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Social work and social recognition: social workers of foreign origin
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Abstract
This article sets out research about people of foreign origin choosing social professions that was carried out some years ago. I try to show up how social work is also at stake in recognition, not only about its clients, but about itself. At that time I was putting emphasis on the sociology of interaction. I reviewed this research for my university habilitation around the theory of recognition (Jovelin 2010). In the first part, I try to show the reasons why young people of foreign origin choose social professions, and in the second part, I relate this approach to the theory of recognition.

Keywords
Social work, social workers, social professions, socio-demographic caracteristics

Introduction

I. Social workers of foreign origin in fight for recognition

My thesis in January 1998 was the beginning of my research with field surveys within my theoretical approach. Choosing this subject brought me to my original field of research which is immigration. This thesis was connecting a research about immigration with research concerning social work by asking this question: How can you sociologically analyse the facts that drive people of foreign origin to turn towards social professions?

There are two central hypotheses:
-1. Choosing social professions for people of foreign origin is vocational because of the similarity between their original social environment and those social workers assist.
-2. Considering the economic situation related to the increase of unemployment, the choice of social work is not actually a vocation, but a downwardly mobile workof the people of foreign origin (as well as people of French origin[1]). In fact the choice of social work by people of

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[1] I define people of French origin as people that descend from two parents with French nationality.

foreign origin is more a choice by default than by vocation. But beyond having to make a 'choice' by default, it is also a possibility of social recognition.

Social professions such as education have to be considered as professions of descent today that allow their agents to adjust to an undesired situation of suffering (Jovelin, 1999, 2000).

From a theoretical point of view in this piece of work, the actor is considered as a privileged informer, as mirror of his/her time and culture, in this thesis. I emphasised the theories of interaction that privilege the way social actors define themselves by their environment (Becker, 1985, p. 229). These empirically based theories insist on the observation of situations (Chapoulie, 1984) that allow exposing some ignored aspects of the social reality, such as the set of processes that are involved in individuals constructions about their actions. Without doubt, one's status and the roles that go with it condition integration into social structures. So, choosing a profession and working means acquiring a status, means existing in a certain way, means being recognized by others in certain way. In this work I did not present « *une vision déformée de la réalitémais la réalitédanslaquelleétaientengagées les personnes (* quej'ai *)étudiées, la réalitéqu'elles se sontcréées en donnant un sens à leurexpérience, et par référence à laquelle, ellesagissaient* », [a biased vision of reality, but the reality of the people I studied, and their reality that they created by giving sense to their experiences in which they are acting; KF], as understood by H. Becker (1985, p. 196).

It is this approach that allows me to understand the process of professionalisation of social workers of foreign origin. You can see that the questions of social recognition, as explored in Axel Honneth's approaches today, were far off my preoccupation, even if the analysis shows clearly that social workers of foreign origin were fighting for recognition (Jovelin, 1999).

To make this approach intelligible, I use the approach of Hughes who tried to understand the notion of career by replacing the question « *est-cequetel métier estune profession?* » [isthis job a profession?; KF] by a fundamental question:« *Dans quelles circonstances les membres d'un métier essaient-ils de transformer celui-ci en profession et quelles étapes franchissent-ils pour se rapprocher du modèle valorisé de la profession ?* » [Under which circumstances do the workers in a job try to transform it into a profession, and which steps do they take to get to the valued model of profession?; KF] (Hughes, 1958, p. 45).

The whole social sector is questioned across these themes, analysed through a sociological analysis of professional groups, emphasising a process that is led by individuals, concentrating on the meanings they give to their choice of profession. Why did workers of foreign origin choose social professions instead of others? Under which circumstances did those who considered their work as an occupation turn it into a profession? To understand this conversion, I examined the occupations as well as the people that apply to these occupations, specifically young people of foreign origin in their context. At this point I used the theoretical approach of the school of Chicago, which associates the world of work to the mechanisms of socialization. Forsociologists of thisschool, thesetwo are tightlylinked; they talk of new approachesto qualification and competences by redefiningthem as « *une articulation entre trajectoire probable et système occupationnel, c'est-à-dire entre un système d'attentes légitimes (à quoi puis-je prétendre étant donné ce que je sais et ce que j'ai fait auparavant?)*

et un système d'opportunités (que puis-je espérer étant donné l'évolution probable des positions professionnelles?) » [an articulation between possible paths and the occupational system, which means between a system of legitim hope (what can I claim to know and having done before?) and a system of opportunities (what professional evolution can I hope for?); KF] (Tripier, 1987, cité par Dubar, 1991). These reflections are in the centre of the collected discourses of young people of foreign origin: « _Depuisque je suis né, le seulboulotque je sais faire, c'estcelui-ci. Avec le niveauquej'ai de toutefaçon, je n'irai pas loin »_ [Since I was born, this is the only job I knowhow to do. Anyway, I won't get far with the educationlevel I have; KF] (TSOE) (Jovelin, 1999, 1998). You can connect this to the analyses of the school of Chicago who talked about the possible paths of people, and the occupational system. You can see parallels concerning the socialization in a profession between professional boxers in Chicago and the professionalisation of social workers of foreign origin. The profession seemed to be a kind of an ideal to the eyes of the young people from the neighbourhoods. The recruiting of the future professionals took place among the young people of the neighbourhood who liked to fight and admired this work. As Demarez underlines: « _si la culture du boxeurprofessionnelétaitfaite des techniques, d'illusions, d'aspirations et de rôlesbiendéfinisquechacund'euxassimilait et qui les motivait »_ [if the professional boxer's culture is made by technologies, illusions and hope and well- defined roles that each of them identified with and was motivated by; KF] (Demarez, 1986, p. 163), those of some of the social workers of foreign origin, specifically those from the neighbourhoods, were realised in the same way.

In this thesis the sample includes 54 people that work in their original neighbourhood. These young neighbourhood leaders are building up a professional identity across different roles they have to integrate practical knowledge « _issusdirectement de l'expérience du travail, non reliés_(dans un premier temps) _à des savoirsthéoriques »_ (Dubar, 1991, p. 261) [arising directly from work experience,and not from theoretical knowledge in the fist instance; KF] « _qui s'interprète à partir des modes d'articulation entre transaction objective et transaction subjective, comme les résultats de compromisintérieurs entre uneidentitéhéritée et uneidentitéviséemaisaussi de négociationsextérieures entre identitéattribuée par autrui et identitéincorporée par soi »_ [that is explained by the methods of articulation between objective transaction and subjective transaction, such as the results of inner compromises between aninherited identity and an aimed-for identity, but also of outside negotiation between an identity accredited by others and an integral identity; KF] (Dubar, 1991, p. 257). The career of those leaders shows an early socialisation in social work (Jovelin, 1999). This pushes them to say that finally, « _ilsétaientfaits pour le travail social »_ [they were made for being social workers; KF]. Whatever are their biographical accidents, in contrast to other people the choice of social work is here vocational for the leaders, because they were born with social work, as the boxers of Chicago are born with boxing not knowing any other type of professional activity. As from their young age there has been aninternalisation of a professional destiny, of social work, as a choice that I defined from what they say is a result of a vocation.

1. Methodology and socio-demographic caracteristics

This thesis concentrated essentially on educational professions, animation and assistance. Objectively it deals with people of foreign origin coming from the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa. After identifying the research population, I visited several social associations in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais (northern protection, association of prevention clubs, public establishment of care and adaption, northern society of protection and reinsertion, association le Gîte, schools for social formation, etc.). I created the sample out of these investigations. Concerning the methodology, my approach associated an ensemble of quantitative and qualitative methods. I made a questionnaire around the biographical paths of social workers of foreign origin that I filled in with them or sent them by mail. I received 121 questionnaires from social workers of foreign origin (TSOE) (71 men, 49 women) and 133 from social workers of French origin (TSFO). I added 27 semi-directive interviews (15 men and 12 women) to the TSOE.

Concerning the sociological profiles, more than half of the questioned TSOEs were aged between 20 and 35, but the age varied between 20 and 55. Within this population there were 103 people originally from Maghreb and 17 originally from sub-Saharan Africa (and one without response). 62,5% were born in France and 35,5% were born abroad. 74,4% have French nationality, and 25,6% kept their primal nationality. Concerning the family situation, 60,3% told that they were single, 28,1% married, 5,8% divorced and the same percentage for those who are live in a relationship. The analysis of the parent's educational level showed that 77,7% of fathers did not have any diploma, as did 81,8% of mothers. The parents had a low educational level. 94 fathers of TSOEs had no diploma, 51 are not able to read. This number is even higher when it comes to women, because 81, i.e. 66,9%, are in the same situation. The TSOEs' parents are also at the bottom of the ladder of the French society, where 60,3% are qualified workers, whereas there is none within the TSFO and 78,5% of women are not active in this way. In total, 80,1% of the fathers are workers.

Concerning the educational level, the results of the research show that there is a certain dispersion of levels from CEP (certificate of primary education) to university. There were 45,5% who had passed the « baccalaureat » [A-level; KF] and 20% obtained the CAP (certificate of professional aptitude) or the BEP (diploma of professional studies). Having to repeat grades took place especially in primary (23%), secondary school (46%) and during superior studies (33%). There are many reasons for these failures: lack of interest at school, family problems, lack of support at home etc. To be more precise, the « lack of school support » could be seen to reflect more on the schools than on the foreign origin. The variable « migrant », « the diagnosis of a handicap due to being a foreigner », does not explain in a sufficient way the inequality in scholastic success of children of foreign origin. In terms of scholastic orientation, 51 people have been oriented towards sectors that would have not been of their preferences. The choice of orientation that is often associated with ethnic origin is questioned than accepted by the researchers. This draws us back to the way decisions about orientations are made. When the child is too weak concerning school, families eschew difficult scholastic orientations. When the pupil is average, there is an auto-selection versus social origin. In addition, national education is also selective about pupils from the working-class and has a tendency to reproduce injustices that already existed in their origins.

2. Choosing social professions

To find out the reasons for choosing social professions, I asked the participants to choose 3 answers in the questionnaire out of 7 items: *« professional interest, access to university, failure in previous studies, unemployment, friend's counsel, parent's counsel, militancy, desire to help others, other »* (Jovelin, 1999, p. 102).

Regarding the answers, one item was predominant, desire to help others, in 2/3 cases of TSOE (66,7%) and of TSFO (68,5%), showing the desire in the centre of a social worker's mission. To this there is added failure in previous studies and unemployment(cfrJovelin, 1999, chap. V). Choosing the item « desire to help » is influenced by the nature of social professions. Students that choose to become a teacher or a social worker refer to values oriented towards people, whereas people that turned to business obtrude other forms of recompense, such as getting rich (Rosenberg, 1978). However the reasons that are appealed to: « desire to help, professional interest, militancy, parent's or friend's counsel », it is difficult to put aside the choice according to a « professional descent » bonded with biographical accidents, as I could see in this research. I call back that one of the thesis' hypothesis is that social professions are to be seen as descent, allowing social gents to adjust «an undesired situation of suffering ». Indeed several people oriented towards social work after a long period of unemployment and several repeated courses in university. Starting from this review, I created the typology « biographical accident ». As a biographical accident I do understand all the small or big happenings that have impact on the peoples' professional paths: failure in the school leaving examination, repeating classes in university, enforced redundancy, unemployment, and that oblige the individuals to alter their path. The decision to alter one's path such as becoming social worker is, as already told by Claude Dubar in his thesis of 1970, always the « *le terme d'un processus et non le résultat d'un choix unique* » [process and not the result of a unique choice; KF] (p. 141). Choosing a profession is the conjunction of several elements that I tried to spot along the reconstitution of essential elements that competed in determination of choosing a profession. These social elements are: the parent's situation, the scholastic evolution, the degree of participation in social life, previous jobs. To comprehend these elements, I reconstituted the biographical paths of the investigated and also looked for elements of objectivisation that social workers give to the choice of their profession. Across this sociological analysis, I constructed a typology of those with biographical accident: 77% of the TSOE and 44% TSFOE, spread in three categories, *enduring repeaters, or downgraded in university, roving professionals and the over-qualified*, as I will present them in the following.

1.-*Enduring repeaters, or downgraded in university*: there are 33% of TSFO, and 31 % TSOE. Their scholastic and professional ambitions are in contradiction. It is the „downgraded in university" that changed their way because they were forced to by scholastic failure. Of course all those who know failure, did not necessarily state their choice as down to this. Thus only 17 out of 46 repeaters in secondary school explained their orientation towards the social sector with their scholastic failure. And out of 33 repeaters during the first two years in university, I only found 26. I specify that the variable „failure in studies" was an incidence in the cycle of university and in a smaller number in secondary school. Here you have to understand failure as repeating classes.

2. R*oving professionala*: I met several « downgraded professionals » that could never fix to an employment: people economically downgaded that find themselves in difficulties. It is a choice commanded by unemployment. Entering into social work is in fact unemployment to them. Meeting the new profession depended essentially on the economic situation. The TSOE (30%) were a larger group than the TSFO (19%) saying that they chose social professions because of unemployment. Looking at the former professions the difficulties of integration in the social sector can be confirmed, 29% of TSOE have been workers before, as well as 12% of TSFO. Whatever, their hopes have been spontaneously adapted to the 'owned' capital (economical, social and symbolic), what means that certain social workers "*n'obtiennentrienqu'ilsn'aientraisonnablementvoulu et ne veulentraisonnablementquecequ'ilspeuventobtenir*" [don't get what they reasonably wanted and don't want what they could get; KF] (Accordo, 1991, pp. 134-135). You can believe in a professional descent, but the declared interest in these professions is also to be found in their childhood, the experience of each of the declared examples of situations where the participants'« past me » is irrupting with the « present me », because the circumstances conspire to do so (Accordo, p.94). It is the capital that actors and institutions have at their disposal at a certain time of their existence that command different strategies of investment in the field (Bourdieu, 1980): *« .... Disons qu'au départ, comme j'avais fait psycho et que cela n'a pas marché, je me suis dit: 'Il me faut un domaine où je puisse m'exprimer', et je pensais que le social et la psycho allaient très bien ensemble pour moi. Je me suis retrouvée dans une situation où, après avoir fait plusieurs petits boulots de secrétariat, opératrice de saisie, comptable pendant plusieurs années en C.D.D. par l'Intermédiaire de Manpower de 1984 à 1989, je n'avais plus droit aux Assedic et je suis devenue RMIste...dont j'ai refusé le statut parce que j'avais honte de ce statut d'assistée... J'ai rencontré un Inspecteur qui m'a demandé ce que je voulais faire. J'ai dit que je ne voulais pas dépendre de l'État et j'ai demandé des pistes de bénévolat... J'ai pris tout de suite l'aide aux devoirs. Je suis devenue animatrice. Ça fait maintenant 4 ans. J'ai fait du bénévolat jusque mars 1992. J'ai fait deux années de C.E.S.* (contrat emploi solidarité*). J'ai été embauchée en 1992 à temps partiel. Aujourd'hui, sache que mon D.U.T.* (diplôme universitaire de technologie) *n'est pas pris en charge ... »*[2](animatrice, 31 ans) [Let's say that in the beginning I was studying psychology and that didn't work out, I told myself: I need a domain where I can express myself, I believed that the social and the psychology go together quite well for me. I found myself in a situation where I, after having done several small jobs of secretary, doing data entry, accountant for several years with fixed term contracts with the intermediary Manpower from 1984 to 1989, did not more have a right on assedic (employment benfits) and I became a beneficiary of the social allowance… I refused this status because I was ashamed of this status being helped… I met an examiner who asked me, what I wanted to do. I said that I did not want to depend on the state and I asked for voluntary work. I immediately took the job to help with homework, I became an animator. This is now 4 years. I did voluntary work until March 1992, I did two years of solidarity work. In 1992 I was employed part time. Today as I know that my university diploma is not acclaimed… ; KF].

We see by this discourse that after the professional errancy this social worker becamethe object of social planning: « I became a beneficiary of the social allowance » But she wanted

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[2] Social formation is payed by the employer or the county council. This womenpayed for the formation herself.

to overturn the logic of her struggle: « that I did not want to depend on the state... I was ashamed ». What we can note concerning this kind of path is that the orientation towards the new profession is the consequence after a long period of professional errancy. Here, social work really plays its role as corrector of accidental biographies (Jovelin, 2009) by beginning with the candidates of the professionalisation itself, as can be seen across this woman's words. Speaking for myself, whatever the motivation for this animator is, the meeting with her new profession cannot be divorcedfrom thecurrent and past situation, especially in relation to unemployment, one of the determining factors. The commitment has nothing to do with a certain vocation; here we find the choice of descent.

3. The over-qualified- a proven discrimination: These are people that have an university diploma such as the « licence » [The licence is an academic qualification, awarded after three years of university study in France; KF], 19% of TSOE and only 1,5% of TSFO. They are living their choice as determineddue to their ethnic origin. They consider social work as a waiting profession, a stepping stone to better jobs; but the time spent waiting and rarely finding a way out, pushes them to adopt strategies of « late vocation »: « I don't see myself living without social work anymore ». They are facing a real dilemma: remain or leave, but where to leave to? Hereis the paradox: *« Être éducateur m'a paru un travail valorisant... Mais c'est un peu par hasard que je suis tombé dans le social. Il se pourrait aussi qu'il y ait d'autres éléments, que je ne maîtrise pas, qui m'ont poussé dans le social. Toutefois je n'ai pas choisi ce métier. Si je suis dedans, c'est pour des raisons économiques, parce que je cherchais un boulot... »*[Being an educator seemed positive work… But I found my way to the social sector by accident. Maybe there are other elements that I ignore that pushed me towards the social. Anyway, I did not choose this work. If I'm doing it, it is because of economic reasons, it is because I was looking for a job; KF] (educator, 38 years). Among the overqualified, a lot of people are telling the same thing- they are downgraded by the level of their studies. Entering in social work causes a real awareness about their place in French society:« Being French, I would not be here ». So the definition of biographical accidents has to consider not only the progression of living in different situations, but also the nature of these progressions in order to make the abrupt change to the social sector comprehensible. After the closure of the upward social mobility there is only hope for a magical success or lucky hazard left for the overqualified in social work (Bachmann, 1992). So this is not a choice, but a forced mobility. Being unable to use the career prospects their diplomas offered, they invested into social work and developed strategies to climb the social elevator within the profession they meanwhile were calling their own. The typology of those with biographical accidents will give an overview of the different strategies they use once they are entering the social sector, within which it is possible to identify two types (Accordo, 1991, pp. 136-155):
- Dominant strategies: on the one hand, because the overqualified come from the working-class. Choosing social work is a necessary choice that is limited by the accommodation of their social background's conditions. This choice is seen as the product of the internalisation of the necessary: *« Plus exactement, ilest le produitincorporé et naturalisé de conditions socialesd'existence »* [More exactly, it is the incorporated andnaturalised product of the social conditions of their existence; KF] (Accardo, 1991).
- Average strategies: on the other hand because these overqualified people own a high scholastic capital they were believing in (and still are). They define themselves by a double relationship between superior and inferior classes, which follows the internalisation of a

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dichotomous logic. They are living a sort of ambivalence – « a kind of inter-social and dominant polarization» by showing off their university titles and « the dominant pole of the structure of social classes » by saying they are vexed because of their immigration history that forces them into failure despite their scholastic capital. Concerning the situation of the immigrants there is a question of discrimination in hiring (Jovelin 2005, Rebzani, 2002), that, if we consider the overqualified people of foreign origin, leads us to doubt whether the French model of integration which was founded on the individuals' merit might be in crisis. Regarding the present economic situation it is not surprising that over overqualified of foreign origin feel rejected because of their ethnical specificity and downgrade themselves to a sector where they can still find work: social intervention and teaching.

The objecitve of this research was to find out the reasons that lead people of foreign origin to orient towards social professions. I presented several reasons, starting with the school of Chicago. Today you can see parallel approaches such as the theory of recognition, especially in the analysis of the contribution of social work to TSEO and TSFO, but this is limited concerning the motivations in choosing social professions. Today it is possible to mobilise other ideas such as the « event » (Michèle Olive Leclerc, 1997, Sophie Denave 2010, Negroni, 2010) or « junction » (Marc Bessin et al. 2010, Marc-Henry Soulet, 2010). Why do people decide to signup for a job, to quit a job, to divorce, to change their lives at a certain point of their existence? These are significant eventsconcerning orientation or changing life (Leclerc Olive, 1997). But as underlined by Sophie Denave (2010, p.172): « *si la genèse de l'événement dépend en partie de la position et des dispositions des acteurs, ses effets sur les trajectoires individuelles se comprennent à la lumière du contexte d'action et du passé incorporé des acteurs* ».[if the genesis of the event is depending partly on the position and the predisposition of the individual, you can only understand these effects on the individual's paths in the light of the context of action and past that is incorporated in the individual; KF]. The biographical analyses and the research in this thesis show that the reason why choosing social professions are also an « event » to seize in its whole complexity, because « *le trajet qui mène à un événementdonnépeutêtre vu commeune succession d'événements contingents les uns des autres* » [the path that leads to an event can be considered as a succession of events from one to another; KF]. Now there is one question to be asked: Which are the triggers to choose social professions? There are several triggers that lead to choice: failure in previous studies, unemployment, friend's counsel, parent's counsel, desire to help others etc. As r Catherine Negroni reminds us (2010, p.176), the question is in which way people are changing their direction and we can « *affectent un sens à l'événement, qui en devenantévénementdéclencheurparticipe à la démarche de reconversion entreprise* ». [make sense of the event that becomes the trigger to the reconstruction enterprise; KF]. My analyses show that there is no sole trigger that produces the decision to « sign up » to social work, but it is arising in a particular context. So, « *l'événementestassocié à un bouleversement des configurations danslesquelles les acteursévoluent* » [the event is associated with a distress of configurations in which the actors evolve; KF] (Denave, 2010, p.172). These configurations can turn out positively or negatively, i.e. that « *la bifurcation révèleraitunevulnérabilitésituationnelle* » [the junction revealed a situational vulnerability; KF] (Soulet, 2010, p.280). For this thesis I met people who felt injured by scholastic failure, unemployment, breaking-up of relationships, beneficiaries of the social allowance, overqualified people with problems of inclusion, and young people from the

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neighbourhooddoing small jobs… For Marc-Henry Soulet there can be junction without action and he is asking himself how to interact in a context like this. According to himthiscanonlybeanswered by « *qu'en posant le fait qu'agir en situation d'incertitude et « d'in-quiètude » n'est pas orienté par les fins (agir stratégique), ni par les normes (agir conforme), mais par l'action qu'il qualifie de poïetique car créateur de possibilité d'une action, de sa finalisation comme de sa légitimation. Dans une telle configuration, la production de buts est simultanée à celle de ressources et se construit en cours d'action tout comme la fondation des formes et des principes de légitimité* » [respondingto situations of insecurity and anxietyis not driven by goals (strategies) or norms (acting in a conformingmanner), but by action. In this configuration, the production of goals is simultaneous to the production of resources and is constructed by action just as the foundation of forms and principles of legitimacy; KF] (p. 282).

II. Social work: at stake in recognition

In relation to social work's status, especially around social advancement of social workers of foreign origin and also the people in difficulties, the theory of recognition is useful. Beyond the advancement issue, there is also social work's double role in relation to the mirror effect, produced by the interaction of two people: social worker and client. This means that by educating young peoplethey are educating themselves. There is a double movement of educational work: educator/educated, integrator/integrated. For example for some social workers meeting young people who are delinquent introduced them to phenomena of marginality that implicates the knowledge of different problems their clients face: « *le travail social m'aapportéunecertainemanière de regarder la cité, des méthodes de travail, la compétence* » [social work taught me to look at the neighbourhoods in a certain way, the methods of working, the competences; KF] (animator, 26 years). Social work participates at a double level of recognition: The recognition experienced by people of foreign origin and professionals in educational professions: « *avantquand on me demandait,qu'est-cequefaisdans ta vie? Je ne disais rien. Aujourd'hui, je réponds éducatrice…disons, je suis intégrée dans le monde du travail, je suis insérée, on peut dire ça, j'ai un salaire, je mange à ma faim* » [whenyouasked me before: what are youdoing in your life? I did not say anything. Today, I answer educator… let's say that I'm integrated to the working world, I'm included, you can say this, I get my pay, I have enough to eat; KF] (educator, 27 years) is also the recognition of the people in difficulties because of the social workers' intervention. So you can attribute a double role to social work: producerof asense due to interactions of social workers and integrator because of the reintegrating some social workers that were on the road of being downwardly mobile. The entrance to social professions can be interpreted for some as a way to treat their own exclusion.

But social workers that work in difficult neighbourhoods also experience their work as a denial of recognition, because « *le travailleur social issu de l'immigration, on s'ensertcomme alibi* » [the social worker with foreign origin is used as an alibi] (educator, 28 years) to legitimate governmental integration and also to answer multiple provocations of certain young people from the neighbourhood, especially young migrant people. The peacemaker with foreign origin is adopting the role of a big brother, knowing that this role is attributed to him, a role of [peacemaker, agent of social control, spy in service; KF]. Instead of being considered the same way as social workers of French origin, these people serve as fuse wires

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to damp down the conflicts in the neighbourhoods. The arrival of social workers of foreign origin is seen as a special form of social regulation by bringing both an answer and a displacement of social contradictions without dealing with the ground of the problems, because by nominating leaders these neighbourhoods are under social control. emindByfavouring this, the governement provided itself with human fuse wires to avoid violence developing(Garnier, 1982).

For Mace (1997, pp. 225-244), itis an 'ethnfication' of arbitrational conformation *« comme forme instituée d'une représentation de l'insécurité en termes culturalistes ».*[asan instituitionalized form of representing the insecurity in cultural terms; KF]. This way of understanding republican integration is creating ethnification in social relationship, which is supposed to be fought since it continues to produce an ghetto of community that is not wanted by the social workers of foreign origin, but produced by public powers. This ethnification of recruiting is considered even more by the social workers of foreign origin as *« le signed'uneprolétarisation et d'une reproduction des attributs (pénibilité, petitssalaires, non reconnaissance) »* [signs of a proletarisation and a reproduction of the attributes (hardness, low wages, no recognition); KF] (Roy, 1993) that have always defined immigrants' work. Despite the ethnification of social relationships that are seen as a denial of recognition, one cannot ignore the benefit of work; getting a salary is surely a catalyst of successful integration for some of them: *« Le travail social m'adonné un boulot, un salaire, aujourd'hui je peux manger... »* [social work gave me a job, a salary, today I can eat…; KF] (animator, 23 years). This debate is in the broader sense placing the research in the frame of integration in society. Integration is analysed from the place that is acquired by anintermediary of type of work, and how social work fits with any other profession. Social work as a way of social promotion and social recognition is for some, not at all depending on their path and their cultural capital. Whereas 31% do think that social work has been a way of social advancement to them, 54% do not. Two types differ in their answers: the overqualified answer massively 'no' and the less qualified answer positively.

Those who own higher scholastic capital refuse to see a way of social advancement in social work. They think that choosing social work is a descent, because they were not able to make their original diplomas profitable. They are living this situation as a devaluation, a stagnation, a downgrading: *« Maintenant, je me trouve dévalorisé. Ce n'est pas une mobilité pour moi. Être éducateur, avec mes diplômes, mon expérience, non, ce n'est pas une promotion »* [Now I amdevalorised. That is not mobility for me. Being an educator with my diplomas and my experience, no, this is not an advancement; KF] (educator, 38 years). The TSOEs with a lower scholastic level admit that social work is a way of social recognition, of social advancement: *« Pour moic'est important d'être arrivéelà. Pour moi c'est une promotion, j'étais coincée financièrement, je ne pouvais pas me payer mes études, ce n'était pas possible... »*[For me it is important to arrive here. For me, it is an advancement, I was financially stuck, I could not pay for my studies, it was not possible…; KF] (animator, 32 years). As we can see along this discourse, a lot of people appreciate social work in their situation as a success story. Some affirmed that today they live better, because they feel accepted by society: *« Ah !Maintenant que j'y pense, je suis bien maintenant, j'étais un usager du social, tu sais… Je suis moins défaitiste qu'avant. Lorsque je galérais, je me disais le lendemain sera toujours pareil, et maintenant, plus rien n'est impossible... »* [Ah ! Now I think that I'm good now, I was a user of social work, you know… I'm fewer defeatists than before. When I was struggling I told

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myself that tomorrow will still be the same, and now, nothing is impossible anymore…;KF] (animator, 36 years).

In these last words you can imagine this animator's way of life. Social work is indeed a way of social recognition, or even future advancement for the TSOEs that obtain a weak scholastic level: « *Le travail social estplutôt un prolongementversune promotion, c'est un tremplin »*[social work is the prolongation towards advancement, it is a stepping stone KF] (animator, 23 years). TSOEs that obtain a weak scholastic level have an idea of social progression, but regarding their original social conditions, this one is different. They adopted dominant strategies that conformedwith their condition. Knowing where they are coming from, their present position is judged convenient and reasonable. So if social work is a profession of descent for some categories such as those with biographical accidents (overqualified, roving professionals , ongoing repeaters) it is also a way of obtaining social recognition, not only for users but also professionals of social work.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, several reasons of choosing social professions have been brought up, but they don't deplete the subject. Choosing a profession is a long process and there is not a single major reason to it but a potpourri of causes. The analysis of the paths showed the difficulty of privileging one over another variable concerning the interest in professions.

Definitely we can regroup the professionall choices of the TSOEs in three main categories:

-1. The ancient: people that oriented towards social professions before thegovernmental involvement in the nineteen-eighties. The choice is often expressed by professional interest and the desire to help.

-2. Young people originally from the neighbourhoods: for some of them the choice of social work is due to a vocation, for others due to biographical accidents.

-3. Biographically by accident such as: enduring repeaters or those roving around in the universities/ professions, as well as those overqualified.

I would like to specify that there are no borders between the categories that I presented. This shows that repeating in earlier studies, unemployment or private reasons can lead to choosing social work. It is difficult to build a clear-cut typology. But in the choices of social professions there are also problems that touch the investigated in their inner self. For some these are « *les fragilitésou les vulnérabilitésaffectives et relationnelles* [relational and affective fragilities or vulnerabilities; KF] (De Gaulejac et TaboadaLeonetti, 1994) that they found in situations of crisis they faced along their path that are at the origin of their choice of social work.

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