

Career Construction in the Age of Uncertainty: Talent Alignment, the Individualization of Risk, and the **Paradox of Access to Social Rights** for Generation Z

Research Symposium

Young people's access to social rights

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Presentation Outline

01

Introduction and Background:
Children of the Neoliberal Order



02

Three Core Dilemmas:
Risk, Access, and Skills



03

The Real Transformation:
Institutional Negotiation, Not Psychological Adaptation



04

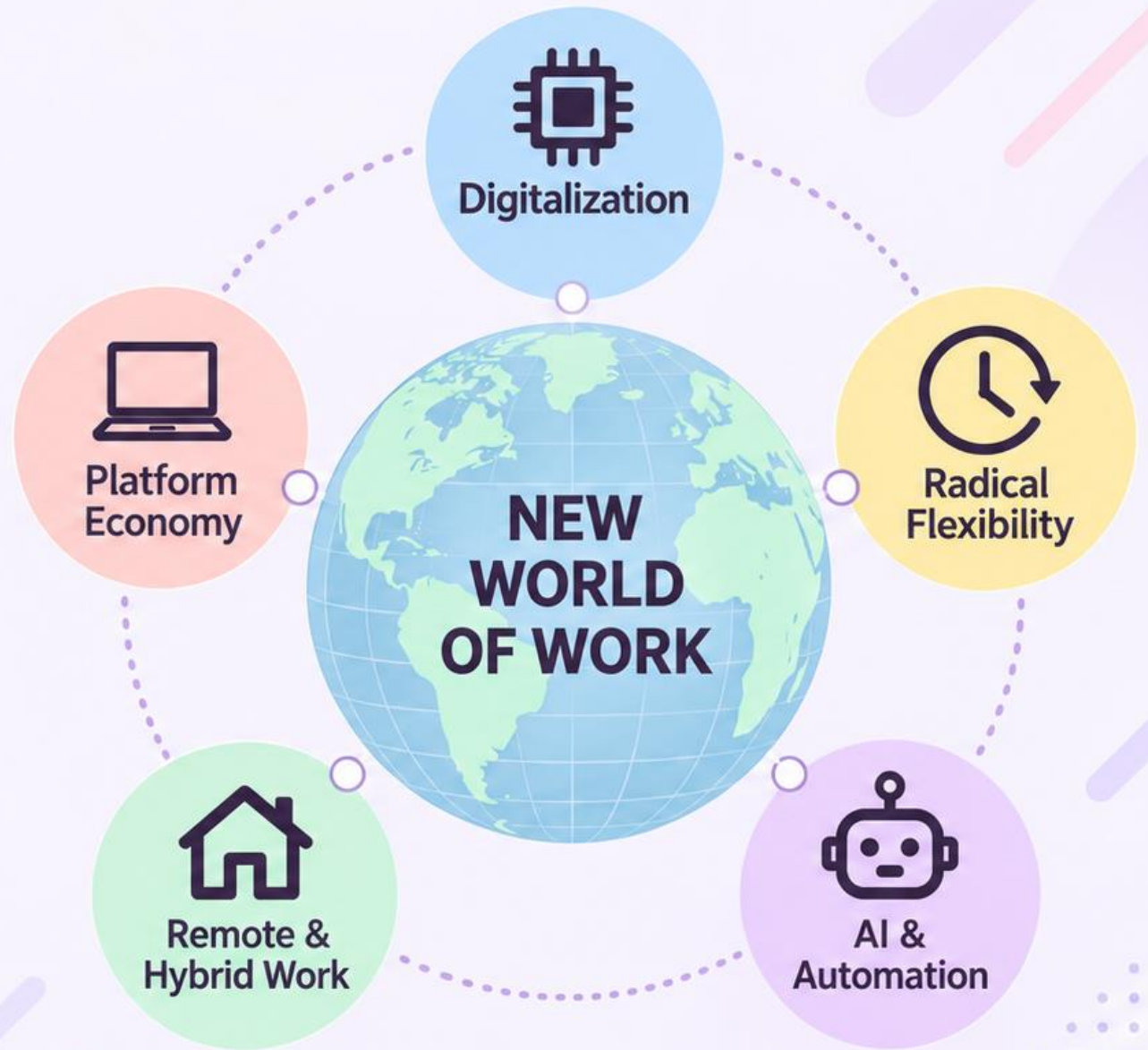
Conclusion and Collective Vision



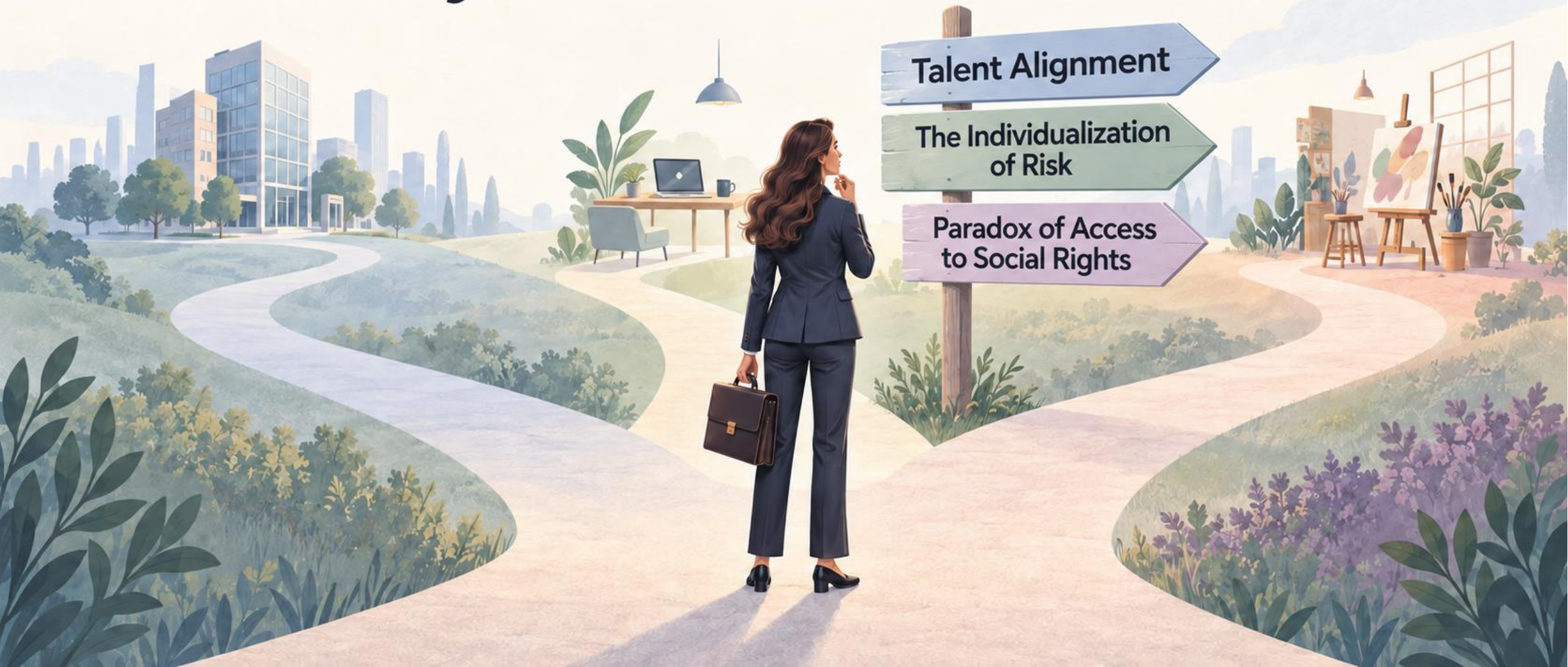
The forces reshaping the world of work

Digitalization, platform work, radical flexibility and AI are changing how careers begin and evolve.

**CAREERS ARE BECOMING
MORE FLEXIBLE — AND LESS
PREDICTABLE.**



Career Crisis and Uncertainty for the Individual



Talent Alignment

The Individualization
of Risk

Paradox of Access
to Social Rights

TRADITIONAL WORK



Long careers • Stability • A secure future

WORK TODAY



Constant change • Unclear rules • Uncertainty

THE BROKEN PROMISE

The traditional career pathway no longer holds.

THEN



Education



Stable Employment



Career Progression



Security & Loyalty

VS.

NOW



Education



Gig / Short-term Work



Fragmented Careers



Uncertainty & Instability

THE PAST (TRADITIONAL HIERARCHY) (TRADITIONAL HIERARCHY)

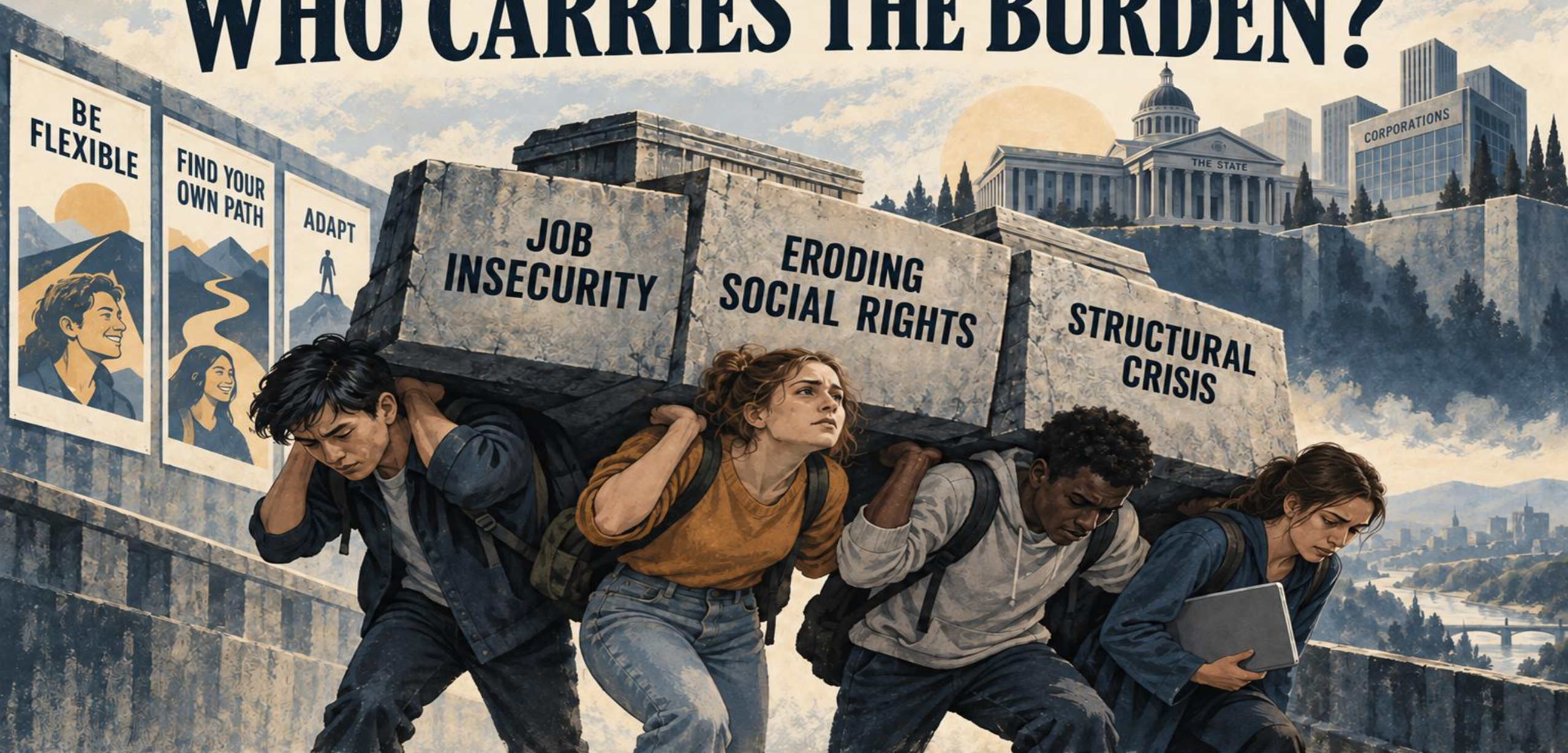


THE PRESENT (COMPLEX & NON-LINEAR) (COMPLEX & NON-LINEAR)



From a clear, ladder-like progression to a dynamic, multi-directional journey.

WHO CARRIES THE BURDEN?



A structural crisis. An individual responsibility?

WHO BEARS THE BURDEN?

*Gen Z and the blind spot
in career theories*



FOCUS OF CAREER THEORIES

Career Construction • Protean • Boundaryless



Individual psychological adaptation

OUTSIDE THE ANALYSIS



Corporate retreat



Erosion of social rights

Neoliberal labor markets

While contemporary theories such as Career Construction, Protean, and Boundaryless Careers focus on how individuals **psychologically adapt** to this ambiguity, they leave the **corporate retreat** and the **erosion of social rights** created by neoliberal labor markets outside the scope of analysis.

OVEREMPHASIS ON INDIVIDUAL AGENCY



A narrow focus on the individual

BEYOND SELF-CONSTRUCTION



More than vocational identity development

Critiquing the issue of the "**overemphasis on individual agency**" in contemporary career theories, this study argues that career construction has ceased to be merely a developmental vocational identity process ("**self-construction**").

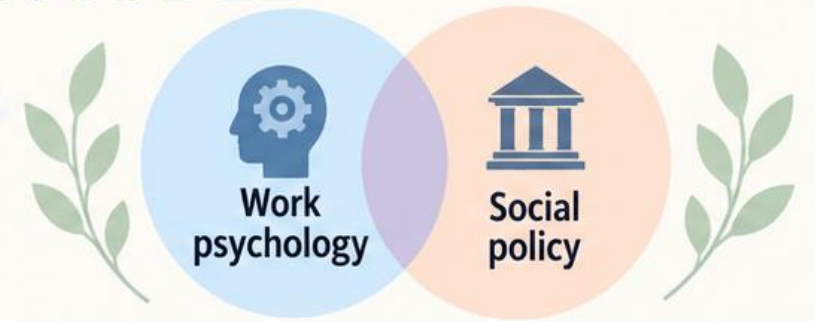
CAREER AS SURVIVAL NEGOTIATION



Instead, career construction has transformed into a compulsory “**survival negotiation**” conducted with organizations to gain access to **minimum employment security** and **social citizenship rights** in increasingly precarious markets.

AN INTEGRATED CONCEPTUAL MODEL

To move beyond psychological reductionism, the article proposes an integrated conceptual model that intersects work psychology with social policy, based on three core mechanisms:



(1) The Individualization of Risk, wherein the responsibility for maintaining employability is shifted from institutions to the individual;



(2) The Access Paradox, whereby massive investments in continuous education and skill development no longer guarantee decent work and social protection; and



(3) Skill Alignment as a Survival Mechanism, in which social competencies cease to be a tool for career advancement and transform into a means of holding onto the system and protecting minimum access to social rights.

The Career Ladder Illusion

NAVIGATING A CHANGING WORLD OF WORK

Traditional career expectations no longer reflect Generation Z's working lives.

- 1 — Globalization
- 2 — Deregulation
- 3 — AI-Driven Algorithmic Management
- 4 — Platform Economy
- 5 — Erosion of Social Rights



The Traditional Promise

Linear careers
Protected social rights
Predictable progression



Structural Disruption

Global competition
Deregulated labor markets
Algorithmic management



The New Reality

Fragmented career paths
Platform-based work
Precarious employment

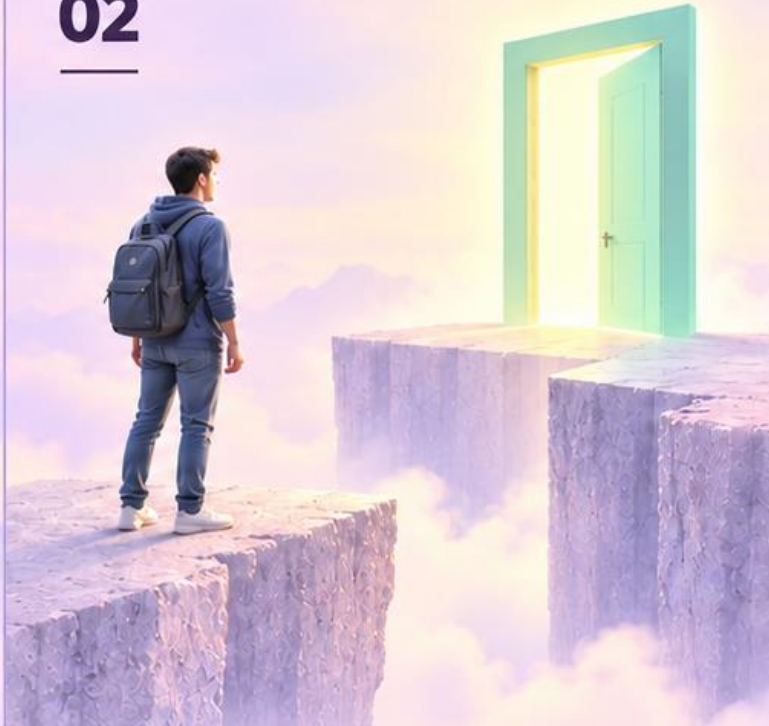
Three Core Dilemmas: Risk, Access, and Skills

01



**The Individualization
of Risk**

02



**The Access
Paradox**

03



**Skills as a Survival
Mechanism**

The Individualization of Risk

Institutional risks become personal responsibility.



Unemployment



Economic crisis



Occupational burnout

Success and failure are attributed solely to the individual.



The Access Paradox

“Develop yourself, upskill, and reskill.”

Investment in skills does not guarantee access to social rights.



Healthcare



Pensions

**Temporary adaptation,
not a ticket to a stable career.**



Skills as a Survival Mechanism

Skills become a shield against exclusion.



Precarious work



Weakened social rights



Pressure to remain employable

The goal shifts from career advancement to survival.



Beyond Psychological Adaptation

Young people need a voice in shaping institutions, not just pressure to adapt.



Institutional Negotiation

Not Just Adaptation



For Generation Z, career construction is not a passive psychological adaptation process, but an active and tense **"institutional negotiation"** carried out with institutions.

A Collective Vision

If we want to break this cycle, our goal must be a **collective transformation** rooted in **sustainable social protection, decent work, and stronger institutional capacity**, rather than isolated individual success stories.



04 / Conclusion

Ultimate Goal



Sustainable careers with access to
decent work and social rights.

