Chapter 9
A CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH TO ETHICALLY GROUNDED VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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In our present industrialised societies, each individual must find an answer to the same fundamental question: how should I best direct my own life in the globalised society to which I belong? For school-students, this question occurs as follows: which studies should I choose, given my school results, as well as to my personal and family expectations concerning my future career and social integration?

Within these types of societies, career development interventions – mainly education and counselling – are considered as aiming at helping young people find their own answers to these questions. Two conditions are necessary in developing such practices seriously: firstly to ground them in an adequate knowledge in the field of social sciences, and secondly to define them in reference to clarified ends.

Fulfilling the first condition implies transforming the societal question of finding one's life bearings – "how should I direct my life" – to a scientific problem, one which it becomes possible to answer in terms of observable phenomena, factors or processes. This problem can be formulated as follows: what are the – universal and determined – factors and processes of life-long self-construction? Concerning youth, the problem becomes that of the factors and processes involved in the constitution of their intentions for their own future. The first part of this chapter is dedicated to some European models of that constitution.

The second condition for the development of serious career development interventions implies that their goals are defined firstly according to the processes and factors observed in the research presented previously, and secondly, to human, societal and economic ends which have to be clarified. The ends are related to the meaning of these goals. They refer to questions such as: why do we pursue these goals? What type of society do we wish to develop? Which human world would we wish to live in? These questions are tackled in the second part of this chapter which presents two examples of career development interventions included in such a framework. The conclusion again takes up this issue, underlining the importance of the ethical stake.

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Factors and Processes Underlying the Construction of Future Intentions: From Matching to Identity Cognitive Structures

Matching between self-concepts and occupational prototypes has constituted the minimal structure of vocational guidance theories and practices for a great part of the 20th century. This structure had various statuses: that of an ideal society to the accomplishment of which psychometric methods were supposed to contribute, that of an empirical guide for counselling practices, and later of career education or even that of a basis for theorisation of psychical processes of choice elaboration. These different statuses are of course interdependent.

To formulate the link between subject and context consisted in tackling fundamental issues. These included issues such as the genesis and structure of this link, that of the different career decision-making temporalities, that of the contents of these choices as well as that of the psychological processes of their elaboration, that of internal and external factors of intra-individual change and of inter-individual differences.

In this set of questions and models of subject-context links, one of the expansion lines can be isolated: the one which goes from matching as appropriateness of profiles (psychometrical conceptions), to systemic representation (Huteau, 1982), to a developmental process (Dumora, 1990), to a dynamic approach (Van Esbroeck, Tibos, & Zaman, 2005) and finally to the constructivist modelling of multiple identity forms (Guichard, 2001, 2004, 2005). It would be vain to look more precisely for filiations, derivations and ruptures within this set of models because the expansion line proposed (appropriateness – system – development – dynamism – constructivism) is logical and not chronological. That is the reason why the following paragraphs present four European models which enable a better understanding of the transformation of the paradigm: the systemic approach to representations (Huteau), the developmental study of processes (Dumora), the dynamic model of career choices (Van Esbroeck et al., 2005), and the constructivist approach to identity structures (Guichard).

A Systemic Model: Representative Matching

By referring to the *concept of representation* and by the *systemic structure*, Huteau's model constitutes an important theoretical step in the conception of the subject-context link and a decisive enrichment to the notion of matching. At the heart of this theory lies the concept of representation, which comes from cognitive social psychology. The representation of an occupation is the set of descriptive dimensions about it and which a person can build up mentally; it is more or less differentiated; it evolves with cognitive development; it is dependent on the level of visibility of this occupation within the teenager's life environment; and it is evaluative. Therefore, the mental representations of occupations are not exact

copies of reality, but are modelled by interactions with the environment (parents, peer group, media) and thus submitted to schematisations, deformations, simplifications and stereotypes of any representation thus collectively generated. These representations appear to be particularly dependent of the people positions (according to sex, school status and social origins) within the different structured spaces of positions in which they are socialised (spaces called "social fields" by Pierre Bourdieu (1984). Huteau's model, combined with Bourdieu's approach, lead to the observation that through the mediation of representations, these positions determine occupational preferences which are established during school years and prefigure the two principal modalities of division of labour: according to sex and social origins. This prefiguration is not a simple copy of parental positions, but the result of a real cognitive activity of organisation (in particular: into a hierarchy).

As regards self-representations, they are organised into *self-schemata*: sets of dimensions or traits through which the individuals think of themselves and on which they base their self-evaluation. These characteristics and evaluations are progressively built up throughout childhood and adolescence, through social interactions, identifications with surrounding persons and integration of the judgments implied: the affective component of self-representations is thus very important.

When people think about their vocational preferences, they can either activate a *self-schema* or an occupational *prototype*. This evocation then calls up the evocation of the other type of representation, their confrontation and the evaluation of their appropriateness. The level of appropriateness between the self-schema and the occupational prototype evoked, determines whether people continue the process until the selection of an occupational preference if the appropriateness is satisfactory, or whether they try either to reduce the dissonance by modifying one or other of the representations in the case of ambiguity, or reject it in the case of discrepancy.

This process can be spontaneous, it can be induced by environment solicitations, surrounding people, school or career counsellors, it can even be trained through career education (actually such an assumption underlies some of these interventions). In any case, it is spontaneously repetitive and depicts how the teenagers' occupational representative universe is progressively built up, by selecting, modifying and eliminating. This systemic matching model breaks with the previous static matching conceptions, and does so through the recurrence of processes, by the retroactive accommodation loops and thus by the plasticity of the representations it poses. But above all, this model enables one to understand the role of the *strong and more* or *less deforming filter* of reality which is played by social and school positions (Guichard, 1993, 1996).

Following this structural description of the occupational preferences construction process, Huteau gave an account of its development during adolescence. The process is elementary in children and pre-adolescents, because they have little experience and their representations are poor. It becomes more complex with the cognitive development of teenagers, the multiplication of their experiences and the enlargement of their horizon, and also with the changing relational and identity mode to parents and later to the peer group. Firstly, the occupational representations

progressively move away from perception and immediate action, they become more differentiated and rich; secondly, but almost at the same time, the self-representation, which at the beginning consists mainly in physical characteristics, progressively withdraws from this concrete perception by integrating personality traits and later ideological, sociological, moral and political criteria. As the career plan term comes closer, the comparison work between oneself and the occupations becomes more systematic, either spontaneously or during counselling interviews or career education sessions.

Beyond the training and counselling applications that this – both systemic and developmental – model has generated, its main interest is to give an account of the complex interplay of future intentions during (a) the long period of the individual development, (b) the mean period of time of school curriculum (junior high-school, senior high-school, etc.) and (c) the short period of time of life events or information search. Retroactivity is indeed able to integrate change and thereby training, but it is also needed to grasp discontinuities, regressions or sudden decisions taken by the subjects. Such phenomena (that researchers or career counsellors frequently observe) cannot be analysed neither by models which assume a necessary appropriateness between given personality profiles and given types of occupations nor by models of social learning which assume that the career plans derive from a simple accumulation of life experiences.

A Systemic and Developmental Model

Dumora (1990, 2000) tested Huteau's model through a longitudinal study of teenagers' intentions for their future. Indeed, in almost every country the most important career decisions have to be made during adolescence. Across the diversity of school systems but with their similar problems, each teenager has to face at various grades and at the end of secondary school some necessary decision making (type of school, type of training, option, vocation, etc.), whatever the organisational mode, institutional actors and evaluation methods. These choices are hard to make because of their major occupational and social stakes: the quality of secondary scholarship and of the diploma obtained, still greatly determine the future education or training and social position in most countries.

From the preceding propositions, Dumora (1990, 2000) retained the structural conception of representations as evaluating dimensions, the recurrent comparison scheme and the weight of social and school positions. She approached the mental processes which underlie comparison and retroaction and their evolution during adolescence. Two major models of developmental cognitive psychology were used as analysis framework for the components of these processes: on the one hand the structural development model proposed by Piaget in *la logique des propositions* (the logic of propositions), which is based on his exploration of the understanding of physical problems (cf. Inhelder & Piaget, 1970) and which can be applied to the understanding of the social world of professions (Doise, 1993); on the other hand,

Fischer's theoretical model of abilities, in which the abstraction level precisely characterises adolescence and can be applied to any functional domain (Fischer, 1980).

By basing her work on the study of teenagers' argumentation as regards their intentions for their future during secondary school, Dumora showed the bringing into play of a tension between preferences, representations and self-assessments via the development – between the ages of 10 and 18 – of two mental processes: the *comparative reflection* and the *probabilistic reflection* (see Table 9.1).

The concept of comparative reflection aims at describing the psychological development in youths of the cognitive relationship between self-schemata and occupational prototypes. It consists in an argumentation process which progressively creates a rupture with the mental image register in order to open access to the formal register. At the beginning of secondary school, it is extremely poor and is not yet a connection between both types of representations (self and occupations). Because of the young teenager's inability for categorising or for cognitive analysis, the argumentation is reduced to a tautology or a simple juxtaposition. Comparative reflection then changes into a metaphorical reflection: the teenager wishes to "do as" or "be as" a person s/he knows or as a figure seen in the media, but in a global way, without eliciting any precise characteristic of oneself and of the occupation. This reflection becomes metonymic when the adolescent starts making comparisons, still disorganised and elliptic, between some striking characteristics of the occupational figure or of the occupation and these same characteristics which s/he can recognise in her/himself. The last step in the development of this comparative reflection process is a complex balancing between abstract categories about oneself and those of the occupation: the abstraction capacity thus enables adolescents to think about the occupations in terms of social functions and not only in terms of concrete actions, imagined or imaginary, and also gives them the possibility of building a consistent "self-theory" and to overcome the compartmental and additive self-descriptions (Bariaud, 1997; Harter, 1994). This progression in comparative reflection explains the evolution of teenagers' intentions for their future which can be observed through longitudinal study: from a fusing participation or a global and syncretic identification to some "occupational figures", to a differentiation underlying the objective evaluation of possible school or career choices.

Table 9.1 Main steps of the evolution of processes implied in youth (from 10 to 18 years old) career decision-making observed within the framework of the French school system

Reflexive processes		Contents
Comparative reflection	Probabilistic reflection	Types of future intentions
Tautological	Magical	Conformist adhesion to adolescent myths
Metaphorical	Predictive	Narcissist preferences
Metonymical	Estimated	Detachment
Complex balancing	Strategic Meta-reflexive	Educational choices

The concept of probabilistic reflection intends to describe the psychological development in youths of their decision making capabilities as regards their school curriculum (and future career). This reflection progressively breaks away from the magical and Manichean way of thinking, specific to childhood, to a mind able to consider doubt, uncertainty, hazard, chance and probability which characterises the whole life-long personal and career developments process. Thus, as a 10 year-old child can think "I'm sure I'll make it if I really want it", the adolescents or young-adults – a lot more circumspect – compare their chances of making it with every option they have. The analysis showed that teenagers progressively distinguish and combine the internal and external factors which might influence their personal and career choices. They distinguish the favourable and unfavourable factors. Last but not least, they are capable of exploiting hypothetico-deductive logic and think about the implications of their choices in terms of ends and means schemes, balancing criteria between what is desirable and what is probable, preference hierarchies and possible scenarios. At this level of cognitive development, teenagers also become capable of using meta-reflection: it appears in interviews, as an analysis of their own discourse, as a self-critical judgment about their own feelings, their representations, their preferences, as a judgment which is both introspective and retrospective. Table 9.1 sums up the principal steps in three fields: the comparative reflection and the probabilistic reflection processes, and the types of future intentions.

When the conclusions of the comparative and probabilistic reflections do not coincide, a major inner tension may occur. It is the case for example when a teenager maintains the expression of an ambitious vocational choice, while being conscious that his/her school results do not offer him/her such possibilities. S/he then enters into a magical way of thinking: the belief that "something favourable will occur" enables him/her to overcome, temporarily at least, this contradiction. Sometimes this tension is absent. For example, in excellent students: with any achievement being possible, they can base their decision only on their probabilistic reflection and have as their only project – to get as far as possible – in the most ambitious studies. In most cases, it is still a realistic and school logic which is used; an accommodation to what seems probable, with its renouncement and rationalisations. Thus, with the eruption of the reality of school selection, dramatised in the French school system, most teenagers move from the *myths of their age group* to the *institutional norms* to which each one submits her/himself.

The accommodation to probable options is often made as a rationalisation (Dumora & Lannegrand-Willems, 1999): it consists in transforming the individual's motivations and representations when the circumstances lead this person to making a decision which doesn't match his/her initial motivations and representations. In other words, rationalisation is a motivation a posteriori for a career plan which has not been chosen. The rationalising process transforms the occupation- and self-representations in order to reduce cognitive dissonance, as underlined by Huteau. It enables, for example, some teenagers to rehabilitate educational or training courses which they rejected before and which now seem the only ones possible. By giving more value to the course of study (or training) they choose or have been

forced to choose, teenagers also enhance their own self-image and give sense to their school experience. This cognitive process is therefore beneficial to them; it is very present and active in teenagers making future plans. The risk is that some of them, those who do not have enough family support to envisage difficult and demanding courses of study, abandon their first intention too easily: for example in teenagers from low social background.

For most individuals the cognitive tools thus created are only truly available at the end of secondary school or even later. And there are great differences, not only in level but a real qualitative jump, between junior high-school- and senior high-school-students, as regards their logical and analytical capacities. This means that first career plans are asked – in many school systems, for example in France – too early, when the teenager is not yet ready to face them with full knowledge. The teenagers at the end of junior high-school sometimes mainly think in terms of images, magical thinking, tautological argumentation and with identifications to mythical occupational figures (Dumora, 1998). These observations enable us also to better understand the disillusionment with certain career education programs offered to junior high-school students. These interventions are based on the sequence exploration – crystallisation – specification – implementation, which is at the core of many career education programs, although it ignores teenagers' cognitive and psychological development. It rather seems to be the progression from imaged-reasoning to propositional- and functional-logic, and meta-cognition which determines the way they address the issue of their future plans.

For the teenager's school or career counsellor (or psychologist, teacher or educator), assisting adolescents in their career decision making means supporting them in the verbal elaboration of their representations and preferences. It means also clearly helping them to become more conscious of the influence of their own family and social positions (and family social life-path) on these representations and preferences and of the role played by psychological mechanisms such as stereotypes or rationalisations in their construction-deconstruction. In other words, the aim of such counselling interventions is to facilitate both a putting in words of, and a standing back, to look objectively at one's situation; that is to say: to stimulate teenagers' meta-reflection.

A Dynamic Model of Career Choice

For Van Esbroeck et al. (2005) the hierarchical and sequential order of matching tasks between self and the environment which was the basis of most 20th century theories and intervention programs do not correspond to today's career reality. In our post-modern societies, "a career is an unpredictable, lifelong evolution of small steps in reaction to environment, which need to be seen as part of a much broader framework than work alone" (p. 6). Indeed, today's changing labour market, the rapid transformation of occupations, the influence of contexts and the other social roles of the persons throughout the development of their career (Greenhaus,

Callanan, & Godshalk, 2000; Savickas, 2002) must be taken into account. Van Esbroeck and colleagues thus proposed a conceptual re-elaboration: the dynamic model of career choice development. They substituted the idea of a hierarchical and time related order in the career development tasks or stages by recurrent mini-cycles. These mini-cycles are composed of six career choice development activities: sensitisation, exploration of the self, environmental exploration, exploration of the relationship between self and the environment, specification and decision. These activities are, though slightly different close to the classical components of matching models (e.g., exploration of the self, environmental exploration) and of developmental tasks (e.g., sensitisation, or crystallisation stages). The activities are specified as (a) sensitisation (defined as a process of anticipation of the need for knowledge and activities); (b) knowledge about self and about environment; (c) the exploration of the relationship between self and the environment; it concerns the role of significant others, societal influences, economic factors, important events and choices; (d) the specification; it consists in narrowing down the possibility of choices by the analysis of information on hand about the self and the environment; and (e) decision making (making a choice and implementing it).

These activities do not occur in a precise order but are simultaneously present within each mini-cycle. The mini-cycle can start with any one of these activities. They are not independent but interconnected. This results in a situation that progress in one activity has a repercussion on the level of development of another activity. Though the activities are constantly present when a choice or a decision has to be made, the importance of each activity can change according to the subject's development stage and the content of the decision, but not its presence.

The career development is considered in this model as a dynamic and continuous process. Between the starting point (a situation in which the subject objectively needs to make a choice) and the destination point (the decision itself), the person can move within a real maze of activities and of possible pathways. Four types of loop can be identified: the starting loop that moves from the starting point into any of the six activities, the exploration loop that moves between the three types of exploration, the career activities loop between the six activities, the return loop between unsatisfactory decisions into any activity.

Lastly, Van Esbroeck and colleagues proposed the concept of development profile of career choice. This profile is the result of a constant confrontation of the person with decision making situations, of her/his past experiences and of her/his social and psychological maturity. It is operationally approached by an assessment of the level of involvement in each one of the six activities. This concept seems quite close to those of vocational/career maturity and of career adaptability proposed by Savickas (1994, 1997). According to the type of issue at stake – the context and the developmental profile – the person will preferably engage in one of the activities proposed and will follow his/her own development path within the maze of activities and possible pathways, leading naturally to an involvement in the other activities.

This model, with its concepts of activities rather than tasks, of mini-cycles rather than hierarchical stages, as well as that of systems, loops and inter-connections

rather than sequences, seems to get much closer to the description of individuals' psychological reality, which often is disorganised and changing. It may also constitute a much more relevant framework for understanding careers and life paths which are now often unpredictable and unstable and even "chaotic" to use Riverin-Simard's terminology (1996). One of the today's issues is indeed to know whether words like career or even life path with their linear connotations fit with the description of everyone's occupational life.

Even today, some career development theories appear to be based on an abstract logic: that of a one-dimensional link between future ends and today's means (for example training, education and actual choices are considered as means to achieve a certain self-actualisation and an occupational goal in the long term). The dynamic model indicates that this view is obsolete. Of course, the model uses traditional elements, but it organises them in a flexible way. In doing so, it does not constitute a program but rather a set of career counselling or education indicators for clients of any age group – teenagers, young adults and adults – and in any situation: school, looking for their first job, occupational transition, etc.

The Self-Construction Model

As opposed to previous models, the model presented by Guichard (2001, 2004, 2005) is not centred on career construction, but on self-construction. Here, vocational counselling (or education) is seen as essentially aiming at helping individuals in their self-construction, which implies – for a great majority of contemporary industrialised societies members – the involvement in occupational activities.

The Construction of Subjective Identity Forms

The model aims at articulating three types of analysis: sociological, cognitive and dynamic – semiotic. This synthesis mainly retains from the sociological analyses that self-construction occurs within structured social contexts (social fields – Bourdieu, 1984): the individuals act, interact and discuss within the social and linguistic contexts (family, school, neighbourhood, relationship systems, life accounts) which they find there, organised in a certain way when they are born. Through the mediation of their actions, interactions or language games, these individuals contribute to the evolution of these contexts from which they adapt some elements to themselves (in the sense of making them their own: more than simply being impregnated the elements are seized upon). Some of these elements play a major role in self-construction: they are categories which describe groups and various social communities, but situated within structured social spaces (for example: women, retired, Belgian, punk) and certain determined modes of relation to oneself (self-schemata, biographical forms). The social

world thus exists both as an external and internal world (as a field and as a habitus, to speak in Bourdieu's terms, 1967, 1984). The individual comes to know it in her/his own way because its knowledge particularly depends on the positions s/he occupies in the different social fields in which s/he interacts and communicates.

This cognitive elaboration gives place to the construction (among others) of *cognitive identity frames*. These frames, as other cognitive frames, are mental structures of attributes having default values (for example: in the cognitive frame "room", the default value for the attribute "wall" is four) (Barsalou, 1992, pp. 157–163). As "identity" frames, they refer to different groups or social categories. The default values of their attributes are mainly social stereotypes (for example: in the cognitive identity frame "engineer", the default value for the attribute "gender" is male). These cognitive identity frames are organised and form a multidimensional system of relations, in particular, of opposition and hierarchy. This system of cognitive identity frames constitutes the cognitive basis of the representation of the other, and of self-construction, in some identity forms. For example, an individual considers her/himself in a certain context as a "high-school student" and interacts and communicates as such, and perceives some other person as a "teacher". According to the contexts in which the individual interacts and communicates, s/he builds her/himself in distinct identity forms (for example: high-school student, girl, scientific, Jewish, swimmer). The identity forms in which the individual builds her/himself are said to be *subjective* in order to differentiate them from those in which s/he perceives the other. Indeed, when an individual constructs her/himself within a particular identity form, s/he appropriates it to her/himself, s/he "*identizes*" her/himself (Tap, 1980): s/he gives certain specific values to the attributes of the underlying cognitive frame (for example, the individual does not think of her/himself as an ordinary "student" but as a "successful student in computer science"). The individual identity thus seems to be constituted by the evolving system of subjective identity forms in which the individual constructs her/himself. Among these forms, those in which an adolescent or young-adult anticipates her/himself are of major importance as regards the formation of her/his intentions for her/his own future (see above: §1.2).

The dynamic of these processes seems to originate in the tensions and in determined modes of articulation of two forms of reflexivity, constitutive of the self. The reflexivity "I – me", is based on the pre-linguistic processes of the looking-glass phase during which self-anticipation in this picture of the mirror – in which what will become the "I" appears as a completed whole – informs the present, that is to say structures it from the point of view of this anticipated unity (Lacan, 1977). This form of reflexivity is constitutive of the prototype of identification links to others, that is to say the self-anticipation in some characteristics of the other which fascinate the individual and in which s/he dreams of becoming her/himself. A boy for example may say: " 'I' can imagine 'myself' as a footballer like Zidane", in other words: " 'I' can imagine 'myself' becoming this image which 'I' have built 'myself' of Zidane and which informs and structures my present: I play football like him, I wear the same clothes, etc". This identification process seems to have as a corollary and complement, the rejection of the representations

of some others, considered as being the opposite. This first form of reflexivity is articulated with a second: that of the "I – you – s/he". The latter originates in interactions with others and language games (Harré, 1984) in which the child relates to the people who mother her/him during affective symbiosis. During these *complementation* activities (in which both individuals function as one person), the child discovers her/himself as a point of view amongst others (that is to say as a member of a society of persons), as being able to survive only if relating to these other persons and as being able to articulate in her/his inner-self as the others do (that is what defines them as a person), the three possible positions of human discourse: I, you, s/he (Jacques, 1991). This *trinity reflexivity* leads to the ethical interrogation which necessarily accompanies the self-construction: what consequence implies this essential link to the other (the other as a person, not as an identification figure) which constitutes myself as a human being? How can I live well, in fair institutions, with others?

The Importance of School Identity Forms

If in today's industrialised societies almost every adolescent is a student, they are not exclusively that. They also build themselves within other identity forms related to the other contexts in which they interact: sports, associations, leisure, religion, family interactions, friendship, and love. However, for most teenagers, school experience plays a central role in their self-construction: it takes a large part of their time, it requires many activities such as homework; it is an intense interaction space with peer groups, teachers and educators; it takes place in an institutional framework having its own rules, using norms and numerous evaluations. The various school subjects constitute in themselves or by identification – or counter-identification – with the teacher, opportunities of identity reflection (cf. Rodriguez-Tomé & Bariaud, 1987, in particular p. 212). The teachers also influence the student's self-construction by evaluating him/her. It is known for many years (Gilly, Lacour, & Meyer, 1972; Meyer, 1989) to what extent these evaluations influence teenagers' self-representation and play a fundamental role in the formation of the intentions for their future (Guichard, 1993). School experience thus strongly structures youth intentions for their future as was also noticed by Huteau and by Dumora (2000): adolescents thus tend to think about their future in terms of probabilistic reflection (what could be my best wish according to my actual school results?). Furthermore, the representative links they establish between themselves and the occupations they consider for their future, puts into play various dimensions which were constituted during their present school experience (for example: "I'm good at languages", so "I could find a profession linked to languages"). In a slightly exaggerated way, one could therefore say that most secondary school students' representations of the future are based on the link they make between a present school identity form and an anticipated occupational identity form, which sometimes is quite vague and mostly imagined, in reference to that present school identity form. The future is seen through the filter of their present school experience: their

other experiences, other activities (when they have some), in other words their other present identity forms, are generally put aside or even ignored in this self-anticipation process.

A Core Purpose for Vocational Counselling Interventions with Young People: Helping Them Get Their Major Life Bearings

Within a constructivist framework where identity forms are at the centre of the model, vocational interventions as counselling and education fundamentally aim at helping the individuals in their self-construction. These interventions should focus on the system of subjective identity forms within which the persons build themselves and on the underlying cognitive frames: Their objective is to help the clients formulate in their own words and map out their identity forms system.

Such interventions capitalise also on the other models previously depicted. These identity forms (and their underlying cognitive frames) constitute indeed representations of one-self in different – actual or anticipated – contexts. Mapping out this system implies that the cognitive abilities described by Dumora (comparative and probabilistic reflections) are formed. This mapping out occurs during these recurrent mini cycles described by Van Esbroeck and displays the different vocational activities that he set apart: two of them – knowledge about self and exploring the relationship between self and the environment – being here of major importance.

It is mainly in relation to the activities, interactions and dialogues implied by each of the composing forms that this system can be formulated. This could be done by focusing on present and anticipated subjective identity forms and by defining to which extent they are desired, probable or rejected. The persons will sometimes during this process discover dissonances between their expectations and their present activities.

Moreover, the purpose is to help the client firstly to determine the identity forms in which s/he wishes to build her/himself or those s/he would like to become more important than others in her/his identity forms system, and secondly to enable her/him to identify activities, interactions and dialogues which could enable her/him to construct her/himself by anticipation in such forms. Furthermore, in post-modern societies in which the individual does not act within a given and undisputed ethos of action anymore (Giddens, 1991), but where the landmarks are much more blurred (and where at the same time, individual and collective risks are much greater – Beck, 1992), this reflection implies that the individual engages in some ethical considerations. Such considerations encompass a reflection lead by the individual on the meaning of his/her choices, firstly with regards to the others whom s/he cares for, but also more fundamentally to others in general: for humanity in general. To say, as did Charles Taylor, the issue is that of drawing a moral map: "the drawing of a moral map puts us squarely in the domain of the subject-referring, since this touches quintessentially on the life of the subject *qua* subject. It is in fact an attempt to give shape to our experience" (Taylor, 1985, p. 67).

As shown by the weight of school experience, a set of elements seems to play a major role in self-representations and, correlatively in youths' anticipations of their future: their activities related to interactions and the retroactions to which they give rise. But some teenagers invest more than others in activities out of school and for some of them, particularly in collective activities linked to charity, social, cultural or political projects. The consequences of such involvements in terms of work and employment are very positive if we consider the examples given – in interviews – by employees having many years experience (Guichard, 1991): their transition to work and their following career were facilitated.

Many studies (in particular in the framework of the Albert Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, or Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of human development) bring clarifications to the processes at work. Firstly, the activities (interactions and retroactions) originate the development of certain actual competences (knowledge, know-how, how to be, etc.), attitudes and expectations often different from those elaborated in school context. They also lead to the formation of self-efficacy beliefs in various domains (interactions, interlocutions and retroactions thus play a major role). Moreover, they lead to a diversification and a better articulation of self-representations: according to her/his activity and her/his interactions (and interlocutions) in a greater number of contexts, the adolescent or young-adult elaborates various dimensions of self-representations, each one being linked to some identity forms in which s/he builds her/himself in these occasions. Last but not least, they give place to numerous "mesosystemic" interrelations – which originate "transition roles" – which we assume they stimulate, among other things, reflection about oneself (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 212).

Human and Social Goals and Ends of Vocational Interventions

Such observations lead one to suggest that present, potential and future activities should be placed at the core of vocational interventions – counselling or education – aimed at youth. In this paragraph, "vocational intervention" is used as an equivalent to "career intervention" for one main reason: vocation is "broader" than career. This term refers – according to Webster's dictionary – to a "strong inclination to a particular state of course of action" and fits with the idea of a meaningful self-construction. These interventions' main goals could be stated as follows: help them (a) to spot the activities they would like to find in their future occupations, (b) to analyse their present situation as regards their activities (interactions and interlocutions) as well as their self-efficacy beliefs and self-representations which are linked to these activities and (c) to get more involved in certain types of activities, as well as in new activities and new contexts, in order to develop new competencies, self-efficacy beliefs and self-representations dimensions related to the occupational activities which attract them today.

While taking the studies presented above into account, this goal is not directly deducible from them. Indeed, it is always in reference to social and human ends that

a social intervention goal can be defined. The end retained here corresponds to a general view, admitted in today's western societies. It can be stated in the following way: vocational interventions (counselling or education) for teenagers first aim at preparing them to take their decision as regards the kind of study or training they will follow and to cope with their transition to work and all the following ones which will mark their occupational life. This end now corresponds to a sort of minimal consensus with regards to these interventions. This is why it was chosen here.

However, other ends could be proposed. Among these, the ethical one – evoked in this chapter conclusion – is more ambitious. Indeed, it conjugates the previous minimal intention with that of an involvement in a reflection about the principles of a good and fair life, in particular an occupational one.

Let us be more precise about the core goal which has just been formulated. Firstly, it has been stated in terms of activities not in terms of occupation, job or career. Indeed, nowadays in our western societies, jobs and occupations evolve quickly: their activities change very rapidly. Furthermore, many workers do not have a real trade: they have an employment for which they have rapidly been trained. Furthermore, for a growing number of persons, the succession of jobs (or periods of unemployment, training) do not correspond to a "career", but rather to a "chaos" as Danielle Riverin-Simard (1996) wrote. In this unstable occupational and career context (and of growing social insecurity), a specific element appears nevertheless to remain stable: the link (in both ways) between activities and "competencies". It is thus around this issue that vocational interventions can be organised.

Secondly, is it necessary to recall – in particular some work of sociologists such as Richard Sennett (1998) in mind – to what extent this unstable universe can be harmful for the individual? This is the reason why today's vocational interventions cannot have as a unique goal the issue of activities and competencies. Indeed the human-being expects from her/his activities in the different areas of her/his life that they have a meaning for her/him, whose life unfolds in relation to others. As Philippe Malrieu highlighted it (2003, p. 20), the human person thus continuously carries out a reflection on her/his deeds – which s/he compares to those of others in order to elaborate a life perspective unifying – according to a certain intention – her/his different experiences and past, present and anticipated activities. Anthony Giddens (1991) underlined to what extent in contemporary industrialised societies these reflexive processes are all the more exacerbated as the traditional bearings (a unified space and time, an established religion, solid ideological systems, etc.) are shaken and blurred. One can thus consider, with Bill Law (1981), that the development of a "sense of self" – understood as this capacity of a continuous self-synthesis, in a projecting of oneself into the future, and of a putting one's own different experiences into a certain perspective – constitutes a major stake for contemporary vocational interventions. Consequently, the core goal previously mentioned must be clarified in a second way: the focusing on occupational activities does not lead to neglect what is at stake: a meaningful self-construction. Moreover, let us stress that, in the framework of the development of a reflection on the ethical dimension of self-construction – cf. this chapter conclusion – an emphasis is also put on the "care for the other": "the sense of the other's self" is then seen as a major element of the "sense of self".

The framework which has just been presented gives the possibility of elaborating a methodology for career development interventions. Only two examples will be given here (focused – in order to simplify the presentation – on the issue of links between occupational activities and competencies, while neglecting correlatively what is at stake in the "sense of self" and in "caring for the other"). The first one relates to career education and the second to counselling.

DAPP (Découverte des Activités Professionnelles et Projets Personnels – *Discovery of Occupational Activities and Personal Plans*), DAPPI (Découverte des Activités Professionnelles, Projets Personnels et Insertion – *Discovery of Occupational Activities, Personal Plans, Work and Social Inclusions*), DAPPT (Découverte des Activités Professionnelles et Projets Personnels: Enseignement Technique et Nouvelles Technologies – *Discovery of Occupational Activities and Personal Plans: Technological Training and New Technologies*) (Guichard, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1991) are career education courses which can be carried out over 3 or 4 half-days. DAPP is meant for senior high-school or college students, DAPPI for high-school students having difficulties at school or dropouts and DAPPT for students in vocational or technical schools. At first these activities aim (a) at helping them become more conscious of their stereotyped vision of occupations, (b) to discover the diversity of activities which constitute an occupation and (c) to perceive the importance of different life experiences which matter (in different ways: competencies or interests development, constitution of a network of friends, meeting key figures) in the transition to work and subsequent ones. The activities proposed looks like games. First, trainees, on the one hand, reconstitute occupations starting from the occupational activities which constitute them and, on the other hand, the life paths of the actual incumbents in these jobs (all the material is based on interviews carried out with persons doing these jobs). In a second part, participants focus on each one's own present situation. Each of them selects some occupational activities which s/he would like to have in the future. S/he also takes stock of his/her actual situation as regards her/his activities, self-efficacy beliefs, resources or attitudes in three different contexts of her/his present life: school, family and extracurricular activities (leisure, work experiences, holidays). The third part aims at stimulating each participant to engage in present activities related to her/his anticipations. Each of them receives – and discusses – propositions made to her/him by two other participants as regards "training periods, odd jobs, work experiences, documentation: personal, leisure, holidays, school activities in which you could engage tomorrow in order to increase your chances of obtaining this future occupational activity in which you are interested". The last part is used to integrate the previous suggestions and reflections into each one's present life (for example: choice of studies, training period, involvement in school work). These courses gave place to several evaluations (Guichard, 1992; Guichard & Falbierski, 2003). These studies (using a quasi experimental design including a control group) showed that the beneficiaries of these programs have a more articulated vision of occupations as well as of the ways which lead to occupational inclusion. They also benefit from a "dynamic" and thus engage in active conducts (information search, training periods, reflection about their career plan, new activities, etc.).

Career counselling interviews with high-school and college students (or dropouts) can also be conceived in a similar perspective. They do not differ – in their general principles and their structure – as those used in the field of career counselling (for example: Gysbers, Heppner, & Johnston, 2003). They start with a period of construction of a working alliance. Then follows a period of analysis and reflection carried out by the client. It ends by a personal synthesis and an action plan (and here more specifically: involvement in activities related to the occupational activities which s/he wishes for her/his future).

Only the client analysis and reflection phase concerning her/his present, potential and future activities and resources will be presented here. The client then indicates the contexts which are important to her/him in her/his present life and classifies them in a certain order: from "the one which could play the most important part in your future transition to work" to "the one which would play the least important part". The work then consists in exploring each of these main contexts in terms of activities, competencies, self-efficacy beliefs, self-representation dimensions and, more generally, "resources and assets for her/his future". In this phase, the dialogue between the counsellor and the client play an important part. The former's objective is that, through this dialogue, the client stands back to analyse her/his own experience in order to shape it and describe it in terms of competencies, self-efficacy beliefs and self-representation dimensions (cf. Clot & Prot, 2003; Diallo & Clot, 2003). This standing back and shaping through a putting in words of one's own experience requires a lot of time and this phase may be carried out over several meetings. The following phase focuses on the occupational activities – and not on occupations or careers – which the client can imagine her/himself doing. Here again, dialogue is essential. The counsellor can sometimes propose an interest questionnaire – or lists of occupational activities – in order to help the person in selecting those which interest her/him. The client is then asked to re-read and re-interpret his/her present situation with regard to his/her anticipations and imagine certain possible transformations: "starting from the occupational activity which interests you most, we are going to examine everything – in each context which you have explored – that can increase your chances of attaining this goal. We will look for activities – in which you could enrol – that could increase your chances of having access to this occupational activity". The career counselling interview ends by an elaboration of the action plan which precisely defines the terms of the person's involvement into such or such activity, relating this involvement to all his/her other life experiences. (It is advised to plan future meetings during which the client takes stock of his/her actual experiences and, if necessary, redefines activities which interest her/him.)

Conclusion: The Ethical Dimension of Career Development Interventions

As it was previously stressed several times in this chapter, occupational activity plays a central part in the life – and thereby in identity structure – of individuals in contemporary industrialised societies. This is probably why the object of career

counselling psychology – as well as vocational interventions – can sometimes come down to issues related to study courses, occupation, inclusion, career and employment decision making. This gives the impression that getting one's major life bearings would consist merely of issues related to school and work. However, what occurs in one context of life (e.g., occupational life) always interacts with what happens in other fields (as for example family roles and family life). The idea is supported by Malrieu (2003) who was mentioned before but other authors could be named as well (Baubion-Broye, 1998; Bronnfenbrenner, 1979; Curie & Hajjar, 1987; Dupuy, 1998; Super, 1980; Vondracek, Lerner, & Schulenberg, 1986). For a more detailed synthesis see Guichard and Huteau (2006). These links – and tensions – between contexts (or "activities systems" or "mesosystem"), and the adjustments which they require from the individuals play a major part in self-construction which the authors call, depending on the case: "development", "personalisation", "identisation", "subjectivation". Consequently, the individuals issues related to school and work cannot be separated from that of self-construction and, fundamentally, in our societies, career development interventions aim at self-construction.

A key question is, however, on how the concept of "self-construction" must be understood. The main tendency today – because of the importance of the individualistic societal model – is to assimilate self-construction to self-fulfilment, the latter being defined in terms of personal growth (Häyrynen, 1995). In this perspective, the aim of career development interventions would be to foster the development of a reflexive activity in individuals in order to help them find a necessary balance between their different activity systems (the different areas of their existence, their diverse subjective identity forms) and live out the potentialities which best seem to correspond to what they wish to become. Such a point of view can be qualified as ego-centred in the sense that it considers the person according to one dimension only: his/her objective of individual happiness.

This ego-centred view does not resist analysis for three types of reasons:

1. Firstly, because the individual who carries out a reflection on his/her own personal growth, necessarily meets "the other". Of course, most of the time, this concerns an other who is closely related to the person. That is the case when s/he tackles issues such as: what would be the consequences of such and such occupational involvement on my personal life (e.g., on my future married life), for my family (my parents, my children, etc.), for my friends, etc.?

2. Secondly, because today's work organisation and occupational paths do not always give the person the possibility of investing activities in which s/he can grow as a person. This is known since Henry Ford and the debates of that time on human work. But nowadays the situation is even harder (cf. Sennett, 1998). The worker asks her/himself: how can I adapt to such working or life conditions? Sometimes, this interrogation remains implicit and comes out differently. For example, in the shape of "work suffering" (Dejours, 1998) which sometimes leads either to occupational diseases (some of which – for example: musculoskeletal problems – are increasing considerably), or to other kinds of diseases (a recent study shows that "almost 10% of cancers in France have an occupational

origin", *Le Monde*, 23 March 2006, p. 7) or to industrial accidents (the statistics of which show that the more the individual lives in insecure conditions, the more often accidents occur – Cingolani, 2005).

3. Lastly, because there is a growing anxiety concerning the short and long term consequences of our technological power and ways of life: there is an anxiety linked to ecological or technical risks which leads the contemporary individual to question her/his responsibility in maintaining a genuine human life on earth (Jonas, 1985).

These three factors lead to the other, the contemporary western society individual who thinks about her/his personal growth. These others are first of all closely related people (family, friends, colleagues). The individual notices that s/he cannot think about her/his self-fulfilment – understood at first as personal growth – without taking the other into account: how can it be possible to conciliate this other's personal growth – the other who is important to her/him – with one's own personal growth? Might what s/he chooses for her/himself be harmful to this other person's growth (or to that of more distant persons)? Reciprocally: wouldn't certain decisions or conducts of the other – even of others s/he does not know – be hazardous to her/his own self-fulfilment? For example – to mention an issue addressed by Muirhead (2004) – do the working and career conditions that bear upon him/her leave space for self-fulfilment? Are these conditions "such they offer opportunities for autonomy, relatedness, and competence?" (Blustein, 2006, p. 151).

By such a questioning the individual gets closer to ethical analyses. Indeed, according to Paul Ricoeur, ethics can be defined as an intention which, "at its deepest level, is articulated in a triad in which the self, the close other and distant other are equally honored: to live well, with and for the others, in fair institutions" (Ricoeur, 2004; Ricoeur had carefully discussed this assertion in chapter 7 of his book *Oneself as another*, Ricoeur, 1992). Indeed, the questioning presented above (that of the "prototypical" individual of our societies who intends to direct her/his life in reference to her/his own personal growth) truly reflect the problem of living well with the others. In this aspect it is the beginning of an ethical reflection. However, they are only first steps, because a true ethical reflection – if we follow Ricoeur – necessarily leads to tackling the issue of "living together". This "living together" is more than just "living with the others". It is a "living for the other". Furthermore, Ricoeur underlined that "living with and for the other" implies fair institutions. Consequently, a true ethical reflection leads the individual to deeper questionings than those tackled up to now, in particular questionings focused on principles that constitute a "good life" or a "fair life".

In a more concrete sense, this means, for example, that a student who thinks about her/his occupational and personal future, in most cases, does not consider issues such as: what are the short term, middle term and long term consequences for humanity (concerning water resources, pollution, public health, importance of technological risks) of the development of occupational activities as those in which I wish to engage? What are the consequences for some people (and maybe for myself) – in terms of human development, industrial injuries or diseases – of

present work organisation forms and global employment distribution mode? How to improve this situation? How could I contribute to such an enhancement? Or even more simply: may I embark on an occupational activity which might have harmful effects on others (for example: promoting tobacco or alcohol consumption; organising work and employment in such a way that it produces premature aging of the workers). And if so, under what conditions may I?

The development of such a reflection is a complex task. It is probably part of a "post-conventional stage" of moral development as described by Lawrence Kohlberg (1984). And it is not sure that it immediately becomes accessible to all teenagers. However, shouldn't careers interventions designed to this population aim at – among other goals – helping them begin such a reflection? Indeed, nowadays, the working and employment situation seem particularly difficult: on a global scale, the number of unemployed is considerable and the number of those having degrading working conditions – or a job which only just enables them to survive – is impressive. Thus, Juan Somavia, Director of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) – in his inaugural address to the 89th session of the Work International Conference which was held, June 5th, 2001 – denounced the lack of "decent jobs" in the world (Buhrer, 2001). According to the ILO, there was then a one billion deficit of "decent jobs" throughout the world. In wealthy countries insecure employment and life conditions increase considerably (Palmade, 2003). The trend appears to be the same as regards technological, ecological and public health risks (Beck, 1992). In reaction to this state of affairs, the summit of Lisbon in 2000 gave Europe an objective of "sustainable" growth, respectful of environment, social well-being and the values Europe defends. Indeed, as Dominique Bé – one of the members of the European Commission – underlined it (*Le Monde Economie*, 14 March 2006, p. IV), "employees, consumers, investors have the possibility of influencing companies' practices by their own behaviour". Couldn't a youth sensitised to the aforementioned ethical questioning during career development interventions be a means of reaching the goal fixed by the European Union?

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