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Career and career guidance beyond the Euro-Atlantic culture

Collectivist counselling theories and practices¹

Introductory

The main tool for advice is conversation. All counselling is based on interpersonal communication, even if the counsellor and client communicate through images or movement instead of speech. Like any communication situation, communication during counselling is culturally loaded. The understanding between transmitter and receiver dependent on culture. In essence, the career development theories and practices applied in Hungary are all based on individualistic interpretive frameworks. They are built on activating the counsellor, and inspiring action. We have a few theories and practices that target the community. Hungary today represents a highly individualized culture. From an economic and social historical point of view, the emergence and ossification of strong individualisation can be traced very far back. Tibor Valuch wrote in his book describing contemporary Hungarian society; *"In the decades following the regime change, a significant part of Hungarian society moved even further from the intention of collective action and participation in it.... Individual and low-risk political and advocacy actions using all possible means of informal advocacy are generally accepted as opposed to collective action."* (Valuch, 2015, p. 171)

The creation of a less individualistic framework for the theory and practice of career counselling in Hungary could not be facilitated by the strong Euro-Atlanticist influence on the adaptation of certain methods from the 1990s onwards. In essence only North American, Western European, and Israeli counselling theories and methods were adapted. These approaches have further strengthened the approach of career building, which is now based on individual opportunities and responsibility. While community development has received and continues to receive serious attention in related areas of counselling, such as social work (Kozma, 2018), community resilience has been and is being developed. After all, just as a career is a solitary activity, it is connected by a thousand threads to the community, to its culture, without which our career itself is essentially an incomprehensible, truncated story.

As programmes for the training of career guidance counsellors develop in certain regions and countries (in the case of Hungary this was done in the early 1990s, but Hungarian career guidance models have been available for about a hundred years), university teachers, researchers, and practitioners have also started to develop theories that guide and support local practice. Research on the effectiveness of certain counselling models, and investigations into the effectiveness of different practices are beginning to provide evidence to support model practices and theories. This institutional knowledge is an important indicator of whether a country has developed its own theoretical and practical framework and further training system supporting career development. Typically, this level of commitment in the field goes hand in hand with the fact that the population also begins to understand and use the knowledge related to track construction. There is also a widespread belief that everyone should deal with individual careers, career development, and career care. (Yoon & Hutchison & Maze & Pritchard, & Reiss, 2018, pp. 4-5). Although we live in a globalised world, the Internet reaches everywhere, and the career orientation development and emphasis of each region and country is very different.

In this article, we mainly review career counselling theories and practices that do not belong to the above-mentioned culture, emphasizing a collective approach, reflecting on which we can expand our own theoretical and practical thinking frameworks in Hungary. Geographically, the article focuses on

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Asia, Africa, and Central and South America. Europe, North America and, in this approach, Russia is deliberately omitted, because it represents a more Euro-Atlantic culture. Due to the size and cultural differences between Africa and Asia, as well as the very different levels of development of labour markets and education systems, we cannot strive for completeness even in these large regions. The purpose of this article is an overview rather than an accurate inventory. From a European perspective alone, let's say looking in from Budapest, the developed South Korean or Japanese system and the fragmented labour market in the Philippines or Indonesia are both Asian. The 56 sovereign African countries can similarly not be lumped together. Neither the linguistic and cultural orientation of the former colonial past, nor the linguistic and cultural diversity of individual states allow for the use of the term "African" counselling model of service. One of the youngest career guidance journals, *The African Journal of Career Development (AJCD)*, undertakes to present this African diversity², and we may be critical of the extent to which the journal published in English by the South African Career Development Association (SACDA)³ can reflect this diversity. In any case, it is telling that the track/career theories A to Z website contains only Anglo-Saxon theories⁴ (Truyens, 2019).

While the review lacks the classic tool of anthropology, observation based on fieldwork, I would argue that the fifteen years I have spent on the boards of directors of global career advisory organisations⁵ have equipped me to embark on such a (partially subjective) venture.

"Cultural anthropology can be described in dictionary brevity as the total of knowledge in cultural theory, comparative cultural studies, "general" ethnography, or universal "human science." (Gergely A., 2006, p. 4) Instead of my fieldwork, I built my message on the secondary analysis of articles available in English, with the help of which the Hungarian-speaking reader can gain a level of insight into the repository of counselling theories and practices belonging to other cultures. In our globalised world it is becoming increasingly important to get to know the interpretive frameworks of other cultures related to career and career counselling, especially with the transformation of the Bretton Woods and Anglo-Saxon world, the large number of foreign (often Asian, South American, and African) guest students already appearing in Hungary (mainly within the framework of the Stipendium Hungaricum⁶ programme) and the temporary reduction of employment of third-country workers in 2025. I feel that an equally strong reason for preparing this compilation is the fact that nowadays we regularly meet speakers from Asia, Africa and South America, whose message is often understood through the interpretative framework of well-established North American and European cultural circles during 15-30-minute conference presentations. With this, we often get straw man statements, Euro-Atlantic style sample presentations, professional adaptation of North American and European career questionnaires, and examination of statistical relationships, but we do not learn more about the meaning of career in each society and environment. While I know that a single literature review will not fill this gap, perhaps it can highlight the need for a change of perspective. After all, not everyone likes to eat at McDonald's.

² <https://ajcd.africa/index.php/ajcd>

³ <https://www.sacda.org.za/>

⁴ <https://marcr.net/marcr-for-career-professionals/career-theory/career-theories-and-theorists/#A>

⁵ ICCDPP: International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (continuously since 2011) <https://www.iccdpp.org/> IAEVG: The International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (2015-2019) <https://iaevg.com/> Cedefop Careers Net <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/networks/careersnet> (since 2017) and NICEC: National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (since 2015)

⁶ <https://stipendiumhungaricum.hu/> Stipendium Hungaricum, the Hungarian Government's most prestigious higher education scholarship programme, offers a wide range of courses for high-achieving international students with an excellent academic track record. The programme, founded by the Hungarian Government in 2013, is supervised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and managed by the Tempus Public Foundation.

Career development and culture

In many ways, the idea of career development is a concept of the modern age. The selection, modification, adjustment (correction) or even complete change of trajectories was based on a wide variety of aspects, none of which belonged to the activities of professionals engaged in career development. The history of work suggests that in earlier times, individuals chose a job, a place of work, rather than a career or career. This is all the truer for geographical and cultural regions outside the Euro-Atlantic, Judeo-Christian culture.

At the same time, the present interpretation of Judeo-Christian culture also raises questions. In the USA, for example, there has been a growing awareness of the presence of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and other religious communities in American society. The perception of the United States as a "Judeo-Christian" country used to be perceived as exclusive as the term "Christian" seemed after World War II. The Western religious tradition itself had to be described as including Muslims; in some ecumenical religious circles, the term "Judeo-Christian" began to be replaced by the term "Abrahamic" – a term that expresses the common ancestor of Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the Patriarch of the Hebrew Bible, Abraham (Silk, 1989). In connection with the quote here, perhaps it is worth thinking about how far the framework of a given culture can be expanded. How long do salad bowl (peaceful coexistence of cultures) and melting pot (integration or annexation of cultures?) approaches make sense? The "melting pot" is a metaphor for the views of assimilation advocates on integration, which means that a person merges into a new identity while losing their original selves. It is often used to express submission, drawing a line between "successful" and "unsuccessful" integration. In contrast, the "salad bowl" is a metaphor for social integration as a process of establishing and nurturing social relationships that leads to co-existence with trust, reciprocity and a sense of belonging.

Sweden is one of the countries receiving the highest number of immigrants in the European Union in terms of population. In his article, Qamar (2024) explores the paradox of Swedish multiculturalism through the example of two Muslim girls. Swedish multiculturalism (as described in politics) created the image of a welfare society based on class and gender equality. However, the gap between formal and substantive rights has not been bridged, highlighting the paradoxes of Swedish multiculturalism.

When all religions and continents are absorbed, like a line of restaurants on a better metropolitan street, is it still the same culture? And to what extent are assimilated cultures deformed and changed by their behaviour in their new environment? Everyone knows the offer of the Chinese buffet adapted to Hungarian consumers. Just as the twentieth-century stories of Turkish doner kebab and Greek gyros exemplify the transformation of original food and consumption culture in the new environment. Spending time in company has gone from slow food to street junk food alone.

Economy and career

"It would seem that poorer countries have limited ability to offer their citizens career opportunities – is that necessarily the case? In middle- and low-income countries, the priority is obviously to provide jobs for all, to provide adequate living standards, nutrition, housing, schooling, and health care, among other needs. Unfortunately, in many countries, these minimum standards are not met because of several economic and socio-political factors that hinder the development of adequate formal employment opportunities." (Pillay, 2020).

The theories and most of the practical literature on career counselling also focus on the individual. The individual's career choice and then career maturity are studied. Practicing career counsellors try to understand individual career blockages and guide them toward change. Most counselling models are therefore formulated in individualistic cultures.

In individualistic societies, the interests of the individual prevail over group interests, thus personal achievement is encouraged. These cultures are often referred to as "self-culture." The reverse is true of collectivist cultures, where individuals consider the interests of the group to be superior to their own. The most important aspect is the well-being of the group, harmonious relationships, and

emotions within the group. These cultures are often referred to as "we-cultures" (Hofstede, 1994, cited in Holló 2011). In this article, we look at how different the thinking of collective, community-based cultures is about careers and career guidance services supporting career development and construction. Do all these non-Euro-Atlanticist approaches give rise to different interpretative frameworks that is from ours? If so, they could enrich our own perspective.

Central and South America

The international career development community has learned more and more about career guidance in Central and South America in recent years. For example, following the COVID pandemic, the OECD (2021) surveyed adult career counselling in four countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico).⁷ The National Career Development Association (NCDA), the major consulting association⁸ of the USA, is also showing a keen interest in solutions for the continent, classically considered "near abroad".

Latin American labour markets are characterised by a high degree of informality, which may limit formal learning opportunities or access to career guidance. Chile, Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico have one of the lowest rates of informal employment in Latin America (OECD, 2021). In Chile, Argentina, and Mexico, for at least 80% of adults pick "really matter," but at least "to some extent" when questioned on how much they rely on advice from family and friends when making work-related decisions. While adult guidance, correctional, and career guidance have not received significant political attention in Latin American countries, young people's career guidance is being followed by greater interest. Youth training programmes are widespread in the region and mostly target young people with fewer opportunities. These programmes often include a specific guidance component. At the same time, a large group approach is typical here, and less individual counselling.

In Latin America, according to the OECD survey (OECD 2021), the most common reasons for using career guidance services are progress in the current job (40%), help needed to choose study/training opportunities (29%), and changing jobs (23%). Adults in the four Latin American countries surveyed are significantly less likely to report "looking for a job" (21%). This fact has a significant correlation with the informality of labour markets. Formal job searching in the European sense is not widespread. In this context, the OECD questionnaire showed that 36% of adult counselees wanted advice on exactly how to formally apply for a job.

Recent details on the practice of consulting in Latin America can be found in surveys conducted by the Inter-American Development Bank (IAB, 2025). Their studies, published in 2025, are flash reports on career guidance experiences in five countries (Panama, Peru, Chile, El Salvador, and Mexico). The focus was on the policy issue of youth employment, which is 'automatically' linked to the lack of access to youth guidance in the region.

Latin American theories of career guidance rely heavily on theories of the Northern Hemisphere, although such approaches take shape in the context of the Global South (Fonseca da Silva & Paiva & Ribeiro, 2016).

Brazil

Brazil is also struggling to get rid of its colonial past. The career/career counselling for middle- and upper-class people in Brazil is inspired by classical global Nordic (read: Western) theories. However, they are near irrelevant for a large part of the population.

There are two relevant proposals for the development of independent Brazilian career guidance theory and practice, which produce theory and practice in different ways in the field of career development/guidance.

⁷ Survey of Career Guidance for Adults (SCGA) https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/career-guidance-for-adults-in-a-changing-world-of-work_9a94bfad-en.html

⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PH7kty9Dr_g

First, Silvio Bock proposed a socio-historical approach to career development, based on historical and dialectical materialism and inspired by the ideas of Paulo Freire (1975). This is to draw attention to the socio-historical context, as well as to the place that people occupy in the power relations (Riberio, 2020). Secondly, in Brazil, the intercultural career development approach proposed by Marcelo Ribeiro combines the epistemology of social constructivism, inspired mainly by the design paradigm inspired by life trajectories and oeuvres and the theory of work psychology (Blustein, 2013), combining contextualized theories from the Global North with theories from the South.

The Brazilian career development/orientation practice is based on the theory of narrative counselling. It tries to find the possibility for the counsellor to recognize social discourses in their own narrative, while helping the counsellor to develop their own career/career narrative.

Colombia

In Colombia, career/career counselling as a profession does not exist. These functions belong to the general responsibilities of school counsellors (Brual, 2018). Counselling training was first developed in the country in the 1950s, inspired mainly by preventing drop-out rather than pursuing the goals of career guidance. The concept of transition between educational levels related to career choice is undeveloped in the country. Therefore, the tasks associated with this process are also not structured.

Africa

In African countries, career/career counselling traditionally consists of psychometric tools that tailor an individual's values, personality, and abilities to a particular trajectory, based on personal goals, and interests (Maree, 2024, Scholtz, 2023). The lack of career/career guidance is particularly evident in disadvantaged groups, for whom person and environment focused guidance programmes are lacking. The use of non-adapted devices designed for European and North American populations is highly criticized. Several African studies have been conducted that have supported the unreliability of Western devices and the lack of adaptation (Scholtz, 2023) For example, Holland's hexagon model does not work reliably in an African (Morgan & De Bruin, 2015). Due to Africa's size and cultural diversity, even the concept of the "African model" is difficult to interpret and leads to error. Some researchers have made considerable efforts in recent years to develop career guidance tools that can be used in the African context (Maree Career Matrix⁹ and South African Career Interest Inventory). The Maree Career Matrix (MCM) reflects an affinity for 19 job categories by asking about interests and skill levels in 152 different occupations. The results are then aggregated and plotted on the Maree Career Matrix. The matrix consists of four quadrants, namely 'Get started', 'At the bottom of the pile', 'Use it, don't lose it' or 'Improve yourself'.

Guidance and counselling organisations from the African continent are brought together by several networks. Prominent among these is the African Career Development and Guidance Association (AFCADAGA),¹⁰ based in Ghana. They publish a separate guidance journal in Nigeria, the Nigerian Journal of Guidance and Counselling (TNJGC),¹¹ founded in 2011. While much of Africa is still a blind spot in career guidance research. African Journals Online (AJOL) provides a good overview of this situation with a summary map of the number of articles received and published from each country (not career advice specifically).

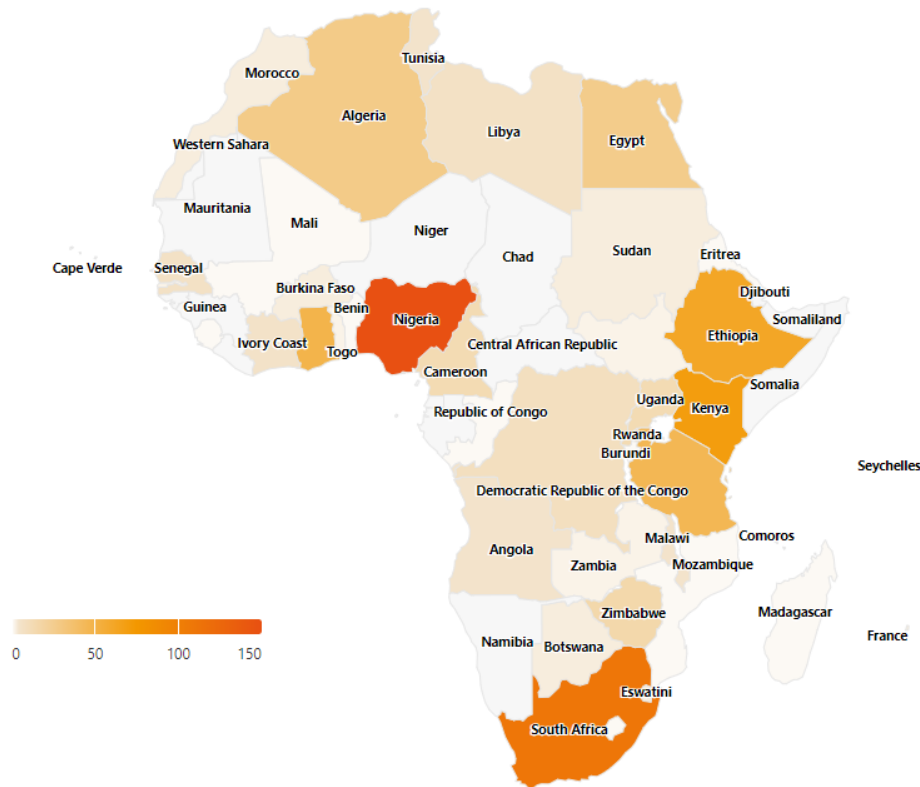
⁹ <https://jvrafricagroup.co.za/catalogue/maree-career-matrix>

¹⁰ <https://afcadaga.com/about/>

¹¹ <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/njgc>

Map: AJOL Number of peer-reviewed OA studies published in Africa (2024)

AJOL features journals from 40 Countries:



(source: <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajol>)

*AJOL, an indexing platform for quality African scientific journals, is a non-profit organization that has worked (since 1998) to increase global and continental online access, visibility, quality and use of published, peer-reviewed research in Africa.

South Africa

Counselling has always been a controversial issue in South Africa, created specifically by Afrikaner academics to perpetuate racist ideology and white economic power by empowering poor whites and providing access to good careers. Through social engineering, the black majority is excluded from social mobility (Maree, 2010). Career counselling in South Africa is still largely practiced by relatively well-situated counselees, making orientation the privilege of a few.

In terms of career guidance publications, the "leading power" of the African continent is the Republic of South Africa. Building on the Boer-British tradition, the country maintains strong international academic relations even after the apartheid regime. The editorial office of the African consulting journal operates here, and thanks to the work of Avron Herr, the country is also the entry point for African career guidance developments and research. Avron Herr is a founding member of the East African Association for Career Development (EACDA), a career consultant for 27 years, and managing director of the PACE Career Centre, Africa's longest-running career advice company.¹² The other major academic figure involved in career guidance in the country is Professor Maree.

¹² <https://eacda.org/member/0>

He is the founding president of the South African Association for Career Development (SACDA). At the same time, building on the South African might also be also deceptive. The country's researchers often participate in cross-continental research, collaborating with Australian, American, British and Canadian researchers. So, the careless reader can easily become a cultural victim of the Anglo-Saxon globalist approach. The role of psychologists in career guidance is still strong in the country. Several EU-South African projects have already aimed to introduce a modern career guidance approach aimed at developing new pedagogical-andragogical interpretive frameworks and competence profiles.¹³ (I had the pleasure of attending one or two of these conferences online.)

The legacy of apartheid still haunts us today; in essence, children of colour did not have access to guidance in the school system for career choices and high school preparation (Pilley, 2020). At the same time, the expertise represented by whites, essential to the functioning of the country, has only partially been replaced. The labour market is characterised by informality, lack of decent work, and deteriorated public security. Career guidance and guidance services are nothing new in South Africa. These services have existed in the country for decades and are well-known among a certain stratum of the population. Unfortunately, the services were only available to a select few, coinciding with racist apartheid policies that specifically benefited the country's white minority.

Uganda

It would be appropriate to write a detailed account of Africa in several volumes if the development of career guidance systems in several countries were not a continuous blind spot for us. At the same time, considering the above, the professional situation of the Republic of South Africa, however burdened, cannot be extrapolated to the continent's entirety. So, let's look at another, somewhat more typical African state.

Uganda is an agricultural country in East Africa with a population of 40 million, where 80% of the population works in agriculture and lives in rural areas. In 2008, the Ministry of Education of Uganda established the ministry's career guidance and counselling department. The department is responsible for providing strategic and professional guidance, counselling, and strategies on all issues that may be aimed at counselling, including HIV/AIDS mitigation, psychosocial problems, and support services (Yoon & Hutchison & Maze & Pritchard & Reiss, 2018, p. 186). It is already clear from the assignment that career guidance in Uganda cannot appear on its own but in conjunction with maintaining a healthy life. The primary question is whether young people live to healthy adulthood without becoming a victim of illness and domestic or tribal abuse. Talking about career guidance in the Euro-Atlantic sense is therefore pointless in this context.

In Uganda, career services usually start in high school (if at all), and some higher education institutions offer one-to-one services. Students are usually only familiar with certain jobs, so young people are not fully aware of their occupational opportunities. Family responsibilities affect the ability to attend school, and many do not get far in education, instead staying at home to work on the family estate. As a country, Uganda still does not have easy access to information due to lack of infrastructure (e.g. internet access). Most rural areas do not have access to the internet, computers and electricity, so online materials are not easily accessible. The Ministry of Education requires schools to carry out career guidance tasks, but it cannot control this. Consultants are trained in one-week trainings. The country is still a long way from establishing a functioning career guidance system and the associated research and development background, while Euro-Atlantic models and tools do not provide answers to its daily problems (uneducated rural population, farm work, lack of infrastructure, work organisation within families).

Nigeria

Completely different characteristics are inherent in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. With a population of more than 220 million, it is the most populous country on the continent and the sixth most populous

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<https://www.dhet.gov.za/Information%20Systems%20Coordination/Framework%20for%20cooperation%20in%20the%20provision%20of%20career%20development%20services%20in%20South%20Africa.pdf>

country on Earth. In the multi-ethnic state with more than 250 ethnic groups, English is used as an intermediary language. The concept of career counselling was first introduced in the 1980s. Within higher education, vocational guidance tends to have a national history dating back to the early post-colonial times of the 1960s.

Official vocational training counselling for graduates of St. Theresa's College in Oke Ado, Ibadan, was launched in the country. In 1961, in the now independent country, the organisation "Ibadan Career Counsellors" was inaugurated as its headquarters. This is how the association known as the Nigerian Association of Career Counsellors came into being. Then the National Career Council and the "Career" magazine, were launched in 1961 (Raji, 2019). The next steps led to the formation of the Association of Nigeria (CAN) ¹⁴at the University of Ibadan in 1976. Olumakinde was the first president of the association. Since 1981, the use of a counsellor has been mandatory in all schools in Nigeria.

While Nigeria's decades of professional consulting experience are impressive in comparison with Uganda, tribal culture still plays an important role in practice. *"Many Nigerians still prefer Babalowos {meaning "father of secrets"}, pastor, imam or consults elders in their community when they face problems related to their own professional, marital or spiritual life."* (Raji, 2019 p. 51).

Arab states

Although it is not an independent continent, the Arab world deserves an independent entry. Its specific religion and culture spans continents, part of which is a little bit of Africa, and another part Asia, strongly divided from within by religious differences. One need only recall the unfortunate history of Syria over the past decade. The Arab states form a greatly divided environment based on their labour market and career prospects. There is also "Gulf" wealth, where citizens (e.g. Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia) are "getting work" because they are comfortable with high state transfers and culinary work provided by guest workers. Several Arab states are in a state of total or near-total collapse, such as Libya, Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria, where the basics of track construction, peace, and individual security are not available. Some Arab states (e.g. Egypt) have a huge population of young people, so they face problems more similar of some Asian countries like Pakistan and India. In the process of creating new posts, there is a constant competition with population growth. Maintaining social peace is often difficult. Despite the division, interpretive gardens and descriptions of "Arab career counselling" have already been created. The independent Arab Career Development Association¹⁵ (ACDA) was launched in 2023 with a clear mission to¹⁶ enable career development professionals and educators in the Arab and MENA regions, to study career development, learn from each other and develop together.

Hooley described the Saudi Arabian career guidance model based on his observations in the mid-2010s. He found Saudi Arabia to have a very limited tradition of career guidance. Although counselling and orientation had existed in schools in the Kingdom, it was more pastoral and dealt only very limited with the secular concept of career guidance. (Hooley, 2017, p. 290) Some of the biggest challenges facing Saudi career guidance practices include the under-representation of Saudis in the private sector, low interest in vocational training, a shortage of a highly skilled national workforce and the rudimentary design of the unemployment benefits/activation system. The lack of Saudi or other Arab consulting theory and practice has resulted in a few Anglo-Saxon developments lacking a local context in recent years.

We learned a lot about the career guidance processes of the MENA region through the mediation and development work of Professor Sultana from Malta. In 2008, he described ten countries as such; *Different colonial and postcolonial experiences left different traditions and models in each Arab state. This affects many aspects of state administration and institutions, including education. In the field of career guidance, for example, while Egypt and Jordan were more influenced by Anglo-Saxon*

¹⁴ <https://cassonnigeria.org/about/perspectives/>

¹⁵ <https://acda.me/>

¹⁶ The Middle East and North Africa (MENA), also known as West Asia and North Africa (WANA) or Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA)

approaches, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and, to a lesser extent, Lebanon were more influenced by French and French-Canadian models. (Sultana & Watts, 2008).

Hooley's comment refers to Saudi Arabia, but it reflects the region's calls to develop career guidance theories and practices. *The Islamization of knowledge refers to the attempt to harmonize Western knowledge with Islamic ontology and epistemology. At present, it is clear that career guidance in Saudi Arabia relies heavily on Western epistemology, although there is considerable reflection within the country about how career guidance should appear in the Saudi context* (Hooley, 2017, p. 294).

This adaptation experiment already has noticeable traces in the international literature. In Jordan, once part of the British sphere of influence, local authors started the work. With the local environment made visible, we again see the increased career orientation role of the extended family, some kind of genus; *In Jordan, it is well known that families and community play a big role in their children's lives in any decision they make, and career choices can be one of them. Both community and family are especially important in the socialization of children. This is because every child in Jordan belongs not simply to his immediate family, but to the whole community. Therefore, the community has a very big role to play.* (Alkaraki, 2017).

Asia

We have quite detailed knowledge about certain groups of Asian countries, such as Japan, South Korea, and Singapore from authors who often publish in English, while in the case of large countries such as China or India, information is often either fragmented, or delivered through the mediation (interpretation?) of English and North American colleagues. In the case of other states, such as the Philippines or several tiny micro-states in Oceania, we only have flashes of memories from global conferences and information from narratives (Fiji, Samoa).

To help us understand the career orientation trends of this vast and highly heterogeneous region, we are helped by APCDA Asia-Oceania Career Development Association¹⁷ and their journal, edited by Brian Hutchison¹⁸ (a.k.a. the Global Career Guy), which has earned undeniable merit over the past decades. APCDA connects career development professionals working in or interested in Asia-Pacific and provides a global forum for sharing effective career development ideas, research and techniques in the Asia-Pacific region. The organization's 2025 conference will be held in China.¹⁹

Regarding the Asian Career Guidance Symposium in 2023, the two organisers wrote; *"Asia! The very name evokes in us an image of expanse and diversity. Asia is the largest, most diverse and most populous continent in the world. This symposium aimed to provide an overview of the development of counselling and guidance in Asia, as well as the specific challenges and opportunities of the region and those shared with other regions. The Asian symposium covers a wide range of presentations from China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Singapore, India and Pakistan."* (Bakshi & Yuen, 2022).

Japan

In articles about Japan, the term "ikigai" (生き甲斐, "reason for existence") is quick to pop up. In the context of career development, the term pinpoints the intersection of four topics that set meaningful career/career goals for the individual. Essentially, you're trying to create your personal "place of happiness" by considering what overlaps with four different elements: (1) what you love to do; (2) what you are good at; (3) for which you may be paid; and (4) what the world needs. Some explanations perceive a link between a long, healthy life and career choices based on ikigai.

According to the Japanese, everyone has an ikigaija – the reason for life. Residents of the Japanese village, home to some of the world's oldest people, say finding this is the key to a happier and longer life. If we have a strong sense of ikigai — where what we love, what we're good at, what we can get paid for, and what the world needs — means that every day becomes meaningful. That is why we get up in the morning. This is also why many Japanese never really retire (in fact, there is no word in

¹⁷ <https://asiapacificcda.org/>

¹⁸ <https://www.globalcareerguy.com/>

¹⁹ <https://asiapacificcda.org/2025-conference/>

Japanese that means retirement in the same sense as in English). They stay active and engage in what they enjoy because they have found the true purpose of life – to be always busy is happiness. (García & Miralles, 2017).

The downside of Japanese work culture and career perception is mental and physical overload. Japan is known for its excessive work culture and commitment to work, which makes the world view the country as "workaholic." "White collar heroes", or "paid people" as they are known locally, are credited with boosting Japan's economy at the expense of their own lives (Widarahhesty, 2020). In this contradiction, a) work that forms our sense of ikigai and b) work that overloads us emerge as an interesting dichotomy as a paradox of useful activity serving the community (and not Euro-Atlantic self-expression).

In Japan, the term career was classically used to describe male careers (Dillon, 1983). The concept of "vocational counselling" ("shokugyo shido") was historically introduced in Japan in 1915. Shokugyo means vocation in Japanese and shido means guidance. After the Meiji Restoration, this was the era of labour migration due to the Industrial Revolution. Soju Irisawa translated the term vocational counselling into Japanese and introduced the concept of vocational counselling in her book 'Current Education' (1915) (Mimura, 2016). In 1927, the government introduced vocational counselling into school education.

In 1950, the Korean War broke out, and during the war, increasing production resulted in the boom and vigorous development of the Japanese economy. Human resources, especially skilled engineers and people with technological skills, were in great demand and were therefore highly valued. Thus, in 1957, the term career guidance appeared for the first time instead of vocational training. At the same time, the concept of career and career counselling referred to an academic career. In 1971, the Japanese Ministry of Education codified the concept of career guidance. This legislation stated that 'career guidance' was the process by which teachers guide and assist individual pupils. They systematically and continuously support students to develop their own competencies and attitudes to choose or plan their future careers, progress to higher levels of employment or education, and adapt to their future roles in adult life.

Student follow-up is also an important activity for teachers. The main function of this activity is to assess whether graduates have dropped out of further education or adapted to a new school, level of training, or profession. If there is a career matching problem, teachers are responsible for supporting former students.

China

In 1916, Zhou Yichun, then President of the Tsinghua School (University) (predecessor of Tsinghua University), organized career development lectures and surveyed student preferences in choosing majors and overseas universities (Xie, 2009). This date is often referred to as the institutionalized birth of Chinese career guidance. Career guidance in secondary schools is still in its infancy and does not have well-defined professional staff. Despite the lack of a uniform professional protocol and set of requirements, there is a national standard for the provision of career guidance services in higher education. One of them is the national standard for professions: Expectations of guidance professionals, which was given in 1999 and revised in 2005 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

Chinese culture has a collectivist orientation, which also plays an important role in the emerging career guidance theory and practice under Western influence. Chinese culture, values and beliefs influence the career choices of Chinese students and the career aspirations of employees. In China, the family structure is very clear and strict, and people respect authority. To this day, Confucian values, "filial piety," which favour humility and good behaviour of individuals, are also strong, which partly explains the negative attitude towards career counselling (Shao, 2021).

"Keeping your face" (how you look and behave in front of others) has significant cultural value and influences career choices, career development and work culture in China. It refers to social rank, fame and dignity. Maintaining a good image is key for both individuals and organisations. Chinese experts

try to avoid embarrassing themselves or cause embarrassment for others. The emphasis on protecting the "face" affects the dynamics of communication, since criticism or confrontation can be approached indirectly to preserve harmony and avoid public shame.

In Chinese work culture, building and nurturing relationships, known as *guanxi*, is highly valued. *Guanxi* refers to the network of personal contacts and relationships that facilitate business interactions and collaboration. Trust, mutual understanding and building relationships with colleagues, customers and business partners are essential for successful co-operation in China. Investing time and effort in building a strong *guanxi* can lead to better business opportunities and a deeper understanding of the local business environment. Chinese work culture is often associated with a high-pressure environment characterised by long working hours and intense commitment to work. The concept of "996" refers to the unofficial expectation of working six days a week from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. This strenuous work schedule can result in increased stress levels, fatigue, and limited time for personal activities. Chinese professionals often face the challenge of balancing their professional obligations with their personal well-being.

While reviewing the available literature (quite possibly due to the lack of access to non-English articles) I could not find domestic career development theories based on modern labour market challenges and careers and the international characteristics of career guidance. There are many traces of the adoption of Euro-Atlantic models. The globally noted works of Pop, Savickas, Holland, etc. often appear in English-language literature written by Chinese authors. The resurgence of Confucianism is also clear; *"Confucianism has been shaping China for more than two millennia: the words of the Master offer guidance to both ordinary people and power."* (Almady) whose teachings are indispensable in the organisation of work and career guidance based on collectives. For an outside observer, it seems to be a professional challenge create work-life balance (similarly to Japan and South-Korea), to adapt consulting models supporting the adherence of decent work agenda in China, or to develop their own Chinese modalities.

India

By 2020, India had become the world's youngest country by its age structure. The average age is just under 29 years old, accounting for around 28% of the world's workforce. Like other countries on the African continent, guiding a growing population of youth into the world of work in India will be a challenge for a long time to come. With this, India views career guidance from a fundamentally different point of view than the aging Japan, South Korea or the neighbouring giant China.

India is making significant effort to develop its own guidance theory and practice. Jiva²⁰ is a career guidance system developed for non-Western cultures, with a special focus on India. The intervention is based on strong research and has been developed in two phases with the intention of introducing career and livelihood planning into the national mainstream. As part of this effort, the NGO that developed the model is publishing an English-language journal called *The Indian Journal of Career and Livelihood Planning (IJCLP)*²¹. The main gesture of the advisory model, adapted to the Indian framework, is Gideon Arulmani, founder of the Bengaluru (Bangalore) foundation.

In simplified terms, livelihoods are related to survival needs, and livelihoods are thought to be exercised by people in lower income brackets, such as farmers, artisans and skilled workers, mainly in rural areas. Careers, on the other hand, are more strongly tied to middle- and upper-class urban life and are portrayed as offering better opportunities and higher incomes. Formal education (school and higher education) is seen as an entry point to a career, while the traditional, non-formal practice of skills transfer is linked to livelihood. In many cultures, however, making a living is a reality. Still, there is a common trend among career development professionals to replace livelihood practices with career guidance. (Arulmani, 2014). This misguided practice sums up Arulmani and the Jiva Foundation.

²⁰ <https://jivacareer.org/>

²¹ https://jivacareer.org/?page_id=2253

The word jiva means 'life' in most Indian languages. The jiva approach to career counselling is based on the premise that a healthy career is intrinsically linked to an individual's life. A career is not just a job – it is a collection of jobs and occupations that harness our potential and give us deep satisfaction. A career is something that lasts a lifetime, in a sense an extension of our lives. Jiva is based on four career development values from Asian cultures.

The Jiva Spiral is a non-linear approach to career development. Ancient Indian philosophy presents a cyclical approach to life. Relying on this principle, Jiva uses the image of a spiral to describe development. During the Jiva workshop, children learn that nature is full of examples of spirals, from the structure of galaxies to snail shells to rosebuds blooming. Through various jiva activities, children discuss the fact that a career rarely develops linearly and sequentially. It has its ups and downs, and it evolves with the individual.

As life plays out, a person often returns to where he started, but qualitatively different: they become older and more mature. One can move away from the path one was part of to a related but different path.²² Indian philosophy encourages individuals to practice objectivity and dispassion (nishkama) when making (career) decisions. Jiva interprets this to point out that the nature of today's economic development offers countless opportunities for Indian youth. This does not mean that just because an opportunity exists, it should be seized. Career/career development requires the ability to weigh the pros and cons and then accept or reject them.

During the jiva workshop, students consider how well an opportunity or educational path suits their interests and talents. Does an opportunity lead to just a job or a real career?

Finding answers to these questions is key to building a healthy career. Jiva lays the foundation for students to be critical of their career choices.

In India, the state (more precisely, the central state and the member states.) has also made a lot of progress in the past decade, at least in the development of basic job search and career guidance services. In July 2015, the Indian government introduced the country's new online career guidance platform called National Career Service (NCS).²³ The NCS has been designed in collaboration with Indian states (provinces), taking advantage of their experience in employment services and private job portals. NCS has more than 27,000 career advisors. Their main goal is to provide career orientation counselling reaching young people.

Philippines

Finally, let's look at a country from Asia with very different characteristics. The Philippines, with a population of more than 110 million, was the 13th most populous country in South and Southeast Asia in 2023. It is the only predominantly Christian state spread over 7,000 islands. In Europe and here in Hungary, it is known mainly for exporting guest workers. You can only find materials about the description of the country's career guidance and career support system in the libraries of major international organizations (OECD, ADB, ILO), but hardly about their career theories. The World Bank report (2004), which is no longer available online, examined career guidance institutions in seven countries, including the Philippines. The report, now two decades old, concluded: "World Bank customer countries often face specific problems. These include limited public resources, high unemployment and poverty, a large number of informal economies, the need for community capacity building, and sometimes specific family and cultural factors that can have a significant impact on career choices." (World Bank, 2004).

In Asia, parents often have the greatest influence on their children's career choices. This also applies to the Philippines, where ordinary families are cut off from high-quality public services. Career guidance and career counselling often take place in large groups, even in theatre halls, where inspirational speeches are given.

²² https://jivacareer.org/?page_id=328

²³ <https://www.ncs.gov.in/Pages/default.aspx>

In 2019, the President of the Philippines signed the High School Career Guidance and Career Guidance Act, which applies to public and private high schools nationwide. The law also called for the establishment of a National High School Career Guidance and Counselling Program (CGCP) to provide high-quality guidance and counselling services to students. Most of the emerging labour institutions consist of institutions called state-run employment offices (PESOs) while also providing career guidance and job-search advice (OECD/ADB, 2017). One of the consulting services that astound European eyes is mass motivation when stadiums full of people are given career guidance and motivational speeches *masse*.

In addition to government data releases, mostly subjective professional reports are available on the country's career guidance practice and incomplete theory. "Unfortunately, many Filipino students do not have access to such benefits due to the lack of comprehensive career guidance programs. The availability of surveys such as the Myers-Briggs personality test or other tools is limited. Also, in the Philippine context, their use is severely limited, which hinders students' ability to understand themselves and their potential and exacerbates the career guidance crisis." (Lagon, 2023). We know from the data of the Asia Pacific Advisory Organization (APCDA) mentioned above that there has been an advisory NGO in the country since the late 1970s. CDAP was founded on March 4, 1977 as the Philippine Vocational Training Advisory Association (PVGA) with the primary purpose of promoting career development practices in the Philippines.²⁴ Articles by local academic authors (Salazar-Clemeña, 2002) address issues similar to those mentioned above: the dominant power of the family, the lack of accessible theories and practices based on local context and imperfect infrastructure. As an interesting fact, it is worth mentioning here that local working materials for the development of career guidance practices in secondary institutions can be found from as early as the 1970s (Aquilizan, 1975). It is beyond the scope of this article that the colonial status of the Philippines and the general use of English have aided, or rather hindered, the development of their own theories of advice. Given the fact that the Philippines was a colony of the United States between 1898 and 1946, it is understandable, for example, that the US-origin HOPE theory took strong root in the country (Niles & Amundson & Neault, 2011).

Oceania

While Oceania covers a vast area, it is made up of countries with a small population (apart from Australia). Due to their territorial location (Australia, USA) Anglo-Saxon influence is strong. Considering Oceania as a single career guidance geographical area would be a major oversimplification. Its territory spans six time zones and does not even have a joint working week due to the international date line (Athanasou & Torrance, 2002). At the same time, the remnants of tribal society and the extensive family system that underlies Pacific cultures, together with the prevailing social structures (matrilinear, patrilinear, tribal systems) and specific ethnic identities also have an impact on career development.

These classic tribal systems are beginning to disintegrate in the face of economic and social development and the shift toward urbanisation. The transformation causes tension, economic inequalities, and social exclusion. In addition, the importance of the role of the leader, the recognition of the leader by the group members, is a topic influencing career choice. Finally, the economic-labour market monoculture and the strong migration drain effect (towards Australia and Singapore) often characteristic to these small countries further shape career guidance practices.

The New Zealand Māori counselling theory, the "meeting house" (Te Whare Tapa Whā)²⁵ model is essentially an example of a community-based career guidance model.

The wharenui (meeting house) is a symbol used to illustrate dimensions of prosperity. Just as every corner of a house needs to be strong and balanced to support its structure, every dimension of the house and every dimension of well-being must be balanced for health to be maintained, including career choices. This philosophy can be applied to define a good life in all areas, including career management (Durie, 1998). Sir Mason Harold Durie, professor and research academic of Māori Studies

²⁴ <https://asiapacificdda.org/career-development-association-of-the-philippines/>

²⁵ <https://www.careers.govt.nz/resources/career-practice/career-theory-models/te-whare-tapa-wha/>

at Massey University in New Zealand, has made an undying contribution to the survival and documentation of the Māori model. He is known for his contribution to Māori healthcare.

Summary

The starting point of this article was to show that despite living in a globalised world, career guidance and career counselling should not be exclusively approached in a Euro-Atlanticist framework, where we make the individual the main actor in counselling and career development. Non-European, *non-North American practices also remind us that the role of the community, and within it of the "elders", is imperative when discussing the trajectories and the social division of labour.*

Our region, including Hungary, suffers precisely from the effects of extreme individualization: certain regions of Asia, Latin America, and Africa teach us that it is worth treating the practice of counselling on an *individualist-collectivist scale instead of extremes*. It may easily be disastrous for the pendulum to swing to one side and we only support the individual's career aspirations, or vice versa, the collective has the power to force career decisions, both situations lead to disaster. In one, the individual, in the other, the community does not find itself.

It is also important to note the need to develop local devices and the availability of tools designed for the local counselling population. Many countries suffer from a colonial past, which today is reflected not in direct repression, but the import of "Western" models and advice with a limited range of situational applicability.

Hungary can be grateful in this regard for its career guidance, career choice, pedagogical-psychological history, or more precisely, for the several generations of professionals who built it. In Hungary, we take this fact for granted, even though the examples presented here eloquently prove that this is not self-evident. A different language and relative professional sovereignty are conditions for developing one's advisory models and practices in a region. These exercises should not be isolated from the outside world so they may provide and receive continuous influence on global trends in the career counselling profession. There is no global development without local development and vice versa.

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