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**Valérie Cohen-Scali, Jacques Pouyaud, Marek
Podgórný, Violetta Drabik-Podgórná, Gabriela
Aisenson, Jean Luc Bernaud, Issa Abdou Moumoula,
Jean Guichard (Eds.) (2018). *Interventions in
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There have been many books, articles, and reports written on the contemporary labor market. Among its characteristics, the most often listed ones are flexibility, versatility, uncertainty, defragmentation, lack of consistent employment in one profession at one location, and low job security or complete lack thereof (Szaban, 2013; Standing, 2002). In recent years, mostly due to the actions of International Labour Organization (ILO), the researchers have focused on the notion of decent work. According to ILO, 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” (ILO, 2015). A minimalist approach treats work as decent when it provides the minimal standards, while the maximalist one labels decent work as one which becomes the expression of a person’s decency and creativity, devoid of any compulsion, creating possibilities of self-improvement, giving the possibility to perfect one’s knowledge and skills; a work that gives the worker a feeling of satisfaction and fulfillment (Podgórný, 2018, pp. 231-232). All of these relate to the notion of ethics in decent work, which consists of “equal pay for equal work, observance of the labor law, recognition of employees as agents, acknowledgment of and appreciation for their achievements, and appropriate interpersonal relationships” (Lenart, 2016, p. 111).

Taking into account the latter approach in particular, decent work becomes a relevant concept which is more and more prominent in the discussion about the tasks of modern job counseling, which is supposed to assist in entering the labor market and prospering on it while helping the workers construct their self-image. Such construction is not possible without interpersonal relations which can form in a workplace environment, strengthening positive communication, allowing to develop one's abilities, increase one's self-esteem as well as self-worth (Guichard, 2016, p. 14).

The book we are discussing in this review showcases such a new outlook on the tasks of life- and working-design counseling, which contemporarily extends beyond conventional notions of professional counseling focusing on matching a profession to a person. The text in question, released in 2018 under the *Interventions in Career Design and Education. Transformation for Sustainable Development and Decent Work* discusses new methods of interventions in counseling, focused mostly on supporting activity which promotes decent work and sustainable development.

The reviewed book is a collection of texts, edited by Valérie Cohen-Scali, Jacques Pouyaud, Marek Podgórný, Violetta Drabik-Podgórna, Gabriela Aisenson, Jean Luc Bernaud, Issa Abdou Moumoula, and Jean Guichard. The editors invited world-renowned researchers from universities and facilities all over the world to contribute in the project. The book is another publication in a series of texts not only on decent work, but also on lifelong learning; the series presents the most recent research, which encourages innovative thinking in the reader. The influence of the book on the development of the research is significant since it pertains to the research area which is not well developed yet, with terms like "lifelong learning" or "decent work" still deemed imprecise and difficult to theorize (Alheit, 2011, p. 7).

International Labour Organization claims that its concept "has a strategic objective, which is to define clear criteria for elimination of the working conditions deleterious to the health and personal development of individuals working in such deplorable settings, of their relatives and neighbors, and, more generally, of the communities in which these people interact" (Guichard, 2016, p. 15). People create their environment through work they do, so decent work is also a condition of decent living and decent participation in society. Taking ILO's approach as a starting point, the authors of the book note the elements of decent work such as: free time and rest; proper and just compensation in case of suffering losses; ease of access to healthcare; a company's organizational values, being complementary to the societal and familial values; as well as safe working conditions, both as they related to physical and interpersonal well-being.

Along with dynamic shifts in the marketplace and transformations of the systems of organized labor, as well as numerous crises, among which are large financial inequalities, mass emigration, or the rising issue of unjust working conditions caused by the current forms of labor organization (Guichard, 2018, p. 99), the forms of assistance and support for people entering the labor market have also evolved.

The model of directive career counseling, which was created in the beginning of the twentieth century, was gradually replaced by the models of career education and new models of career counseling until, in the last decade, the notion of Life Design, or life design counseling (developed by, among others, researchers such as Mark Savickas, Jean Guichard, and Maria E. Duarte) has gained prominence. This notion also became the inspiration to create the reviewed publication.

Taking the transformations currently underway into account, the authors of the book note that most of the actions in twentieth-century counseling were directed at matching the client to a profession, enabling them to be a perfect candidate for an opening and including them into the labor market. This market, however, has never prioritized decent work or sustainable development (Guichard, 2016, p. 14, 22). The current direction in counseling has shifted significantly. Today, many people experience sudden transitions, negatively affecting one's professional development, while also at times preventing decent living. Numerous shifts in the labor market also influence setting the requirements for the employees, as the competences needed for a job differ from the ones that were required years ago, and therefore facilitate a need for changes in preparation for a professional role. Thus, the task of modern counseling is to engage in activities to equalize life opportunities and lifelong learning. The support of the clients in the process of career- and life-designing itself does not rely exclusively on using devices such as psychological tests, but should be an authentic conversation between the counselor and the client. Therefore, the entire counseling process proposed by the Life Design current can be divided into four stages. The first one is **construction** of micronarratives which present specific events in a symbolic manner. The second stage is **deconstruction** of restrictive ideas and flawed convictions. Next, it is relevant to establish new intentions through **reconstruction** of macronarratives. Finally, both the counselor and the client participate in **co-construction** of a project, or a plan of operation, which can subsequently be realized by the counselee. The key categories of career- and life-design counseling are **relationship**, **reflection**, and **sense-making** (Savickas, 2015, pp. 9-14).

Interventions in Career Design and Education. Transformation for Sustainable Development and Decent Work consists of five parts, and is edited by the members of UNESCO Chair on Lifelong Guidance and Counseling, which brings together researchers from universities in Europe, Africa, and Latin America. The purpose of the Chair is to, among others, promote integrated development of the research system, as well as to organize trainings and provide information regarding educational and professional counseling. The first chapter describes the goals and purposes of the UNESCO Chair and its activities (research, conferences, seminars). The "UNITED NATION 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" brought up in this chapter encourages both researchers as well as career counseling practitioners to consider which counseling activities might help in answering the question of "Which direction should I give to my active life so that by 2050 a population of about

10 billion human beings can live a truly human life in a world with limited resources?” (p. 2). The authors of particular chapters attempt to assist with that task.

The first part presents the *Theoretical Foundations and Perspectives for Guiding Life and Career Interventions*. The authors propose new forms of intervention adequate to the needs of a twenty-first century person, thanks to which the counselors can contribute to enabling decent work and sustainable development in the world. The problems of the counselees are caused by phenomena such as the environmental crisis, difficulties in access to decent work for marginalized groups, or immense technological development, resulting in demand for more complex professional capabilities. The authors perceive these difficulties as challenges to the researchers, ones which should make them reflect on the paradigms they assume, as well as prepare new forms of intervention that would help people. Alicja Kargulowa claims that another challenge is the increasing role of pop culture, which promotes values and behaviors contradicting those that pertain to the idea of sustainable development. The emergence of pop culture caused the emergence of a new type of counselee – *homo consultans*, a person who does not only seek counseling in traditional, professionally-controlled environment, but also is under constant pressure of constant advice, tips, and orders from the media – which is another reason why there is a need for new methods of acting for the professional counselors (Kargulowa, 2017, p. 13). Innovative actions of counseling interventions should most of all lead to understanding the meaning which people attribute to work, and then focusing on indicating the actions conducive to decreasing the discrepancy between that ideal meaning and the current situation of the working clients. That goal is stressed in the article by Koorosh Massoudi, Marc Abessolo, Kokou A. Atitsogbe, Eloïse Banet, Grégoire Bollmann, Jean-Pierre Dauwalder, Philippe Handschin, Christian Maggiori, Jonas Masdonati, Shékina Rochat, and Jérôme Rossier. However, Violetta Drabik-Podgórná claims that the help brought on by counseling should focus first and foremost on ethics and the sense of responsibility, as well as on increasing the individual responsibility of the clients for their decisions, which in turn helps them in achieving the readiness to make changes in their lives. Maureen E. Kenny, David L. Blustein, Ellen Gutowski, and Tera Meerkens posit that another important aspect of the actions is the focus on developing critical consciousness that is an essential construct for the Psychology of Working Theory, which underscores the relevance of combating the marginalization in the society.

The second chapter has a significant meaning for the entirety of the reviewed text, as its contents and the questions posed in it are used in the following chapters. Jean Guichard notes that most of the modern interventions are based on the notion of helping people by adjusting to the dominant labor organization and labor exchange methods, while it is necessary to focus on the goals that are omitted by such approach. Guichard claims that it is imperative to prepare and implement the kinds of intervention which will assist people in designing an active life, and therefore contributing to just and sustainable development. He asks, “*By what active lives can*

people contribute to achieving the various goals set out in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development? What life design interventions can help individuals commit themselves to active lives that contribute to sustainable development?" (p. 15). Guichard himself attempts to answer these questions, suggesting new counseling interventions.

The second part of the book presents *Life and Career Design Interviews and Dialogues Based Interventions*. Such interventions take form of dialogues referencing to specific situations of marginalized individuals without access to decent work. And so, Guðbjörg Vilhjálmsdóttir describes the seminal *Career Construction Interview* by Mark Savickas, a text which was used to help women with low employment skills establish their employment goals, as well as to research how can those women be helped with overcoming obstacles and developing their professional identity. *Career Construction Interview* is a method explaining the meaning of career in the client's life, taking into account the difficulties related to career design. Valérie Cohen-Scali, Jean Luc Bernaud, Issa Abdou Moumoula, and Jacques Pouyaud discuss the interviews used to support young people participating in migration processes. These interviews include *Meaning of Life Interview*, written by Savickas among others; *Explanation Interview* by Pierre Vermersch; and *Life and Career Design Dialogues*, a questionnaire based on Guichard's "self-constructing model". These tools help people reconstruct the history of migration, give meaning to their current situation, and design future possibilities and perspectives. This part of the book also includes a suggestion of informal employee support through Life and Career Design counseling, overviewed by Marcelo Afonso Ribeiro. According to the author, such counseling should assist a larger number of people (instead of limiting its scope exclusively to school graduates and individuals with higher education), and its purpose should be promotion of decent work trajectories for all the people, with no regard to their social standing. This chapter also presents a model of informal employee support and a method of its implementation on the level of individual career counseling, using individual narratives to construct a vision of the future.

The third part of the book discusses (using examples and case studies) *Life and Career Interventions Combining a Variety of Career Counseling Instruments*. The authors discuss the following: the psychological perspective of designing and managing personal projects; the possibilities of employing the Life Design counseling in designing career and enabling development of employment ability and decent work possibilities in developing countries; the establishment of tasks Life Design counseling has in pursuit of social justice, with a suggestion of coaching as a method of individual knowledge management support for sustainable development and decent work in companies. The article written by Annamaria Di Fabio is an answer to the question posed by Guichard, "How does one best advance reflection on sustainability for decent work and decent lives?" (p. 9). The author, using a case study based on the purposeful identitarian awareness model, shows how significant the methods relying on career- and life-design as means of growth for decent work

and sustainable development are. This idea is also stressed by Jacobus G. Maree, acknowledging that Career Construction Counseling and Life Design could be successfully used in Africa and developing countries elsewhere. Maria E. Duarte and Paulo Cardoso claim that learning depends on both focusing and engaging into formulating the theory and applying said theory in action (practice). They stress that it needs to be remarked that learning and education “are no longer linear, no longer assume a continuity of qualifications and career, and instead are much more reminiscent of a mosaic or assume a cyclically-repeating form”¹ (Alheit, 2011, p. 10). The authors, using a train ride as a metaphor of knowledge, note that everyone has to learn – no matter if they occupy a first class seat, or if they do anything to participate in the ride – everybody should be able to modify their knowledge depending on the stimuli, reconstruct their knowledge, and adept. Duarte and Cardoso underscore the importance of self-identification, cooperation between adolescents, their families, and various labor market institutions, which is characteristic for the Portuguese career counseling system.

A biographical approach to lifelong learning is understood as a (trans)formation of “structures of experience, knowledge, and actions as they relate to history of human life and lifeworlds”² (Alheit, 2011, p. 7). This notion served as a visible inspiration for Marek Podgórný’s text, who discusses his own proposition of knowledge management and counseling interventions as they pertain to the concept of three work scenarios (PwC, 2014, p. 8), which are: the Blue World, in which large companies compete with one another, while education and development is correlated with goals and means of achieving business success; the Orange World, involving networks of specialists cooperating on their projects, responsible for development and education; and the Green World, the companies concerned about sustainable development and minimizing their influence on the environment, and in which personal and professional development become integrated into a single entity, while education becomes a part of lifelong learning. It is in that Green World where Podgórný indicates Life Design and Life Coaching as a viable proposition of career development. The core of the assistance model in Life Design counseling is dialogue built on a trusting relationship. The purpose of such dialogue is working on the client’s resources and supporting them in their development through analyzing their future options and possibilities. In contrast to the traditional assistance model, Life Design prioritizes the individual over their issues (Drabik-Podgórná, 2016, pp. 194-195) – the human and their narrative become the focal point of counseling. Life Coaching present a similar approach; both it and Life Design rely on similar general and specific goals, which include supporting integral development, developing reflexivity, or encouraging the client to handle challenges. A significant difference between Life Design and Life Coaching, however, is that the former might include

¹ Reviewers’ own translation.

² Reviewers’ own translation.

specific suggestions and propositions, while the latter is completely deprived of them. Moreover, in counseling responsibility is shared among the counselor and the client, while coaching places it entirely on the client's side (Podgórný & Drabik-Podgórný, 2015, pp. 41-42).

The fourth part is the analysis of the *Tracks for Implementing Targeted Innovative Life and Career Design Interventions*, acknowledging the individual (the client), their social environment, as well as the institution and organization of the society they live in. The authors in this part claim that the efficiency of Life and Career Design counseling increases when the individual's circumstances and possible changes in them are considered. Gabriela Aisenson, Leandro Legasapi, and Viviana Valenzuela indicate, based on their research, ways in which young people define and interpret their lives and plan their future. As Aisenson describes it, contemporarily, building professional or personal identities on stable and consistent ways of life is impossible. Therefore, the obvious solution is a constant identity configuration and re-configuration process, being a result of factors such as everyday uncertainty and unstable life conditions. Finally, the authors propose counseling and advisory strategies, directed explicitly at vulnerable social groups.

While discussing decent work one cannot omit the issue of gender. The problem of inequality between men and women on the labor market has been tackled by Chiara Annovazzi, Maria C. Ginevra, and Elisabetta Camussi. The discrimination of the female part of the society is evident in the global indicators. Women are discriminated against on many levels: in wages (women are a majority in the low-wage groups), in access to training and promotion, and even in the recruitment process (Kończek, 2009, pp. 2-5). The authors discuss selected theoretical models referring to gender inequality to then indicate action that could be undertaken to enable gender equality.

In the following chapter, Valérie Cohen-Scali discusses the integration of young graduates in SSE (Social and Solidarity Economy) sector, where production and service contribute to sustainable development of environment and society. The author suggests to develop the interventions intending to promote the pro-social attitudes of the young adults interested in that sector.

In turn, the seventeenth chapter sees Sara Santilli, Maria C. Ginevra, Laura Nota, and Salvatore Soresi discuss the issue of difficulties that the people with disabilities face on the labor market. The authors highlight the meaning of decent work to sustaining a positive frame of mind in people with disabilities, indicating soft skills as particularly relevant to professional success. The authors also describe actions that intend to enable work inclusion to people with disabilities. According to them, these actions should focus on removing career obstacles to allow the workers a possibility to work while stressing their individual differences. The authors note that, even though various kinds of disabilities and ways of their presentation have a negative influence on the employers' attitude (Nota et al., 2014), the idea of work inclusion might inspire them to changing that attitude and treating

every employee as a unique individual, capable of benefitting the goals of their establishment.

The fifth part of *Interventions in Career Design and Education. Transformation for Sustainable Development and Decent Work*, entitled *Perspectives*, is intended as a source of inspiration for future endeavors. The final two chapters are a conclusion of the book. The first, written by Cohen-Scali, outlines the new purpose for counseling, and then presents a career- and education-design intervention program which can then be realized in the future. This program is based on psychological processes showcased in the previous chapters of the book. The author of the penultimate chapter indicates the way of intervention conducive to implementing this program; namely, Workshops for Attitude Change, Assessment Centres of New Psychological Processes, Collaborative Local Projects Development, and Observatories of Sustainable Human Life Occupations and Training.

Drabik-Podgórna and Podgórný in the final chapter present a project of further research, using triangulation (of data, researchers, theories and methods) with five levels of analysis (normative, political, institutional, relational, and methodological), which might constitute a framework for the operations of UNESCO Chair on Lifelong Guidance and Counseling's and UNITWIN "Life Designing Interventions (counseling, guidance, education) for decent work and sustainable development", which was created and is coordinated by the UNESCO Chair. The authors express the expectation that diverse research will enable a better understanding of human necessities, prevent negative effects of the global crisis, and efficiently support the effort to enable decent work.

The reviewed book includes attachments, where one can find the information about the authors of the articles, as well as a summary of the history of UNESCO Chair on Lifelong Guidance and Counseling.

In conclusion, it is worth repeating that the reviewed book is an important text in the current time of labor market transformations. These changes require many experts (counselors, psychologists, *etc.*) to be versatile and react quickly to the most recent needs of the counselees. The subject of the book is immensely relevant, and can be treated as an answer to contemporary problems and dilemmas. It cannot be the ultimate answer, however, since the discussion in this research area should be continued, and the reviewed publication might serve as an important contribution to it. As we have indicated above, the book includes both theoretical sections – which familiarize the reader with the current labor market condition and the situation of various social groups on it – as well as empirical suggestions. We regard those as possibly helpful for the practitioners, while at the same time inspiring to undertake new actions intending to promote sustainable development and decent work.

Clear, well-ordered structure of the book and division into five topical parts enable the reader to easily reach the required content. Enriching the discussed notions with examples and research results testifies of the thoroughness and the high

quality of the collected texts. Presenting various social groups along with the difficulties they have to face (such as people with disabilities who are often excluded from professional life, or women who are discriminated against in many areas of it) as well as proposals of interventions intending to improve their life quality make for a significant input into academic achievements as a whole. One cannot ignore the suggestions made by the authors, concerning further actions on the way to decent work and sustainable development. These suggestions are an indubitable benefit of the book; however, we also note the need for further research in the area, in particular when it comes to Polish environment.

In our opinion, the reviewed book will be a focus for the people who are actively observing the changes on the modern labor market as well as the newest trends in career counseling, while being interested in the activities that promote decent work and sustainable development. It should be considered a compulsory read to counseling researchers (both research designers and research conductors) and the students of psychology, pedagogy, and sociology, who intend to work in the sectors related to professional career consulting in the future. It will surely be useful to all the practitioners; counselors who look for new methods of engaging with their clients. Reading this book might lead one to reconsider their knowledge and pose new questions, inspired by the writings of Guichard regarding counseling interventions in the initial part of the book, which might support future endeavors for sustainable development. It is also worth to refer to one's own actions and ask a question: *How am I contributing to supporting the endeavor towards decent work and sustainable development?* We would like to present this question as the final conclusion of this review.

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