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Abstract

Based on analyzes of life course questionnaires, semi-structured qualitative interviews and focus group interviews carried out with early-stage sociologists over a period of 8 years, this paper presents analyzes of continuity and change in the decisions made by early-stage researchers in regard to their work and careers. The longitudinal approach reveals contradictions between repeatedly declared intentions to leave academia due to the high level of insecurity and continued applications for academic jobs. Personal narratives reveal the individual reasoning behind this contradiction, and four reasons for staying are analyzed. The attitudes that changed the most within the given period had to do with work?life balance and moving abroad. The ambivalence between thinking that one will have to leave academia and still hoping for a more stable position is connected to contradictory policies of academic institutions and unclear evaluation criteria, which foster hope and cause frustration at the same time. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)