to other psychological constructs.

Accordingly, more research is needed until we can conceive of a complete theory describing this phenomenon.

Conclusion

Considering the rich history of philosophical thought and empirical investigation of the phenomenon of calling, a need for interdisciplinary research on the intersection of psychology, education, theology, and management, as well as cross-cultural research should be acknowledged. Such research would contribute to the creation of a more coherent concept of calling. Fortunately, steps are being made in both directions. In 2013 Martin Seligman and his team organized a conference in Kent, United Kingdom where they invited prominent religious and secular scholars who investigated the concept of calling in their works. Following the conference, a book called *Being Called: Scientific, secular and sacred perspectives* was published (2015). Moreover, between 2014 and 2016 the Institute of Ecumenical and Cultural Studies in Collegeville, Pennsylvania carried out a study analyzing and comparing the concepts of calling in various religious traditions, and issued a book called *Calling in today's world: Voices from eight faith traditions* (2016). The continuation of cross-cultural and interdisciplinary dialogue is the necessary condition for the creation of a comprehensive concept of calling that could provide basis for interventions which would enrich existing practices in counseling, education, and management.

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