
Career Dynamics Unleashed: Professional Mobility and Job Mismatch Among Doctorate Holders

Nancy Kracke¹ and Steffen Jaksztat²

^{1,2}Research Area Educational Careers and Graduate Employment Researcher, German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW), Leipzig, Germany

The tertiary education sector in Germany has seen significant recent growth, resulting in a heightened number of individuals obtaining doctoral degrees. A doctorate is not only a prerequisite for an academic career but is also considered a general professional qualification. Given the constrained employment opportunities within academia, characterized by a limited number of permanent researcher positions, the majority of doctorates must seek employment in other sectors. This raises the question of whether these highly educated individuals secure positions matching their qualifications.

If individuals are mismatched employed, in the sense that their level of training exceeds the job requirements, parts of the human capital lie idle. This does not only have negative consequences on the individual level but can also be costly on the social level because of inefficient use of resources. Empirical evidence for doctorates is scarce. This paper adds to the literature by using data from a recent panel study with doctorate holders in Germany and by applying panel data analyses. Utilizing this data, we address the following research questions: 1) What effect does professional mobility have on mismatch among doctoral graduates? 2) How does the situation differ across various subjects? 3) What are the consequences of mismatch for doctorates?

Preliminary findings indicate that leaving academia generally increases the likelihood of obtaining a job where a doctorate is not a formal requirement. This applies to research-related positions in the public and private sectors, particularly non-research-related roles. Analyses reveal that mismatch has negative effects on both wages and job satisfaction.

Keywords: job mismatch, professional mobility, doctorate holders