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Conference Theme “Discourses we live by” (How) Do they benefit the world we live in?

**How to play the game of exchange in a changing career landscape?**

**An exploration of peoples̓ common-sense knowledge of career and   
the redesign of commonly held-discourses in contemporary working life**

The past decades, tremendous changes have occurred in the world of work. Globalization trends and the gradual transition towards a knowledge-based economy have created uncertainty among all parties involved, when career contexts are changing, and career has become less predictable for people when they try to navigate in this new world of work. Previous research has shown that a group of adults affected by work-related changes hold both stable and dynamic social representations of career, where the stable representations are clearly anchored in earlier working life conditions. Such thinking systems are challenged in the new world of work. Furthermore, the dynamic social representations among the examined group disclose thoughts of career as being a game of exchange. However, the outcome of the exchange seems to be less certain. This paper present an ongoing study in which the focus is to explore what kind of career related issues people are struggling with, and for which they are searching for career advice support in a ̔questions and answers column̓ in one of the largest newspaper in Sweden. During some years in the beginning of 2000s such ̔questions and answers column̓ expanded in the newspaper, and clearly people in working life seems to be troubled with many types of career issues. The expansion of questions and the apparent increasing need for advice and support indicate an uncertainty among ordinary people in how to play the game of career exchange in a changing career landscape. This is remarkable, and needs to be further explored. Career questions published in the Swedish Daily News (DN), during the years between 2011 and 2015 were identified and downloaded after a searching procedure in the Retriever database. Altogether 99 published question columns were included in the material for analysis. With qualitative content analysis as the basic method, this study seeks to reveal conceptual expressions that guide and bound peoples̓ thoughts in the career dilemmas they are struggling with. These dilemmas are categorized, analyzed and finally discussed related to some of the dominating commonly held discourses we live by in our contemporary, global society. Preliminary results reveal that people in contemporary working life are struggling with career issues because of their anchoring in previous working life conditions and therefore they clash with both the experienced new conditions and with new ways of speaking about career phenomena. Clearly, people are searching for career support and advice because they are trying to navigate in an ongoing changing career landscape where they try to identify and understand the new rules of the game between themselves as employees and their employers.