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**Abstract**

Increasingly PhD graduates who wish to take up traditional academic positions (full-time teaching and research leading to permanence) are unable to find such jobs. They end up in fixed-term appointments as post-doctoral fellows or researchers on others' grants. Few studies document their experiences and most that do draw on data from the late 1990s and early 2000s. This longitudinal study reports on the experiences of five social science researchers in two universities in the UK over the years 2008?2010. The analysis results in a rich portrayal of the role of relocations as integral, yet often disruptive, to academic work. Moreover, the multiple often concurrent work-related relocations in the two-year period had personal impact; this aspect of researcher life is rarely reported. A subsequent review of similar data from doctoral students and new lecturers revealed the broader applicability of relocation in their lives. The results raise questions about the long-term impact of such relocations on newer researchers. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)