Career Guidance and Livelihood Planning across the Mediterranean

Challenging Transitions in South Europe and the MENA Region

Ronald G. Sultana (Ed.)

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Career Guidance and Livelihood Planning across the Mediterranean

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Edited by

Ronald G. Sultana
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All chapters in this book have undergone peer review.

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ADVANCE PRAISE FOR
CAREER GUIDANCE AND LIVELIHOOD PLANNING ACROSS THE MEDITERRANEAN

"Ronald Sultana has made an immense contribution to the exploration of the role of career guidance in different cultures. This book is a major achievement, focusing on a pivotal part of the world."
– Tony Watts, Cambridge, UK

"This book challenges career guidance to truly think in a contextual, localised, plural and dialogical way. In providing an opportunity for the South to speak on its own terms, it encourages both South-South and North-South dialogue for widening the possibility of mutual understanding and cooperation, and avoiding the imposition or the incorporation of knowledge and practices produced in the global North upon the global South. It is a great contribution to renew the field through different ways of thinking and doing career guidance."
– Marcelo Afonso Ribeiro, University of São Paulo, Brazil

"I took the 'imaginative leap' that Sultana, with over 35 scholars and practitioners invite us to make and found that it was not merely a leap of faith! Ripples in the career guidance literature that question the hegemonic influence of Western epistemologies upon the global South, build into a coherent wave in this volume. This book is packed with fresh ideas based on lucid arguments that draw from a substantial evidence base. This work is essential reading."
– Gideon Arulmani, Director, The Promise Foundation, Bangalore, India

"In this wonderful new book, Ronald Sultana has compiled a masterful collection of chapters from leading scholars and practitioners that provide a critically needed perspective on career guidance in the Mediterranean region. Rather than simply reviewing career guidance practices in very diverse settings, Sultana and his colleagues use this opportunity to interrogate the underlying norms and assumptions that have shaped our work. This book furnishes a pathway forward in its compelling reassessment of how counsellors, educators, and government leaders can approach the task of helping people and communities establish practices that will support our natural striving for work that is decent, dignified, and meaningful."
– David L. Blustein, Boston College, USA

"The complexity of providing career guidance services and livelihood planning in a context of grave socio-economic, cultural and political realities cannot be overstated. This publication is a significant source of research and narratives of Mediterranean

countries, providing a better understanding of the settings in which they have to think about and practise career guidance. It is a must-read for every individual involved in policy, research and practice activities in the career guidance field in the Southern African region."

– Rènette du Toit, Research Manager, Independent Research Services, South Africa

"This volume, a very impressive narrative providing a wide perspective to career guidance and beyond, paves the way to a better and wider understanding of the commonalities yet the uniqueness of the career guidance processes around the Mediterranean. This project will encourage the readers to form new constructs to interpret their work, to make sense of their observations and experiences in relation to career guidance. It is also informative as the volume presents the present state of art in so many countries."

– Füsun Akkök, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey

"To consider career counselling through the lens of the Mediterranean: this is the successful wager of this great book. The Mediterranean – cradle of Western civilisation and of today's globalised economy – has become the tomb of thousands of migrants and refugees who have no alternative but to flee overcrowding, wars and famine in the regions where they were born. Meanwhile, career counselling, as it prevails in the West today, has the sole objective of helping people to design their individual lives and careers. But, in so doing, does it prepare them to contribute to another development than that of the present system of trade, in which eight people now possess as much wealth as the poorest half of mankind? Does it train them to deal with the crises of today's world? Unfortunately, the answers to these are obvious. Therefore the ultimate purpose of career counselling needs to be redefined. It should become, writes Sultana, "a dialogic, mutually pedagogical relationship, that serves to conscientise individuals and groups about the social forces that define the world of work and that affect the range of opportunities available to them, while at the same time equipping them with the political skills, networks, community resources, values, and dispositions to struggle for social and work arrangements that are equitable and just, where one's development and self-fulfilment advances the development and fulfilment of others.""

– Jean Guichard, Paris, France

"This volume is a chorus of original voices which bursts on the career guidance and counselling publications scene by focusing attention on little known differences and uniqueness, and on values that are so important for our human destiny. The work of our colleagues allows us to see with our own eyes to what extent our hyper-diverse societies need inclusive visions, also on the part of those who devise career interventions."

– Laura Nota, University of Padova, Italy

For Matthew, our grandson…
a ray of sunshine
in stormy seas

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INTRODUCTION

RONALD G. SULTANA

1. ANCHORING CAREER GUIDANCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN?

In Search of Southern Perspectives

ABSTRACT

This chapter introduces the goals and aspirations for this volume, showing how the different chapters build on earlier studies of career guidance in the region in an effort to develop theoretically informed accounts of the field as it is conceived and practised in context. The value of using the Mediterranean as a lens through which to consider career guidance is discussed, suggesting that by so doing, new insights can be generated that promote a deeper understanding of what career guidance might involve, and the forms and shapes it can assume. Such intellectual labour, it is argued, is necessary if we are to develop Southern perspectives, which can serve to trouble mainstream understandings of what career guidance entails, particularly if context-sensitive accounts of the public and private benefits of guidance are to be articulated.

INTRODUCTION

This volume follows up on an earlier comparative study of career guidance in 10 Mediterranean countries commissioned by the European Training Foundation (ETF) as part of its MEDA-ETE (Education and Training for Employment) project 10 years ago. That study included eight Arab countries and territories (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon), together with Israel and Turkey (Sultana & Watts, 2007, 2008). The survey instrument used then had been designed and first deployed by an OECD team led by Richard Sweet and Tony Watts (OECD, 2002),[1] and subsequently by the World Bank (Watts & Fretwell, 2004), and by the two European Commission agencies dedicated to education and training (Sultana, 2003, 2004), namely the ETF (based in Turin and focusing on EU candidate and partner countries) and CEDEFOP (*Centre Européen pour le Développement de la Formation Professionnelle*, based in Thessaloniki and focusing on EU member states). In some cases, the survey instrument was slightly modified to take into account the specific challenges of low- to middle-income countries.

In all, over 55 countries were involved in this series of overlapping studies, generating the most detailed comparable database on career guidance that has ever

been produced (Watts & Sultana, 2004; Watts, 2014). In each case the survey was answered by specialists in the field in every participating country, in response to a comprehensive list of questions on the development of career guidance, together with the current state of policies, practice, and research in both the education and labour market sectors. In the case of the OECD initiative, as well as in some cases in the remaining studies, country visits supplemented the information obtained through the survey. Further studies extending this database have been carried out focusing on career guidance in European public employment services (Sultana & Watts, 2006a, 2006b), and by the ETF in a number of former Soviet countries (Zelloth, 2009).

This volume aims to build on that fund of knowledge, bringing the Mediterranean region into sharp focus. There are some important differences with the previous study. First, while some of the authors invited to contribute are practitioners with links to policy and practice in educational settings, most are academics and researchers based in universities, none of whom had contributed to the earlier surveys as authors. Second, contributors were given a choice between two options. They could take a wide angle approach and provide an overview of career guidance in their country, highlighting the economic, political and cultural dimensions impacting on the way the field is conceptualised in their particular context, and the key debates, issues and challenges surrounding provision. Alternatively, they could be more focused in their approach by choosing a specific theme, challenge, target group, or project. Third, irrespective of whether they chose a broad or focused approach, authors were encouraged to engage with theoretical frameworks and to be analytic and interpretive in their consideration of the field. They were also invited to reference key and relevant studies carried out in their respective countries, particularly those written in their native language, with a view to bringing these to the attention of a wider international readership. Most authors opted for a more focused approach, while nevertheless providing contextual information in sufficient detail to give readers a sense of the lay of the land when it comes to career guidance policies and orientation, especially in the education sector. Further detailed consideration of the regional context is provided in Chapters 2 to 5.

Four goals and aspirations drove this project forward. First and foremost, I wanted to enrich our understanding by digging deeper into aspects of the knowledge base generated thus far, and by mobilising a broader range of theoretical lenses in order to better appreciate what career guidance might mean in different contexts. This responded to my desire to develop more contextually nuanced understandings of a social practice that acquires diverse meanings in different cultures, institutional traditions, and economic realities. Second, I set out to explore the degree to which career guidance policies and practices might have developed since the first survey a decade earlier, thus addressing complex issues around the impact of international research on policy, and on the dynamics of policy lending and policy borrowing, even though it would be foolhardy to try to establish direct causal links with any degree of certainty. This is a promising research agenda, with strong connections to globalisation and regionalisation studies, which, while referred to in this volume

(*inter alia* by myself in the next chapter, and by Khalil, Turcotte et al., Hooley, and Antoniou),[2] will be pursued in greater detail in a different context.

Third, I wanted to see what sorts of insights could be generated about the overwhelming problem of youth unemployment in the region, and how, if at all, career guidance could serve public goals by establishing a better balance between the demand and supply of skills, and private goals by helping make education, training and employment more fulfilling experiences for citizens. Fourth, this publication – the sixth in a series of thematic volumes published by the Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Educational Research (EMCER) in collaboration with Sense, and the twentieth volume since the launch of the *Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies* (MJES) in 1996[3] – inscribes itself in the project at the heart of the research centre I lead, namely to develop South-South and North-South dialogue in the field of education and through this to enhance the possibility of mutual understanding and cooperation among the people of the Mediterranean in the various spheres of life.

The reader will of course be the ultimate judge of the extent to which these aspirations have been fulfilled by this collection of chapters, all of which have been specifically written for this volume with these goals in mind. In the sections that follow in this chapter and the next I will introduce the main themes that emerge from the different contributions, thus providing a key to making sense of the similarities and contrasts that are evident in the different countries that feature here. Before I do that, however, it is first necessary to outline why a Mediterranean focus is of value when it comes to increasing our understanding of career guidance as a social practice. That entails justifying the use of the 'Mediterranean' as a *tertium comparationis*, or unit of comparative analysis, despite the many differences that mark the region.

USING THE MEDITERRANEAN AS A LENS

Many researchers who study the Mediterranean – including economists, political scientists, and geographers – tend to focus their attention on sub-regions, which are variously defined as 'South Europe', 'European Mediterranean Countries' (EMCs), 'Arab Mediterranean countries' (AMCs), the Arab 'world', the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region, or the MEDA region (constituted by countries participating in the EU's Mediterranean neighbourhood and partnership policy, launched by the Barcelona Process in 1995). Each term has its own history, and reflects specific political and economic interests that have evolved with time in response to different ways of considering the region, the relationship of the different countries to each other and to powerful national and supra-national entities, be these the United States and post-/neo-colonial powers, the European Union or the World Bank, to mention a few examples. Depending on who organises the clustering of countries and territories in the region, and towards which end/s, the resulting map would stretch from Mauritania to Yemen, including the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC), Iraq and Iran, and doubling back via Turkey to include the littoral Balkan states, and the southern nations of Europe right up to Portugal. Like every regional

grouping – and indeed like every national perimeter – the Mediterranean is a social construct, an 'imagined community', the shape of whose borders grow, shrink and change depending on geo-political and economic factors rather more than merely geographical ones.

The *MJES* project has consistently adopted an inclusive view of the Mediterranean, with volumes featuring all the countries around the maritime basin, including the hinterlands of Portugal and Jordan – sometimes celebrating their uniqueness, and at other times noting their shared fortunes and 'destinies'. Braudel (1949, 1992) was among the first to make a strong case for such an inclusive view of the region when, in his monumental history of the Mediterranean, he gave pride of place to the way climate shapes cultures and economies. Braudel defined the countries bordering the 'white sea' – as the Turks refer to what the Romans called *Mare Nostrum* – in relation to the northern limits of the olive tree up to the northern limit of the palm tree. In this space, Braudel discerned a unity in diversity that has a social, besides a geographical referent, noting that "in the Mediterranean to live was to exchange", whether this exchange involved persons, ideas, ways of life, beliefs … or habits of courtship (Braudel, 1992, pp. 548, 550). He also famously noted that "a native of the Mediterranean, wherever he [sic] might come from, would never feel out of place in any part of the sea" (p. 178). Over millennia of conquest, colonisation, and conversions, "it has proved impossible for Mediterranean people to ignore each other […] the contacts are perpetual and inescapable" (Davis, 1977, p. 255).

Similarities and Differences across the Region

While comparativists informed by positivist methodologies would baulk at the idea of comparing Spain, Greece or Italy to Morocco, Egypt or Syria, I have made a number of arguments as to why more imaginative and qualitative accounts, as well as political motives, can help us make the imaginative leap to rise above the obvious diversity to apperceive the unifying impact of the promiscuous interaction that marks the history of the region, leading to hybrid but recognisable languages, cuisines, beliefs and world views (Sultana, 1996, 2012). In making this leap, I have been guided by the historical, geopolitical, and geopoetical works of such authors as Matvejević (1992), Cassano (2007), and Abulafia (2011), among many others.

One important aspect of working with the Mediterranean 'imaginary' is therefore that of 'writing back' to the dominant narrative of exclusion and rejection of the 'Other', a rebuff nowadays clearly marked as much by the rise of nationalism and Islamophobia as by the building of razor-sharp walls of shame (Jones, 2016), including high-tech ones that, under the give-away name of *Frontex*, track and push back hundreds of hope-steered rickety boats attempting to reach the northern shores in the vast cemetery of despair that *Mare Nostrum* has become. The act of seeing past diversity in order to imagine a different Mediterranean space is thus a political one, in as much as it resurrects past historical notions of *convivencia* (Chak, 2009), in

contrast to current depictions of multiculturalism as 'impossible', and 'assimilation' as the only fall-back position available.

Focusing on the Mediterranean space therefore holds the promise of engaging the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean in a conversation with each other, around issues that are of mutual concern, viewed through the mediating lens of education, which, while far from being a panacea for all ills, has much to contribute when it comes to the welfare of the region, and to that of its future generations. In the case of this particular volume, attention is turned to the value of career education and guidance in facilitating and supporting youth transitions, in a region where, along its north and south shores as much as along its east and west ones, unemployment features high on the Geiger counter of concerns of governments and public alike, as Chapter 2 will note in detail.

While there are important differences between the North and South of the Mediterranean, especially in terms of population increase, outward vs. inward movement of populations, and per capita incomes – the revenue of the seven EMCs is ten times higher on average than that of the AMCs (de Wenden, 2015) – there are also important similarities, some of which are made evident by many chapters in this volume. Suffice it to mention here those that are most often mentioned and which are relevant to career guidance: besides youth unemployment, these include: 'early' school leaving; low labour market participation rates by women; 'bloated' public sectors; bureaucratic and centralised environments that stymy entrepreneurship; a strong informal sector that mops up unskilled labour allowing depressed wages and conditions of work to thrive; a welfare regime that is highly dependent on extended family ties and support rather than state safety nets; recruitment strategies that tend to rely on connections rather more than on merit; and an 'academic drift' reinforcing low take-up of vocational training routes, leading to high graduate unemployment, skills gaps and mismatches. These elements often feature in neo-liberal portrayals of the region, with most of the characteristics being considered negatively, as deviations from the assumed and hardly ever problematised norm – the referent or 'absent centre' represented by the global North.

The motivation driving this volume is somewhat different. It is less about judging the Mediterranean according to the yardstick of the North, and more about providing a space and an opportunity for the South to speak, and to do so on its own terms. Let me say immediately that we are still far from articulating what de Sousa Santos (2007a) refers to as 'epistemologies of the South'. And yet several of the chapters in this volume, implicitly or explicitly, struggle with/against the kind of 'knowledge deficit' language that Mazawi (2007) warns against in his review of much of the literature on the intersections between education, training and work in the Arab states – that is, perceiving one's reality in terms of categories deployed by others, without sufficiently problematising that which functions as a referent in the author/s' mind/s. As Afiouni and Karam note, there is a need for 'epistemological reflexivity', which critically interrogates not only the positionality of researchers, but the very research questions we ask.

Here, Mediterranean scholars can take their cue from other colleagues' efforts internationally, who, by investing in regional studies, are striving to articulate ways of 'thinking' and 'doing', career guidance differently – along the lines, for instance, suggested by South Asian (Arulmani, 2011) or Latin American (e.g. Ribeiro, Uvaldo, & Silva, 2015; Fonseca da Silva et al., 2016) authors that draw on culturally grounded indigenous worldviews, liberation psychology, critical social theory, and social justice perspectives in their efforts to reconceptualise the field and to make it meaningful in a different regional context. Many of the chapters in this volume therefore represent what de Sousa Santos – to turn to him again as our touchstone – calls a 'sociology of emergences', that is efforts from below to build up grounded and context-sensitive and context-responsive knowledge "that generates an emancipatory way of being and acting" (2007b, p. 10). Several of the contributors engage with the career guidance field in ways that reflect what I have elsewhere called a 'thirst for social justice' (Sultana, 2014a, b), exhibiting a stance that refreshingly places the attainment of human dignity well ahead of market and instrumental concerns that privilege economic over democratic imperatives, and over personal flourishing. The task of this volume is thus to foreground "signs, clues, and latent tendencies that, however inchoate and fragmented, point to new constellations of meaning as regards both the understanding and the transformation of the world" (de Sousa Santos, 2007b, p. 10).

Situated Knowledge and Emancipatory Practice

These stabs at better understanding the regional settings in which career guidance is practised, however modest, are important in that they trouble the colonisation of the life world by instrumental rationality – represented by the fundamentalist doctrine of neoliberalism and its spawn, human capital theory – whose hegemonic sway are so powerful that it has become almost impossible to see the world 'otherwise'.

Career guidance is a relatively recent addition to the gamut of social institutions which, like the school, accompanied the arrival of modernity (and empire) and which, especially in some countries, has far from taken root. And yet, the potential for 'learning from the Mediterranean' is no less a defensible project for all that, not only from the perspective of the political motivations that drive this volume, but also from the legitimacy of the knowledge interests that underpin it. In my own work in the region – which, over the past 25 years has involved visits to most of the countries and territories, meeting hundreds of educators in schools, NGOs, and community organisations, observing classrooms at all levels, interviewing political leaders and policy-makers, discussing with academics and researchers in universities, running workshops and attending and contributing to conferences – what has been most rewarding has been the opportunity and challenge to look at mainstream 'western' approaches to career guidance and to view them 'otherwise', filtered and inflected through the lens of different cultures, life orientations, economic contexts and the everyday conditions in which life is lived. Such inflections may still have a long way

to go before they lead to and shape alternative forms of career guidance, but they nevertheless do have value inasmuch as they trouble hegemonic and mainstream accounts, provoking the generation of fresh perspectives and insights.

My own personal learning journey, for instance, has involved challenging several core concepts in the field, including, among others, mainstream notions of 'career' and of 'choice'; the centrality of work; the assumption of internal locus of control and of self-directed autonomy in making occupational choices; the unarticulated expectation to delay gratification in view of long term career planning; the bearing of sole responsibility for life outcomes; and the separation of material from spiritual considerations of being. Examples of mainstream practices that have been 'troubled' by my exposure to Mediterranean realities include the individual career interview; the predominance of discursive strategies as the pathway to problem resolution; the maintenance of professional distance (regulated, in some instances, by a monetised relationship); the overemphasis on personal variables, such as interests and abilities, at the cost of considering environmental and contextual variables; and the articulation of solutions in terms of individual rather than collective action, often without reference to the spiritual dimension of life or the role of piety as a source of personal satisfaction at work. Such personal learning has been considerably extended and deepened by the contributors to this volume.

Several chapters note the fact that the very term 'career guidance' poses a number of problems that are difficult to resolve (e.g. Chbani & Jaouane; Mejri & McCarthy; Elhawat). For some, and especially those in the countries where Arabic is spoken, the term is difficult to render appropriately or succinctly, possibly suggesting that it carries with it meanings, orientations, practices and aspirations which do not fully connect with the contexts in which it is deployed. To start with, the very word 'career' is loaded with connotations that are quite distant from the kind of modest occupations the vast majority of 'common' people in the global South are involved in, such that the term 'livelihood planning' might be much more appropriate (Arulmani, 2009; Kalyanram, Gopalan, & Kartik, 2014; Sultana, 2014c; Kattaa).[4] Furthermore, the word 'guidance' implies that people are involved in exercising personal agency in making choices out of a range of available options, or that, to use the 'life design' terminology (Savickas et al., 2009), are in a position to 'construct' a self-identity which is then expressed through the kinds of activities engaged in at work (Guichard, 2005; McMahon & Watson, 2011). As becomes very clear when reading through the various contributions in this volume, such assumptions seem to mostly apply for a privileged few. For the vast majority – particularly so in the global South – a number of forces come into play which, at best, constrain choice whittling it down to a few options, and at worst determine the life pathway in irrevocable ways, due to strict gender-typified expectations, belief that life pathways are subject to 'fate' or 'divine will' rather than one's own, and the reproduction of social class locations due to the lack of meritocracy, family expectations, and the nature of the labour market.

Additional difficulties with the term 'career guidance' arise from its frequent merging with cognate terms such as 'vocational' guidance and career 'counselling'.

The issue here is not with the blurring of disciplinary boundaries – which in itself is not necessarily negative, and in fact often reflects in language perceptions evolving from practices on the ground – but rather that the fading of distinctions serves to construct the meaning of the field in particular ways, rendering it a somewhat different practice than it is conceived in mainstream western literature. 'Career counselling' in the region, and particularly in the AMCs, is thus sometimes confused with personal counselling, especially so in terms of its purported role in maintaining moral codes of conduct and keeping young people on the straight and narrow (see, *inter alia*, the chapters by Mahdjoub and Miliani; Elhawat; Hashweh, and Hooley). 'Vocational guidance' is often closely associated with 'vocational education', with the former being seen as necessary in order to 'orient' students away from academic educational pathways towards the latter. This is an important and recurrent theme, addressed by several authors in this volume (Chbani & Jaouane; Mahdjoub & Miliani; Mejri & McCarthy; Vlaardingerbroek et al.; Jones), besides being considered in greater detail in the next chapter.

This directive aspect of career guidance is also caught by the use of the French term *orientation*, with *orientation scolaire* being a process which, while ostensibly serving to 'guide' students to follow educational tracks in which they have strengths and to which they are consequently deemed suitable, more often than not ends up being a process that makes decisions *for* students, on the basis of grades obtained, and somewhat impressionistic (and not infrequently problematic) views held by teachers about 'potential'. It is not surprising that this approach, prevalent in the countries most influenced by France – namely Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, as well as Lebanon – readily lends itself to closing down options, particularly for students from subordinate groups, in France as elsewhere (André, 2012; Duru-Bellat, 2012; Cohen-Scali et al.).

Attention to the terms used and to language is not, therefore, a purely linguistic and academic exercise, but is important in as much as it helps reveal deeper issues, linked to notions of what constitute the inalienable rights of an individual in a democracy, and the extent to which it is legitimate to channel him or her towards particular occupations on the grounds that this is of benefit to the nation,[5] or that one can confidently determine the capabilities and potential of others, for that matter. Language and terms – and of course theoretical orientations, policies and practices – therefore, reveal important tensions in the field, which, as I have argued elsewhere (Sultana, 2014d), and following a typology proposed by Habermas (1971), weave together three inter-twining discourses, namely technocratic (concerned with matching people to available occupations), developmentalist (concerned with personal growth and fulfilment), and emancipatory (concerned with critiquing and transforming the world of work such that social justice is better served).

Definitions of career guidance will reflect one or more of these orientations, with one of the three likely to predominate, while not necessarily excluding the others. The OECD definition – which has been promoted internationally thanks to the impact and reach of the survey it carried out, and the influence it had on the

subsequent surveys organised by other agencies – tends to foreground liberal notions of self-directed choice, while also integrating a humanistic orientation inasmuch as it puts the individual at the heart of a process of designing a life project: "Career guidance refers to services intended to assist people, of any age and at any point throughout their lives to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers" (OECD, 2004, p.19).

In contrast, a definition of career guidance that privileges an emancipatory rationality over the other two discourses would highlight and foreground the social context in which such life paths unfold. An alternative definition would therefore propose that "Career guidance entails a dialogic, mutually pedagogical relationship, that serves to conscientise individuals and groups about the social forces that define the world of work and that affect the range of opportunities available to them, while at the same time equipping them with the political skills, networks, community resources, values, and dispositions to struggle for social and work arrangements that are equitable and just, where one's development and self-fulfilment advances the development and fulfilment of others".

The first definition remains somewhat equable in tone when it comes to considering the complex relationship between individual agency and the impact of social structures on that agency, leaving the prevailing work arrangements largely untroubled. The latter takes a much more proactive stance in encouraging persons' 'capacity to aspire' (Appadurai, 2004), conscientising them in ways that help them move beyond their 'bounded rationality' (Simon, 1991), their 'adaptive preferences' (Biggeri, 2010; Nussbaum, 2001), and their 'horizons for action' (Hodkinson, Sparkes, & Hodkinson, 1996), and promoting advocacy and community mobilisation so that career guidance truly becomes a force, among others, championing economic and social justice.

Organisation of the Chapters

The chapters in this volume speak to these experiences, tensions and aspirations, and represent this diversity through accounts they provide of the way career guidance is engaged with as a concept and a social practice in the different countries across the region. The next four chapters address specific aspects and themes that are regional in scope. In Chapter 2 I provide a detailed overview of a number of factors – economic inequality, demography, migratory flows, the structure of the labour market, the nature of political regimes, socio-cultural environments, education, and globalisation – that have a highly significant function in mediating youth transitions, alerting us to the need to reconsider taken-for-granted assumptions about the role, value and usefulness of career guidance in such contexts. In Chapter 3, Afiouni and Karam cast a critical eye at gender relations across the AMCs, which take on a notoriously different colour when compared to the way men and women interact in the global North. While arguing for a counter-narrative to liberal feminist theories as articulated in the West, the authors challenge assumptions that are commonly made

about women in the Arab 'world', in the hope of raising awareness about their real lived experiences and their on-going struggles in relation to careers and employment. While several other chapters discuss the complex intersections between gender and occupation futures (see, *inter alia*, the contributions by Hashweh, by Cinamon, and by Hooley), it was nevertheless felt important to focus on the issues in a separate article, besides featuring it as a crosscutting theme.

Chapter 4, penned by Badawi, represents an atypical contribution in the career guidance field, but one whose inclusion is more than justified as we become increasingly aware of the way in which value systems and beliefs condition one's engagement in and with the world of work. Such values and beliefs often find expression through institutionalised religions – an important dimension in the Mediterranean, which is the cradle of no less than three world monotheistic religions, with Islam and Muslim cultures being given special though not exclusive attention in this volume.

A regional overview of employment- and livelihood-related issues is unimaginable without addressing one of the major tragedies affecting the planet today, with millions of refugees fleeing civil conflict, war and environmental disaster. Kattaa provides us with a stark picture of the consequences of the forced displacement of people, highlighting the ways in which access to livelihood opportunities can be facilitated through the development of bespoke guidance services. Chapter 5 thus focuses on initiatives organised in Jordan on behalf of Syrians, in Za'atari, one of the largest refugee camps in the world.

The remaining chapters are country-based, organised in clusters around the sub-regional units known as the 'Mashrek' (the lands of the rising sun), the 'Mezzogiorno' (the lands of the noonday sun),[6] and the 'Maghreb' (the lands of the setting sun). As we move anti-clockwise across the region, starting with Morocco and ending up with Portugal,[7] it is important to keep in mind that these countries and sub-regions are not to be considered as isolated from each other: rather, as has been made clear from the start of this Introduction, there is a flow of ideas, practices and people between the different shores of the Mediterranean. Francophone approaches to career guidance have an impact on ex-colonies of France, while France struggles to mobilise career guidance to provide effective services for students of Maghrebi origin in its schools – a clear case of the global South in the global North, in more ways than one. Saudi Arabia, whose geographical position seemingly renders it remote from the Mediterranean Sea, is nevertheless present in other ways, exercising as it does a major influence in business, politics, religion and society in the region thanks to its oil wealth (Allmeling, 2012; Dazi-Héni, 2016), which funds anything from the High Military Council in Egypt, to the building of Sunni and Wahhabi mosques and schools as much in Europe as in North Africa[8] – not to mention the impact the country has through absorbing foreign labour, mainly from Asia, but also from the MENA region, and Egypt especially so (de Bel-Air, 2013; Hooley).

Having set the scene for – and outlined the organisational logic of – the contributions in this volume, we will now focus on identifying the main contextual factors that are

likely to impact on the way career guidance is conceptualised and practiced in the region. This is the task of the next chapter, which also serves to tease out the main themes and issues that can be mined from the different contributions, providing readers with a framework that can serve as a matrix to organise the wealth of information and insights provided by each author. The final chapter attempts to synthesise the lessons learnt from this Mediterranean excursion, highlighting implications for policy and practice, and suggesting research agendas that address gaps noted.

NOTES

1. Most details regarding the OECD (2002) survey and publications are available from http://www.oecd.org/edu/innovation-education/careerguidancepolicyreviewhomepage.htm
2. Reference to authors of chapters featuring in this volume are not followed by a date. This avoids the tedious repetition of the phrase 'this volume' in brackets every time these authors are referred to in this and subsequent chapters.
3. All back issues of the MJES, as well as preview chapters of the EMCER-Sense series, are freely available from https://www.um.edu.mt/emcer/mjes/backissues
4. I am here following Arulmani, who, drawing on the work of Jiddu Krishnamurty and Mahatma Gandhi, considers 'livelihood' as a manifestation of the individual's potential in the context of community. For Arulmani, a 'livelihood counsellor' would be someone who has "the skills to allow the context to define the meaning of career along with the capability to understand and optimise traditional occupational structures for the modern context" (personal communication). There is a danger, of course, that in distinguishing 'livelihoods' from 'careers', we reproduce and legitimise the differentials in value, status, and earning power in the socially constructed hierarchy in the labour market (Ribeiro & de Oliveira Silva Fonçatti, 2017).
5. The subordination of individual aspirations to the 'needs of the nation' – as expressed through national development plans – meant that 'career guidance' could not flourish in countries with communist regimes (Sultana, 2007).
6. The Italian word 'Mezzogiorno' (literally, 'mid-day') is usually used to refer to South Italy and the country's larger islands, but here, and in a spirit of poetic licence, its meaning is broadened in scope to refer to 'southern Europe'.
7. In this volume we skirt around the Balkan states, even if these have been included in other special thematic issues in this series (e.g. Bray, Mazawi, & Sultana, 2013).
8. King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saudi proposed to build 200 mosques in Germany to cater for Syrian refugees http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/saudi-arabia-offers-germany-200-mosques-one-for-every-100-refugees-who-arrived-last-weekend-10495082.html

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CONTEXTS

RONALD G. SULTANA

2. CONTEXTS MATTER

Factors Influencing Career Guidance in the Mediterranean Countries

ABSTRACT

This chapter provides a more detailed account of some of the key characteristics that mark the Mediterranean region, which shape and define career education and guidance, its appeal as a policy tool to address, in particular, youth transitions, and the context-sensitive forms it might take in order to serve private and public good. More specifically, such factors as economic inequality, demography, migratory flows, the structure of the labour market, the nature of political regimes, socio-cultural environments, education, and globalisation are examined in detail. In outlining some of the more relevant aspects of context, the chapter pulls together important insights provided by the contributors to this volume, complementing these by drawing on an extensive literature base that provides a wider canvas against which the different chapters can be read. While attention is given to both European and Arab Mediterranean countries, the focus is mainly on the latter, with efforts made to highlight similarities and differences between the two shores when such comparisons serve to generate relevant insights.

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I referred to the earlier study of career guidance in the Mediterranean (Sultana & Watts, 2007, 2008), which had focused on eight Arab Mediterranean Countries (AMCs), together with Turkey and Israel. That study had organised the material generated by the regional survey under three major headings – namely economic and political, socio-cultural and educational factors – all of which, it was argued, have a bearing on how career guidance is conceptualised, and how it is delivered, if at all. These factors, and several sub-themes, feature prominently across the different contributions in this volume as well, and can be subsumed under the umbrella category 'context'. They will be considered in turn in the sections below, in many ways echoing our earlier analysis, but also updating, deepening, and extending it to include new insights. Most of the attention will be given to the AMCs, with occasional reference to the European Mediterranean Countries (EMCs) when consideration of the similarities or differences helps generate additional understandings, since, as Silver (2007) notes, young people in

Europe and the Middle East share a number of important characteristics, including high levels of unemployment, labour market segmentation, rising education and delayed transitions to adulthood, including marriage and independent living. Israel and Turkey do not feature prominently in this chapter, the former because, despite its heterogeneity, is more similar to the EMCs on a number of indices, the latter because its cleavages with Europe and the Arab world are at least as important as its connections, and possibly becoming more so under the influence of its current regime.

Much of this chapter focuses on presenting statistical data. These are of course important in order to get a grip of the situation overall, even if numbers quickly become out of date. Statistical representations relating to the so-called 'Arab world' – or better still, Arab 'world' or 'worlds' (Mazawi & Sultana, 2010a, b; Afiouni & Karam) – are also problematic given the fact that different agencies carve up the region in different ways: As noted in Chapter 1, references to the region marshal a range of nomenclatures such as 'MENA' (Middle East and North Africa), 'MEDA' (Mediterranean partner countries to the European Union), 'Euro-Mediterranean', 'Arab states and territories'. 'Arab League countries', and so on, with each including some countries and excluding others, such that comparisons between studies made by different agencies can lead to confusion and errors. It makes a difference, for instance, if a study includes the Gulf states, or Yemen, Sudan and Mauritania, in its conclusions about the economy, politics, culture, or education in the 'region', even if all these countries are connected together due to language (at least in its standard, classical form – which in fact, for many, is a second language), majority religion,[1] diverse cultural elements, and a history of oppression by Ottoman and/or Western imperial powers.

It is however also important to keep in mind the way these statistics – however useful, if tentative, they might be – speak to the everyday realities, aspirations, frustrations and disillusionments of the young people they purport to portray – the so-called 'generation in waiting' (Dhillon & Yousef, 2009), which, as recent events have shown, may not be that willing to 'wait' any further. This chapter trawls through many valuable sources that provide much that is interesting about the educational, cultural and economic fortunes of young people across the Mediterranean, and the MENA region in particular. It is a region marked by change and transitions, by huge efforts and often disappointing results – perhaps best represented by the euphoria in the wake of the Arab Spring in 2010, and the subsequent Arab Winter that saw this epoch-making window of opportunity slam shut. But in contrast to the situation in other parts of the world, where young people have been consulted about their hopes and aspirations for lifestyle and livelihood, and about the role that they would like to play as citizens (*inter alia*, Walther, 2009; Kahn et al., 2011), youth in the AMCs have tended to be treated "either as subjects to stimulate neoliberal development, or as essentially religious and ideological beings with either politically radical or benign tendencies" (Herrera, 2010, p. 127). This chapter attempts to avoid such one-dimensional portrayals of young people, highlighting various facets of

their lives that come to bear on their efforts to make the transition to adulthood and independence. In so doing, various insights about the implications that context has for the development of context-sensitive forms of career guidance suggest themselves. These, together with additional insights generated by the remaining contributors to this volume, are brought together in the concluding chapter of the book, which serves to chart possible ways forward.

The multi-perspectival representation of youth transitions in the Mediterranean includes a consideration of the contexts in which such transitions are attempted. Details will be presented regarding the lack of opportunities for employment, in a situation where investment in schooling does not seem to pay, where family is both a source of support but also of pressures and expectations that limit horizons, especially for women, and where opportunities are oftentimes more dependent on having the right connections than on merit. Herrera (2010), in one of the rare qualitative accounts that places young people's voices at the heart of the narrative (though see also Jones; and Cinamon – both of who draw on interview material), presents us with a portrait of a man ('Karim') and a woman ('Dina') from Alexandria in Egypt, both in their early twenties. They are different in all sorts of ways: Karim is a seasonal labourer, from a depressed middle class background that has known better days, somewhat lax about religious practice, even if he finds occasional comfort from it, as well as from hashish, which helps him burn away hours of idleness that would have otherwise been spent in worrying and self-recrimination. Dina is a university undergraduate in veterinary science, both of whose parents are graduates who can afford a comfortable lifestyle, and whose commitment to piety is openly signalled through the wearing of the *hijab*, daily prayers and reading from the Quran, all of which should, in theory, help attract the right companion with whom to build a family.

Despite their differences, both represent ordinary youth, sharing the same commonplace aspirations which, as Dina says, are modest: "We want to live at a decent level (*'ala mustawa karim*), get a job, find love, and get married" (Herrera, 2010, p. 141). Both also are deeply concerned that such aspirations are likely to be frustrated, largely due to the lack of jobs and the impediments of injustice, in a society where a poisonous cocktail of connections, nepotism, bribery and dishonesty – rather than hard work and just merits – are what lead to success, be it in education or in clinching a decent job. Barred from the latter, and from a reasonable income, young people such as Karim and Dina find themselves in a no-man's land – a limbo between childhood and adulthood, unable to transition to independent living, and without the possibility of taking a loan to invest in housing, when home ownership is an important aspiration across the region (Arancibia, 2016, p. 261).[2] Herrera comments that despite Dina's seemingly simple desires, such goals "appear hopelessly out of reach", concluding that "arguably the two greatest impediments facing youth in the Arab states are not the spread of Islamist movements or radicalism, but the scarcity of jobs and the absence of justice" (p. 141).

The life stories of Karim and Dina serve to foreshadow some of the key aspects of the larger picture that will be presented in the sections below, in the knowledge

that "To understand some of the complexities, complications, and confusions within the life of just one member of a community is to gain insights into the collective … [E]very in-depth exploration of an individual life-in-context brings us that much closer to understanding the complexities of lives in communities" (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 11, cited by Herrera, 2010, pp. 129–130). It is to these complexities and communities that we now turn, starting first by considering the economic inequalities that mark the region, and the way that unemployment reinforces and deepens such inequalities. The driving argument throughout the chapter is that these contextual factors have a bearing on the way career guidance can be conceptualised, and the role it can play in promoting a more just and fair society.

ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES

Travelling on a train from Casablanca to Rabat in Morocco, on my way to a conference where I was slated to make a presentation on the benefits of providing career guidance services to young people, I overheard a British holidaying couple commenting about a scene that unfolded before our eyes at one of the stations along the way. A shoeshine boy, perhaps 8 years old – let's call him 'Ali' – was busy trying to get custom from among the passengers on the platform. The English lady told her husband "I wonder about that shoeshine boy … did he ever think of becoming something other than a shoeshine boy? And if he did, what chances are there that he will make a living in any other way at all?"

One of the things that strikes me most when going to the southern shores of the Mediterranean is the gap between the haves and have-nots – gaps doubtlessly no less present in the northern shores, even if perhaps somewhat better camouflaged. Morocco is a case in point, with seaside villa resorts reminiscent of those one finds on the French Riviera or Malibu, and shantytown districts with houses topped by corrugated iron roofs just a stone's throw away. While, as Piketty (2014) has carefully documented, economic inequality is not only present, but is becoming more deeply entrenched within as well as between countries worldwide, the situation in the AMCs has deteriorated due to a number of factors. These include the adoption of market-oriented reforms (often mandated by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank), the consequent reduction of public sector employment and spending on public sector services (see Diab & Barakat), and the impact of conflict and war. The latter not only wreak havoc on the productive capacities of a country, and divert scarce resources towards the purchasing of military hardware, but furthermore lead to additional pressures on domestic markets due to the presence of large numbers of displaced persons (Hanieh, 2016; Kattaa).

While, as Hassine (2014) notes, state-led economic development models adopted by Arab countries after their independence led to remarkable improvements in human development indicators with levels of poverty and inequality comparing favourably with those in all other developing regions, the situation post-2000 has seriously deteriorated, with the widening of disparities between groups in different

areas, and across a range of social markers such as class, gender, age, national origin, and citizenship status. Furthermore, perceptions of inequality have become sharper (World Bank, 2015), with the regional uprising in 2011 marked by cries for bread, freedom, and social justice (*'aish, hurryah, 'adalah ijtima'iyah'*). The middle classes in particular have become dissatisfied with falling standards of living, shortage of formal-sector jobs, the quality of public services and government accountability, with the MENA region as a whole showing steep declines in subjective well-being by the end of the 2000s (World Bank, 2015, p. 24).

More than 20% of people in the Arab region are poor – a percentage that has remained constant since the 1990s (ESCWA, 2013), indicating that the Arab region is the only area of the developing world in which poverty levels remained stagnant over the past decade and a half (Hanieh, 2016). The proportion of population without the means to acquire basic nutrition and essential non-food items has averaged close to 40% in Jordan, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Lebanon and Egypt (Achar, 2013). Hanieh (2016) also provides evidence to show the so-called 'unhappy development' paradox characteristic of many AMCs, namely relatively strong economic growth between 2000 and 2008, but widespread deterioration in social conditions, indicating that the benefits from economic expansion and growth did not reach the different segments of the population. He also aptly remarks that this so-called 'paradox' is no paradox at all if one rejects the assumptions underpinning the wholesale adoption of neo-liberal policies fomented by the IMF and the World Bank since the 1980s, namely that there is a positive-sum, mutually beneficial effect of the market. Rather, "as social and economic life become more deeply embedded in market relations, those who hold the most power in those markets tend to benefit. The result is polarization and inequality, not a uniform downward spiral (or, indeed, a steady upward climb) felt alike by all" (Hanieh, 2015, p. 1).

People in the AMCs also have unequal access to state services and social support in regard to health, livelihood and education, with state deficits being shored up by religious groups, whose anchorage in and responsiveness to the community earns them credibility and respect that, as we have lately seen, readily expresses itself at the urns. As ESCWA (2013) notes, while 20% of the poorest children in Egypt do not have access to primary schooling, practically 100% of children from well-off families complete upper-secondary education. In a region where private tuition functions as a shadow, parallel education system (Bray, Mazawi, & Sultana, 2013), twice as many rich families benefit from such additional support as do poor families (ESCWA, 2013). In many cases, such support makes or breaks an individual's chances of moving ahead.

Overall, therefore, the dissatisfaction that fuelled unrest among the middle classes is shared by the bottom 40% as well. The litany of woes includes low standards of living, widespread corruption, lack of fairness, having to supplement income by working for long hours and at greater risk in the informal sector, and being obliged to pay more to access good quality healthcare, education, housing, transport and other basic services. All this feeds widespread concerns that, despite all one's efforts and hard work, one cannot get ahead (World Bank, 2015, pp. 28–29).

Rural/Urban and Littoral/Hinterland Divides

Many of the economic and social inequalities in the region boil down to the difference between living in a city and living in a rural, often remote region in the AMCs. Hassine (2015), for instance, reports that for the Arab countries, regional and rural-urban/metropolitan centre disparities are substantial contributors to overall inequality, foregrounding the situation in Syria, Tunisia, Jordan, and Egypt to illustrate his point. The latest UNDP report (2016, p. 24) bears this out, noting as it does that the Arab region has the highest ratio of rural to urban poverty among all developing regions, bar for Latin America and the Caribbean. The report (*ibid*, p. 77) also highlights the fact that access to primary and secondary schooling across the region is still dependent on one's urban or rural location, and that the situation for rural women is often worse not just in terms of education (Sultana, 2008; Jones; Cinamon; and Hashweh), but also when it comes to early marriage, motivated by the family's desire to reduce financial responsibilities towards them, and to transfer the 'honour protection' responsibility to the husband (Hashweh). Conservative groups are especially influential in rural parts of the AMCs, where "the movements, behaviour and dress of young women are more likely to become constrained, including by law enforcement authorities, while the freedom of choice among women about their lives tend to narrow" (UNDP, 2016, p. 97). Ease of access and communication facilities are additional factors to take into account when considering the impact of geography on inequality. As in much of the global South, the communications infrastructure in terms of road links and penetration of broadband are restricted, and this could play an important part in limiting access to services (*ibid*, p. 92).[3]

Another aspect of the rural/urban divide that is germane to the Mediterranean is the difference between the littoral and the hinterland. Many major cities border on the sea, and have their own economic niche in such sectors as tourism, bunkering, trade, and fishing, with the multiplier effects that that has on many other services, including construction, transport, hospitality services, and so on. While such coastal cities have historically enjoyed many economic advantages, and thanks to tourism have also tended to be more cosmopolitan in orientation, they are currently a caricature of what they were in their heyday, often becoming depots for thousands of displaced persons escaping war, famine and persecution, hoping to cross over to the global North, and victims to rapacious traffickers who ferry them on to freedom – or to their untimely death. Coastal cities have also been the theatre for terrorists to stage their dramatic presence, with attacks such as the one at Sousse in 2015 practically wiping out the tourist industry in Tunisia, leading to a fall of 59.6% in receipts (Other Solutions Consulting, 2015).

DEMOGRAPHY AND MIGRATION

The availability and distribution of resources in a country and region are clearly tied up to supply and demand, which ultimately boils down to how many people there

are who need or want to share the resources available. It also boils down to which groups – characterised by a number of social and other ascriptions including class, age, gender, ethnicity, faith, able-bodiedness, and so on – are able to take, hold on to, and exploit those resources. One of these important resources is employment, which, as Karim and Dina – the young Alexandrians we introduced earlier – note, is the key that leads to the satisfaction of the modest aspirations of life. And yet, that key has become increasingly hard to find, not least due to the sheer number of young people making a grab for it. A Maltese saying, no doubt reflecting the country's bitter experience of mass unemployment and poverty, puts it crudely and in a nutshell: *Għal kull għadma hawn mitt kelb* – there are a hundred hungry jaws for every bone. In this section we will look at the so-called 'youth bulge' in the AMCs, which has made the competition for jobs fierce and unforgiving.

This section will also deal with another aspect of demography, namely that concerning the flows of people inside and away from a country. When youths despair of finding employment, they are more likely than adults to look to other shores (Kassotakis; Piazza et al.), especially since they do not yet have extensive family responsibilities that tie them down. Emigration can relieve the pressure on labour supply, but is also responsible for brain drain, especially since work opportunities overseas, at least in the formal sectors, are mostly open to the more qualified. The obverse of emigration is immigration – with the AMCs themselves being recipients of economic migrants from even poorer countries, or from those fleeing conflict, war, persecution and injustice at home. Their flow into a country and region exacerbates the problem of unemployment, not just because there are more people after that one bone, but because they are often employed in the informal, unregulated sector of the economy, driving wages further down given their willingness to settle for anything as long as they get enough to feed themselves and their dependents (Kattaa).

Nothing, of course, can sort the problem of mass unemployment other than increasing the number of jobs available and creating the appropriate conditions for job creation and entrepreneurship. However, career guidance has a role to play, as this and other chapters in this volume make clear.

The Youth Bulge in the AMCs

Population numbers as well as the movement of people within and between national borders have a major impact on the opening and closing of opportunities, and help shape the meaning and relevance of career guidance. Many chapters in this volume refer to the 'youth bulge' resulting from high rates of population growth in the 1980s and 1990s. Close to 30% of the population in the AMCs – around 105 million – is between ages 15 and 30, and another 30% between 0 and 14 years. Youths under the age of 24 make up over half of the population in the Arab world, and their number is expected to peak at 100 million by 2035, and to decline slowly after that, in what has been dubbed as the most rapid growth in the number of young people in the MENA in history (Assad & Roudi-Fahimi, 2007). One out of every five Arabs is aiming

to complete schooling, find employment, and start a family (Mulderig, 2013). By 2020, it is estimated that there will be more than 60 million young people below the age of 14, such that the pressure on the labour market will increase exponentially, with 1,500,000 additional jobs needed every year over the next decade (ETF, 2015; Fehling et al., 2015). The fact that many Arab states have only recently accepted women's participation in the labour market is another factor that needs to be kept in mind when thinking of the absolute increase in opportunities that are needed in the job market over the coming years (Mulderig, 2013, p. 5).

Such demographic trends could be considered in a positive light, but only on the condition that they are accompanied by adequate economic growth and job creation. Many of the authors in this volume (*inter alia* Chbani & Jaouane; Mahdjoub & Miliani; Mejri & McCarthy) in fact express grave concern in the face of growing youth disillusionment, with unemployment and underemployment generating frustrations that lead to brain drain and social unrest. In response to this situation, many argue for the use of career guidance as a tool to orient students towards those areas in the economy that are more likely to offer employment. Others (Jones; Khalil; Hashweh) stress the need to include career education and entrepreneurship in the curriculum – programmes that seem to be more readily offered as extra-curricular activities, mostly thanks to initiatives by NGOs such as *Injaz* (Chbani & Jaouane; Vlaardingerbroek et al.) and often in the context of projects supported or driven by international aid agencies and partners.

Migratory Flows

European Mediterranean Countries do not have a 'youth bulge', but are rather concerned by the opposite: What we find on the continent is an inverted age pyramid typical of aging societies, with Italy, Greece and Portugal having the lowest birth rates across Europe. By 2025, the population of the 7 EMCs will have registered little if any natural increase, whereas that of the AMCs will have grown by 70% (de Wenden, 2015). EMCs however share with AMCs an important demographic characteristic that has several implications for career guidance, namely the movement of people both outwards (emigration) and inwards (immigration), creating new spatial flows, structures and identities through remittances, associations, dual nationality, and "everyday transnational practices such as marriage, information exchange, trade, [and] the creation of small businesses" (de Wenden, 2015, p. 131).

Starting with the flows of people in the EMCs first. Young people, especially those who have invested in education and want to transform certificates into improved lifestyles, look towards other countries, across Europe and elsewhere, in order to improve their standard of living. Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece and Cyprus have been severely affected by the economic downturn, such that the flows outwards remain highly significant. Portugal, for instance, sees 200 young men and women leave the country every day, while in 2013 Italy recorded 94,000 expatriations – an increase of 19.2% when compared to the previous year, with half being under

40 (Grasso & Ottaviani, 2015). In Greece, six out of ten young people were reported to be ready to look for work in another European country (cf. Kassotakis). Another survey showed that 58% of Greek engineering students were planning to go to Germany, seeing that by the year 2020 that country would find it difficult to fill vacancies left by 120,000 retiring engineers (Tholl, 2014). But all EMCs, which, with the exception of France, were for decades countries of emigration, are now also recipients of immigrants (Kassotakis; Piazza et al.; Cohen-Scali et al.; Martinez-Muñoz & Martinez Roca). Spain has 5.5 million foreigners, and Italy another 5 million. Besides the steady flow of refugees from Syria, Greece has received 350,000 Pontic Greeks, as well as Albanians of Greek origin, now making up 60% of foreigners in the country (de Wenden, 2015).

In the AMCs the flows of people exhibit complex dynamics. Many of these countries are themselves recipients of economic migrants, totalling an estimated 1 million in 2010 (ETF, 2015; European Commission, 2010). Jordan is a case in point, and not unique in the region where local nationals are employed disproportionately in the more attractive public sector, with the private sector being obliged to employ foreigners. Jordanian garment manufacturers, for instance, import labour from South Asia (Noland & Pack, 2007; World Bank, 2007). The case of Saudi is even more extreme, with 32% of the population being expatriates. AMCs are also recipients of refugees and forcibly displaced persons who escape poverty and conflict and try to make their way to Europe via the south and east Mediterranean. Many – and Libya in particular – end up acting as 'depots' and holding pens, giving rise to labour market anomalies such as armies of cheap labour, not to mention a thriving if despicable business in people smuggling and trafficking. In 2010, AMCs hosted an estimated 2 million unregistered immigrants (ETF, 2015; European Commission, 2010) – mostly employed for wages and conditions of work that fall below the expectations of the local labour force.

AMCs are also the countries hosting the highest numbers of forcibly displaced persons and refugees in the world. Thus, according to the UNHCR (2015), 39% of the 65.3 million forcibly displaced persons are hosted in the MENA region, compared to only 6% in Europe, 12% in the Americas, 14% in Asia and Pacific, and 29% in Africa. Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey are bearing the brunt of the Syrian civil war, with Lebanon – a country with less than 4 million people – hosting around 1.5 million refugees, representing 34% of its pre-crisis population. As the chapter by Kataa shows, the unprecedented flows of people into a country has a major unsettling impact on the labour market, heightening the competition for jobs, promoting undeclared employment in the underground economy, and generally depressing wages and conditions of work.

Another aspect of the complex dynamics underpinning the flow of people across borders is the fact that the AMCs are themselves exporters of people, and have been so for a long time. Most Arabs who emigrate are under 35 years old, and 50% are under 25 years (Fehling et al., 2015). Many others would migrate if given the chance: In a regional study by Silatech (2009), 30% of young Arabs aged 15–29 declared that

if given an opportunity to do so, they would leave their country. Hashweh reports that a 2015 Youth Survey revealed that 24% of Palestinian youths desire to migrate, even if the majority of them do not want to do so permanently.

While statistics vary depending on who collects them and for what reason, there is a clear trend for such flows to intensify. In Morocco, emigration has doubled in 11 years, and now stands at 3.5 million. The numbers for Turkey, Egypt and Algeria are 5.3 million, 2.7 million, and 1 million respectively (de Wenden, 2015). United Nations data indicate that there are about 5 million emigrants from the Maghreb, or 6.2% of the resident population, with close to 90% living in Europe (UNDESA, 2015). Many others, and especially so Egyptians and Lebanese, have taken up employment in the Gulf. However, the flows between Arab states have become more difficult, either due to conflict (as in the case of Tunisians going to Libya), to policies of labour force indigenisation (as in the Gulf states, for instance – see Hooley), or to strict requirements for visa, with some demanding exit permits as well – a stark contrast to the situation a century ago when, under the aegis of the Ottoman empire, many Arab states constituted a common market. Reflecting on these obstacles to intra-regional travel, the UN's latest Arab Development Report (UNDP, 2016) notes that a customs union and improved travel access could boost the region's GDP by $760 billion over seven years.

The surge in migration can partly be explained by the fact that there is an increasing number of young people with a high educational background who feel frustrated about poor employment opportunities and conditions (Fargues, 2008). Lebanon, for instance, is undergoing an exodus in terms of highly educated emigrants. The OECD (2014) estimates that there is a veritable brain drain from the Maghreb countries, with as many as 800,000 highly skilled Moroccans, Tunisians and especially Algerians in OECD countries in 2010 (especially to France, Italy, Germany), an average share of 20% compared to 10% in 1990. Drawing on INSEE (2012) figures, Musette (2016) estimates that there are around 324,000 highly skilled Maghrebi migrants aged 25 and over in France. The pull of significantly higher wages cannot be denied: It is estimated, for instance, that a skilled Egyptian who migrates to the US can earn almost nine times as much as those who remain in Egypt (Clemens et al., 2009).

Belief that, despite all efforts, jobs can only be obtained if you have the right connections is another factor that drives young people to consider the migration option. Karim, for instance, thinks that he is unlikely to find work because his family is not well connected. He thus thinks that his best option lies in leaving Egypt and going to the West because, according to him, "abroad you can take your rights; here you cannot" (Herrera, 2010, p. 134). And yet Karim is stuck in Alexandria, because he cannot obtain a passport before he fulfils his military service obligations, something that, for ideological reasons, he is vehemently opposed to doing.

LABOUR MARKET

Various aspects of what we have discussed thus far – namely economic inequalities, demography, and migration flows – come together to impact on the labour market.

Five characteristics of the region's labour market will be highlighted in this context, namely, [a] high rates of youth unemployment; [b] low rates of labour market participation on the part of young people, especially women; [c] work attitudes and the predilection for employment in the public sector; [d] the presence of a parallel informal sector in the labour market, and [e] the importance of non-formal recruitment processes. These characteristics are especially important in our consideration of the value and relevance of career guidance given the region's specificity, and the kinds of services that need to be developed in response.

High Rates of Youth Unemployment

Both the European and the Arab Mediterranean countries have unprecedented numbers of youth unemployed, though the nature of the problem is not altogether the same for the northern and southern shores of the basin, and there are some important contrasts. Starting with the EMCs first, the 16–25 age-group has been among the worst hit by Europe's debt crisis and the resulting austerity measures, with the 'Generation Baby Losers', as they have been called, finding it very difficult to break into the labour market. Eurostat figures show that over the past three years, youth unemployment rates have hovered between 40 and 50% in Greece, Spain and Italy, between 30 and 40% in Portugal and Cyprus, and 25% in France. Boot et al. (2016) actually point out that due to the economic crisis, over the past 10 years unemployment rates in the Mediterranean rose more sharply for EU member states than for non-EU Mediterranean countries. Between 2006 and 2013, unemployment more than doubled in Greece and Portugal, and tripled in Cyprus and Spain (Goffette & Vero, 2016). Only Malta – thus far a tranquil oasis benefiting from record arrivals of tourists diverted away from other Mediterranean attractions deemed no longer safe (Debono) – has remained by-and-large untouched, with the youth unemployment rate being just over 11%. While these *rates* include young people who are in full-time studies, even the unemployment *ratio*, i.e. the share of unemployed for the whole population, is high for the EMCs, ranging from just under or just over 10 for France, Italy and Portugal, 12.4 and 12.9 for Cyprus and Greece, and 16.8 for Spain.[4]

There has moreover been a convergence of unemployment rates between men and women in the EMCs. Greece, Italy, and Spain saw a lessening of the gap between male and female unemployment rates for the year 2005–2014. Gaps were not visible for the rest of the European Mediterranean countries, and indeed there were lower rates for females in Cyprus and France, for instance (Boot et al., 2016). In the EMCs, educational qualifications remain the best insurance against unemployment. Eurostat figures for 2015 indicate that the average unemployment rate in the EU-28 for those aged between 25 and 64 having attained at most a lower secondary education was 17.4%, compared to the 5.6% for those with a tertiary education qualification. The NEET (not in employment, education or training) group also reflects this tendency, with those with low levels of education being three times more likely to be in this

situation compared to those with third-level education – with the risk being 70% higher for young people from an immigrant background (EMCC, 2015).

Another factor that characterises youth unemployment in the EMCs includes the increase in the number of long term unemployed, meaning longer transitions between school and employment. As Goffette and Vero (2016, p. 5) note, between 2006 and 2013, the share of economically active young people unemployed for a year or more grew in the EMCs, and multiplied by 9 in Spain (from 1.8% to 17.8%) and by 10 in Cyprus (from 1% to 9.9%), with the highest being in Greece (29.1%). Longer transitions have become not just an economic but also cultural phenomenon, with young people 30 and over having to remain living (or move back) with their parents because they cannot find a job that gives them enough security to strike out on their own independently. This group – sometimes referred to as the 'boomerang' generation – includes young people caught in a period of 'waithood', in the limbo between being childhood and adulthood, earning such monikers as 'twixters', 'kidults', and even 'kippers' (kids in parents' pockets eroding retirement savings).

During the economic crisis, young people in EMCs have also been increasingly obliged to take up involuntary, non-standard, short-term, temporary and part-time jobs (see Kassotakis, for instance), with austerity impeding "capability for work enhancement, i.e. the real freedom to choose the [capability-friendly] job one has reason to value" (Goffette & Vero, 2016, p. 4). In 2013, the share of youths in temporary employment because they were unable to find a permanent job ranged from just over 40% in Spain and Portugal, and over 20% in Italy and Cyprus. Such trends are contributing to the rise of a new class of young working poor (ILO, 2015).

The situation with the labour market in the AMCs is even more dire for youths in all sorts of ways, not only in terms of 'capability-friendly jobs', but of employment *tout court*. The region has the lowest employment rate in the world, with less than half of adults being in formal employment, and with some calculations declaring that there is a need to create 55–70 million jobs by 2020 to reach the global norm of unemployment rates (World Bank, 2007). Young people are the worst affected: The ILO (2013) notes that the Middle East has the highest regional youth unemployment rate in the world – 28.3% in 2012, and projected to rise to 30% in 2018. One in four are unemployed, representing double the rate of the world average, with some countries being worse off than others, such as Libya (48.7%), Palestine (43.9%) and Tunisia (42.3%). An ETF report (2015) also shows that the majority of unemployed people are looking for their first job and have had no previous experience of work. This is the case for as many as 80% of the unemployed in Egypt.

Three features are particularly worth highlighting about youth unemployment in the AMCs – all of which have implications for career guidance. First, as with young people in most of the EMCs, there is an increase in long-term unemployment and lengthening transitions between leaving school and finding a first job, resulting in a limbo state of 'emerging adulthood' (Cinamon). In Jordan, for instance, while 33.5% of youth surveyed moved directly from education to employment, the rest took almost 3 years to find work (22.1 months for males, 40.5 months for females),

with low-skilled males and highly educated females finding it especially difficult to enter employment (Barcucci & Mryyan, 2014). Hashweh notes that the share of unemployed Palestinian youth whose duration of unemployment was one year or longer was 54.8% (55.8% for young men and 53.0% for young women). Similarly in Tunisia, a tracer study found that almost 50% of graduates in the fields of humanities and law were still unemployed three and-a-half years after graduation (World Bank, 2013).[5] The scarring effects of such an experience – not just on self-confidence and realisation of capabilities, but also on future employment prospects, earning potential, economic independence, work values, and integration in the adult world – can be deep and enduring.

Second, particularly striking is the fact that, as several contributors in this volume show (*inter alia*, Chbani & Jaouane; Mahdjoub & Miliani), and in contrast to the situation in the EMCs (and especially France – see Cohen-Scali et al.), schooling does not seem to pay: Those with college certificates are ten times as likely to be unemployed as those with primary education in Egypt, five times as likely in Syria, and three times as likely in Algeria (Noland & Pack, 2007). Unemployment rates for those with tertiary education are 30% in Tunisia, 22% in Egypt (40% for women), 19% in Morocco, and 18% in Jordan (Bardak, 2014). In Jordan, every year around 20,000 new university graduates join the ranks of the unemployed (ETF, 2014c), with the proportion of unemployed graduates doubling between 2004 and 2014 overall. The figures for women are even more dramatic: 60% of women with tertiary education are unemployed in Jordan (Hanieh, 2016).[6]

Third, gender plays an important part in the distribution of opportunities in the labour market in the AMCs. Across the MENA region, we find the largest male-female gender gaps in unemployment rates in the world, with the UNDP (2016, p. 78) calculating that the national income of the economies of the Arab countries could expand by as much as 37% if gender gaps were eliminated. In the region, we find 25.4% unemployed young males compared to 42.6% unemployed young females for the year 2012 (Fehling et al., 2015). Overall, young female unemployment is particularly high in Palestine (62%), Jordan (55%), Egypt (53%), Tunisia (45%) and Algeria (40%). In most cases, this is double the rate for young men (UNDP, 2011, p. 41). Female unemployment rates in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya and Syria are at least 1.5 times as high as for males, with the difference increasing for all but Egypt over the past 10 years (Boot et al., 2016), despite enhanced access to – and better performance in – education. Unemployment rates are in fact highest for female university graduates (Martin & Bardak, 2012). One reason for this is that, as already noted, due to the adoption of market-oriented reforms across the region, there is a trend to diminish jobs in the public sector. As we shall see below, such jobs are often considered to be more appropriate for women, but opportunities have been severely curtailed (ETF, 2015). In Egypt, for instance, 70% of the workforce was to be found in the public sector in 1980; this had gone down to 23% by the year 2000 (UNDP, 2016, p. 78). Given that, as Bardak (2014, p. 79) notes, most private sector jobs available for young women in the region tend to be in the low skilled and low

paid, many prefer not to work, waiting for marriage to invest their energies in home making. This of course means that there is not only a problem with the demand for labour, but also the supply of labour in the region, given low participation rates by those who are willing and able to work, but who refuse to do so because they do not find the kind of work that they are ready to do. This raises the issue of youth participation rates in the labour market, to which we now turn.

Low Rates of Youth Participation in the Labour Market

As a ETF study (2015) notes, low activity rates are another defining characteristic of AMCs, ranging from 51.3% in Egypt to a low 37.1% in Jordan – significantly lower than for other regions in the world. Low participation rates are especially striking when disaggregated by gender. In Jordan, for instance, the participation rate for women is only 13.2% as against 60.4% for males. The corresponding figures for Palestine are 17.4% (Hashweh gives an even lower figure: 7.1%) as against 69.1%. Overall, participation rates stand at around 45% for young males, and only 15% of young females are active in the labour markets of the AMCs.

Linked to this is the high number of NEETs in the 15–29 age group: 32% of young people in Tunisia, 36% in Palestine, 29% in Jordan, and 40% in Egypt – with females and those with lower education being highly represented in these figures (ETF, 2015, p. 12). In Morocco, 60% of all inactive young men and about 23% of inactive young women were discouraged workers (ETF, 2015; World Bank, 2013). Drawing on various figures and studies, Bardak (2014) calculates that about one-third of youths aged 15–29 in the AMCs are neither in education nor in the labour market.

Work Attitudes and Predilection for Employment in the Public Sector

Such low participation rates in the labour market across the AMCs are thus only partly explained by the demand side (lack of employment opportunities); the supply side too needs to be considered. Indeed, it is not uncommon to find statements by employers in the region claiming that there is a labour shortage in some areas, for which they are obliged to recruit non-nationals (Angel-Urdinola et al., 2011; Jones; Khalil). Skills mismatch has been identified as an obstacle in the path of business development by several countries in the region, as asserted by 50% of all firms interviewed in Egypt, 38% in Lebanon, 37% in Algeria, 33% in Jordan and 31% in Morocco (Martin & Bardak, 2012). Here three interlinked issues – which have already been briefly referred to – deserve to be highlighted further, namely expectations from work, predilection for public sector employment, and notions regarding the suitability of types of work for women. There are a number of socio-cultural considerations to be taken into account here, and they are discussed in this section since they are inextricable from the broader review of the labour market in the AMCs. Further socio-cultural aspects are discussed in a separate section in this chapter.

Starting first with expectations from work. In her comparative analysis of workforce development in Tunisia and Jordan, Barnett (2015) notes that both at the level of public discourse as well as in official policy documents, employment problems are often constructed as being due to individual mind sets, attitudes to and expectations about work, and not just as the outcome of structural economic difficulties. She relates such mind-sets and attitudes to the political environment that prevails in the region, where autocracy and state-led development led to "patterns of patronage, entitlement, and top-down direction and control" (p. 6). Barnett describes situations where, as in Tunisia first under colonial government, then under Bourguiba and Ben Ali, any economic, political or social change was not possible unless approved from the top. This, she says, gave rise "to a culture that was wary of innovation and risk taking and that instead deferred to authority, expected strong social protection, and sought to preserve existing institutions and privileges rather than generate new ideas, businesses, and systems" (p. 6). Barnett further discusses the impact of the Arab Spring on work attitudes, where an increase in freedoms has been accompanied by disillusionment given the failure of the revolution to deliver social justice in tangible forms, leading to strikes and protests, rampant absenteeism and even school drop-out. Political and business leaders, Barnett reports, do acknowledge the need for structural change, but also blame young people who "need to realize that they cannot expect something for nothing, they must lower their expectations and develop a new work ethic" (p. 9). She also notes that similar criticisms were common in Jordan, where a frequent charge made by her interviewees was that many did not want to work, lacked initiative, and expected hand-outs (p. 10).

Needless to say, and as Barnett herself notes, it is easier to blame individuals than to change systems, and indeed individual attitudes are more often than not developed in response to signals and steers given by the system itself. One especially influential aspect of the economic system across the region is the importance of public sector employment, and this too helps to partly explain low participation rates in the labour market on the part of young people in the AMCs. Despite efforts to trim the public sectors, employment in it still accounts for an average of 30% of the economy across the AMCs (ETF, 2015). In Jordan, for instance, between 2004 and 2008, just under 42% of jobs created were in the public sector (Muasher, 2016), with the lowest being in Morocco (at 8%) and the highest in Libya (at 70% prior to the revolution). Such over-dependence on the government for jobs represents the particular articulation of the social contract in many countries in the region, referred to by some as 'redistribution without voice' or the 'authoritarian bargain' (World Bank, 2015), with the government providing basic services (health, education, jobs, food and energy subsidies), in return for people having little say in decision-making (Muasher, 2016). Some governments actually guaranteed jobs in the public sector to graduates – as was the case in Syria up to 2001, for instance (Huitfeldt & Kabbani, 2006).

What is characteristic of the AMCs are strong, deeply held cultural attitudes as to what would be considered to be appropriate work environments for women – though such views were common in most of the EMCs until quite recently, and

linger on in some of the more traditional communities (see Kassotakis, for instance). Many families, parents and potential spouses consider that work in the public sector is more suitable and respectable for women than in the private sector (see, *inter alia*, Jones; Hashweh), particularly in terms of the way gender mixing is managed (Barnett, 2015). In Egypt, for instance, 54% of female workers are employed in the civil service, compared to less than 10% in the private formal sector (ETF, 2015, p. 8). Furthermore, as Dhillon & Saleh-Isfahani (2009, p. 245) note, the private sector often expects workers to spend longer hours at work, tends to be much less flexible than the public sector where it concerns work schedules, and is less generous with it comes to such benefits as maternity leave. It is also likely that there are more incidents of sexual harassment, with less of a possibility for protection and assertion of rights (see Afiouni & Karam).

Strong Informal Economic Sector

A major characteristic feature of the economy in the region is the presence of a strong informal sector, a reality which raises serious questions as to the relevance of career guidance, at least as understood in the West. Hanieh (2016), citing various sources, notes that the growth of informal work in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia is the fastest in the world, comprising between 40 and 50% of all non-agricultural employment (UNDP, 2009, p. 111). In Egypt, 75% of new labour market entrants from 2000 to 2005 joined the informal sector, an increase from 20% in the early 1970s (Wahba, 2010). For the years 2001–2007, 69% of the new jobs were informal (UNDP, 2016, p. 32). As the ETF (2015, p. 6) notes, the informal sector is mainly subsistence-oriented with low-skilled workers, and characterised by "easy access, low capital requirements, a low level of formal education, and freedom from complex procedural control – mak[ing] it a dynamic and heterogeneous sector that provides employment for a large segment of the population, especially for individuals who have dropped out of education."

Many young people looking for their first job end up in the informal sector, marked by poor-quality jobs, supporting a hand-to-mouth existence, with no prospect for advancement (Angel-Urdinola et al., 2011). Such vulnerable jobs made up almost 30% of the region's employment in 2011 (UNDP, 2016, p. 32). In Jordan, for instance, a survey among young people showed that as many as 53.2% were in informal employment, or held informal jobs in the formal sector, such that even though they did have work contracts, they could not access such benefits as paid sick and annual leave, and were not contributing to the pension fund (Barcucci & Mryyan, 2014, p. 3). They also received a below average wage, worked excessively long hours (21.9% of young men and 10.8% of young women clocking up more than 60 hours per week), and felt that their skills profile did not match the work they were expected to do: 43% considered they were undereducated, while 9.4% felt they were overeducated (Barcucci & Mryyan, 2014, p. 3). Similarly, a recent ILO report on Tunisia notes that while more than one third of active young people are unemployed,

most of those who do have a job are employed in the informal economy (Charmes, 2015, cited by Arancibia, 2016, p. 259).

Informal Recruiting Practices

Another aspect of 'informality' is the manner that recruitment is often carried out across the Mediterranean region. Here there is widespread acknowledgement of the fact that 'who you know' matters a great deal when it comes to making your way in life. The issue of 'old boys' networks', 'friends of friends', 'pulling strings', and social capital has been discussed in diverse contexts across the developed and developing world, be it in China (where the power of connections is called *guanxi*), in Brazil (*jeitinho*) in Greece and Cyprus (*to meson*), in Malta (*qaddisin*), in Italy (*santi*) in Portugal (*cunha*), in France (*le piston*), in Russia (*svyazi*), in the UK (*cronyism*) or New Zealand (Sultana, 1990). Discussion of this phenomenon in the AMCs would require a separate chapter, and indeed several articles (e.g. Smith et al., 2012; Barnett et al., 2013; Egan & Tabar, 2016) and even books (e.g. Cunningham & Sarayrah, 1993; Ramady, 2016) have been dedicated to a consideration of the meaning, reach, and implications of '*wasta*', as it is called in Arab countries. A number of authors in this volume also refer to this phenomenon, not to mention the additional fillip that is given by the payment of the *shkara* (bribe) in order to clinch a job (see Mahdjoub & Miliani) or to pass exams (Vlaardingerbroek et al.).

In an on-going project on the subject, over 50 researchers from the region provided me with their views on the role of connections in the job-getting formula. Their responses to my inquiry were most revealing: All confirmed the influence of family, political and/or religious networks in obtaining employment and getting on in life. Some made a distinction between employment practices in the public and private sector, with the latter being more securely based on merit, though many countries have made efforts to regulate the former so that recruitment is more transparent and based on objective criteria. Many also noted that the issue of 'connections' and 'friends of friends' has many layers to it: Some see its sequential dimension, in that faced with overwhelming numbers of applicants for a vacancy, employers will make a first selection using qualifications as a guide, but then move on to selecting the most suitable, which is where connections might come into play. A few noted the value of 'wasta' in unblocking deeply entrenched inequities of power, where, to quote what one of the respondents said, connections work "as a kind of shadow economy of the poor and the marginalised – in a context in which power networks are only marginally open to change and inclusion". Most highlighted the impact that such practices had on the morale of young people, especially those who had few if any strings to pull.

Karim and Dina – who we introduced earlier on in this chapter – are two such young people, whose perceptions match the views of the researchers sampled and the available literature, and who are living the consequences that come from lack of '*wasta*'. Karim thinks that "opportunity and advancement come primarily through

connections, bribes, and dishonesty, not through merit or hard work" (Herrera, 2010, p. 134), and while he accepts that some of his misfortunes are his own doing, he feels that the system is neither just nor legitimate: With paths to gainful employment and autonomous adult life closed, he can only look to seeking a better life elsewhere. Dina, on her part, has persevered in her studies, but is concerned that despite all her efforts and hard work, she will not be able to fulfil her aspirations. University life has already presaged what is to come, and what she sees demoralises her and fills her with dread: "She [was] dismayed", notes Herrera (2010, p. 138) "at the degree of nepotism in higher education as she witnessed the children of professors and those with parents in positions of power get the highest marks and job opportunities (apparently unwarranted), whereas those with no connections go unnoticed, underrewarded, and underemployed […]. The lack of fairness in the university parallels what she regards as a more endemic problem – the prevalence of corruption and connections [*wasta*] in the everyday functioning of Egyptian society." "Egyptian society is thoroughly based on connections", Dina tells her interviewer. "It leads to corruption, which spreads like fire from dry leaves."

Many share such perceptions, as evidenced by the response given by young people to a Gallup survey held in 2013, which asked: "In general, do you mostly agree or disagree with the following statement: Knowing people in high positions is critical to getting a job?" More than 60% of respondents from the MENA countries, with the exception of Qatar (which scored just under 60%), agreed. The rate of agreement with this statement for Lebanese respondents was 90%, while that for Jordanians was 85% (World Bank, 2014). While one needs to be wary of falling into the kinds of traps that Said (1979) warns about in the way the 'orient' is depicted – not least because, as I have taken pains to note, deficits in meritocracy are endemic everywhere – sensitivities about such practices as articulated by those within the region itself cannot be ignored.

POLITICAL FACTORS

It is a truism to say that political instability generally negatively impacts on transitions to work: Schooling is often disturbed; businesses retrench, limiting their expansion, or close down and relocate; and young people's energies are absorbed either by political activism or by militias in the ranks of the different factions. Obviously, conflict also generates new opportunities for entrepreneurship, but much of this is illegal, clandestine, and underground – hardly a sound basis on which to construct a life project. Many of the Mediterranean countries, but especially the AMCs, have gone through an intense period of political destabilization, leading to insecurity that has an impact on the business world, affecting job creation. Suffice it to think of the fallout from the Arab Spring, and particularly the on-going civil wars in Syria and Libya that have not only wiped out so many of the economic sectors in both countries, but have had a major impact on the neighbouring ones and well beyond. Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey have absorbed the great majority of Syrian refugees,

taking close to 660,000, 1.5 million, and 2.8 million refugees respectively. Kataa explores some of the implications that such forced displacement has not just on the everyday lives of people – whether refugees or hosts – but on economies as well, and how bespoke guidance services can provide some relief in terms of earning a livelihood.

Authoritarian regimes, however, have a major impact on the economy well before they fall. In situations where economic, social and political initiatives have to be approved and endorsed, most people learn to be wary of innovation and risk-taking. Barnett (2015, p. 6) reflecting on the situation in Tunisia, and drawing on Hibou's (2011) work on the cultural effects of autocracy, notes that repression leads to low rates of civic participation, deferral to authority, high expectations when it came to receiving strong social protection, and a propensity to preserve existing institutions and privileges rather than generate new ideas, businesses, and systems. Such attitudes have a bearing on the relevance or otherwise of entrepreneurship and education-to-work programmes – a point that is also made by Hooper (2010) in his attempt to explain the debt problems of Greece, Spain and Portugal in terms of the attitudes generated during their respective experience of dictatorship, which came to an end relatively recently in the mid-1970's.

In the brief period where countries experienced the Arab Spring – as well as in those countries that decided to be less heavy handed in controlling civil society in order to avoid social unrest – new spaces opened up for NGOs and corporate social responsibility actors to take initiatives. Many focused on youth, particularly in terms of promoting employment and entrepreneurship. Barnett (2015, p. 12) refers in particular to Jordan, where royal family members are promoting the importance of building responsibility and citizenship: "Public discussions of work ethic, work skills, and citizenship for political stability are consistently linked", notes Barnett. She goes on to conclude that "For a young person in Jordan, figuring out how to fit into the economy is not just a matter of self-actualization and empowerment. It is also framed as a matter of national civic responsibility". Such attitudes have implications for the kind of career guidance models that appear salient, whereby individuals are expected to pursue careers and livelihoods within social and community contexts, as the chapters by Badawi, Khalil, and Hooley, among others, note.

SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

Socio-cultural factors are important to consider when attempting to understand the relevance of such socially and historically constructed practices as career guidance for different regions in the world. While some of these have been outlined in the previous section, we here sustain and sharpen our focus to further highlight the contingency of concepts that are essential to the field, at least in its mainstream articulations. As already noted in Chapter 1, taken-for-granted notions include the centrality of work as a source of fulfilment in one's life project; the role of internal locus of control and of self-directed autonomy in making occupational choices;

the delaying of gratification in view of long term career planning; the bearing of sole responsibility for life outcomes; and the separation of material from spiritual considerations of being. Examples of mainstream practices include the individual career interview; predominance of discursive strategies as the pathway to problem resolution; the maintenance of professional distance (regulated, in some instances, by a monetised relationship); an overemphasis on personal variables, such as interests and abilities, at the cost of considering environmental and contextual variables; and the articulation of solutions in terms of individual rather than collective action, often without reference to the spiritual dimension of life (Lips-Wiersma, 2002) or the role of piety as a source of personal satisfaction at work (Ravari et al., 2009).

Many such socio-cultural factors come into play when considering career guidance as a concept and as a practice in the region, in both the EMCs and AMCs. Two are given special attention in this section. The first factor refers to the purported 'collectivist orientation' of Mediterranean societies – and the interplay between this and related phenomena such as type of welfare regime, and the role played by family elders in promoting particular occupations and livelihoods. The second socio-cultural factor refers to the impact of religious orientation towards one's engagement with work. Considerations of the impact of gender run through this section, as through much of the chapter, and indeed the whole volume.

Collectivist Orientations

One way of characterising Mediterranean countries has conventionally been to draw on Hofstede's (2001) work on national and regional cultural groupings which seem to be remarkably persistent over time, and which affect behaviour of both individuals and organisations. Hofstede makes a distinction between cultures that are individualist and others that are collectivist in orientation. The first are "primarily motivated by their own preferences, needs, rights, and contracts they have established with others; give priority to their personal goals over the goals of others; and emphasise rational analyses of the advantages and disadvantages to associating with others" (Triandis, 1995, p. 2).

The second embrace collectivism which is "a social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who see themselves as part of one or more collectives (family, co-workers, tribe, nation); are primarily motivated by the norms of, and duties imposed by, those collectives; are willing to give priority to the goals of those collectives over their own goals; and emphasise their connectedness to members of their collectives" (Triandis, 1995, p. 2). This in-group collectivism also finds an echo in other distinctive dimensions, such as dominant hierarchical practices (referring to 'liberalism-authoritarianism', 'horizontal-vertical', or 'small versus large power distance' scales). Collective and authoritarian cultures emphasise family integrity, harmony, interdependence, saving face, authority, and hierarchy within the collective – and such values are given more importance than competition, pleasure, and self-fulfilment (Dwairy, 2006, p. 7). "The self is defined as an appendage of

the collective, and an individual's identity is associated with social affiliation to the family or tribe rather than to personal qualities or achievements; social relationships are close and cooperative and involve much hospitality" (Dwairy, 2006, p. 7).

Most Mediterranean and Arab societies seem to reflect the collectivist orientation, with people being expected to act rather more as members of a group or organisation, and somewhat less as autonomous, atomised individuals. Hofstede's characterisation has attained further legitimacy through empirical testing, with a recent case in point being the GLOBE study on leadership styles (Kabasakal et al., 2102), where MENA region's leadership preferences reflected cultural practices associated with collectivism, including high in-group norms and power distance. Hofstede's typology also dovetails with the work that has been carried out on 'welfare regimes', and specifically with the critiques that have been made of Esping-Anderson's three-fold typology, which has been extended to include a 'Southern' welfare regime applicable to most of the EMCs, characterised as these are by their fragmented system of welfare provision, with reliance on the family and the voluntary sector (e.g. religious organisations and foundations) to make up for state deficits (Ferrera, 1996).

This in many ways also characterises the AMCs, where the model of the patriarchal family, while increasingly challenged, remains widespread. The World Values Survey (2014) notes that family values in the region in 2013 – in terms of the strength of family ties, of the desire to make one's parent proud, and how much one trusts the family in relation to the broader community – were at levels equivalent to those in the rest of the world, even if they had dropped by about 12% after the 2011 uprisings. It also notes that family values are less prevalent among young people and the well educated, but more widespread among the more religious. In terms of another indicator of collectivist societies, i.e. obedience to authority (whether parental or political) – the World Values Survey notes that the region is about 11% more obedient than in the global average. Even if the propensity to obedience is less strong among youths and the well educated, the education effect is smaller when compared to that it exerts in the rest of the world. Commenting on these figures, the UNDP (2016) argues that increasing dissatisfaction with the quality of life in the region actually reinforces patriarchal values, "reflecting the role of the family as the ultimate refuge in a dysfunctional society and an ineffective state" (p. 49). A recent survey among youth in Jordan, for instance, backs up such claims: 75% of respondents felt that achieving success in life depended on the status of their family in society, rather than on their own efforts (reported in Fehling et al., 2015).

It therefore seems that there is some value in working with such a typology when considering career guidance (see *inter alia*, Hughes & Thomas, 2005; Cinamon; though see Hartung et al., 2010) – for one thing, it leads to questioning mainstream and taken-for-granted assumptions of what 'career maturity' might mean, and when, developmentally, such 'maturity' is attained. It also confirms the importance of thinking of career guidance as a family affair, where a constellation of subtle and not so subtle influences (Diab and Barakat refer to students being 'bullied' into making

particular 'choices') direct a young family member towards a particular 'choice', even if the latitude for decision-making is possibly broader and deeper than it is sometimes presented to be (see the chapters by Jones, by Hashweh, and by Turcotte et al.). The ambiguous process through which such steering takes place is nicely captured by Weir (2008) in his anthropological account of the decision-making form widespread in the Arab Middle East called '*diwan*' which, while hierarchical, positional, and fatalistic, is also individualistic and egalitarian, thus defying analytic accounts of decision-making prevalent in Western accounts – a point also made obliquely by Badawi in this volume.

Such ambiguity therefore highlights the need to handle Hofstede's binary opposition between the two mind-sets with care. As Dwairy (2006) has pointed out in his attempt to develop counselling services more attuned to Arab clients, it is important to avoid both 'alpha' and 'beta' biases. The first bias leads us to exaggerate difference between cultures, blinding us to the many shared universal features, and giving the impression that cultures are incommensurable, thus rendering cross-cultural communication practically impossible and closing down the conversation about dialogic multiculturalism before it has even started. Badawi makes it a point to highlight this danger, while also avoiding the second bias, which involves denial of differences that do indeed exist *between* and *within* cultures. As cultural critics such as Edward Said (1979) and Homi Bhabha (1994) have argued, globalisation and exposure to different cultures – due to mass media, migration, diaspora, displacement and relocation – lead to hybrid rather than hermetic identities. Socio-economic status also plays an important part in positioning individuals and groups across the *continuum* between the two orientations described by Hofstede. Furthermore, as Cinamon's chapter in this volume serves to highlight, contrasting and contradictory values might reside in the same person (e.g. piety, attachment to family *and* liberal values such as self-expression and less respect for authority), creating situations of "multiple or overlapping identities whereby individuals behave differently across the spheres in which they participate" (UNDP, 2016, p. 59), reflecting attitudes in a society in transition.

As Afiouni and Karam and other contributors to this volume note, gender too plays a fundamental role in regard to one's response to the tensions between personal aspirations and societal pressures. While collectivist values have traditionally weighed especially heavily on women, it bears pointing out that the Arab family is in a state of transition and undergoing significant change, with the model of the extended family living together in one household or in close proximity no longer the norm everywhere, even if the traditional family structure prevails among rural and poorer social strata (UNDP, 2016, p. 28). Important changes are thus loosening the tight weave of patriarchy, which is being questioned in the region, in some countries more than others. Evidence of this are improved education for women, delaying marriage, declining fertility rates, changes in the structure of the family, widespread activism over women's rights, and a conservative backlash (UNDP, 2016, p. 274).

Religious Orientations

In the secularised, economically developed world, religious beliefs and spirituality do not generally feature much at all in the considerations of career education, career guidance, and career development. Few of the field's mainstream textbooks dedicate much attention at all to the role played by beliefs or piety in choosing a life pathway. It bears recalling that in the past it was common to speak not of a 'career' but of a 'vocation', a word with Latin roots – *'vocare'*, 'to call' – reflecting the belief that one's labour is a response to a higher calling, in the service of God and society. 'Vocational guidance' was meant to help individuals listen to that inner and transcendental 'call'. Such etymologies and sedimented meanings are mostly lost on current and mainstream articulations of career guidance in what, taking a cue from Weber, we can refer to as a 'disenchanted world'. Increasingly, however, possibly due to a resurgence of piety among youth across the world (World Values Survey, 2014), as well as the increasingly multicultural composition of most societies where many from the global South carry their faith and practices with them to the host countries, the part played by religious beliefs and spirituality in shaping various aspects of individual and social life is being increasingly acknowledged. Dik and Duffy (2008), in particular, have argued for the need to re-introduce constructs of 'calling' and 'vocation' within counselling psychology, with a view to emphasising purpose and 'meaningfulness' at work.

The issue of the importance of religious beliefs is relevant to both the EMCs and AMCs. A Eurobarometer Poll (EP) held in 2005 (European Commission, 2005) and a Gallup Poll (GP) held four years later show that Malta (EP: 95% | GP: 86%), Cyprus (90% | 75%), Greece (81% | 71%), Portugal (81% | n/a) and Italy (74% | 72%) topped the list in terms of persons in Europe who believed in God. Spain (59% | 49%) lagged five places behind Italy, with only France (34% | 30%) being towards the bottom of the list, ahead of the Scandinavian countries. While religious belief is on the wane in all the countries polled, Mediterranean countries are still far ahead of other EU countries in terms of (declared) religiosity, compared to Estonia (10%), the Czech Republic (19%), and Nordic countries (ranging from 23% to 30%).

Religion is also an important factor to consider in the AMCs. A UNICEF report (Khouri & Lopez, 2011) outlined two elements characterising Arab youth identities that influence their vision and priorities: Family and religion. As many as 68% of respondents said that religion defined them as a person. There is a large margin of difference – as much as 21% – between piety (as expressed through visiting places of worship and listening to sermons) in the Arab region compared to other countries worldwide at similar levels of development (World Values Survey, 2014). Similar evidence comes through the survey carried out by the Pew Research Center (2012), which reports on attitudes to religion in Muslim countries, based on more than 38,000 face-to-face interviews conducted in over 80 languages with Muslims in 39 countries and territories in six different regions. Across the MENA region – where 7 countries were included (Iraq, Lebanon, Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, and

Morocco) – about six-in-ten or more say that religion is very important in their lives, with 67% in Turkey saying the same.

In the MENA region, Muslims 35 years and older place greater emphasis on religion and exhibit higher level of religious commitment than those between ages 18 and 34. They are more likely to attend a mosque, read the Quran on a daily basis, and pray multiple times each day. 93% said they believe in fate[7] (compared to 57% of Muslims in Southern-Eastern Europe), 94% said they fasted during Ramadan, 79% that they give alms (*zakat*), 75% pray at least once a day. There are however significant differences in religious commitment between generations – the largest gaps when compared to the results for the other regions covered by the survey. For instance, while 71% of Lebanese adults 35 years old and over declared that religion is very important to them, the corresponding figure for those aged between 18 and 34 was 42%. The gap was less wide for Palestine (90% | 80%), Tunisia (82% | 73%), Jordan (88% | 82%), and Egypt (76% | 74%). Men and women tend to be very similar in terms of the role religion plays in daily life: 82% of men in the 7 MENA countries surveyed, compared to 83% of women say that religion is very important in their lives, 65% compared to 69% say they pray several times a day, 48% and 49% who read or listen to the Quran daily.

Religion is therefore a force to be contended with, and, as Badawi make it clear in his consideration of the way religion permeates the daily lives of believers, it is practically unimaginable to conceive of career guidance – or, for that matter, other services that connect with what makes one profoundly human – which ignores this reality. Religious belief systems offer the faithful a holistic matrix that is applicable to, and permeates all aspects of life, providing guidance, values and rules for personal life and community relations. As such, it cannot be considered simply as an external identity badge that has little impact on the way life is experienced and lived, even if the imbrication of the worldly with the spiritual – through, for instance, the accumulation of status thanks to public displays of religious observance – also needs to be acknowledged. Religious belief, then, provides another important epistemic lens through which to consider work and career in the region, which come to be perceived as a 'calling'. In orienting oneself towards work, self-fulfilment does play a part, but this is/can be subsumed to what Dik and Duffy (2008, p. 427) refer to as "a transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation". Work, and participation in it, can then come to represent much more than a means of livelihood, with the experience being imbued with theological immanence, as Possumah et al. (2013), Gomez (2014) and Sharabi (2012) explain in relation to Islam, Christianity, and Judaism respectively.

These are not abstract considerations, but rather have a bearing on one's approach to career guidance. In his reflections on the Saudi incipient efforts to articulate an Islamic epistemology in their approach to career guidance, Hooley notes attempts to blend Western approach to ones that place notions of career development within

family and community, that stress the relationship between the individuals' career and their faith, and the equal place that career success and philanthropy should have in the aims of the individual. A good example of this can be found on an Internet site, 'Sound Vision', that offers career advice to Muslim youths. Here we find the usual recommendations to know oneself, to know the job market, to consult various information sources, to talk to experts – with parents being admonished not to put undue pressure on their children which, it is noted "can be for the student a source of frustration for years to come". However, in addition to these guideposts, we also find the invitation to "keep an Islamic perspective", with students being told that

> More important than the successes and failures we encounter in life is the way in which we react to them. We should be thankful to Allah and humble in our achievements, and we should be thankful and patient in our defeats. Face every challenge and perform every task to the best of your abilities, and at the same time pray for Allah's help, guidance and forgiveness. Indeed, the amount of *taqwa*[8] we accumulate in our hearts is a more trustworthy measure of our success in life.

In response to which one Egyptian reader tweeted: "This is the best article on the net about this issue. I think the best point is 'Keeping an Islamic Perspective' #1 on the list."

EDUCATIONAL FACTORS

Many of the chapters in this volume address the role of career guidance in the educational sector, and they practically all converge in explicitly or implicitly highlighting the sharp difference between many of the education systems in the West and those that prevail in the AMCs, given that the way in which such systems are organised determines the relevance, consequence and value of educational and career guidance.

Many modern educational systems strive to keep options for young as open as possible for as long as possible, namely by having broad curricula that give students the opportunity to 'taste' different disciplinary knowledge clusters, avoiding early specialisation, ensuring that choices made are not final or lead to dead-ends, and organising pathways that are accorded equal esteem, with modular curricula that facilitate transfer from one specialisation to the other (*inter alia*, Young, 1998; Yesilyaprak; Taveira). The so-called 'Finnish miracle' (Niemi, Toom, & Kallioniemi, 2012), which sees young Finns scoring highly in PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) and other global student achievement evaluation surveys, is at least partly attributed to the system's ability to tick most of the boxes in relation to the criteria just mentioned. Similarly, the blame for German students' surprisingly mediocre performance in the PISA exercise is laid at the door of their much vaunted dual system, which separates and streams students into vocational and academic tracks at what for many is a shockingly early age.

The dominant paradigm in the organisation of contemporary schooling systems in the West – in rhetoric if not in reality – is therefore guided by the aspiration to postpone high stakes decisions till as late as possible, and to ensure that such decisions are neither irrevocable, nor detrimental. Educational and career guidance are increasingly built into the range of services offered to students, from primary schooling onwards, and even integrated in different ways into the curriculum in order to ensure that students learn to make decisions in a skilled and informed manner (Sultana, 2012). This of course does not exorcise away the influence of social class, gender and race in determining futures, nor does it exonerate career guidance from the charge of colluding in the process of the reproduction of inequality (Willis, 1977). But overtly at least, and sometimes in practice, career guidance and the education system are mutually responsive in opening up options and opportunities for students, irrespective of the latters' origin. Indeed, one of the most admirable features of the Finnish educational system is that not only does it promote high educational attainment, but achievement gaps within and between schools are minimal (OECD, 2010).

Schooling systems in the AMCs are organised along an entirely different logic (see, for instance, Hashweh; Elhawat; Jones; Diab & Barakat; Vlaardingerbroek et al.). Despite major investment in education over the past three decades – eight of the top 20 countries in the world that have registered the most increases in general schooling are Arab countries (Chor & Campante, 2011) – the key characteristic across the region remain selection, with class, gender, and geographical location playing a major part in the quality of schooling individuals can access, the outcomes achieved, and the life paths and projects that consequently become feasible. Low educational attainment across many of the Arab states has been clearly signalled by the results of international student assessments such as PISA, TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) and PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study), while between 75% and 50% of students in Algeria, Egypt and Morocco drop out or leave school immediately after completing compulsory education (ETF, 2015; Martin & Barak, 2012). Up to 10% of students across the region drop out of primary school (ETF, 2014).

Money can purchase either élite private schooling or 'star' private tutors (Hartmann, 2013), which dig a deeper trench in achievement gaps between social groups. Despite several exciting pedagogical initiatives across the region (Sultana, 2016), for the majority of students in the AMC schooling is a drab and dreary affair driven by discipline and competitive examinations (Herrera & Torres, 2006; Mazawi & Sultana, 2010a, b), with the dreaded *Tawjihi* crowning an individual's school career. High grades lead to the 'golden highway', i.e. acceptance in a university course in medicine, law, or engineering. Under such circumstances, as we concluded in our earlier study of career guidance in the region (Sultana & Watts, 2008), cultural belief systems, social class distinctions, and related perceptions of occupational hierarchies orient individuals towards futures, rather than aspirations understood more broadly in terms of mainstream career development theories. As Diab and

Barakat note in relation to Syria, tight framing of student pathways results in a "lack of a culture of career planning". The structure of the system "acts as a proxy for career guidance", with orientation built into the way the system "filters and channels students", with learners "going with the flow", guided and filtered by the curriculum (Vlaardingerbroek et al.). Under such circumstances, one cannot help but conclude – according to some of the authors in this volume – that the benefits of career guidance are likely to be small.

Another feature of the educational system that has a bearing on the relevance or otherwise of career guidance in the AMCs is the lack of status of Vocational Education and Training (VET) pathways, and the consequent 'academic drift'. Universities now enrol about one-third of young people in the region (ETF, 2014), with the percentage being higher in Lebanon (53%), and lower in Morocco (13%). About 63% of all university students in the MENA region study humanities and social sciences – with the figures rising to 74–75% in Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Palestine and Oman (Rose, 2016). Here again a number of systemic and socio-cultural features come into play: While those with the highest school-leaving grades are oriented towards selective science and engineering faculties, the rest crowd the remaining faculties, even if – as noted by Mahdjoub and Miliani, the contribution this makes to national economic efforts is minimal. Since many consider employment in the public sector a major attraction, they follow degrees that lead to that rather than choose education and training pathways that lead to the jobs that are available and that are required by industry (ETF, 2015, p. 15).

As several chapters in this volume note, the Vocational Education and Training (VET) option is seen as only suitable for low achievers, with "a poor social image deeply rooted in the culture of the countries" (ETF, 2015, p. 14). Despite many efforts to tighten the bonds between schooling and work and to have an "employability-driven education" (Mazawi, 2007, p. 255) – efforts which have included combatting negative perceptions of VET and even prioritising it after the Arab Spring in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia (ETF, 2015, p. 14) – little headway has been made, with Vlaardingerbroek et al. speaking of a 'brick wall mentality' separating mainstream schooling from technical-vocational education. Summarising various studies it has carried out in the region, the ETF (2015) notes that in the four Maghreb countries, only 10% of students go to a VET school, while for Palestine the figure is 6%. The same report notes that only Egypt has high figures, with 54% enrolled in VET, but that for many of these, VET is "a second education choice after having been tracked out of general education" (p. 13). Jordan possibly went furthest in promoting VET routes, providing a stipend and social security, paying for transportation costs, advertising information among both parents and students about the competitive wages paid for vocational and technical jobs, rebranding through developing new programmes which facilitate transfer between general and vocational courses, and such like. Yet Barnett (2015, p. 18) notes that despite all these efforts and schemes, any discussion of vocational work "refer almost ubiquitously to the 'culture of shame' around such employment" – even if, as Hashweh notes, the attitudes of parents whose children

attend vocational schools tends to be more positive – at least in Palestine. Negative attitudes towards manual work in the region – shared by some of the EMCs as well (see Kassotakis, for instance) – are such that "many young people refuse to take up manual jobs and opt for voluntary unemployment: (ETF, 2015, p. 15). These attitudes, widespread in AMCs as much as in many countries in the global South,[9] stand in contrast to the notions of pride in a craft, strongly embedded in Nordic and Germanic cultures (though see Faroqhi & Deguilhem, 2005), and which go some way in explaining why attempts to export the dual system have consistently met with intractable difficulties (Clemens, 2015). In such contexts, the scope for forms of educational and career guidance as normally understood in the West is severely restricted. If anything, and as several contributions in this volume suggest, the value and purpose of career guidance is reduced to the impact it might have in orienting recalcitrant students towards VET pathways – which often seems to be the main driver for policy interest in the area.

GLOBALISATION

A final contextual factor that will be highlighted in this chapter, and which frequently emerges as a theme in several of the chapters in this volume, is the impact of international agencies and organisations in promoting career guidance in the AMCs. Reference has already been made to the efforts of the European Commission, particularly through the European Training Foundation's MEDA-ETE (Education and Training for Employment) project (see Chapter 1). The ILO (International Labour Organisation) also promoted career guidance in the region and across low- and middle-income countries internationally, holding up achievements by the likes of Jordan as an example to the rest (Hansen, 2006), and taking on an important role in developing services for refugees (Kattaa). As several contributors note (*inter alia* Chbani & Jaouane; Khalil; Hashweh; Diab & Barakat; Yesilyaprak; and Hooley), other organisations have tried to anchor career guidance in the AMCs, most notably the German development agency GIZ (*Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit*), USAID (the United States Agency for International Development), the World Bank, CIDA (the Canadian International Development Agency), Save the Children, the UNDP, and UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) among others. Indeed, some of the authors in this volume – myself included – have acted as consultants to one or more of these organisations, and have reflected critically on the 'push' and 'pull' factors that have made career guidance rise in the horizons of interests of international actors and local policy makers alike (Sultana, 2011; Khalil; Turcotte et al.; Antoniou; and Hooley), leading to much 'policy borrowing' and 'policy lending' across contexts which may very well be incompatible.

While 'policy epidemics' and 'globally travelling ideas' tend to be stimulated by their own specific dynamics, where a topic can become trendy due to a particularly successful and widely disseminated study, due to the impact of a close-knit 'policy entrepreneur' community in search of a mission, or simply due to the need for a

'political spectacle', one needs to more deeply interrogate why it is that career guidance has become an important theme in the policy considerations across the region. Mazawi (2007), reviewing the many documents that purport to promote the 'knowledge-based society' in the Arab region, provides us with a key to making sense of such developments, even if he does not refer to career guidance specifically or explicitly. He notes that 'work' has increasingly become central to major restructuring initiatives across the Arab region, "in relation to which education is perceived as a core policy tool" (p. 261). There is thus an enhanced effort to tighten the bonds between school and work – and career guidance is one such bond, particularly when deployed to direct students towards VET routes.

Mazawi goes on to argue that the instrumentalisation of education at the service of a 'knowledge society' is promoted by local, regional and international development agencies and associations, and that while "how work is structured, and how it is positioned in relation to knowledge and education raises issues related to capacity-building and development", it is nevertheless vital to also consider such issues as "part of larger dynamics embedded in intra-regional, geopolitical and global power relations" – a task that we have tried to fulfil in this and other chapters in this volume. Mazawi concludes that "education for work reforms across the Arab region have become enmeshed in a complex imbrication of 'networks' composed of local, regional and global organisations which henceforward set the development agenda" (*ibid*, p. 261).

Such considerations challenge those of us in the career guidance field to critically interrogate ourselves as to whose agendas and which development goals we are promoting, and in whose interests these ultimately work. Opting for 'capability' rather than 'human capital' approaches to development has major implications for the kinds of vision one might have of career guidance (Robertson, 2015), with the former being much more social in orientation, and the latter primarily focused on the individual, who is seen as a rational economic actor. This is a crucial question, and one that several authors in this collection address, given that they – like me – desire to see the field firmly embedded in emancipatory impulses, anchored in community activism, and striving to promote social transformation and social justice from a variety of epistemic standpoints, yet within a political view of the world which, as Mazawi (2007, p. 262) eloquently puts it, "situates the citizen within broader intersections of culture, identity, community and self, however imagined".

CONCLUSION

The preceding sections have outlined at some length different aspects of context, which, in relation to the region, and particularly in the case of the Arab Mediterranean Countries, are most likely to have an impact on the way career guidance is conceptualised. The remaining contributions in this volume engage with many of the themes and issues raised in this chapter, serving to broaden and deepen the exploration into context and analysis, and to further familiarise the reader

with the dynamic interaction of factors as they play out across groups of countries (chapters 3 to 5) or in particular national settings (chapters 6 to 25).

Clearly the implications for career guidance are wide-ranging, and many of these would have become obvious from the manner in which the issues were presented. Those implications will be teased out more explicitly in the final chapter, where a synthesis of the insights generated by the different contributors will be presented with a view to articulating a regional agenda for career guidance.

NOTES

[1] Like most if not all institutionalised religions, Islam has served as both a unifying and a divisive force: Different branches of the same faith are not only in conflict, but consider other varieties to be heretical. According to the Pew survey of 2012, many Sunnis – the majority sect in the MENA region – do not consider Shias to be 'true' Muslims.

[2] The UNDP (2016) report pulls together some troubling information from various sources in this regard, noting that almost half the men aged 25–29 in the region are still unmarried, up from 37% for the previous generation, and the highest proportion among developing regions. The mean age for first marriage of Arab women was around 18 fifty years ago, when now it is 25. The lowest mean is in Palestine and Saudi Arabia (20 years), with the highest being Libya (31) and Lebanon (32). The implications of this for contexts where pre-marital sex, let alone cohabiting, are prohibited, can be quite telling.

[3] The rural/urban divide does not always work out in favour of the latter when it comes to opportunities for youths. Several AMCs have put national strategies into place in order to make sure that economic development in the rural regions keeps apace with the rest. In Jordan, for instance, a recent survey found that, at 20.6%, urban youth unemployment was almost 4 percentage points higher than in rural areas, with young people in the latter parts of the country enjoying a relatively higher probability of having a written (and longer) work contract than their counterparts in urban areas, and to benefit from higher monthly reservation wages (Barcucci & Mryyan, 2014, p. 3).

[4] Rates are higher than ratios because this measure is based on the number of unemployed youth divided by the total number of youth in the labor force (employed and unemployed). The unemployment ratio is lower because the denominator is the total population of young people, including those in education and training (O'Reilly et al., 2015).

[5] The extent of graduate unemployment has raised concerns about the recruitment of disillusioned young people by extreme and/or terrorist movements – a concern voiced by a number of contributors to this volume. While some of these fears are exaggerated, there is some evidence to support the link. A study of 384 Tunisian court records for the years 2011–2015 and covering 1000 terrorists (965 men, 35 women) found that 40% had a university degree (Sawahel, 2016). Gambetta and Hertog (2016) similarly report that in their sample, as many as 46% of jihadi recruits in the Middle East and whose education background is known are graduates (with 45% of these having qualified as engineers). However, as Rose (2016) points out, the highest number of unemployed are those graduating from the humanities and social sciences: They have tended to be the backbone of the revolutionary movements, but are not much present at all in jihadist movements – possibly because the social sciences are more likely to promote critical thinking.

[6] As Hashweh points out in relation to Palestine, higher rates of graduate unemployment for women may skew our understanding of the situation in particular ways. After disaggregating Palestinian data by sex, Hashweh found that, while overall unemployment rates were highest among better education youths, the rate decreases for young men on completion of higher education, while the opposite is true for young women. This might be the case for other countries in the region.

[7] As Badawi explains, the issue of the notion of 'fate' in Islam is complex, given that there are a number of Koranic verses that also highlight the individual's responsibility in determining which action to take. The high percentage of Muslims in the MENA region who declare their belief in fate suggests

that popular – as against theologically sophisticated – interpretations of the notion reinforce the notion that what happens has been preordained by God, possibly fomenting a passive attitude toward the future. This has important implications for career guidance, which, in its current Western articulations, promotes empowering individuals to be pro-active and strategic in designing their life project. Belief in external forces that determine futures is a widespread cultural trait in the Mediterranean, from '*fado*' in Portugal, to '*qadar*' in Arab countries, and the Moirai, the 'fate spinners' popularised by Hellenic culture, external attribution for events is an area of psychological and anthropological interest, and provides clues about orientations to life which should not be quickly dismissed.

[8]   The word '*taqwa*' refers to the 'shield' or protection from the anger and punishment of Allah – it thus entails a state of awareness of God in everything that a person does, and letting that awareness guide actions and shield from harm. The link to the website from which this extract is taken is http://www.soundvision.com/article/6-guidelines-for-students-and-parents-on-selecting-a-career-path

[9]   Such disdain could be linked to the colonial enterprise, where subjugation of a people carried with it the exportation of work onto indigenous groups – something, for instance, that we note with the British during the time of Empire, when it was official policy to set up vocational schools in the colonies in order to ensure that skilled labour was available to produce the goods required back home (Bacchus, 1988). It would not be at all far-fetched to argue that the drive by aid agencies from the developed economies to promote TVET in the region is a more recent post-colonial strategy to ensure the availability of skilled cheap labour to boost profits for the companies in metropole centres, carried out under the guise of promoting local development. This is of course raises concerns about economic neo-colonialism, over and above the practice of career guidance as 'cultural imperialism' which Hooley, among other contributors to this volume, highlights.

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