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From traditional career guidance to life design counselling. Continuity and change

This article presents the transformations of Polish career guidance from the inter-war period up to the present. The author presents models and concepts of career guidance changing alongside social, economic and political transitions in Poland. Special emphasis has been put on the elements, which were the core of previous theoretical concepts and practical approaches, and have survived to the present times and constitute an important foundation for new models of career guidance. Furthermore, the article presents problematic issues, which stifled the usability of career guidance in supporting young people's professional development as well as their educational and professional decision-making at various stages of development and functioning. As noted, many of these problems are also common today. As obvious, there are new difficulties emerging that, like before, negatively affect the efficiency of preparing students and adults alike to a career choice (occupational retraining) and satisfactory functioning in today's difficult and demanding labour market.

Keywords: Models of career guidance, career counselling for young people, career guidance transformations, career guidance problematic issues, life design counselling

The beginning of the 21st century is a time of reflection on the past, a time of posing questions about the heritage taken over and searching for new solutions and new patterns in line with the crystallizing social reality. These aspirations are noticeable in all areas of human life – in culture, economy, and social life. A deeper immersion into the proposed novelties leads to the conclusion that, more than once, what has been hailed as “new” and decorated with a halo of uniqueness, in fact has only been dressed in a new robe, which draws attention only because of its bright colours. It may seem that we often deal with this phenomenon in career counselling and career guidance, that procedures, methods and paradigms that have been developed and used in the past are merely given new names, and their meaning and sense remain unchanged. However, this is not so.

This article aims to highlight the most important achievements of career counselling of the early capitalism period, as well as difficult and problematic issues

related to it, and is an attempt to find the elements that have been modified and transmitted over the years, and currently constitute the core of current theories and practices of career counselling. It is also an attempt to show how career counselling for young people has evolved, what is new in the current Life Design paradigm, and what problems and difficulties in its past and contemporary practical activity can be considered common in this area, and which concern only its selected areas.

Quest for methods, creating tools, constructing a counselling model in the first half of the 20th century

Reflection on career guidance emerged at the beginning of the 20th century owing to a new look at the psychology of children and adults and the possibility of utilizing it to interpret and solve problems of everyday life. These trends led to the separation of applied psychology from general psychology. The first research area for the supporters of this trend was the school and its students as well as the developing industry and problems related to the choice of profession. Research on these issues in Poland is connected with the following names: Aniela Szycówna, Józefa Joteyko and Jan Władysław Dawid. While Szycówna (1899; 1901) and Joteyko (1918; 1926) focused on methods of learning and supporting the development of schoolchildren, Dawid (1911), in the introduction to his book, pointed to the need for research on abilities as one of the determinants of professional adaptation of adults. The further development of applied psychology was stimulated by the constantly growing demand for specialists skilled at their work, which created opportunities to use its achievements to discover people's talents/ professional suitability and institutional solutions to the problem of career choice.

An extensive activity in this field was carried out by the Psychotechnical Institute established in 1920 by Waław Hauszyl at the Vocational Counselling Centre for the Patronage of Polish Craft and Industry Youth established in 1915 in Warsaw. Its activities did not differ much from the activities of similar institutions worldwide. The founder of the Institute established contacts with foreign centres and, following their example, organized the first laboratory in Poland, equipped with appropriate apparatus and research tools. He has also employed necessary professionals, i.e. a doctor, a psychologist and a specialist in the field of mathematics and physics. The research methods conducted at the Institute included: interviews, anthropological measurements, medical examinations, psychotechnical examinations (examination of intelligence and mental functions), examinations of psychomotor skills and professional abilities. In terms of equipment on site, the Institute not only took first place in Poland, but was also at the forefront of psychotechnical institutes in Europe (Budkiewicz & Kączkowska, 1987, pp. 97–98). As a result, the Institute

and the career counselling centre operating alongside became a model for successive institutions that were established in Poland after the First World War¹.

Although the adopted model of career counselling practice was essentially based on the “theory of trait and factor” by Frank Pearsons, in its assumptions it reached much deeper, that is to the ancient philosophy of Aristotle, referring to three factors determining the direction of human development (including the professional one) – physis, logos, and ethos. According to this philosophy, physis are biological factors of development, life and needs; ethos are factors shaping the personality and behaviour of a human as a result of his interaction with the environment (attitudes, norms, customs), while logos are factors that allow us to perceive a human as a rational self developing not only physically, but also mentally (Baraniak, 2009, p. 87). According to the adopted model, the study of professional suitability was conducted in these three areas, but the most explored were the physical (physis) and mental (logos) spheres of the individuals examined. The sphere defined by Aristotle as ethos, which in today’s understanding can be combined with competences, was taken into account to a lesser degree then. The study of the physical characteristics of the individual (body structure, weight, height, past diseases, genetic burden, fitness) as well as mental ones (sight, hearing, memory, pronunciation, nervous system properties, intelligence, aptitudes) were conducted using individual interviews, psycho-technical and psychometric tests. The obtained results were used to determine the psychological profile of the candidate and then to confront them with the description of a specific profession. The main goal of career counselling was therefore to help the individual succeed in their profession (Lenart, 2013, p. 69). It was a response to the needs of developing capitalism and the progressing industrialization of the country. Recalling this, Irena Janiszowska noted:

“job counsellors had to perform strictly defined tasks to detect the physical, moral and intellectual characteristics of future employees in industry and trade and to establish the adequacy between the needs and interests of the examined and the requirements of the profession. The whole effort of the advisers was therefore aimed at preparing the most accurate «inventory» of personality or profile of a given person. The fundamental importance was the study of intelligence, calculation of its quotient and distinguishing its forms and types (e.g. theoretical, practical, verbal, logical, etc.)” (Janiszowska, 1971, p. 24).

It is difficult to call the activity conducted at that time career counselling in the full sense of the word. It is surely closer to directive counselling or vocational selection, when an individual has little to say and – in confrontation with an omniscient,

¹ The full list of psychological care facilities, including career counselling for children and youth in Poland during the Second Polish Republic can be found in the monograph: J. Lenart, *Vocational guidance and awareness in Poland in the period of 1944–1989*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów 2013, pp. 372–380. The list contains the names of 65 centres, along with their addresses, years of establishment, patron institutions, tasks and groups of pupils.

authoritative counsellor – remains passive. The choice of a profession, in line with the belief that human psychological features are inherent and invariable, was recognized as a one-off decision, taken upon completion of the public school by a student. Professional psychological counselling of the interwar period – according to Janiszowska – did not develop the appropriate theoretical foundations for its practical activity. The activity of career counselling centres was largely based on the psychology of individual differences and on the results of research on the measurement of psychological traits (Janiszowska, 1971, p. 24).

Educational model of vocational awareness and counselling in People's Republic of Poland

After the Second World War, the power in Poland was taken over by the opponents of cultivating individual talents and abilities, who in their views and concepts did not recognize immaterial beings, but glorified work, and the man – its performer – was of secondary importance to them. This had serious negative consequences for the development of psychological sciences and career counselling, which was most felt in Poland during the so-called Stalinist period (1948–1956). Psychology as a field of studies was removed from most Polish universities then (pushed to the underground), and career counselling was deemed unnecessary, against the socialist principle of equality of all people. “Taking up a job seemed to be a simple necessity, determined by objective staffing needs; the individual had no say in it; and should take up work as a civic duty and as a way of earning a living”, Bogdan Suchodolski sums up this situation in his retrospection (1974, pp. 483–484). Psychological tests were severely criticized and then completely rejected in all countries of the socialist block. In these conditions, career counselling was replaced by the agitation for youth to attend vocational schools. As a consequence,

“vocational education was developed, especially at the basic level, which was to prepare people for work “for life”. Decisions concerning the future profession, taken at the educational threshold of secondary comprehensive versus vocational school, were to be permanent choices, linking graduates with the acquired profession. Formally, there was no unemployment, and employment problems in workplaces were rarely solved by professional career counsellors. Career counselling for adults was incidental. Only later together with the activity of work pedagogues, there has been a development of career counselling, but still oriented primarily at helping children and youth” (Wolk, 2017, pp. 213–214).

The emphasis on vocational education, disregarding vocational predispositions, caused many negative socio-economic consequences (decrease in the level of training in vocational education, high percentage of retraining, quitting school, quitting

work, decrease in the quality and efficiency of work, taking up employment inconsistently with the learned profession, etc..).

The intervention model of career counselling was developed at the Educational Congress in Łódź only in 1957. At that time, psychological counselling centres were established (or actually reactivated), which were supposed to return to the ethos of counselling from the interwar period (at least this is what psychologists hoped for), but in fact it did not happen. In the process of preparing students to choose an occupation and school, the authorities assigned the most important role to the school and teachers. Vocational awareness and counselling became an integral part of the educational work of schools. When adopting the model of the educational nature of school and vocational awareness, its theorists, including Stefania Słyszowa, assumed that, through the proper organization and direction of the educational process, it is possible to guide the development of the abilities of each student and rationally prepare them for a career choice. Contrary to the tendencies of the interwar period, the proponents of this concept believed that human abilities were not innate, but developed under educational influences and work itself. According to this approach, the didactic and educational process should aim at shaping specific personality traits of students, important from the point of view of their future and career choices (Słyszowa & Smoleńska, 1981, p. 5).

Alicja Kargulowa while attempting to define educational counselling at that time, stated that it is a system of deliberately organized educational activities aiming at transforming an individual's existing beliefs and attitudes (and thus changing their behaviour), or at creating new attitudes, and thus helping the individual to adapt to the surrounding reality. Counselling thus intervenes in the process of educating, which is carried out in teacher-student or student-environment relationships, but the student is perceived as an unaccustomed and unprepared being who ought to adapt to the requirements of the teacher or the environment (Kargulowa, 1979, p. 10). According to this definition, the subject (at that time the term "object" was in use) of counselling interactions was a helpless individual haunted by various problems. However, it was not only about the individuals. Some theorists believed that their difficulties may be a signal of disturbed relations in the educational institution or in the environment, and vice versa: trouble caused by a child's disabilities may disturb the proper functioning of these institutions, especially the family (Ziemska, 1971). According to this approach, the subject (object) of counselling activities could also be an educational institution, including the family, school, and youth organization.

The situation of the subject (object) being the target of counselling interactions implied the choice of a specific method. The following were used: the method of individual influence (based on persuasion and discussion), method of intervention in the organization of the educational environment and method of situational influence (Kargulowa, 1979, p. 48). By using the first of these methods, the counsellor put emphasis on informing, explaining, instructing and spreading awareness in the

individual. However, the most important in this process was to convince the individual about the rightness of certain arguments, choices, decisions, and the rejection of others, which the counsellor considered inappropriate. The second of the mentioned methods was addressed to the educational environment of the counsellee (subject). The purpose of the interactions in this case was to organize the work of its various elements so that they exert a proper, socially desirable influence on the development of the individual. Interventions of this type were based on community interviews, providing advice to educational institutions and authorities, organizing teacher training and shaping parents' awareness. On the other hand, the situational influence methods were applied to individuals with educational and adaptation difficulties. Interactions, mainly of a corrective and educational nature, covered the entire group then, and the situations created were to influence the behaviour of its individual members (Kargulowa, 1979, p. 49).

It is worth noting that none of the methods took into account the mutual relationship established between the counsellor and the "subject" of interaction. This approach was typical for the so-called directive counselling, which was widely practiced at that time, and always in accordance with the goals set by the counselling centre's "owner", i.e. the state. The majority of Polish counselling experts (e.g. Kargulowa, Wojtasik and others), describing counselling of that period, point to its directive character and authoritative attitudes of counsellors, which did not take into account the discoveries of Western psychology indicating that counselling approaches and concepts may in fact be more diverse. Christoph Ertle and James F. Adams, who characterized the current models of the work of counsellors (including authoritative counsellors), distinguished also several other models, as well as various types of career counselling, providing their characteristics. According to Ertl (1971), the authoritative advisor (today the terms directive or expert advisor are used) seemed to be able to answer all questions and considered himself/herself an expert in many areas with the right to make a decision for the client. Adams (1962) described such counselling as "counsellor-centred" and also distinguished: "counsellor-centred but not authoritative counselling", which occurred especially when sharing information regarding work, and "patient-centred counselling", where the role of the counsellor was limited to merely asking the right questions, broadly interpreting the results of psychometric tests and convincing the counsellee that he/she had to make the final decision on his/her own. It was implemented for people seeking advice on their own, and therefore aware of their needs and weaknesses (in today's understanding it is referred to as liberal counselling). He also mentioned "non-managerial patient-centred" type of counselling, which was rare at the time and was associated with Carl Rogers. When practicing it, the counsellor showed a willingness to understand and tried to "be in patient's shoes". "The role of the counsellor was limited to listening and summarizing the statements of the counsellee and explaining their most important elements" (Kargulowa 1979, pp. 38–39). This model can be found in the current dialogue counselling. It was only

with the passage of time that Rogers' concept of "relationship-centred counselling" emerged. The basis of success in this case was the relationship that has been formed between the counsellor and the patient.

In Poland and other countries of the socialist camp, it was not until the beginning of the 1990s, along with economic and social changes, that counselling interventions were gradually liberalized, taking into account the counsellee's right to make a final decision (liberal counselling). On the other hand, the latest models of counselling identified by Adams – "patient-centred non-managerial counselling" and "relationship-centred" counselling – can be found in the concept of contemporary counselling theorists like Mark Savickas, Jean Guichard, Annamaria Di Fabio, Maria Eduarda Duarte and others, and in the model of constructing career and life counselling – *Life Design*.

System solutions in career counselling

Another, slightly different characteristic feature of career counselling in the People's Republic of Poland was its alleged socialization through connection with numerous institutions, among which the most important role was to be fulfilled by the school. Schools and family, educational and vocational counselling centres, health services, youth organizations, employment departments, workplaces, mass media were to become cogs of the social system of vocational awareness and counselling. The functioning and integration of this complex system were to be influenced by the regulations issued by individual ministries, especially the Ministry of Education, as well as the decisions of the Ministry of Labour, Pay and Social Affairs. All these institutions were to be jointly responsible for preparing an individual to make the "right" educational and professional decision, i.e. one expected by the authorities. "Educational awareness" and "vocational awareness" were to help in this process. According to Janiszowska's definition, "educational awareness" was a pedagogical task, consisting in helping students first to choose a school and then a further direction of learning that best suited their abilities and interests. "Vocational awareness", according to this author, was considered a social task consisting in helping students choose a profession that they would be able to perform well and which would give them satisfaction (Janiszowska, 1971, pp. 28–30). Stanisław Szajek, combining both of these coined a term "educational and vocational awareness", and defined it as "all activities of the school, parents and other people, groups and institutions participating in the preparation of young people to choose an occupation, undertaken at their growing up stage, in sub-periods of interest (11–12 years of age) and abilities (13–14 years of age), and continued in the exploration stage, especially in the sub-period of trying out (15–17 years of age)" (Szajek, 1979, pp. 56–57; see also Kar-gulowa, 1979). While practicing vocational and educational counselling, the active attitude of the "optant" (an individual opting for school or work) was not taken into

account. Szajek, defining the entire process, recognized that “it was the role of parents, teachers, qualified career counsellors, psychologists and doctors, including, above all, employees of educational and vocational counselling centres, to advise young people and help them to undertake a conscious, independent and proper decision concerning the choice of the profession and the path leading to obtaining the required qualifications” (Szajek, 1979, pp. 58–59; Rachalska, 1987, p. 20).

The passivity of the “optant” (Augustyn Bańka (2016) now calls it career indecision) was also sanctioned by Beatrice Horoszowska, who distinguished two stages in career counselling: vocational pre-awareness and proper vocational counselling. According to Horoszowska, proper career counselling is “a system of activities which aim at directing teenagers’ (and other social groups’) professional life in accordance with the physical and mental abilities of individuals as well as social and economic needs of the country” (Horoszowska, 1966, p. 289). On the other hand, “vocational pre-awareness”, as defined by Horoszowska, was to prepare students to career decision-making “to develop a certain minimum of maturity in them concerning this issue” (Horoszowska, 1966, p. 230). It was closely related to the development of the student’s personality, character traits, abilities, interests and vocational wishes. The active participation of the student was allowed only at the final stage of the entire process of preparation for the choice of a profession, i.e. at the stage of making decisions about future work and / or study (university). This stage was perceived as

“the result of long-term pre-awareness, awareness and counselling work, expressed in a conscious decision made as a result of a correct and mature self-assessment, a decision which profession the optant considers to be the most appropriate for him/her and the path to go along to obtain the qualifications needed to practise the chosen profession” (Szajek, 1979, p. 59).

However, these were only assumptions, and the reality was much different.

Research on the effectiveness of such activities in the field of career awareness and counselling, where the subject of influence remained passive, led to the conclusion that they were not fruitful. It was concluded that in the process of preparing the young generation to the choice of a profession or school, there must be a close relationship and cooperation between people, institutions and organizations who interact from the outside with the “optants” themselves. External influences must be compatible with the processes taking place in the consciousness of “optants” developing as a result of their own cognitive activity, aimed at recognizing their own interests, talents, psychophysical qualities, dominant personality traits and confronting them with professional requirements (Suchodolski, 1972, pp. 14–16). It was a very important observation which aimed at recognizing the students’ subjectivity and restoring the importance of their personal self-cognitive and self-creative endeavours.

Suchodolski indicated that “the preparation for choosing a profession accompanies human development (...)”, which was an important point of departure for Polish researchers and theoreticians of career awareness and counselling in the 1970s of the 20th century. Furthermore, he observed that this process was “awakening and stimulating, but also collecting experiences and crystallizing conclusions. It is the diversity of life and its profiling. Such preparation cannot, therefore, be a one-sided action, confined to a short period of time” (Suchodolski, 1972, p. 14). This prompted a broader view of career counselling, i.e. from the perspective of various life problems and changes, either foreseen or accidental ones. This way, already in the 1980s, the “concept of life counselling” appeared, according to which the choice of a profession and school were treated as solving specific life problems related to general difficulties in setting life goals, achieving these goals, developing self-esteem, attitudes towards oneself and other people (Słyszowa & Smoleńska, 1981, p. 17). A certain barrier to its development, however, was grounding counselling almost exclusively in the educational system (Bańka & Trzeciak, 2017). It was essential that the need to support adults also began to be noticed, by including vocational awareness and counselling also in the programs of lifelong learning and education for adults (Suchy, 1980, p. 321).

It is worth noting that the idea of lifelong counselling underlies contemporary career counselling (career and life counselling) too, since according to its assumptions, a person is approached in a more holistic way. While helping an individual in their career choices, various problems and difficulties that may arise during their lifetime (in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood) are also taken into account.

A conservative model of career counselling in the new Polish reality after 1989

After year 1989, rapid changes took place in Poland that destroyed the previous way of life. After a short period of euphoria, the state, which looked after its citizens, almost overnight changed its face and became much more austere and demanding. The momentary joy of leaving the tight, communist embrace quickly turned into confusion and doubts as to whether we were on the right path. The situation of instability and the search for the “right path” most affected the lives of young people and low-skilled workers employed in public institutions such as unprofitable production plants and state-owned farms (PGR). Individuals deprived of government aid had to manage on their own and take lives into their own hands. The counselling and social support system at this stage was still too immature and incompatible with the requirements of the new reality. Only opening to Western Europe slightly changed this situation. The key moment of the changes was the Polish accession to the European Union, which significantly accelerated its civilizational development. EU funds have opened up new employment opportunities and facilitated

self-employment. Nevertheless, for a large group of people there were still no opportunities to find a satisfactory job.

Along with economic, social and political changes, career counselling and career guidance also evolved. The experiences of Western Europe and the United States, where already in the 1960s, the need to replace traditional methods in this area with new, wider solutions was noticed, were taken advantage of. Vocational awareness consisting in introducing young people to the largest possible number of professions and career counselling as a one-time help in choosing a profession were no longer sufficient in the new reality. The results of the research conducted in the United States and other highly developed countries showed that not only professional skills, but also other types of personal qualities, such as the candidate's set of values, their professional attitude, planning skills, decisiveness, complying with company discipline, coping with stress, were important. Therefore, it was realized that, although it may be possible to teach an employee to perform specific professional tasks, if they do not go hand in hand with relevant additional features ("extra-professional", soft skills) and the employee is not interested in the type of work and is not willing to perform it well, the vocational training itself will be of very little use (Herr & Cramer, 2001, pp. 15–16). This is all due to the need of broader competences that potential employees should acquire during school years (both in general/comprehensive and vocational education). Accordingly, in the United States, where the idea of career education was born at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, all the activities supporting career development were introduced to primary and secondary schools (for instance, decision-making courses, job hunting workshops, computerised vocational awareness systems at universities). In addition, the support in career development also began to be implemented in companies, enterprises and organizations as part of new strategies for human resources development, staff development, employee assistance programs, training and development (Herr & Cramer, 2001, p. 58). Career education was recognized as a state priority in the United States already in 1971. This was largely due to a rising unemployment rate, as economists and politicians wondered if it was caused by a decline in the number of available positions or a lack of training. A similar situation also took place in other countries, including Australia, Great Britain, France, Canada, the Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries and Spain. It is therefore puzzling why in Poland, despite persistently high unemployment continuing for many years (after 1989), all in power ignored the importance of proper career counselling. The solutions proposed by the current government – a minimum of 10 hours of vocational counselling classes in the 7th and 8th grade of primary school and the same number of hours in the entire cycle of education in comprehensive secondary school, technical secondary school and 1st level of trade school – are a huge step back. It is returning to the traditional model of career counselling, which consisted only in assistance in choosing a profession as a one-off act, ignoring the need to develop these currently necessary "extra-professional" competences. Therefore, the proposed activities

could only be of an occasional and residual nature. Another important failure of the system is ignoring the issue of training of teachers to conduct vocational counselling classes, which should be included in the program of studies for teachers at all levels of education.

Currently, it seems that career counselling is performed more competently in public employment services (voivodeship and district job centres), although here too, a significant discrepancy can be noticed between the theory and practice which is still based on the traditional model of a one-off meeting (Ministry of Family and Social Policy, 2016, 2019).

Counselling in constructing a career and life – new perspectives for the practice of Polish counselling

As reality is unclear and is getting more and more difficult to predict, employees are often required to make independent career choices and constantly broaden their knowledge and develop expert skills, but above all to be flexible and open-minded (Savickas, 2011). In the context of cultural changes taking place, many theories developed in the 20th century (Parsons, Supera, Holland, Claparede, Binet, Pieron) are no longer valid. Since becoming a subject to a critical review which showed their limitations, the “need to develop new analytical instruments” (Manterys & Mucha, 2009), relating to the quality of life of contemporary society in a dynamic process of changes, is more visible. Therefore, it has become necessary to move from the traditional paradigm and theories focused on career choices, based on the diagnosis (with the use of psychometry) of the vocational development potential and personality of the subject, to theories focused on personal career design, self-diagnosis of possibilities and identification of barriers inherent in the subject and found in the environment and the surrounding world; to theories posing reflective questions such as “who is a person becoming?”, “how does this process come into being?”, depending on the context a given individual finds himself/herself in (Bańka, 2007, p. 48).

One of the first theories corresponding to the needs of the 21st century man, based on the new paradigm of Life Design, was presented by the American psychologist Mark Savickas, entitled “The theory of career construction”. It modernizes, develops and integrates segments of Donald Super’s career development theory and focuses on issues of professional personality and career adaptability. Savickas emphasizes that each individual is predestined to perform many different professions, just like many different people can perform the same profession (Patton & McMahon, 2006, p. 63). In the process supporting the construction of a career, the subject’s self-work, his/her permanent participation in life projects and multifaceted processes, as well as gaining experience and developing the ability to make independent decisions are emphasised (Savickas, 2013, p. 148). In practical

counselling activities, Savickas proposes to use narrative methods that enable individuals to work through their problems owing to the ability of reflective thinking and setting a goal that is important both to themselves and to the society (Savickas, 2011). This treats counselling as a process in which a career is constructed through biographical narratives and stories, which are tools for constructing identity (Duarte, 2014). According to Savickas, constructing a professional career is a lifelong process. Therefore, to be able to manage it properly, we should learn about our own competences in the three following roles: actor, agent and author (A. Paszkowska-Rogacz, 2017, pp. 248–249)².

Another modern proposal developed in the Life Design paradigm is the “Theory of the construction of life” by French Jean Guichard, who assumed that in the modern world, constructing a career cannot be limited to planning life only in the professional sphere, because this sphere of human activity is only an element of a complex process of constructing a personal identity of an individual. Guichard emphasizes that human choices are dependent on career capital (competences) and identity capital that individuals (actors) must recognize in order to give direction and meaning to their lives and work. In this process, the assistance of professional career advisers is absolutely relevant. Guichard (2016) identifies three types of counselling intervention at the life and career design stage. They are: information, counselling and dialogue. The first type of interventions is designed to instruct people on how to find needed and reliable employment information and answer the basic questions, namely: “What can you do to increase your employability? What are the employment prospects? What are the recruitment procedures in the organization in question?”. Interventions of the second type, in turn, are helpful in setting out a plan for your own professional development. Their goal is to help clients make professional self-assessment by inspiring them to gain insight on themselves and their experience. As Guichard emphasizes, this means that a person must learn to relate to himself/herself and their experiences in a specific way, that is, be able to assess the competences and experiences shaped in life and useful in the work he would like to perform constructively. Moreover, he needs to understand what needs he would like to meet, what values he would like to live by at work and finally define resources that will enable him to get employment at the desired position (competence portfolio). The third type of interventions consists in using dialogues in the

² The actor role is played by a young person when he/she consciously discovers his/her own characteristics and predispositions in childhood. The child’s self-knowledge is most often the basis of vocational preferences, which are reflected in childhood games and in everyday behaviour. The second role an individual plays in developing a career during adolescence is, according to Savickas, the role of an agent. Young people begin to act in a conscious and controlled manner. Like agents, they pursue their goals with a high sense of power and autonomy. However, in order for the process of constructing one’s own professional career to proceed in a fully conscious manner, it is necessary to prepare for the role of an author, which integrates the roles assumed during childhood (actor) with consciously undertaken actions (agent), in order to independently create one’s own professional path.

design of life. Dialogues are conducted in a manner enabling the counselee to define their system of values, indicate their priorities in life, define what constitutes their inner self and gives their life meaning and direction. Three time perspectives are taken into account: the past, present and future, which are interdependent and create a meaningful whole. Referring to events from the past and reflecting on the present enables clients to develop awareness of their own self and create a structure of their life and career (Guichard, 2016). "It is achieved by giving meaning to your professional behaviour and experiences" (Patton & McMahon, 2006, p. 63). In this context – as emphasized by Kargulowa – counselling is oriented towards "expanding the client's knowledge in a specific field, developing his/her competences, and thus, mainly mentally supporting the counselee, who is struggling with problems" (Kargulowa, 2010, p. 11). According to the latest concept, counselling is not possible without a relationship based on a dialogue conducted in accordance with the assumptions of the adopted theory. This activity must be based on mutual understanding and client empowerment. Maria Eduarda Duarte believed that it should be divided into several stages: 1) defining the client's problem in its main context, 2) examining the current system of subjective forms of identity recognized by the client, 3) opening perspectives for change, 4) placing the client's problems in the new life story, 5) concretizing actions and modernizing one's identity (Duarte, 2014). Therefore, a new dimension of the counsellor's activity and new understanding of his/her role appears, which consists in co-construction, in aligning work with life and life with work, with the overarching goal of seeking true knowledge, and as a result seeking the essence, purpose and the meaning of life (Spętana, 2015, p. 333).

Counselling aimed at triggering positive changes in the client's life created the need to develop both narrative research tools and instruments for qualitative assessment of changes described by clients in their narrative. An example of such tools is, among others *Future Career Autobiography*³ (Reh fuss, 2009), where one can find comparison of the clients' statements before and after the meeting with the counsellor, or two other tools for measuring the effectiveness of counselling in the construction of life, i.e. *Career Counselling Innovative Outcomes*⁴ and *Life Adaptability Qualitative Measure*⁵ (Di Fabio, 2014).

³ *Future Career Autobiography* (FCA) – is a worksheet with the following instructions: "Please use this sheet to write a short paragraph about where you hope to be in life and what you plan to be doing professionally in five years from now". The FCA worksheet is given before and after a narrative counselling meeting regarding career planning (Di Fabio, 2014, p. 198).

⁴ *Career Counselling Innovative Outcomes* (CCIO) is a tool designed to analyse the narratives built before and after the intervention in life-constructing counselling. It consists of seven problem questions: 1) How is this intervention useful for you? 2) What are your main resources that you might find useful? 3) What are the main obstacles you may encounter? 4) Who do you think can be of help to you? 5) What do you think might be useful for you? 6) What are your main challenges you have to face? 7) What are the main goals you hope to achieve? (Di Fabio, 2014, p. 200).

⁵ *Life Adaptability Qualitative Measure* (LAQuM) – serves for the qualitative assessment of the effectiveness of interventions in the field of life design counselling. The main task is the qualitative

Conclusion

Vocational guidance flourished in the early period of capitalism, when, on the one hand, it was vital for individuals who were lost, unaware of their competences and professional predispositions, and, on the other hand, for industry, which expressed a constantly growing demand for employees with appropriate qualifications and skills. The research methods and tools developed at this stage perfectly responded to these needs. After the Second World War, the paths of counselling diverged in Western countries and Poland. Western counselling theorists continued to search for theoretical foundations for its organization in psychological research, reaching for behaviourism, psychoanalysis or extreme humanism, and elaborating on the concept of counselling which was directive, liberal and based on dialogue. In Poland, though, guided by ideological considerations, in order to intensify activities in the field of career awareness and counselling, various institutions and organizations were involved in cooperation (the Institute of Youth Research, the Teacher Training Institute, the Vocational Training Institute, the Central Methodological Institute of Vocational Counselling of the Ministry of Education, schools, educational and vocational counselling centres, workplaces, health services: e.g. the Institute of Occupational Medicine and the Institute of Mother and Child, youth organizations, career awareness and counselling practices, including the Vocational Counselling Workshop at the Ministry of Labour, Pay and Social Affairs, employment and social affairs departments of voivodeships and city offices, mass media) while the theoretical foundations of such a strategy were neglected. All the above-mentioned bodies were to create a coherent system of career awareness and counselling, based on appropriate rules and regulations. However, the results were not satisfactory. As we read in the report prepared by Stefania Słyszowa and Jadwiga Smoleńska,

“the analysis of the adequacy and actions of the institutions in relation to the adopted assumptions has shown that although many tasks have been undertaken, their effects are still rather weak, and the direction of their work often requires several adjustments to be made (...). Similarly, the most important institutions of this system, i.e. schools and educational and vocational counselling centres, do not fulfil their assigned tasks properly. Diagnostic research on the processes related to the preparation of young people to a career choice has shown that the activities of schools as well as educational and vocational counselling centres diverged significantly from the methodological assumptions which were supposed to program this area (...). Educational and vocational counselling centres hardly support the activity of schools in this field. They focus primarily on providing individual advice to students from special need groups and students who are undecided (...). The poor work of the school has

assessment of career adaptability and the measurement of changes or lack of changes in the life of the individual presented in the narrative over time. It consists of 12 questions assigned to the dimensions of concern, control, curiosity and trust (Di Fabio, 2014, p. 200–201).

a negative impact on the knowledge of the chosen professions or students' future plans and intentions" (Słyszowa & Smoleńska, 1981, pp. 11–13).

The authors emphasized that the reason for the failure of the school in terms of career awareness and counselling is teachers' poor preparation for this kind of work, resulting, among others, from the lack of a coherent concept of educating during university studies, as well as the inability to improve one's skills in this area at a later stage. Another reason for these difficulties, which could not be discussed at the time, was certainly the lack of conviction about the importance and usefulness of these activities, both among the authorities and representatives of all circles involved in the process of career counselling.

Unfortunately, the difficulties presented above are also visible in today's counselling practice, confirmed by the results of nationwide research conducted by the Educational Research Institute. It indicates that counselling is often "squeezed into" a "regular" school schedule and carried out e.g. by substitute teachers, or during advisory classes with a form teacher, or performed by teachers during their compulsory free classes or during extra classes. Despite the fact that implementing career counselling at a school level is obligatory – 25% of schools carry them out in a "rudimentary" form, as they allocate for it less than 4 hours per student group per year, 7% of schools allocate up to 1 hour per student group per year, and 5% of the schools surveyed do not provide any counselling at all. Staff assigned to counselling classes in schools in 1/3 of cases do not have any qualifications in this field, 23% have completed courses and training, while 50% of the respondents have qualifications obtained in the course of their studies. It is worrying that counselling activities are intensified in relation to students in the final years, and minimized in relation to students in the first years. The emphasis on the final years often means that in many cases it is too late to make certain decisions (Podwójcic, 2015, pp. 114–117). Some hopes for an improvement in the situation in terms of preparing students for the transition from education to the labour market are related to the latest Regulation of the Ministry of National Education of February 12, 2019 on career counselling, which finally creates a chance for its implementation at all stages of school education (kindergarten, primary schools, general/comprehensive secondary schools, trade schools and technical schools). However, there are no recent research results in this area. There are also positive changes in the knowledge and use of modern diagnostic methods and tools by counsellors in the profession, resulting from their opening to Polish and foreign experiences (participation in Polish and international conferences and training, international cooperation, implementation of EU projects, a wide scientific and methodical database available on-line and in printed form, etc.) (Jaskulska, 2015, pp. 82–85).

It can therefore be concluded that Poles have recently witnessed favourable conditions for the implementation and development of desirable and socio-economically adequate counselling models of constructing a career and life. The effects

which we will observe in this respect depend on the practitioners of counselling. More and more researchers have recognized the development potential of modern career guidance. Augustyn Bańka and Włodzimierz Trzeciak combine these possibilities with the idea of sustainable growth, and believe that: “in this context, the term should be understood as the stabilization of the long-term career guidance system evolving for a long time and strengthening it by connecting it to the goals and requirements of the future” (Bańka & Trzeciak, 2017, p. 476). It is noticeable that career counselling has been slowly replacing traditional career guidance as it better responds to the current and only emerging requirements of the new, blurred reality.

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