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CREATE CHANGE

The Systems Theory Framework of Career Development: Applying Systems Thinking to Career Development Theory and Practice

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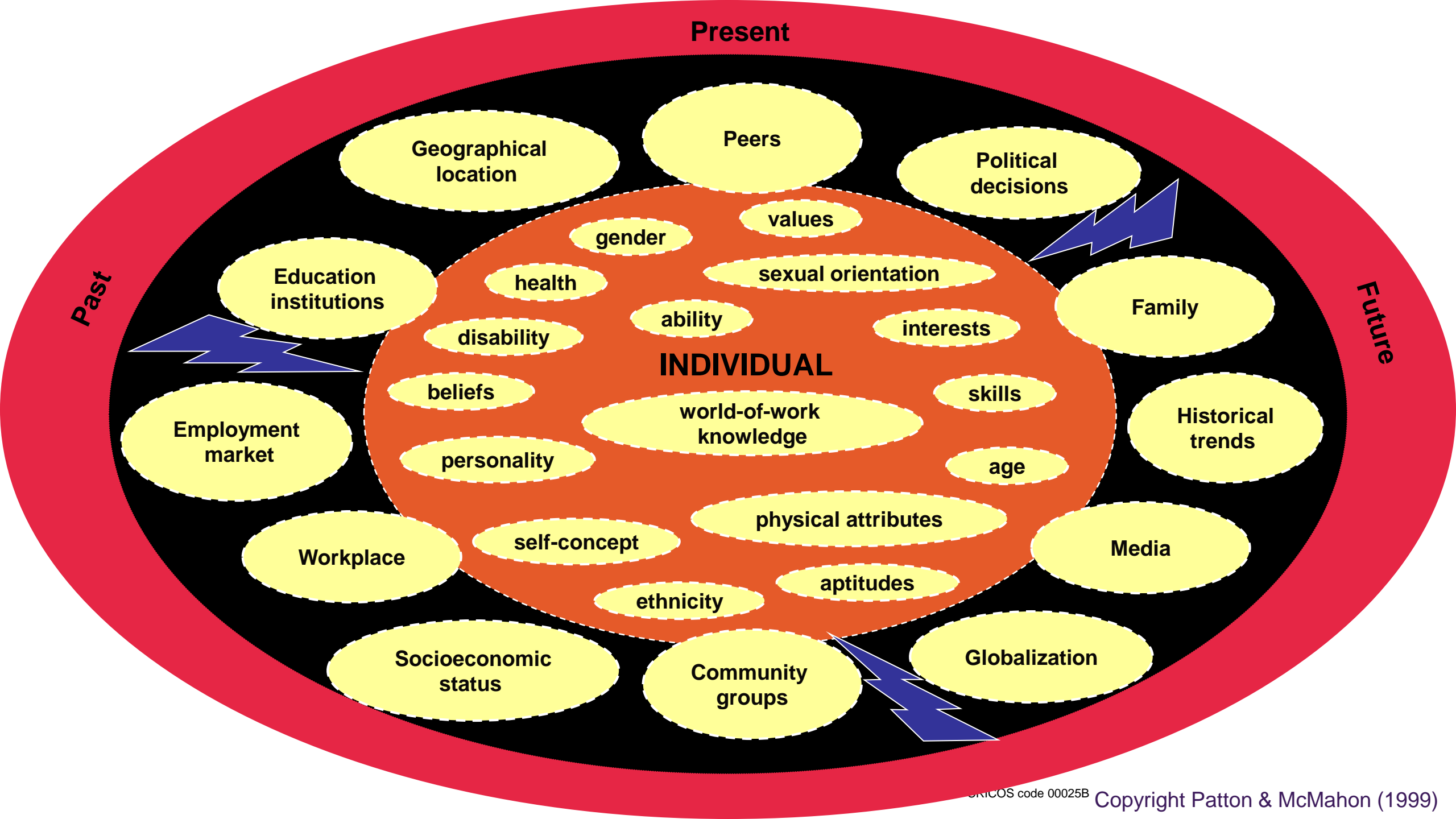
Ottawa, Canada

STF: Origins

- early 1990s: many career theories and debate about convergence or an overarching framework
- need for greater acknowledgement of context in career decision making
- need for more links between theory and practice

Systems Theory

- wholes are made up of parts; parts make up a whole
- general systems theory
 - “single parts and processes cannot provide a complete picture” (Von Bertalanffy, 1934, p. 64)
 - a system is a “complex of elements standing in interaction” (Von Bertalanffy, 1968, p. 33)
- wholes (i.e., career development) comprise many interacting parts; parts are best understood in the context of the whole (McMahon & Patton, 2018)



STF: Main concepts

- career development is complex and dynamic
- metatheoretical framework
- the STF is a systems map
- systems maps can be applied in theory, practice and research
- central understandings: the individual, systems thinking, recursiveness, story
- core practice dimensions: reflection, connectedness, meaning making, learning and agency

STF: Features of Case Vignette

- people can tell stories about their experiences from many times and contexts of their lives
- people's lives are multi-storied
- narrative career counselling emphasises storytelling
- narrative career counselling fosters systems thinking in clients
- story crafting questions assist clients to tell stories and think systemically

STF: Practice points

- respectful, caring, trusting, and mattering relationship
- curiosity
- listen for clues in stories
- identify themes in and across stories
- clients can draw their own personal systems maps
- reflect on your own systems of influence and their impact on you and your practice



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Thank you
Merci

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