

Work-Family Balance in Academia? — Reflections on my PhD time as a parent

Luisa Herrmann

Logic Mentoring Workshop, Naples, February 2024

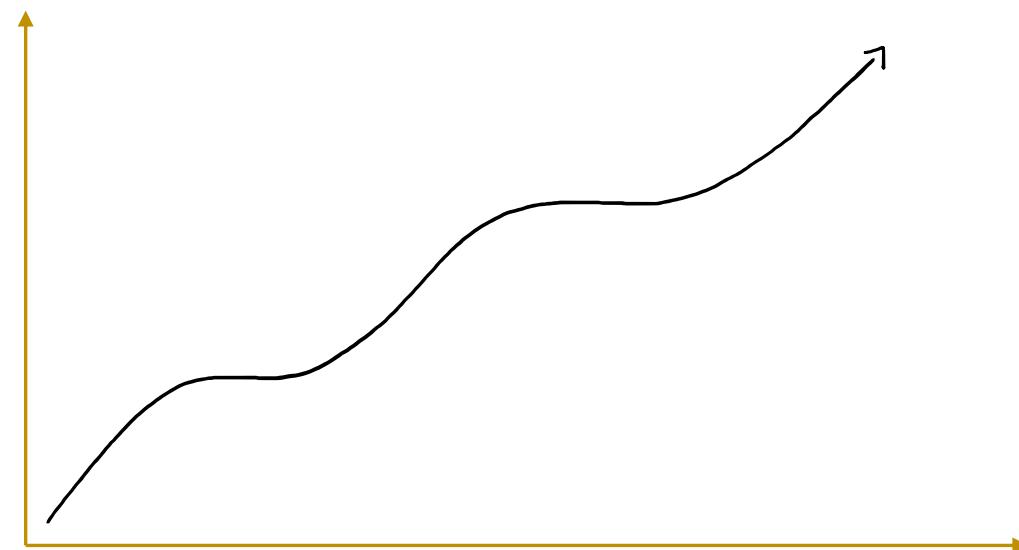
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I did my PhD in automata theory :)

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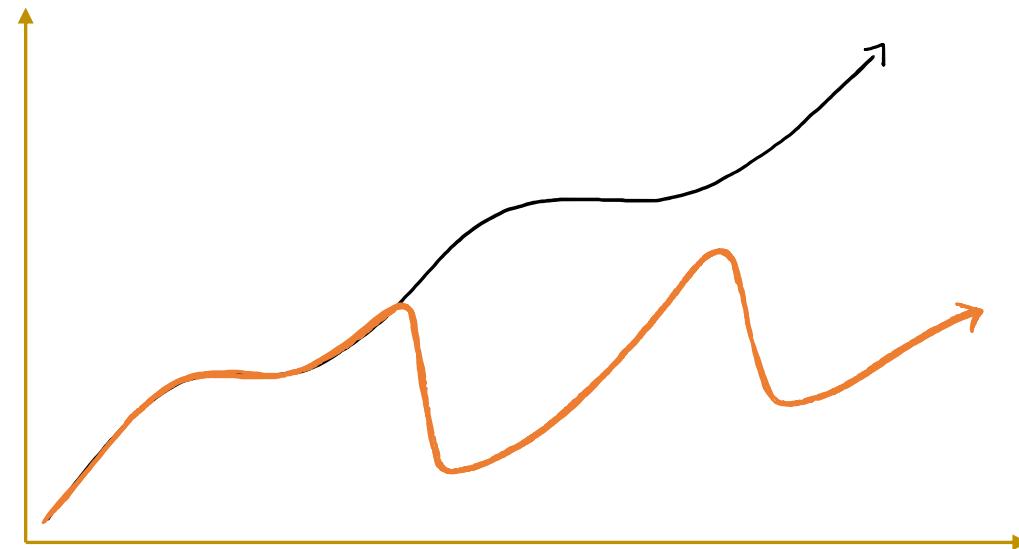
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expected career progression

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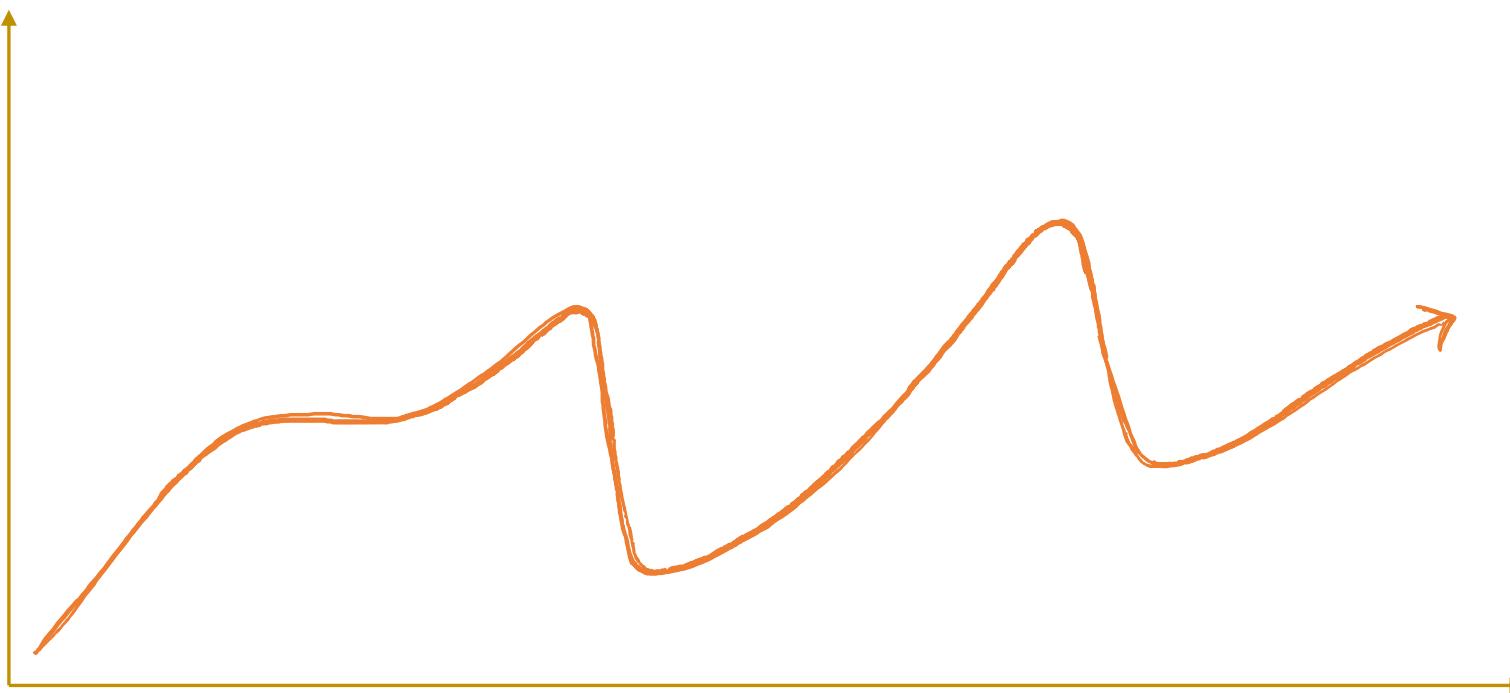
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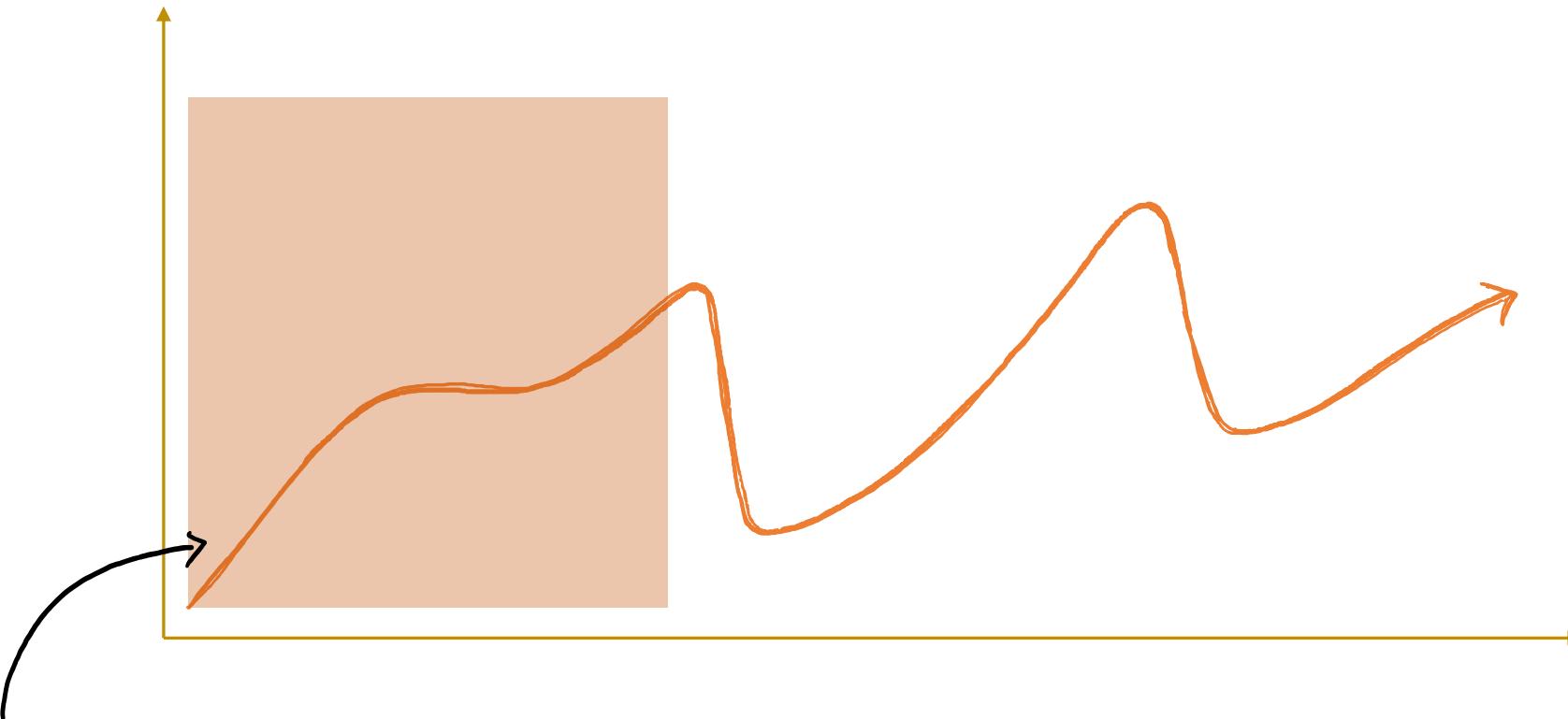
expected career progression

my career progression

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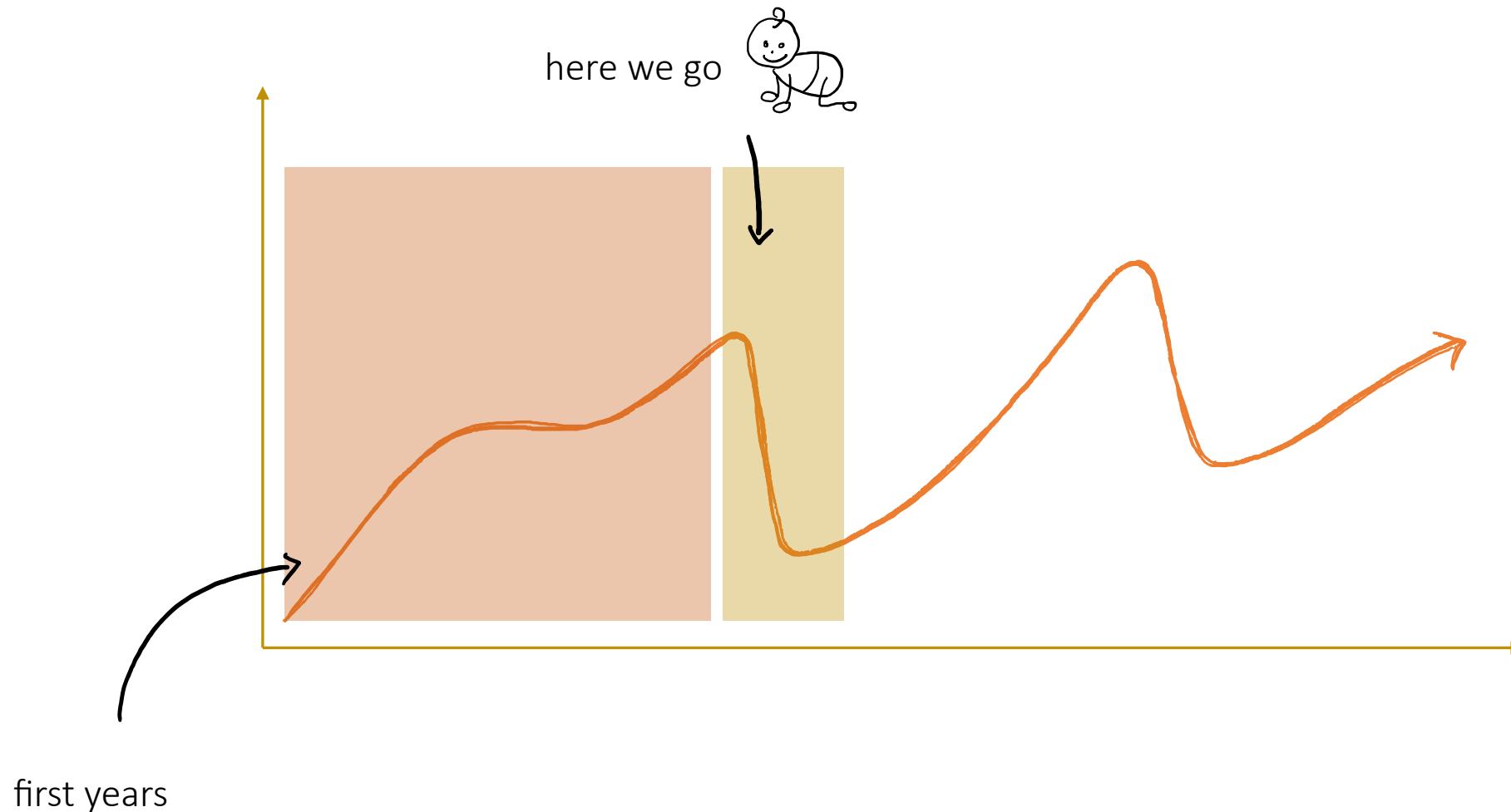


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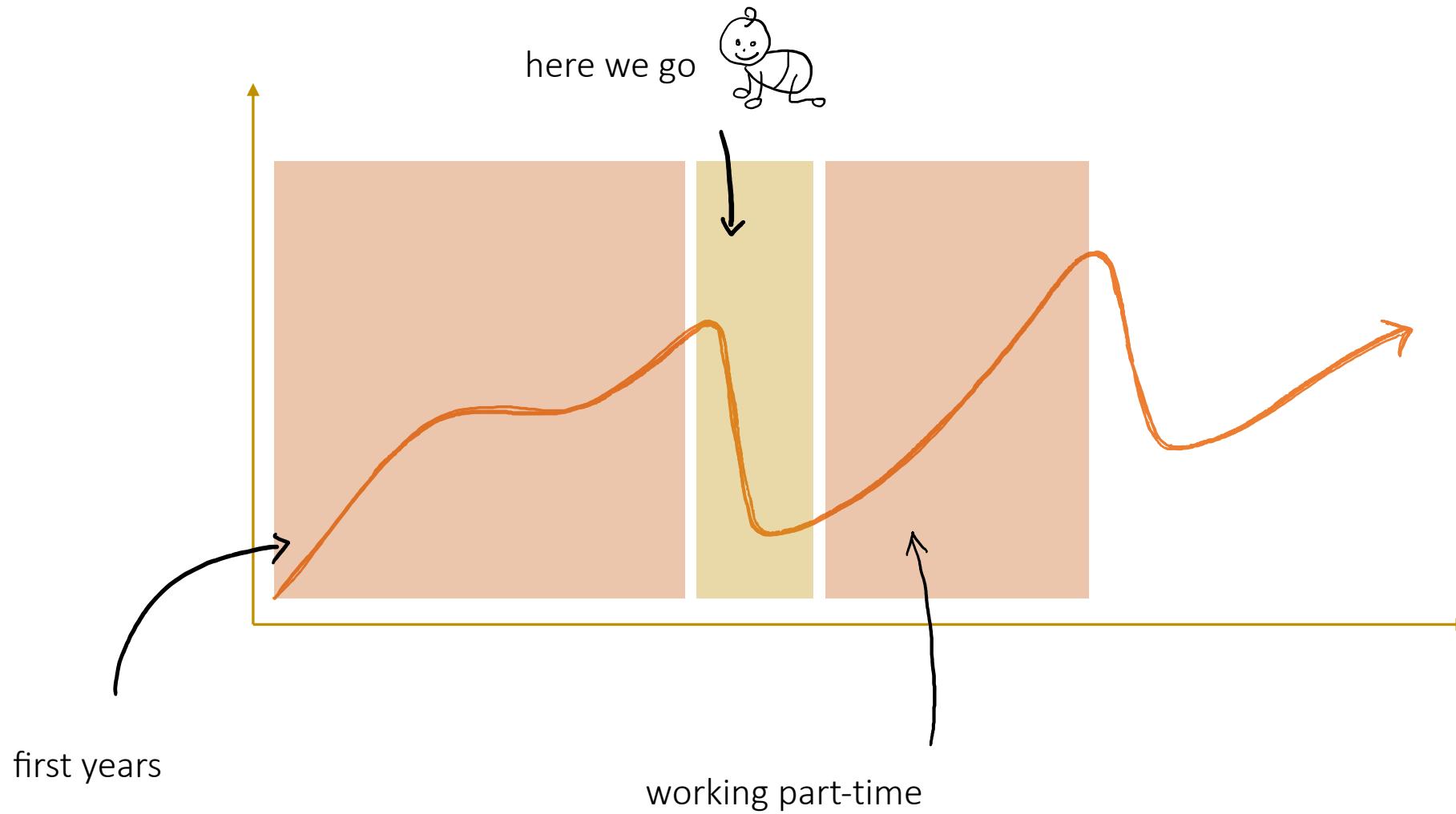


first years

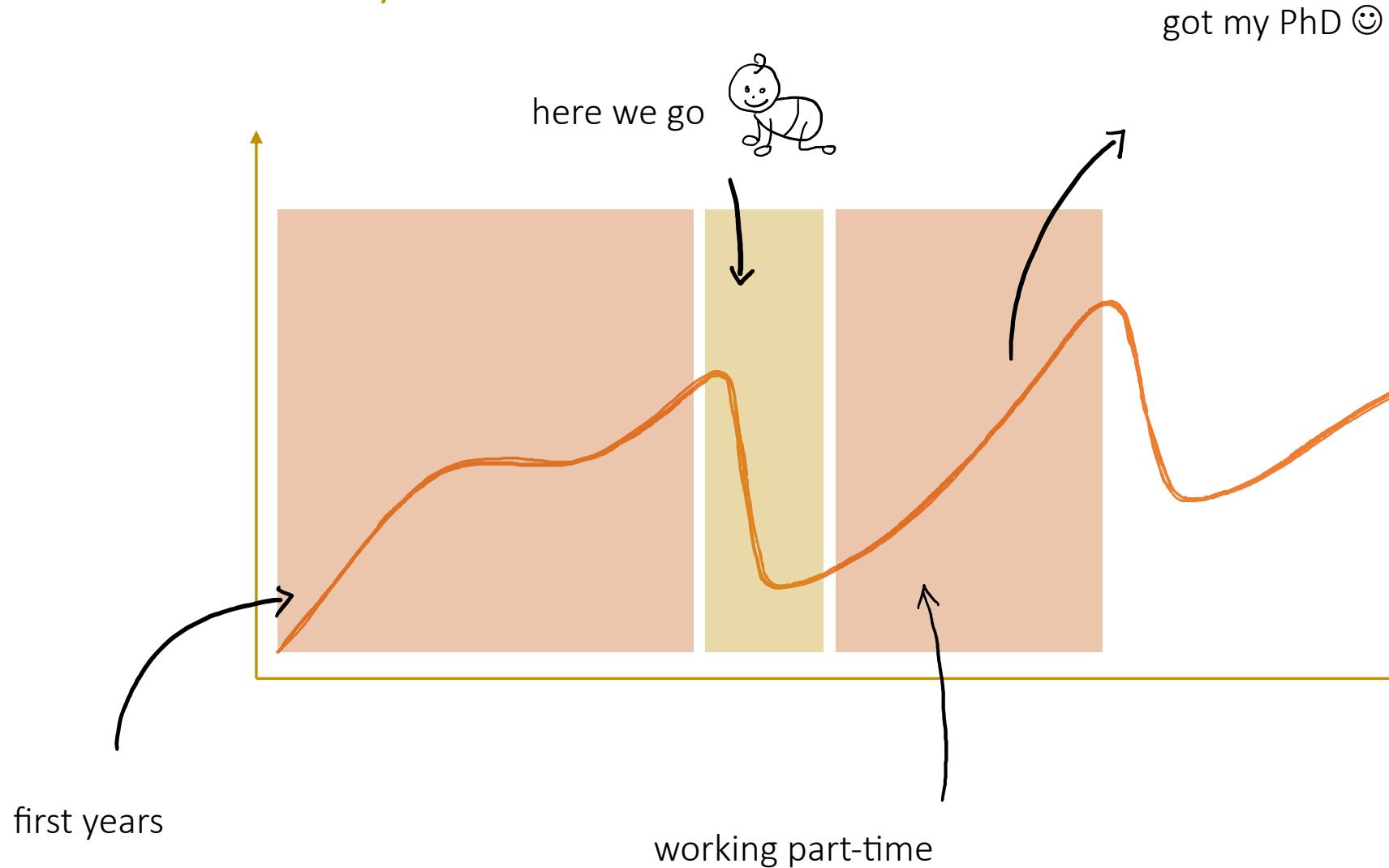
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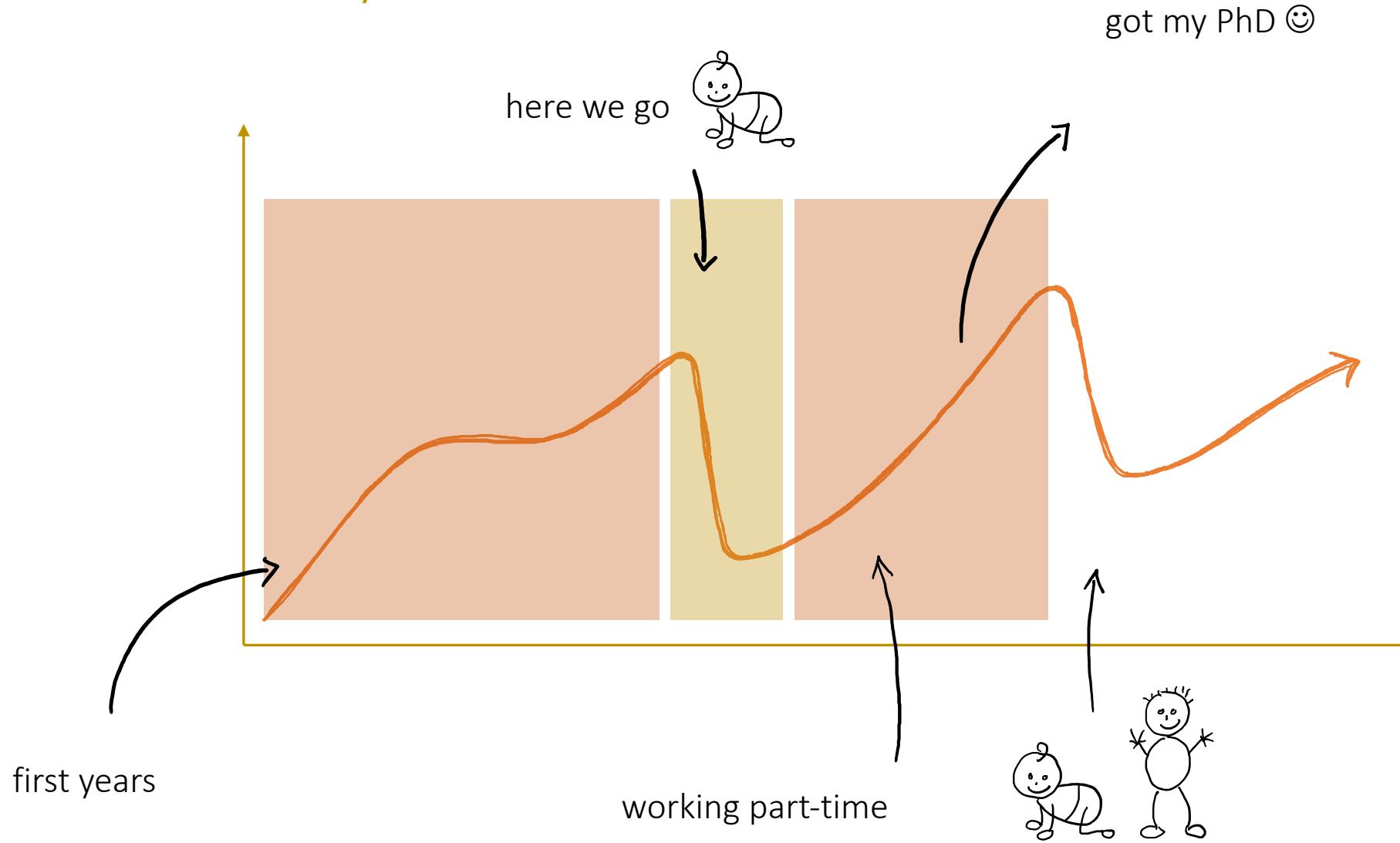
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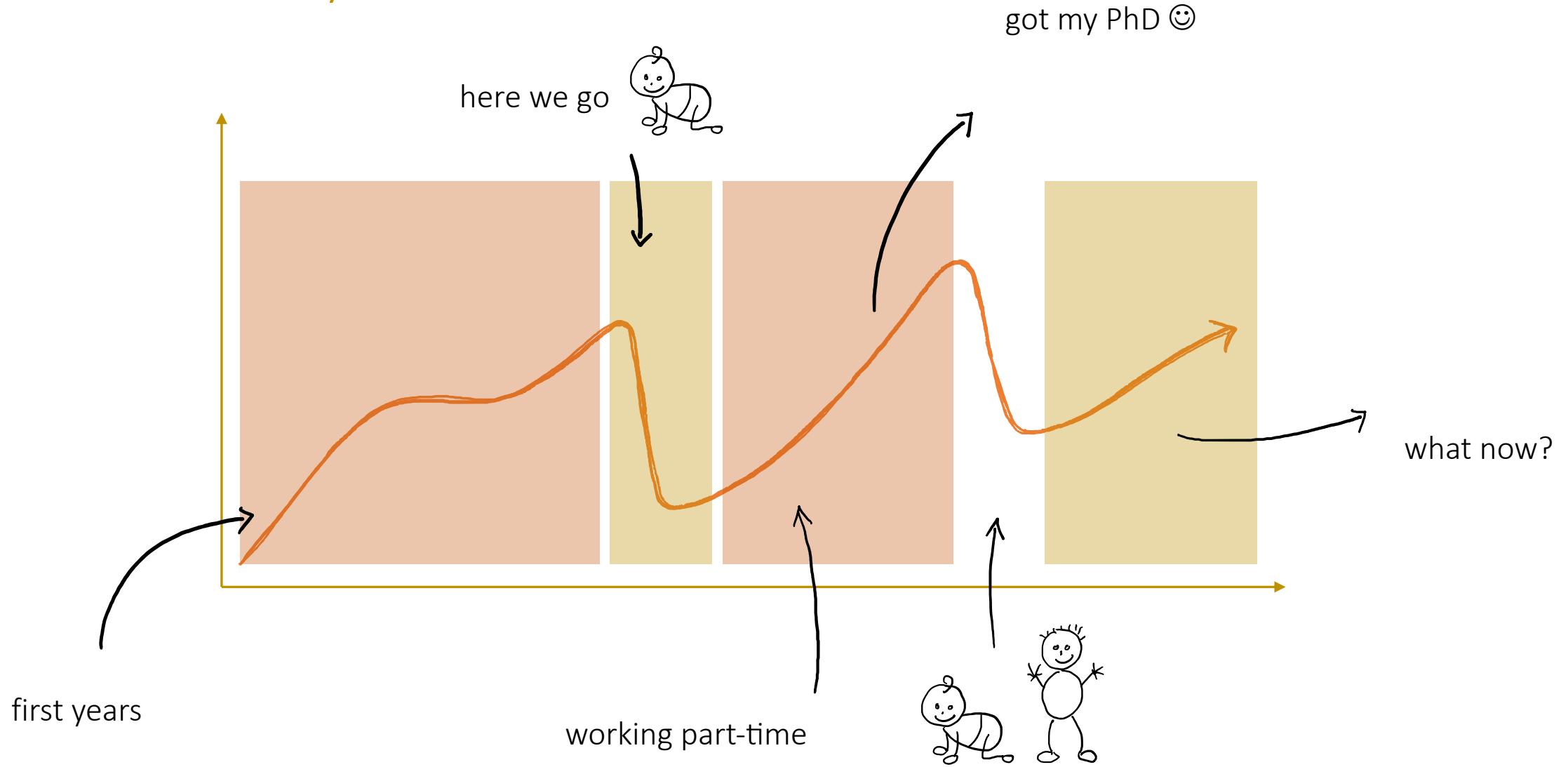
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Preamble — Why do I tell this?

- No advertisement / deterrent ☺

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Germany 2019 [1]: average age (median) of all PhD candidates in computer science: 30.1
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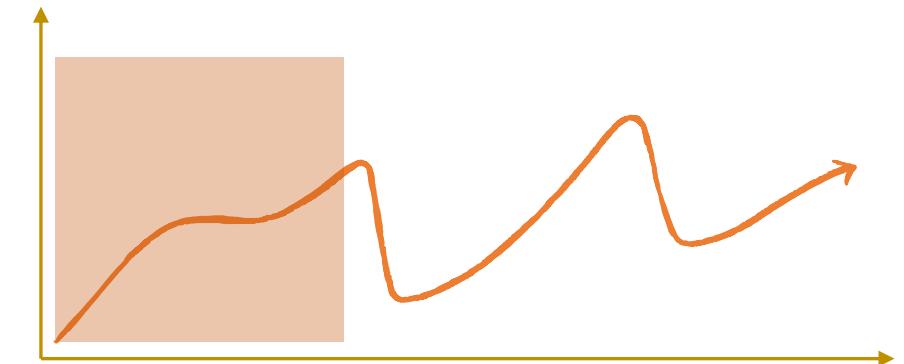
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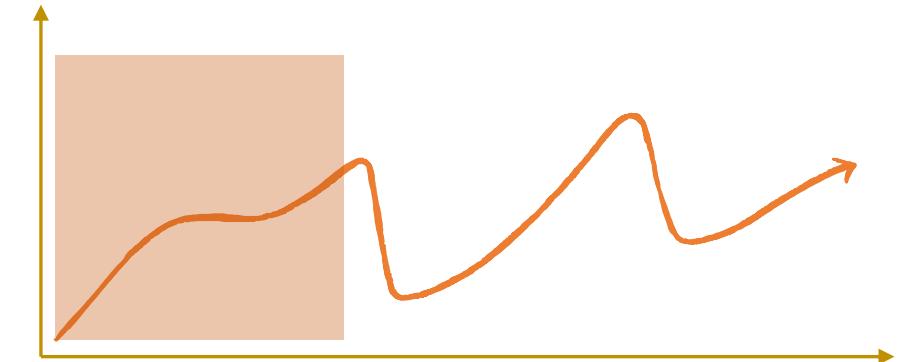
- If you are in a similar situation: exchange might be interesting/helpful
- If you are not affected: maybe your colleagues are
- Important: I can only speak about my own experiences!

The first year(s) of my PhD

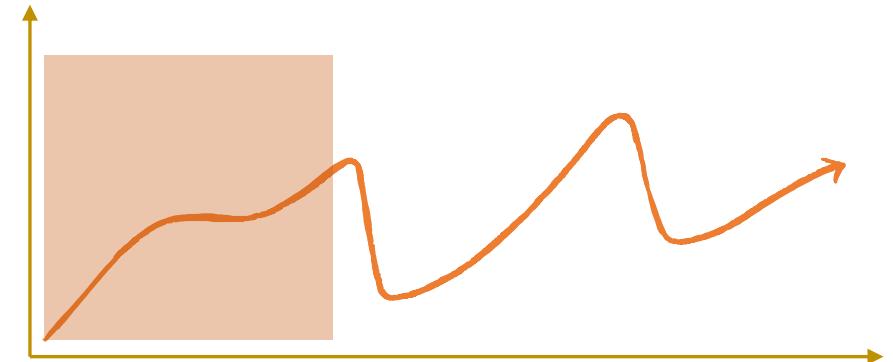


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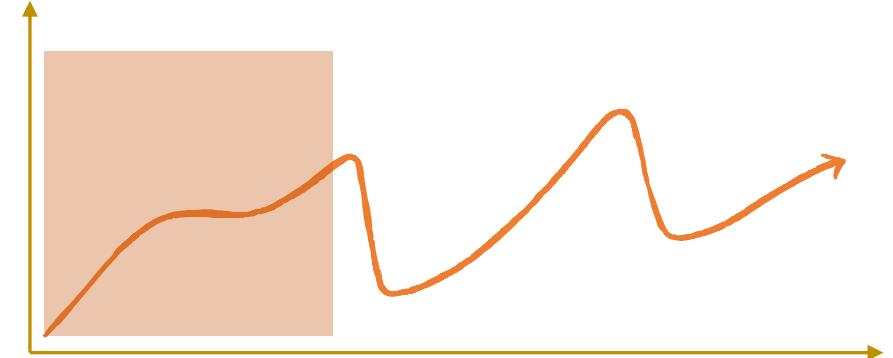


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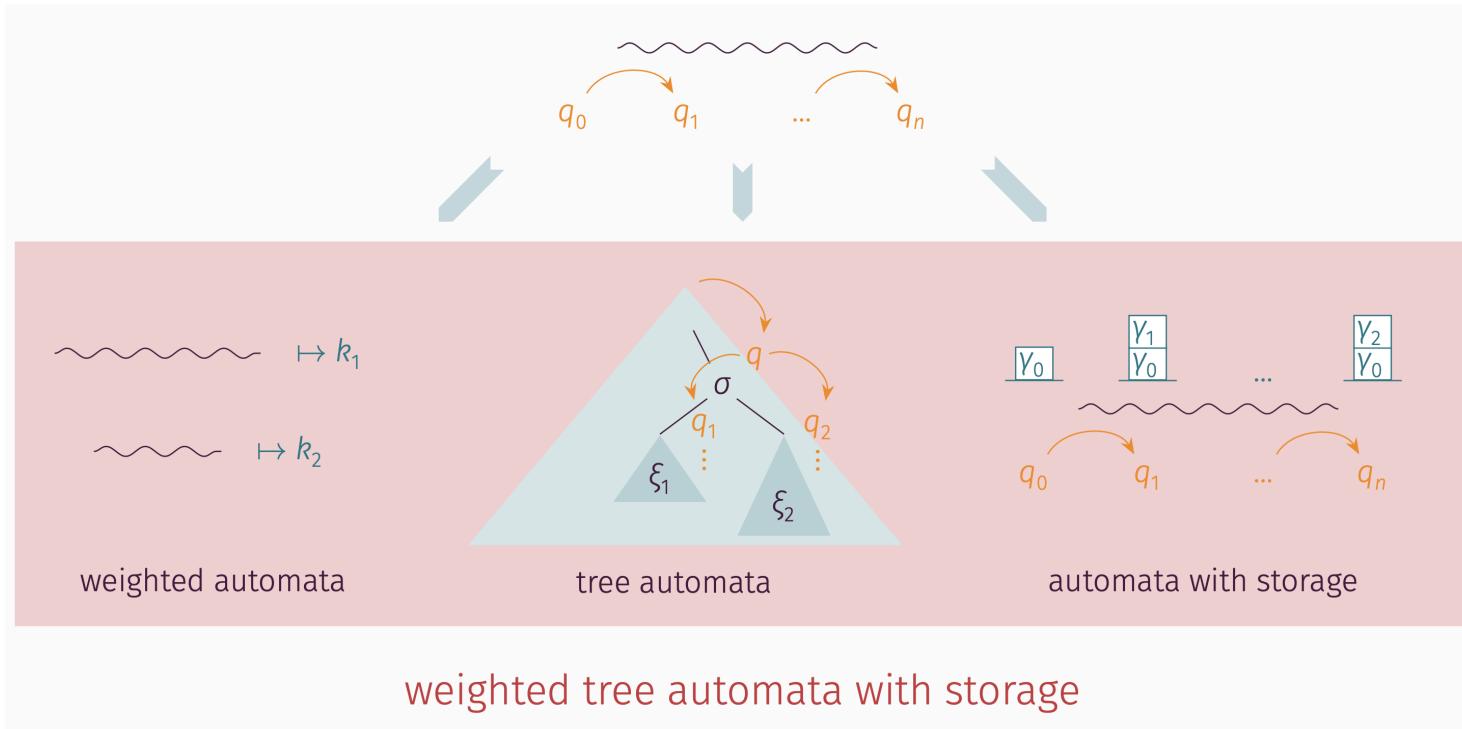


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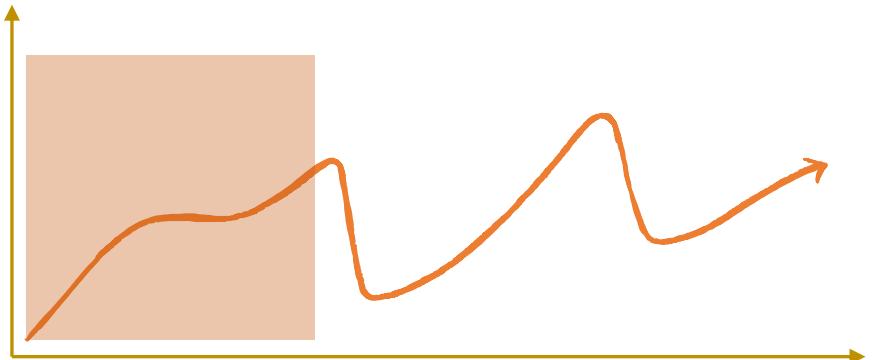
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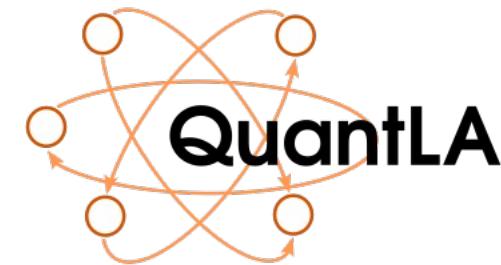
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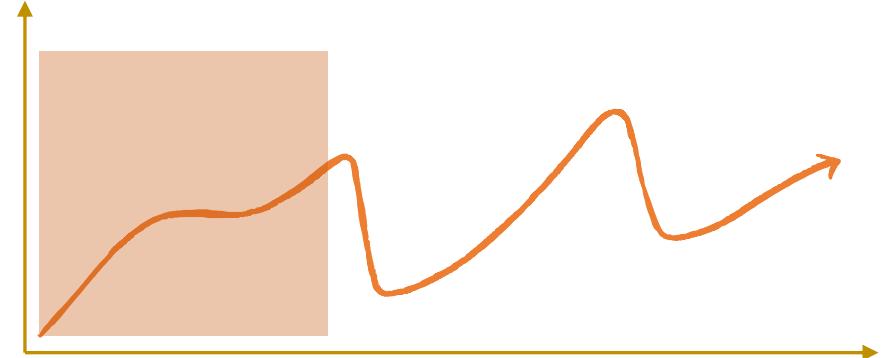
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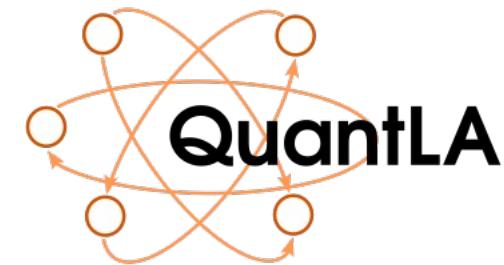
- scholarship for 3 years (turned into position after 1.5 years)
- 10 PIs, 10 scholarship holders, ~10 associated doctoral students



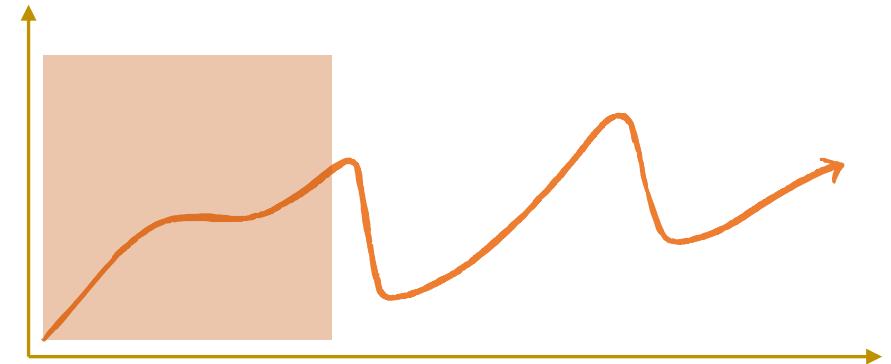
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 - wrote papers, visited conferences, attended workshops...

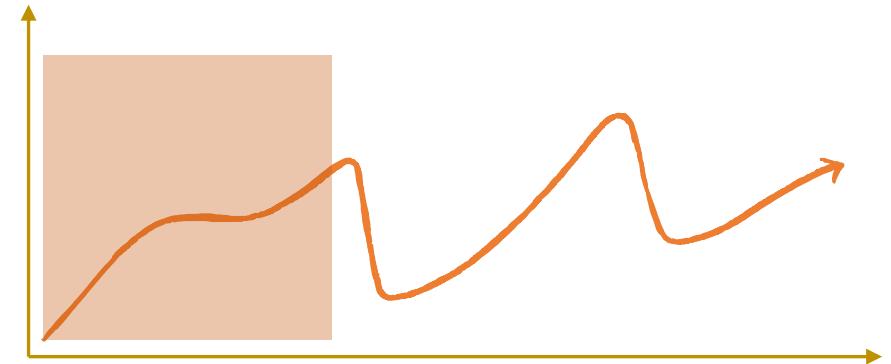


The first year(s) — Reflections



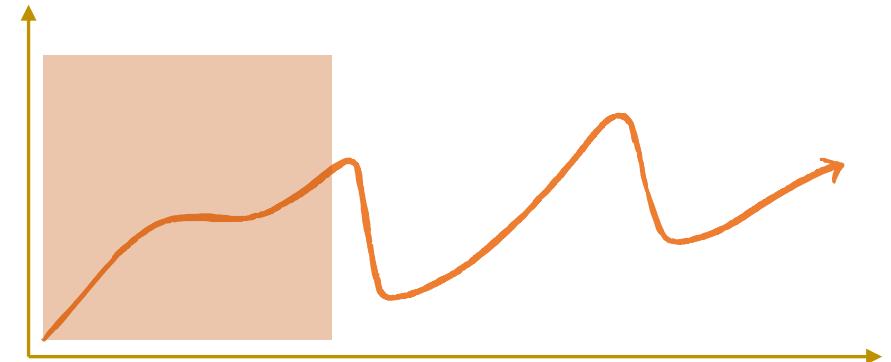
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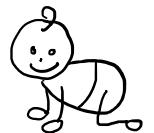
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 - alternative doctoral positions
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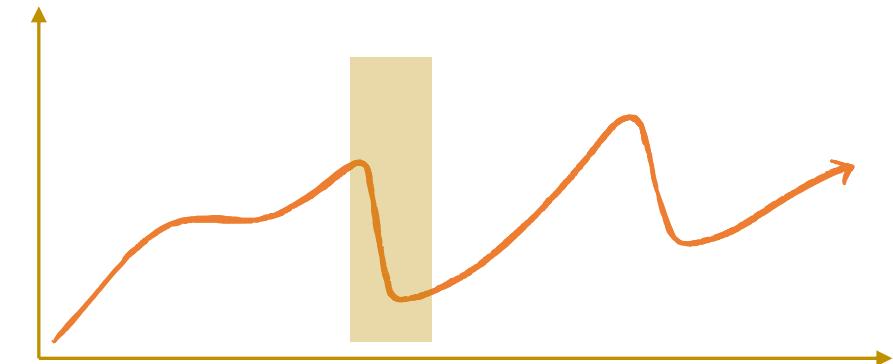


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- QuantLA was a big chance
 - got to know a lot of people
 - could have used this time even better
 - Scholarship vs usual salary: see parental allowance

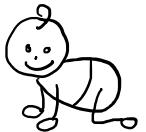
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- Michi was born in 10/2017



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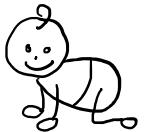


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Excursion 1: Situation in Germany

- maternity leave
 - 6 weeks before delivery, 8 weeks after delivery (mandatory)
 - salary compensation by health insurance
- parental leave
 - 3 years per child and parent
- parental allowance
 - 12-14 months per child
 - 65%-100% of salary
- childcare
 - legal right from the age of 1 year
- Reality:
 - women often stay at home for 1 year

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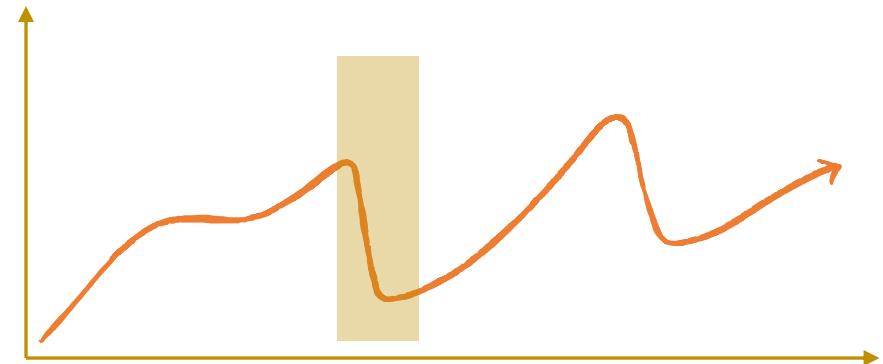


→ cancelled conferences & invitation, no interaction, no research

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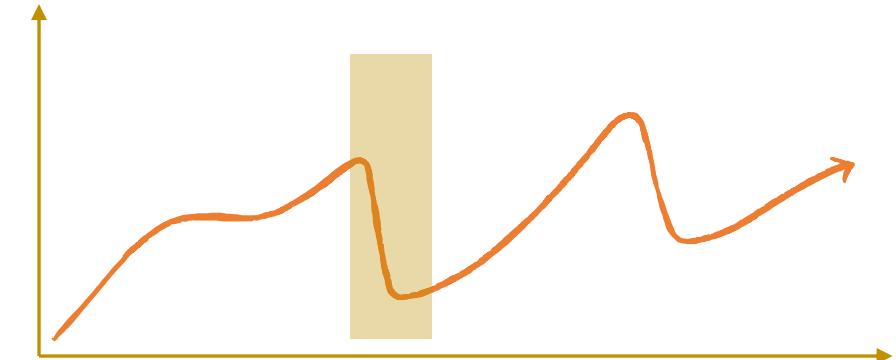
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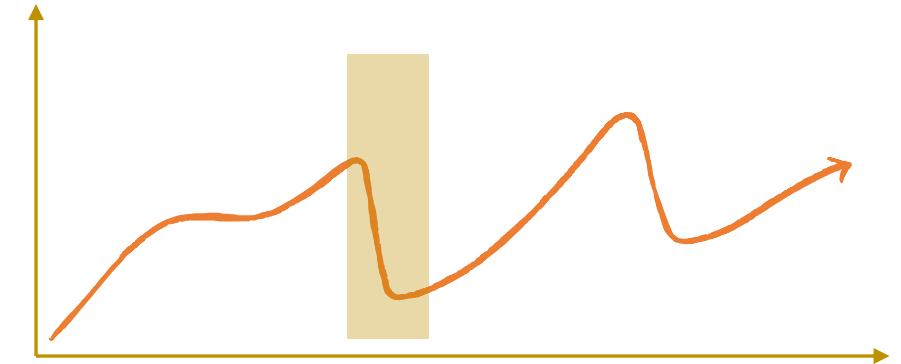
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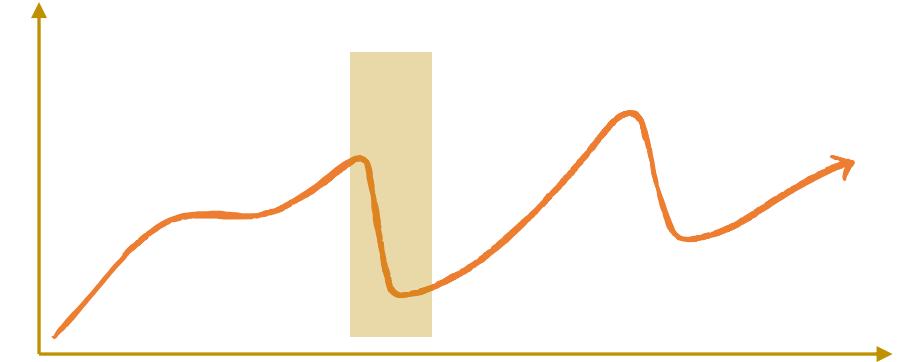
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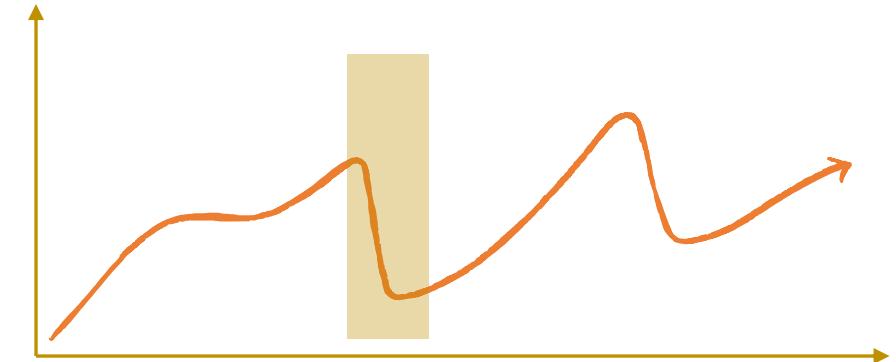
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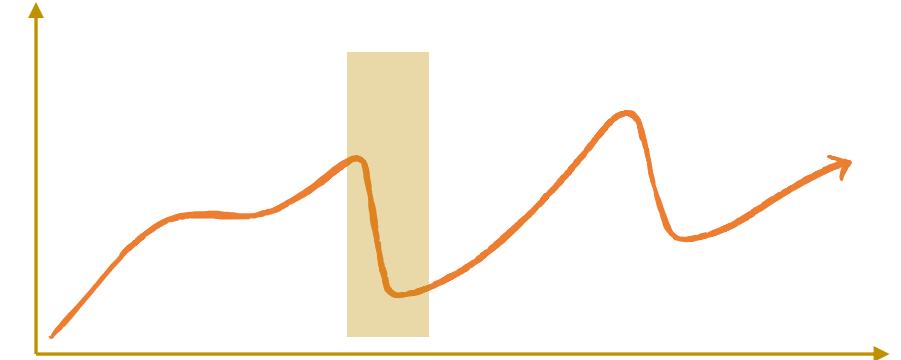
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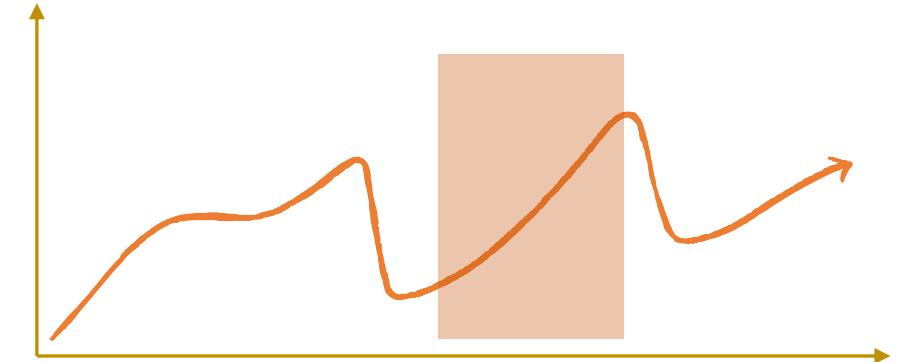
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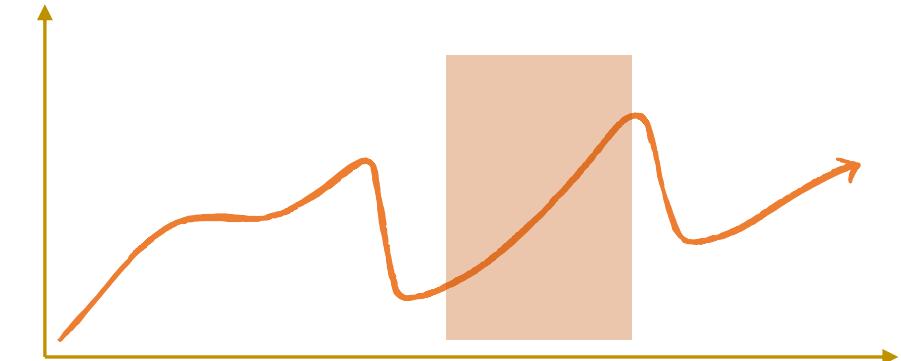
Working part-time

- restarted very slowly:
 - 05/2018 – 12/2018 16h/week
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 - 02/2020 – 08/2021 30h/week



Working part-time

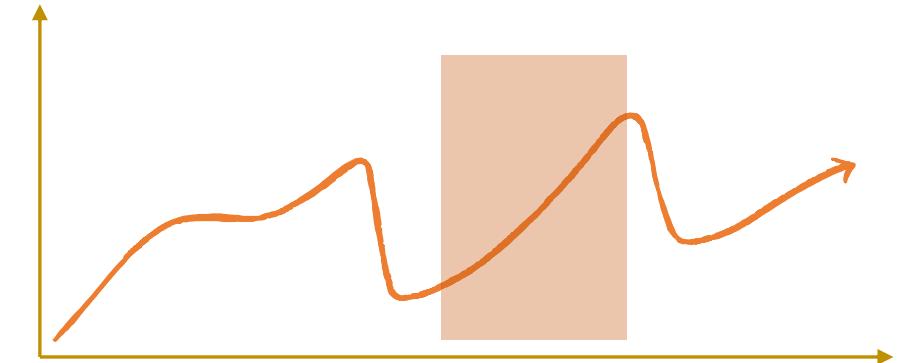
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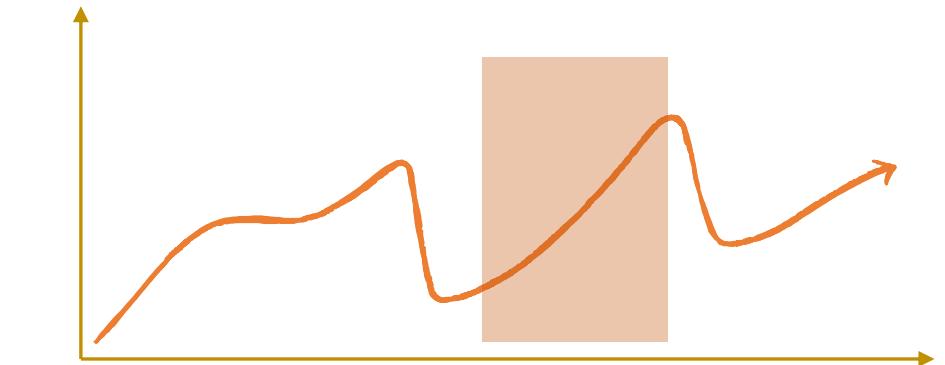
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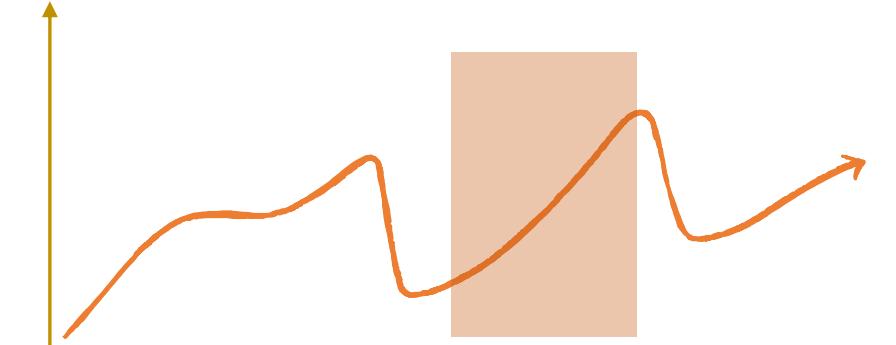
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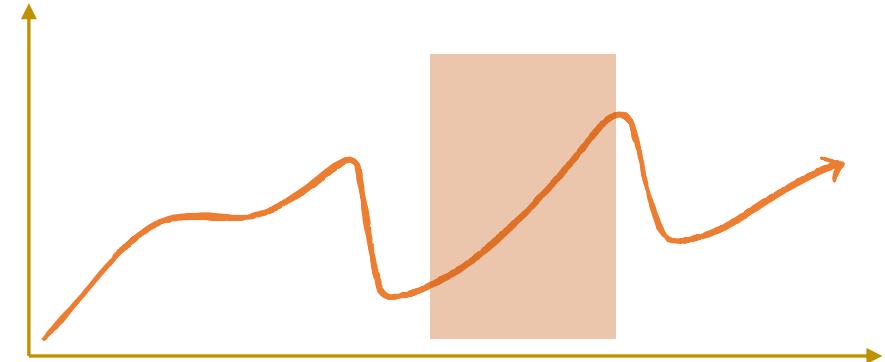
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end of scholarship

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- + teaching
+ supervising students
+ administrative tasks ;)

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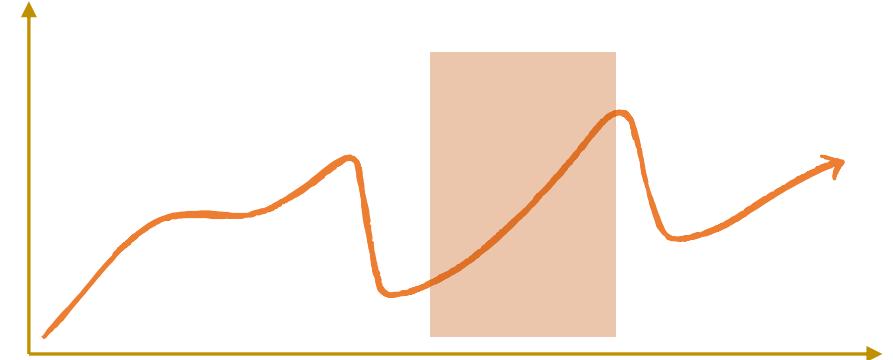
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Excursion 2: What is special about working in our field?

- flexible scheduling
- no time tracking

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Excursion 2: What is special about working in our field?

- flexible scheduling
- no time tracking

- research ↔ other ongoing tasks
- you are “personally involved”
 - ↳ usual to work more than 40h/week
- no permanent work flow
- many tasks cannot be delegated

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Working part-time — Reflections

2021
■ [b1]

■ [j4]

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- I changed my publication behavior
avoided conferences / stays abroad → no networking, no exchange

2010 – 2019

2019
■ [j3]
■ [j2]

2018
■ [j1]

2017
■ [c5]
■ [i2]

2016
■ [c4]
■ [c3]
■ [c2]

2015
■ [c1]
■ [i1]

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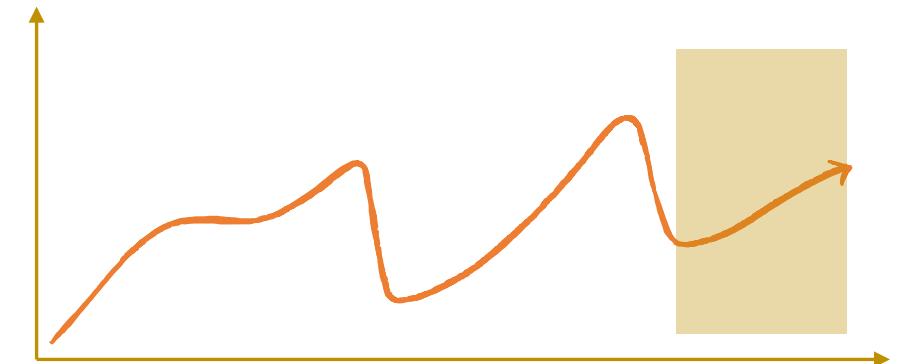
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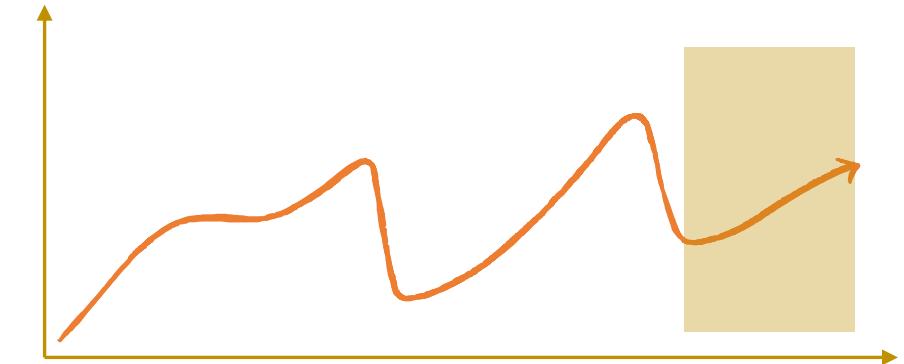
 - This paper / talk / dissertation is no longer important...
 - What are you doing after your PhD? Have the next child? 😂 😊

What now?



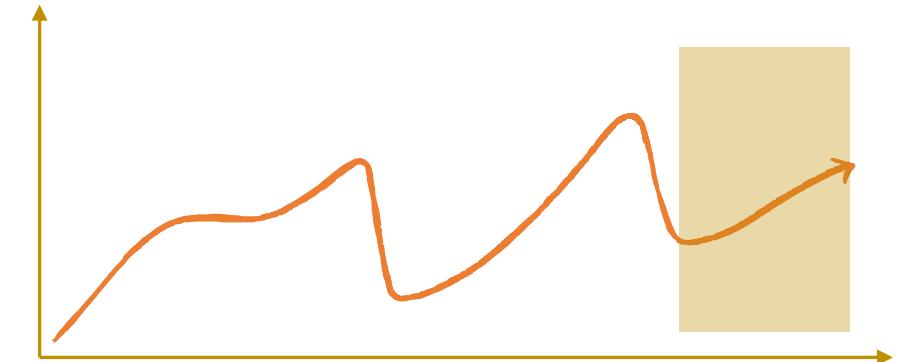
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 - “other tasks” now also important



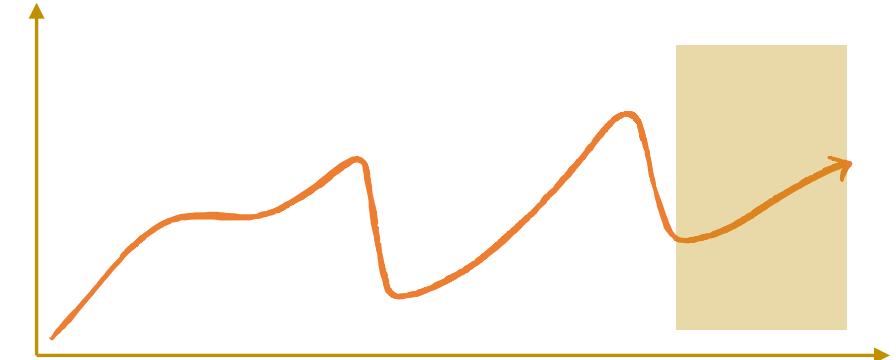
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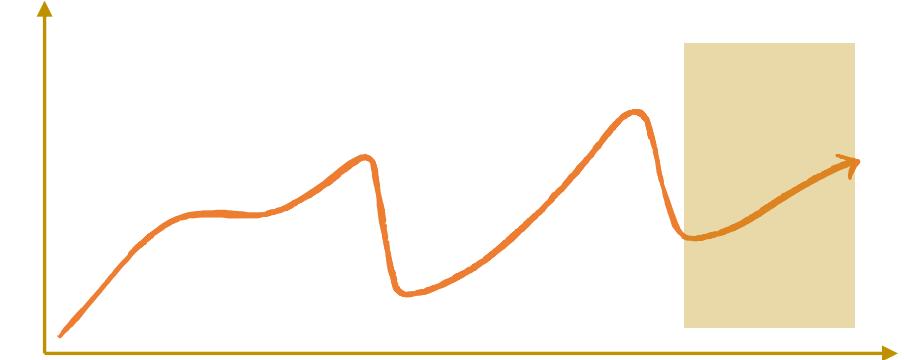
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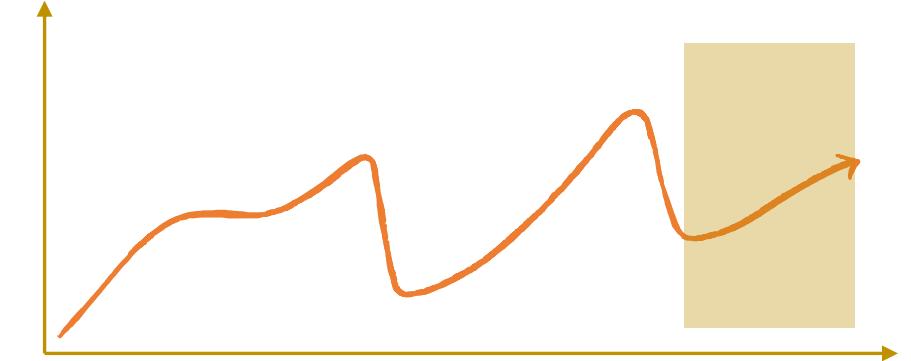
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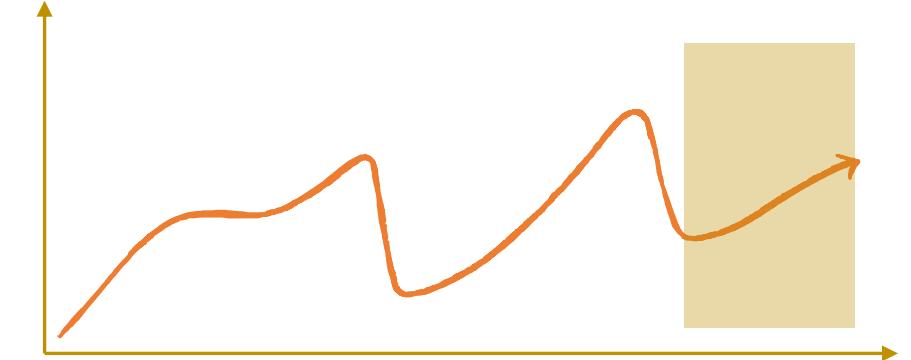


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→ comparison with others

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Remarks / Questions?