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**Abstract**

While postdoctoral researchers (postdocs) are an increasingly important and productive group of employees in academia, they lack further career prospects and embeddedness within their organizations. This paper provides a rare glimpse into this relatively unexplored but important group. A comparative study of two Dutch universities included a survey with both closed and open questions among 225 respondents. Our study reveals that nearly all postdocs (85 %) want to stay in the academic field, but only [3 % was offered a tenure-track position. The uncertainty of their future prospects in academia lowered their job satisfaction; this is particularly true for the social sciences and humanities. Concerning alternative career paths, only few of the postdocs spent time in preparing for a career outside academia, and less than a third attempted to develop any transferable skills, although the importance of networking was recognized. Given that postdocs seem to be trapped between their own ambitions and a lack of academic career opportunities, it is very important that, on

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the one hand, postdocs aim for better visibility within their organizations, while on the other hand, universities provide more clarity and openness about their further career prospects inside and outside academia. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Van der Weijden, Inge, E-Mail:  
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