

Work-Family Balance in Academia?

— Reflections on my PhD time as a parent

Luisa Herrmann

Logic Mentoring Workshop, Naples, February 2024

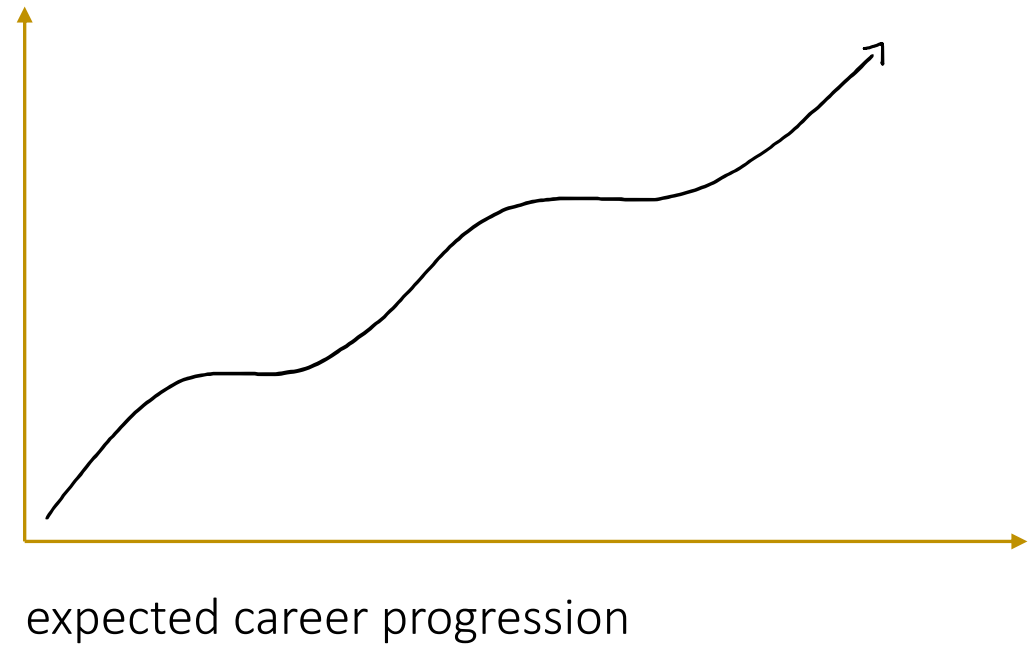
What can I tell you?

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I did my PhD in automata theory :)

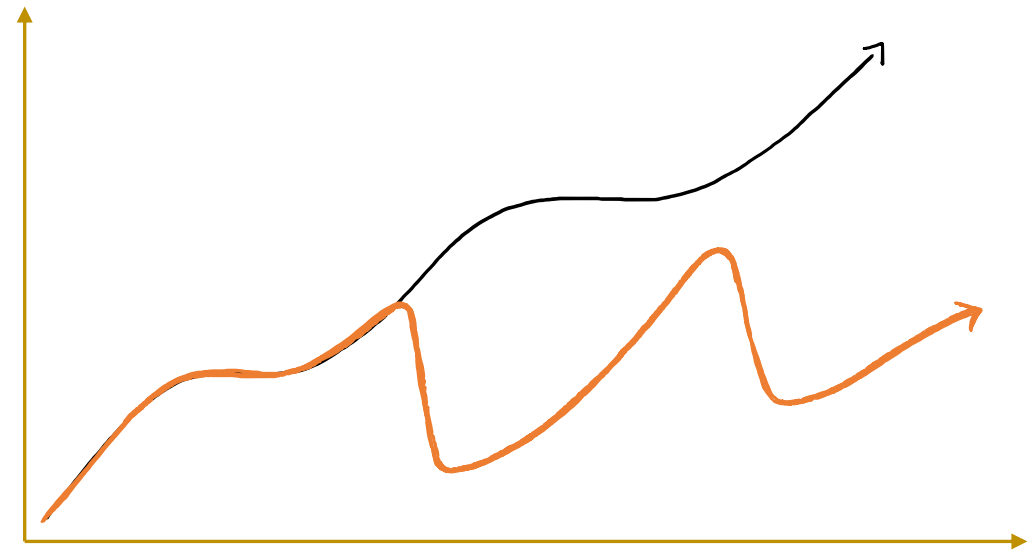
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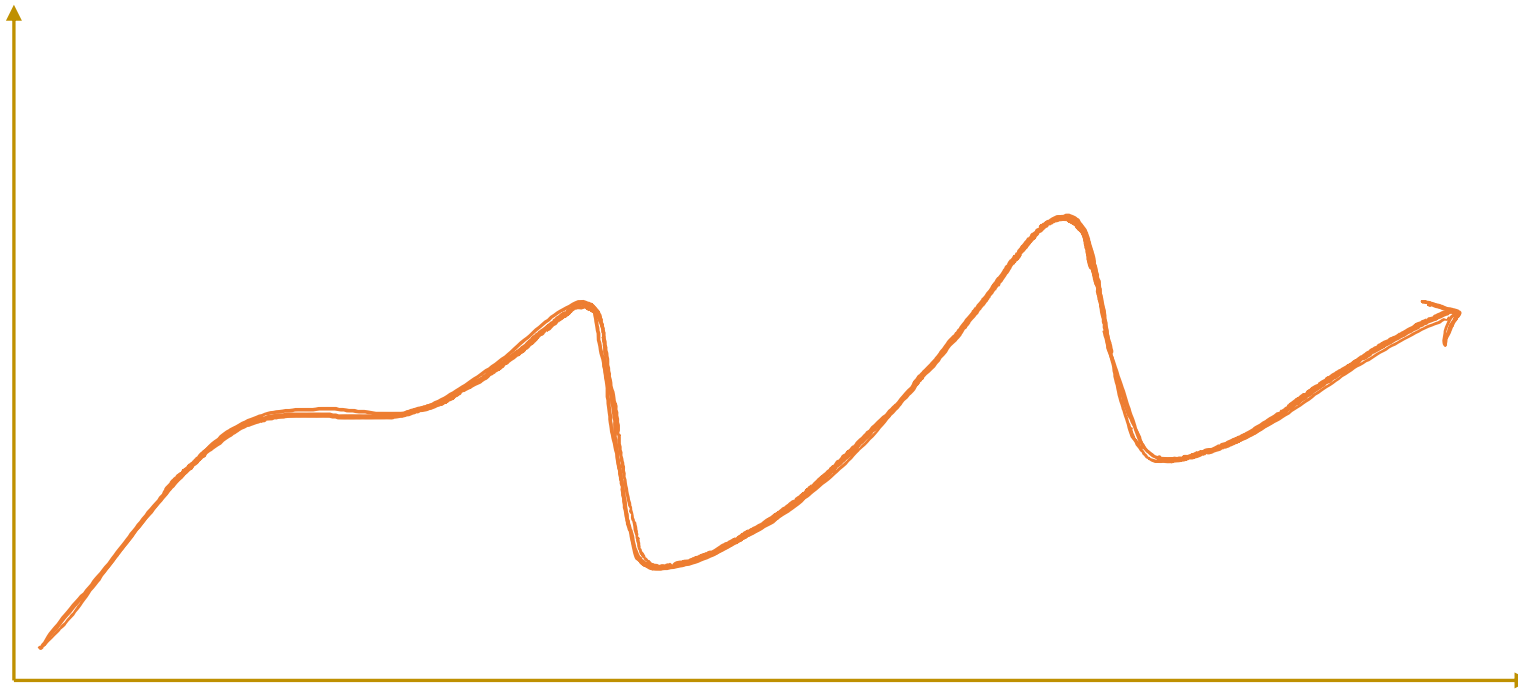
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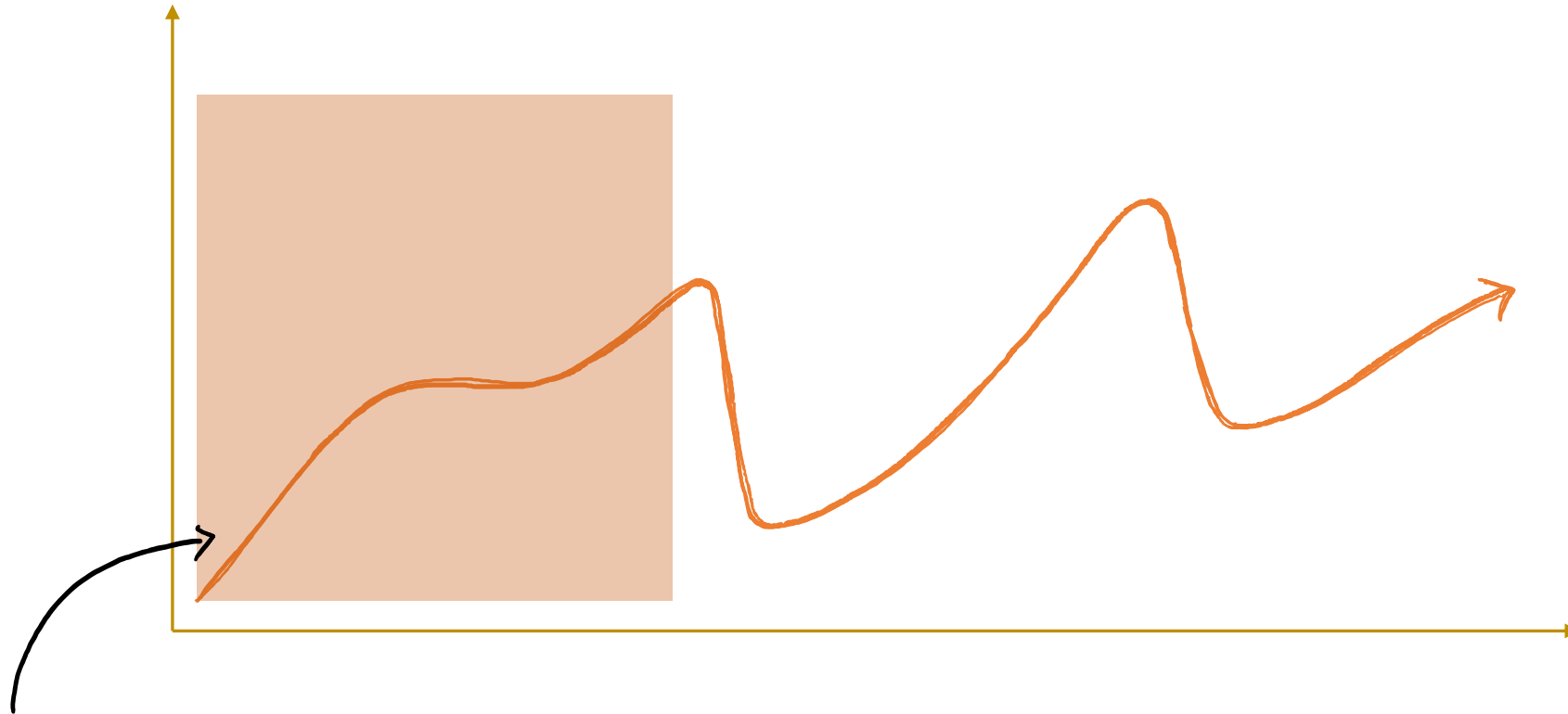
expected career progression

my career progression

What will I tell you?

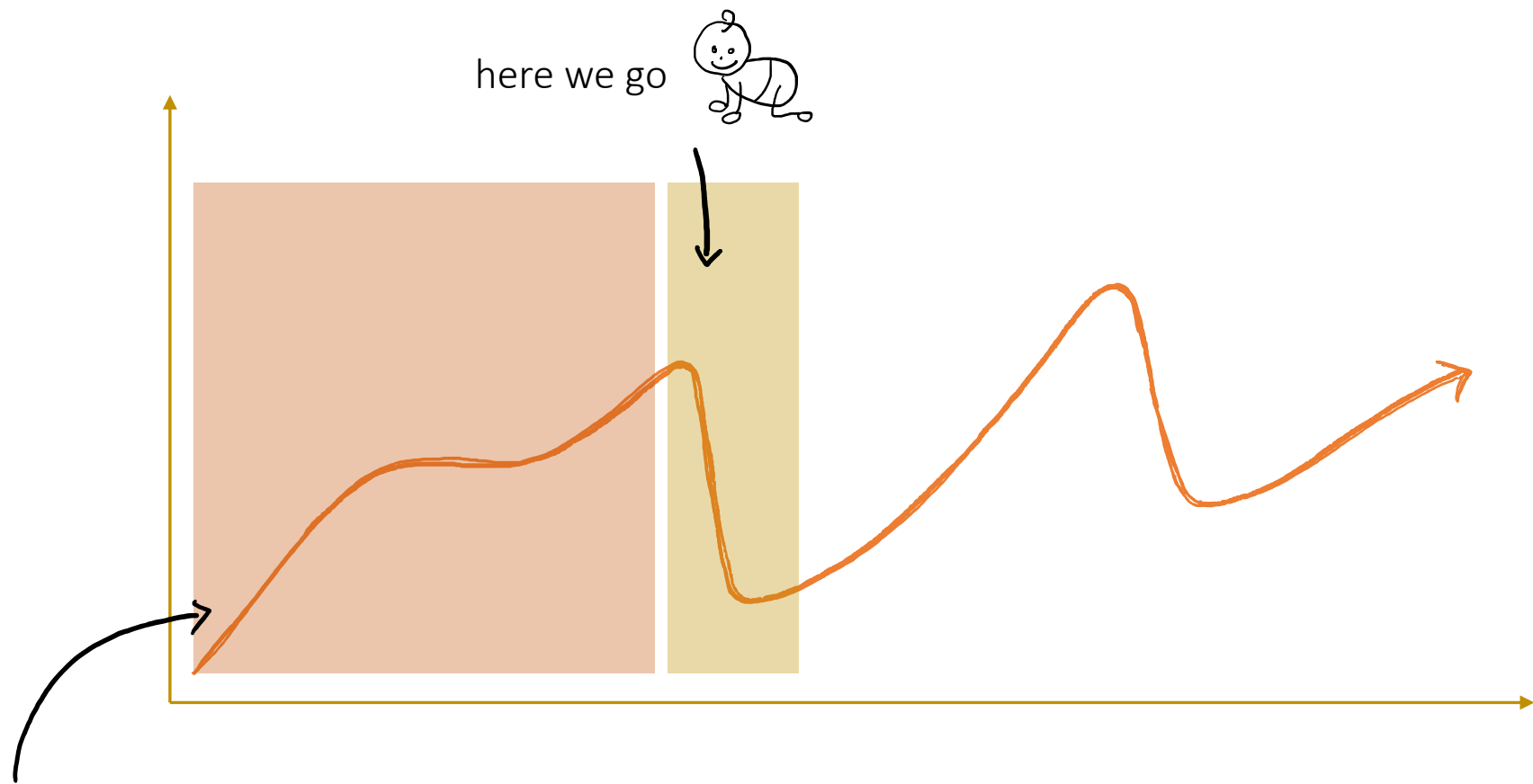


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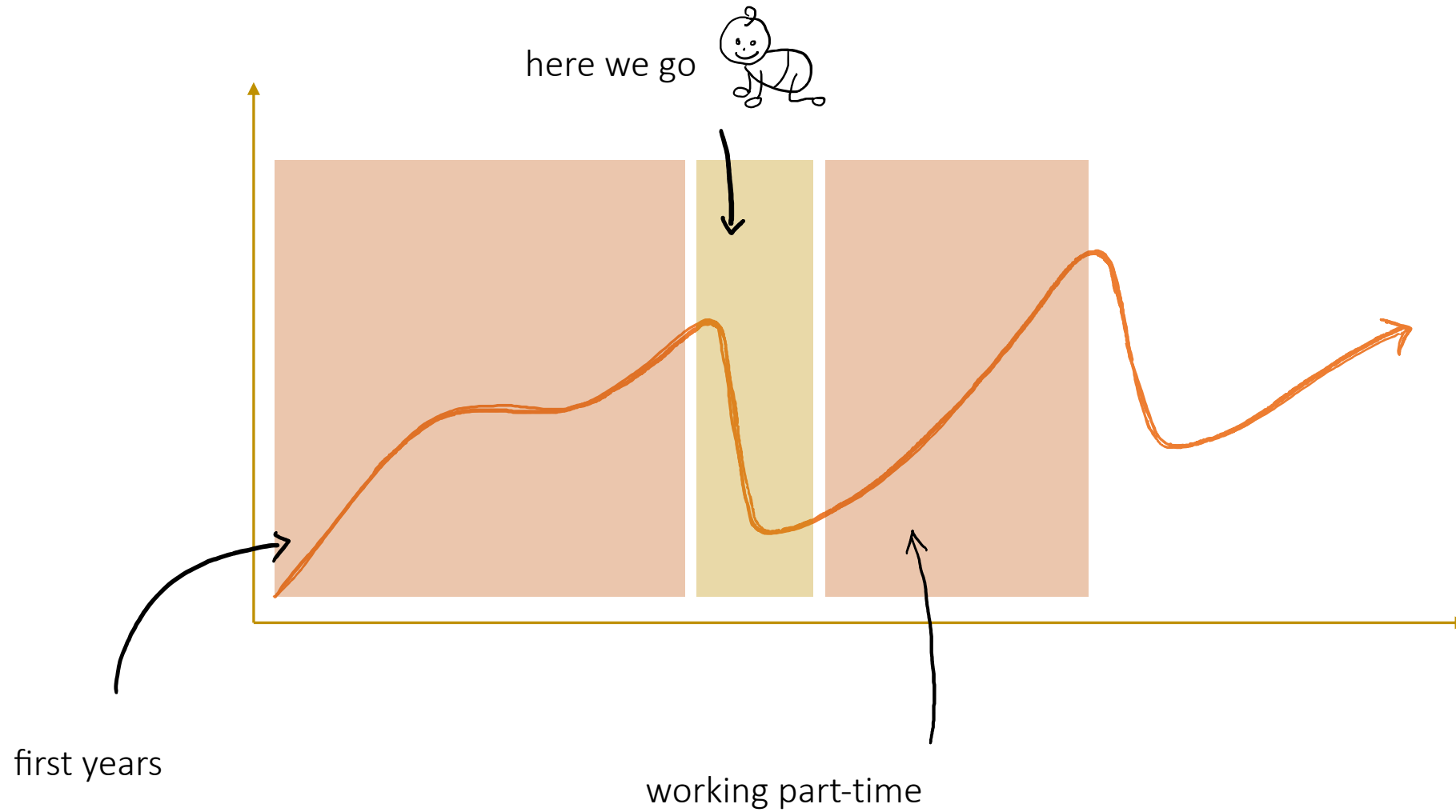
first years

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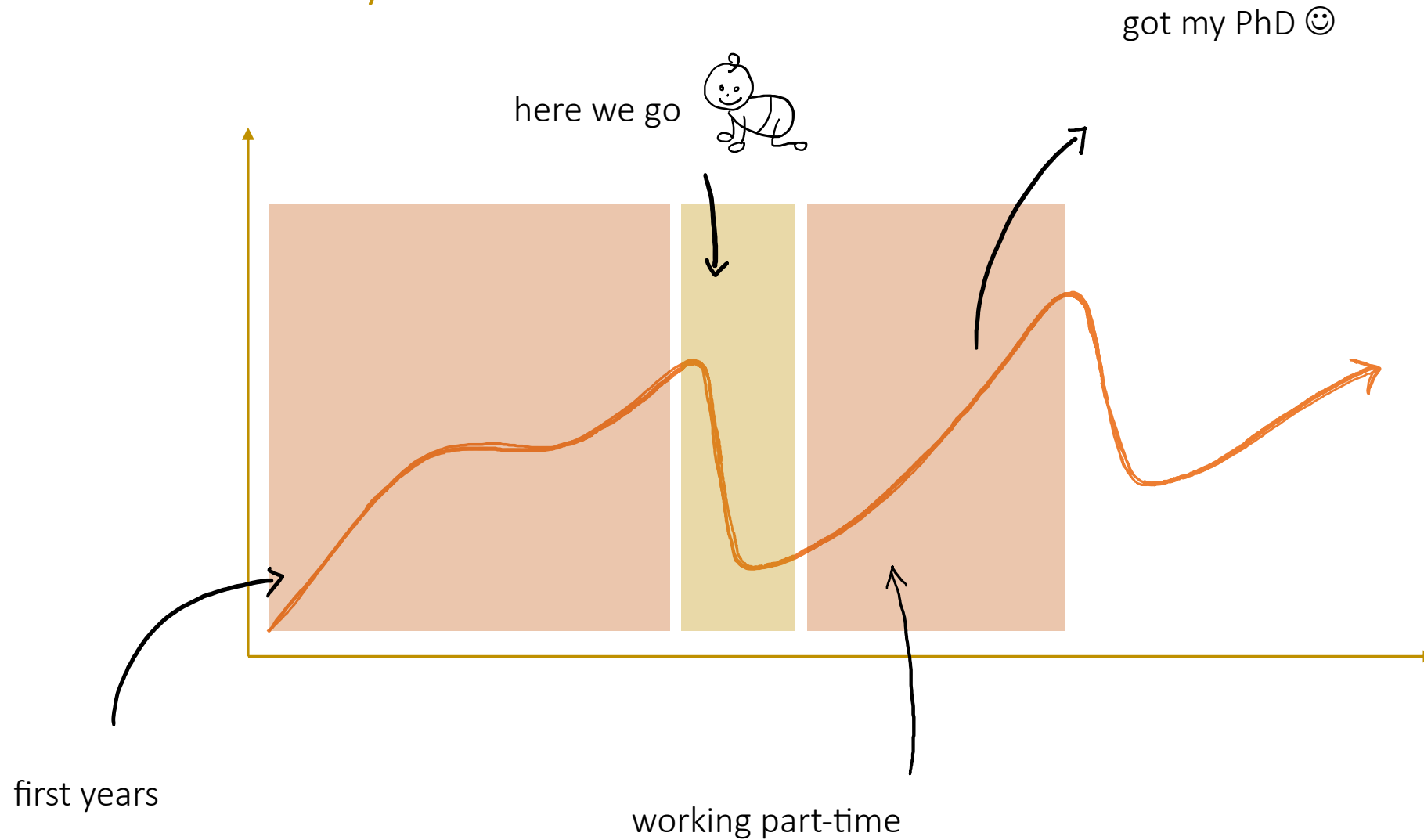


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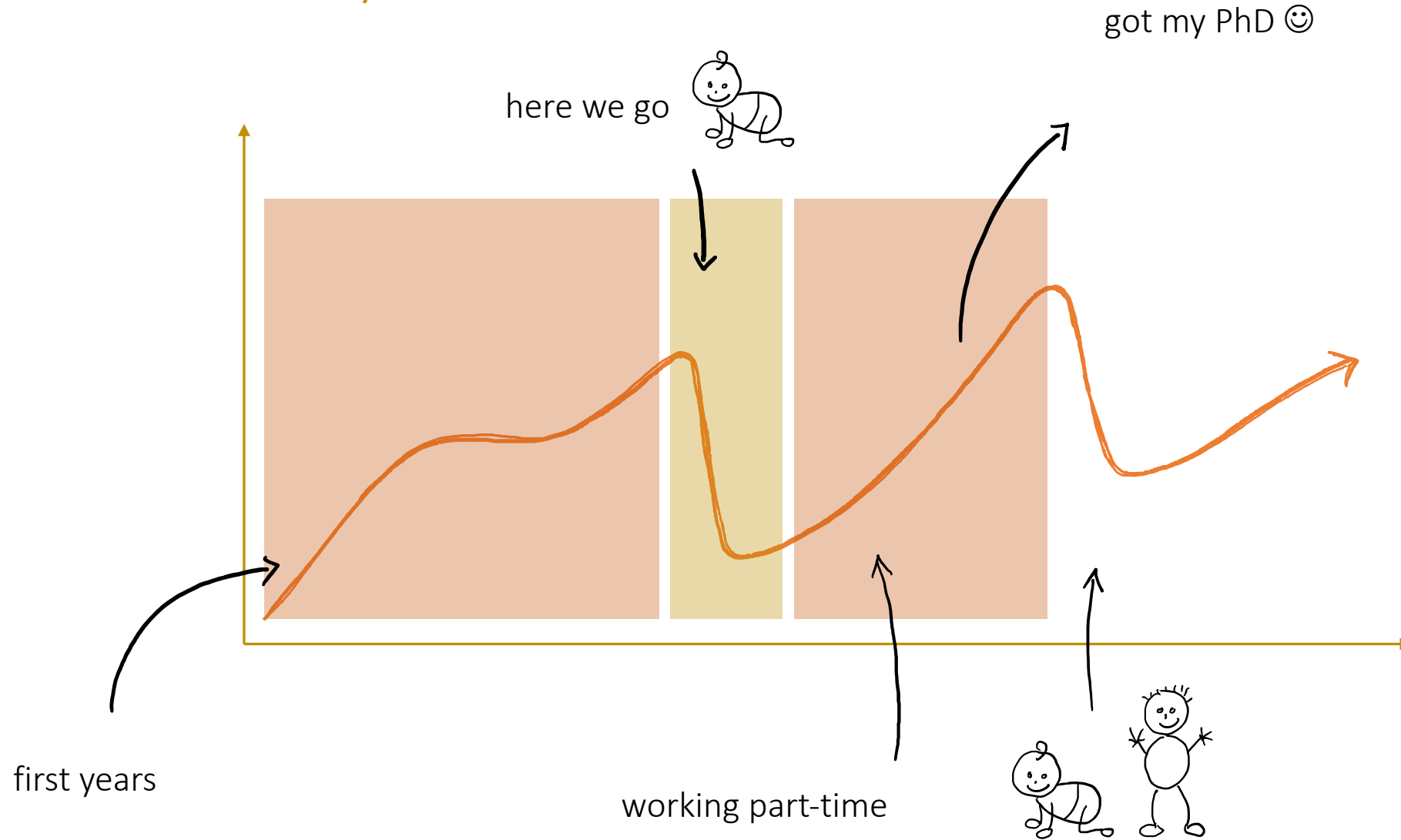
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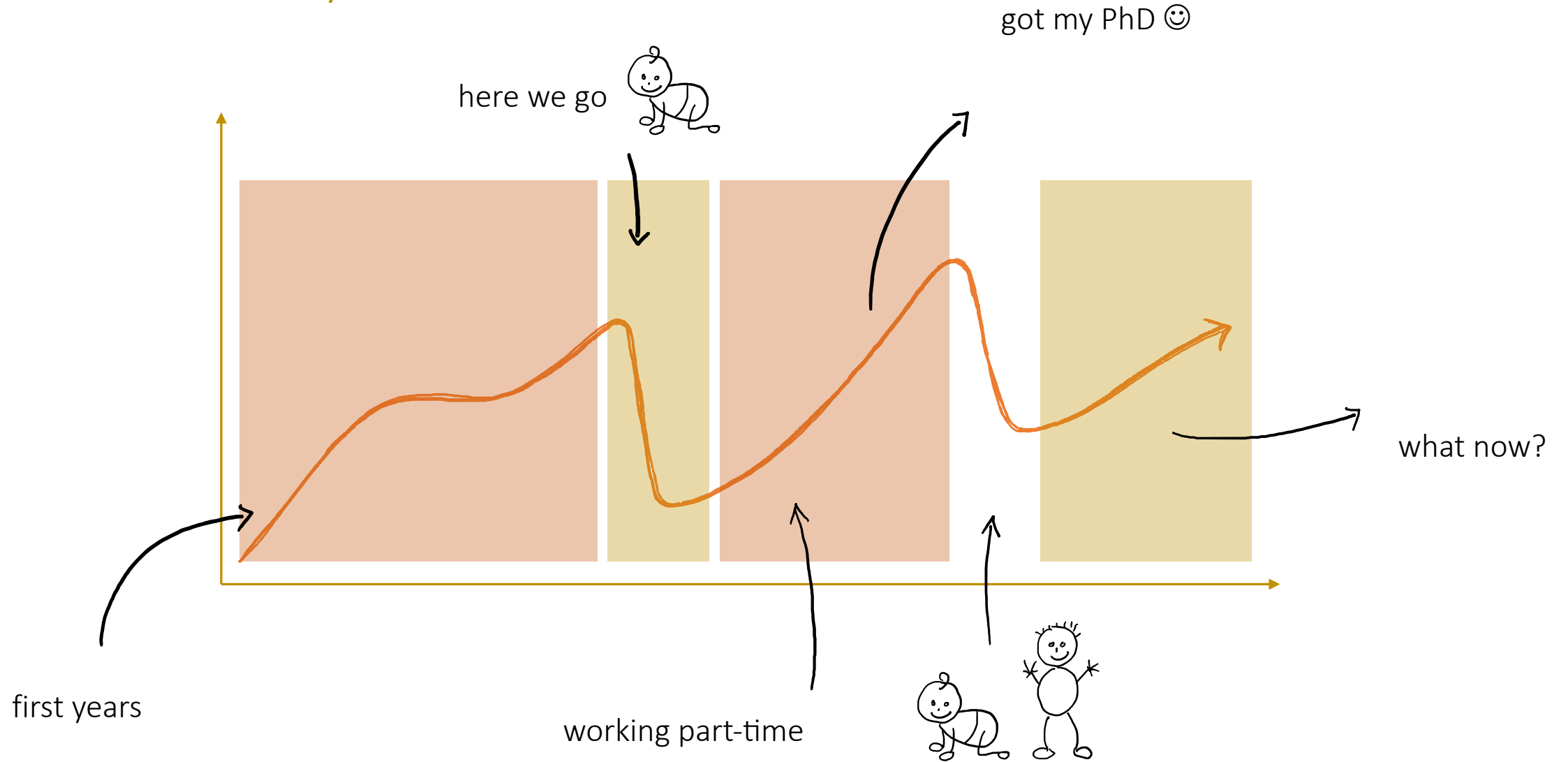
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Preamble — Why do I tell this?

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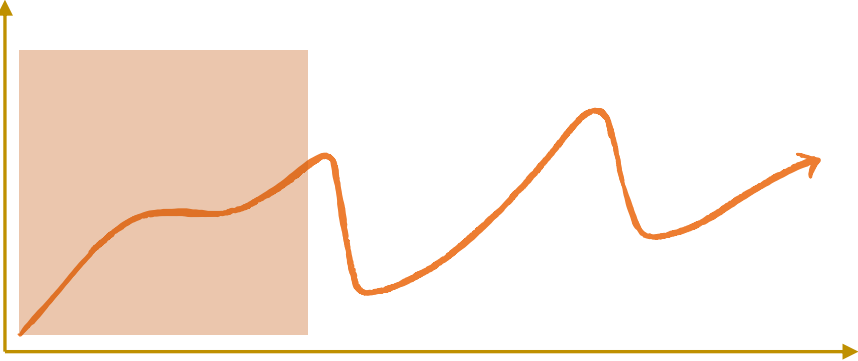
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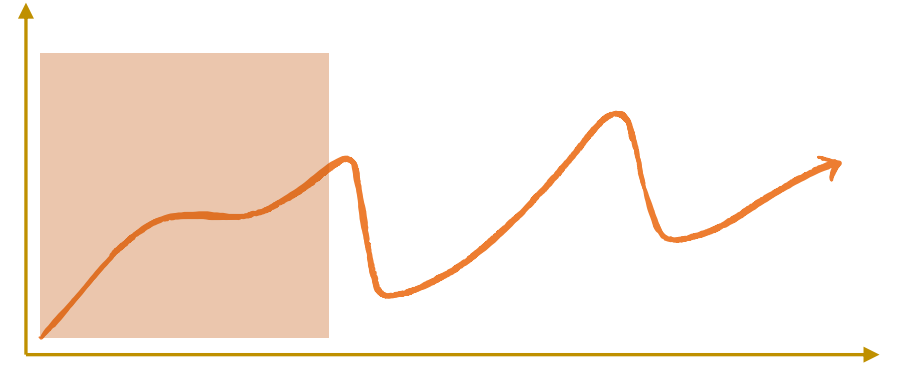
- If you are in a similar situation: exchange might be interesting/helpful
- If you are not affected: maybe your colleagues are
- Important: **I can only speak about my own experiences!**

[1] Statistisches Bundesamt (D) and eurostat

The first year(s) of my PhD

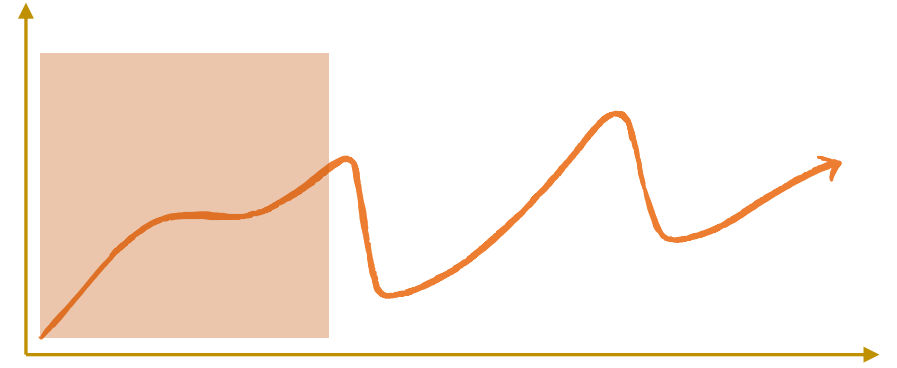


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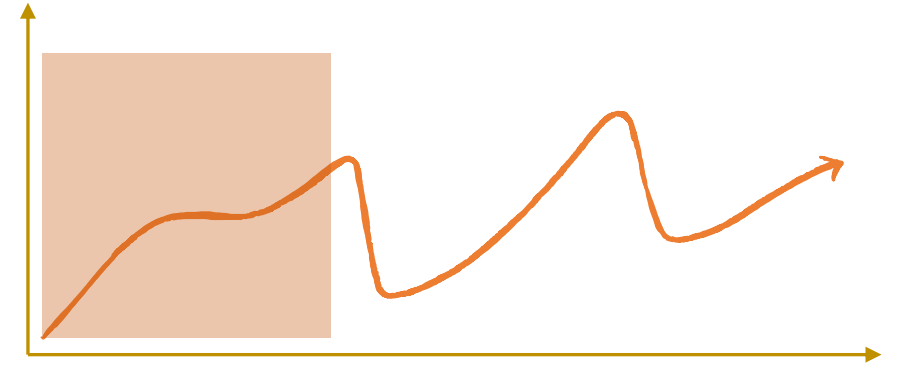
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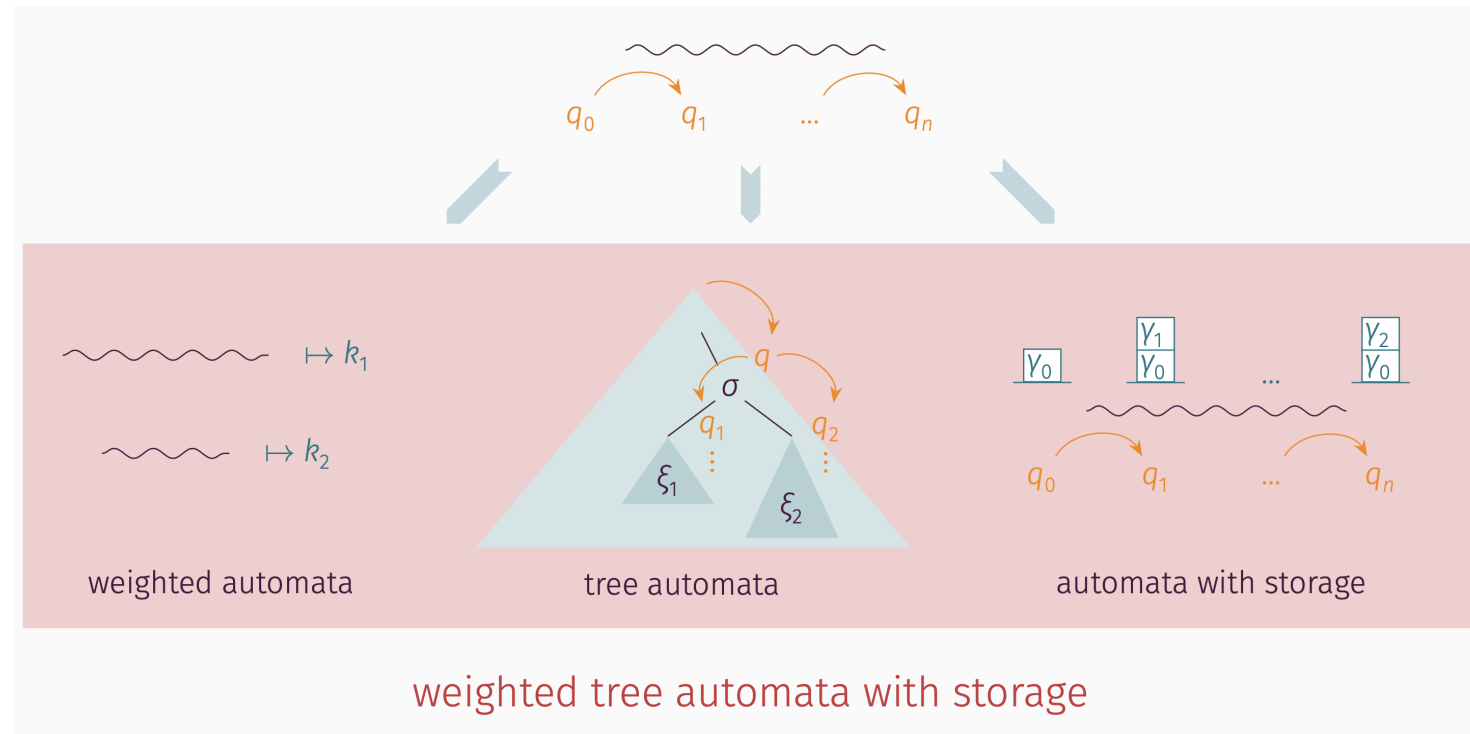


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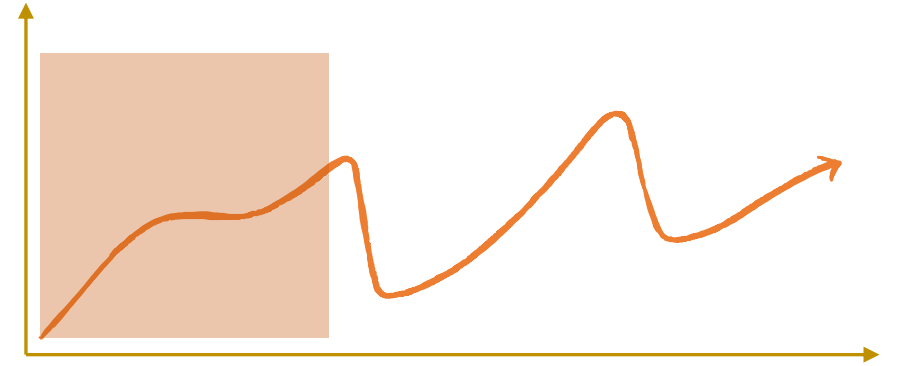
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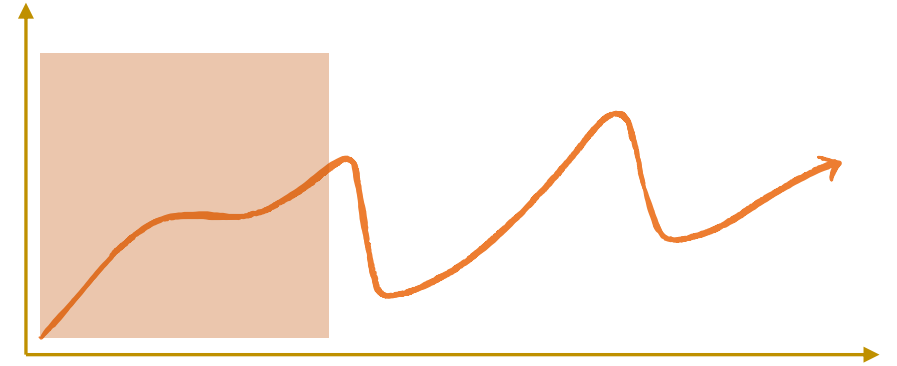
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“Quantitative Logics and Automata”

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



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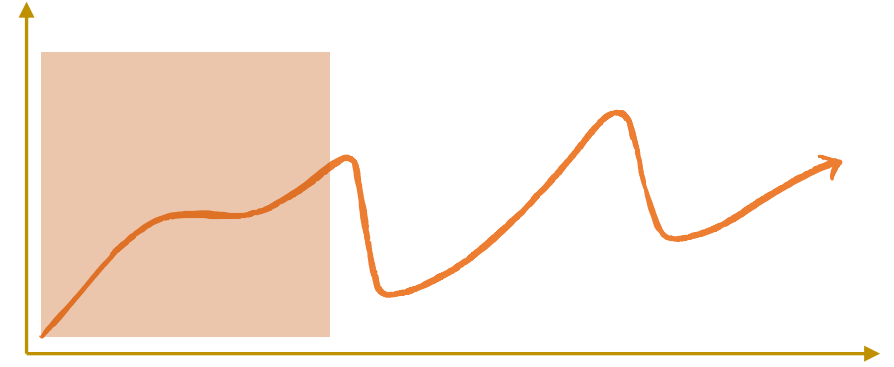
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- 10 PIs, 10 scholarship holders, ~10 associated doctoral students
- wrote papers, visited conferences, attended workshops...

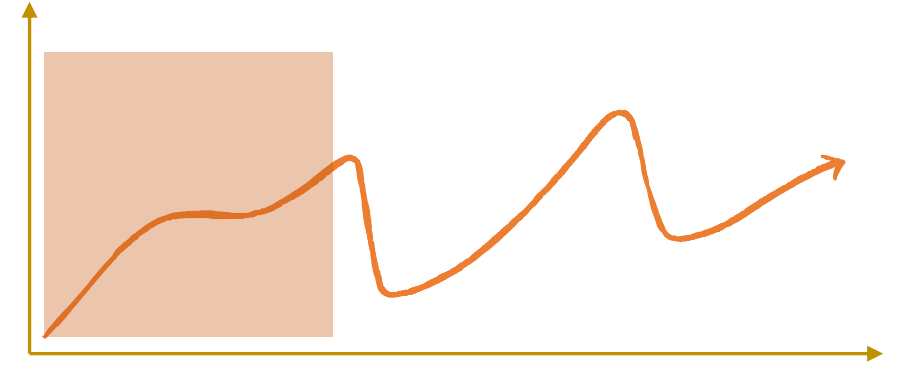


The first year(s) — Reflections



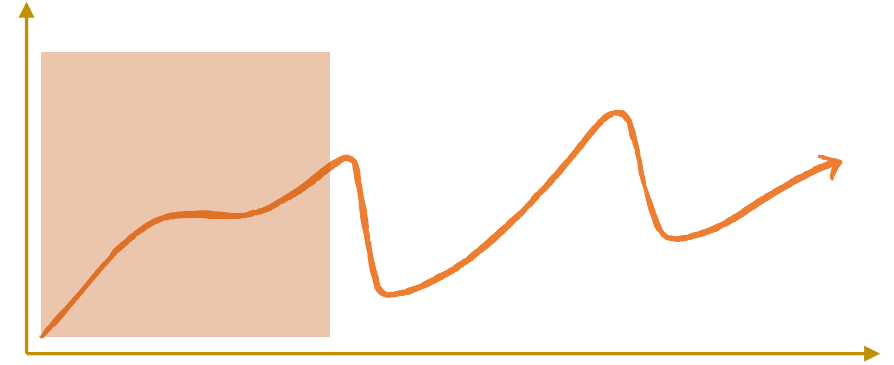
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 - I knew the topic and open questions
 - I know the research group

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 - alternative doctoral positions
 - alternative topic

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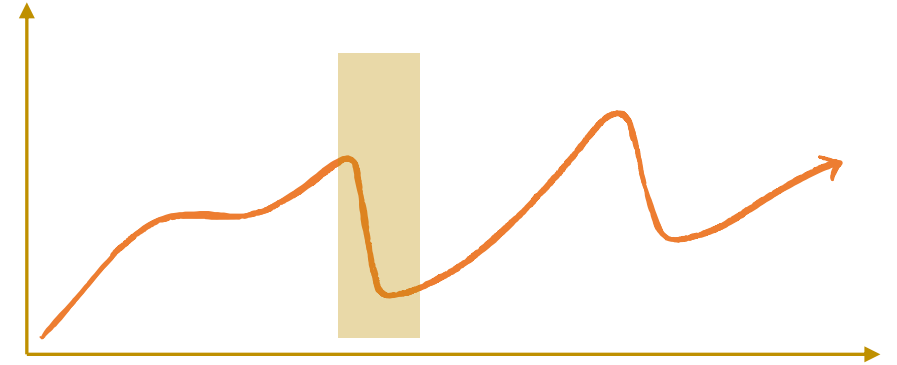


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- ...but I haven't really looked into alternatives
 - alternative doctoral positions
 - alternative topic
- QuantLA was a big chance
 - got to know a lot of people
 - could have used this time even better
 - Scholarship vs usual salary: see parental allowance

Here we go: No 1



- Michi was born in 10/2017



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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:
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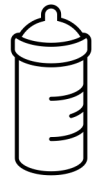
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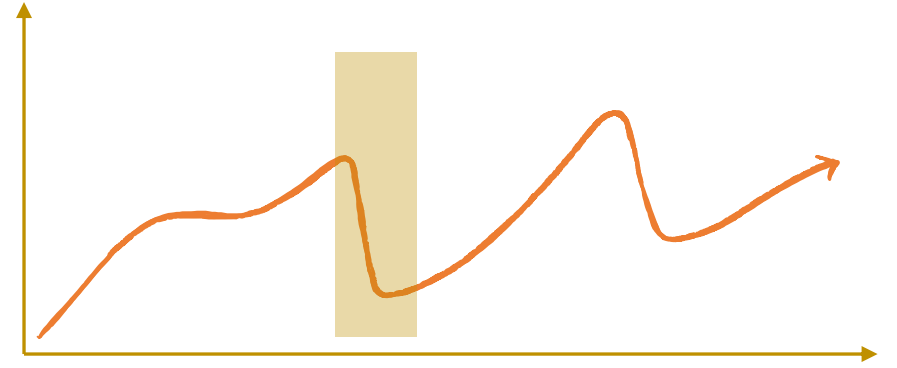


→ cancelled conferences & invitation, no interaction, no research

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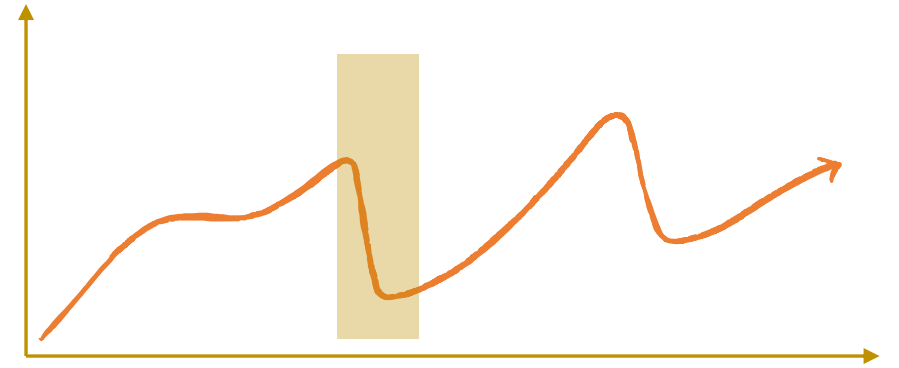
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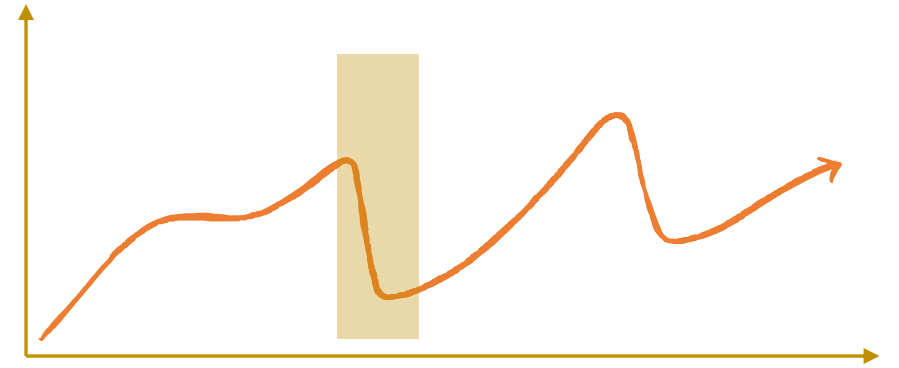
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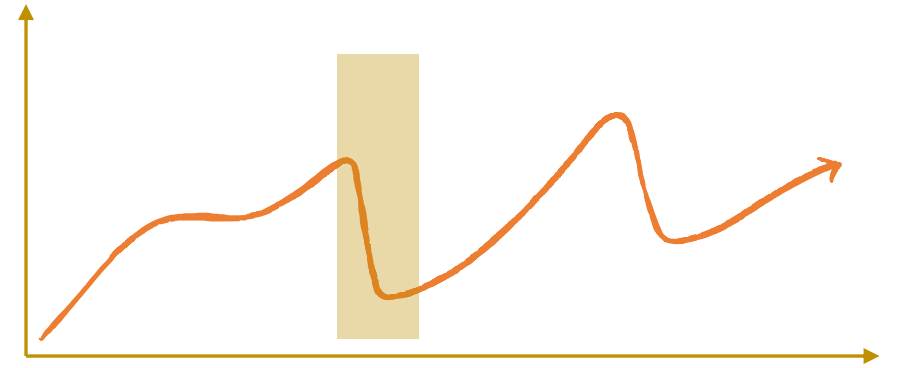
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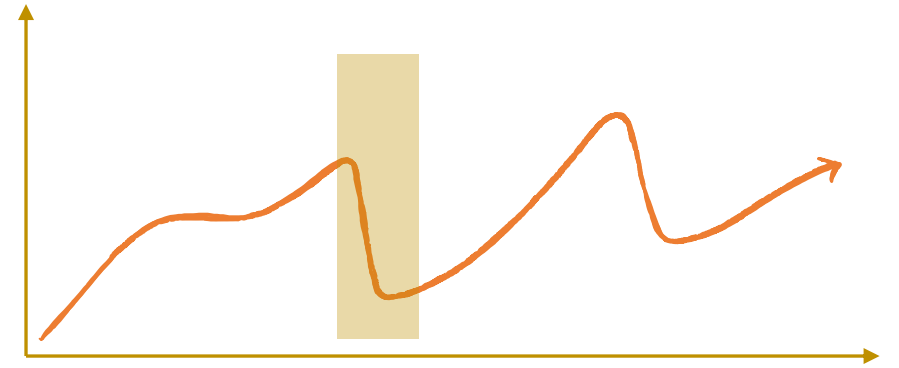
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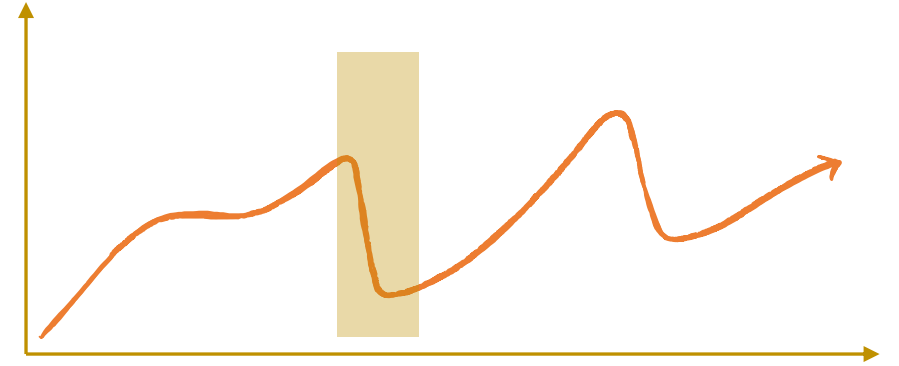
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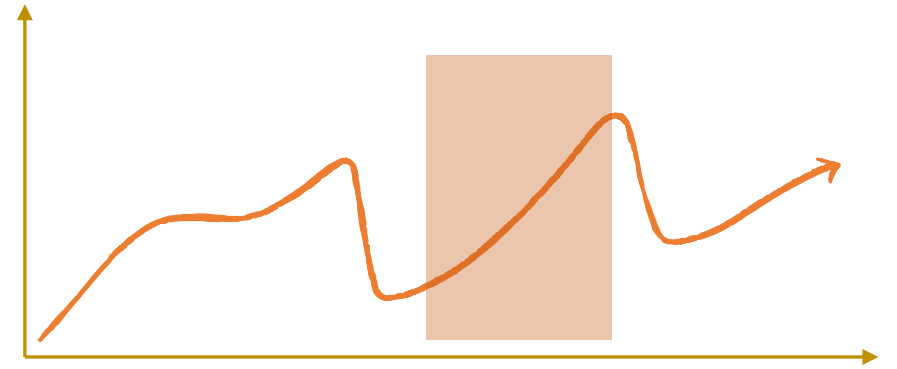


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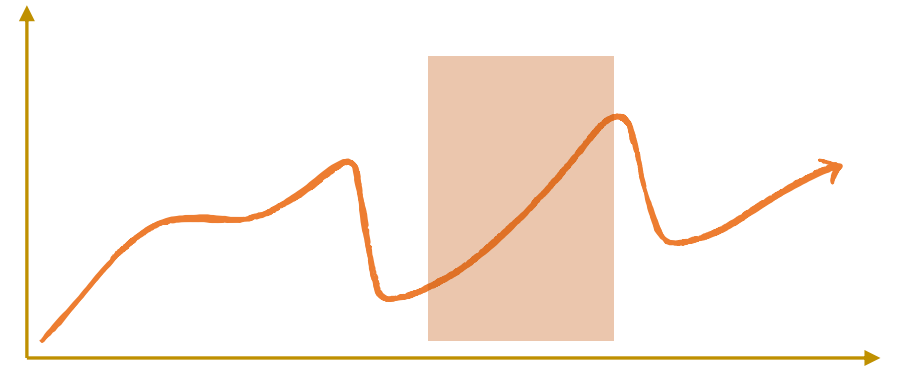
Working part-time



- restarted very slowly: 05/2018 – 12/2018 16h/week
01/2019 – 01/2020 24h/week
02/2020 – 08/2021 30h/week

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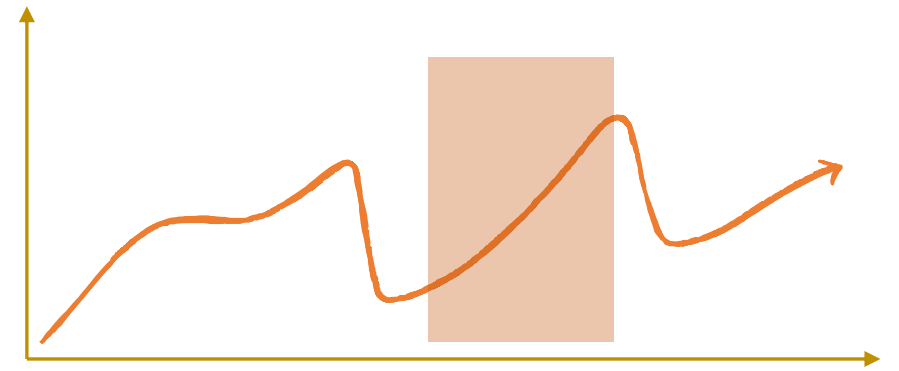
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+ writing writing writing ...

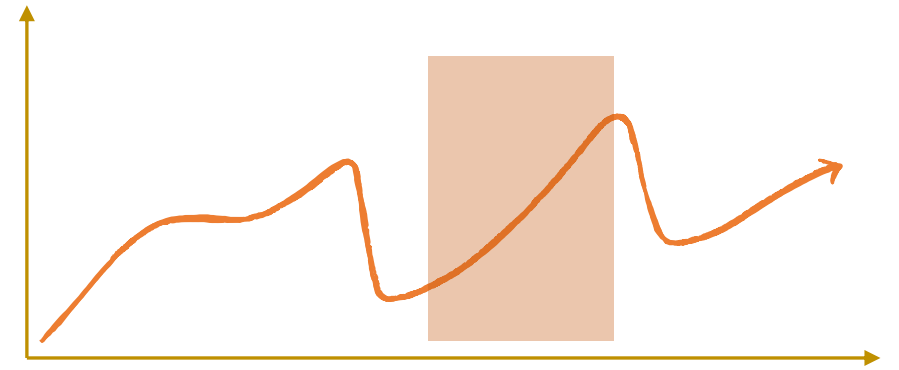
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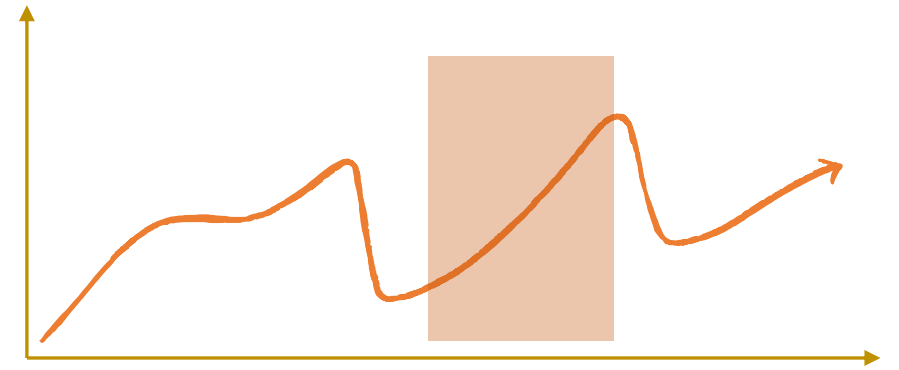
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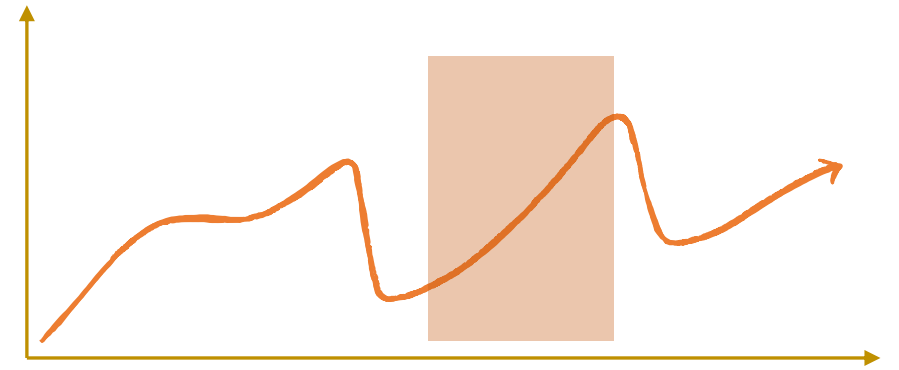
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+ supervising students
+ administrative tasks ;-)

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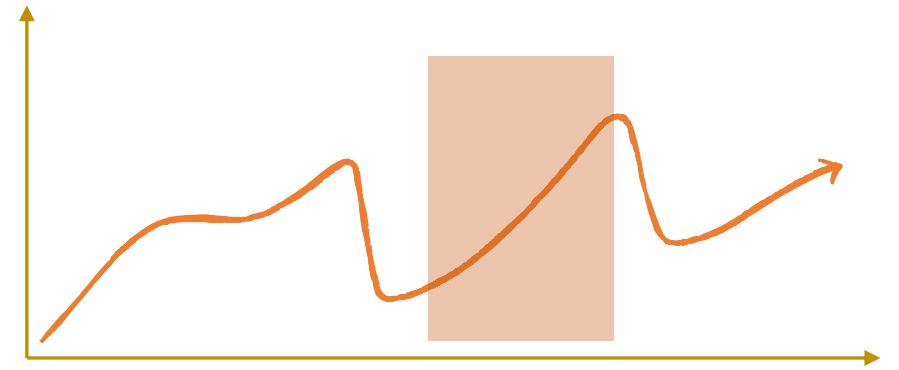
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Excursion 2: What is special about working in our field?

- 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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avoided conferences / stays abroad → no networking, no exchange

2021	[b1]	📄	👤	💬	🌐
	[j4]	📄	👤	💬	🌐
<hr/>					
		[-] 2010 - 2019 🔍			
2019	[j3]	📄	👤	💬	🌐
	[j2]	📄	👤	💬	🌐
2018	[j1]	📄	👤	💬	🌐
2017	[c5]	📄	👤	💬	🌐
	[i2]	📄	👤	💬	🌐
2016	[c4]	📄	👤	💬	🌐
	[c3]	📄	👤	💬	🌐
	[c2]	📄	👤	💬	🌐
2015	[c1]	📄	👤	💬	🌐
	[i1]	📄	👤	💬	🌐

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- I did not use family offers of university / PhD training group

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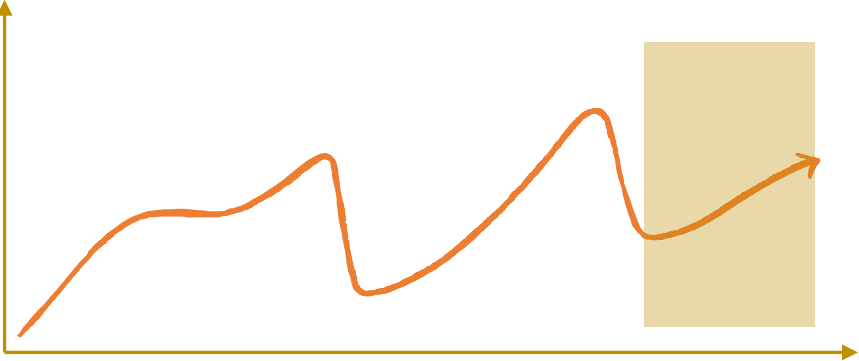
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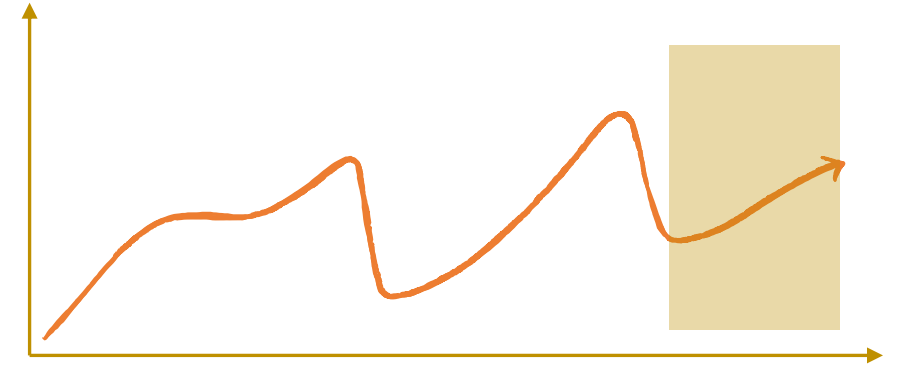
Excursion 3: Phrases a parent does (not want to) hear

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- What are you doing after your PhD? Have the next child? 😂 🙄

What now?



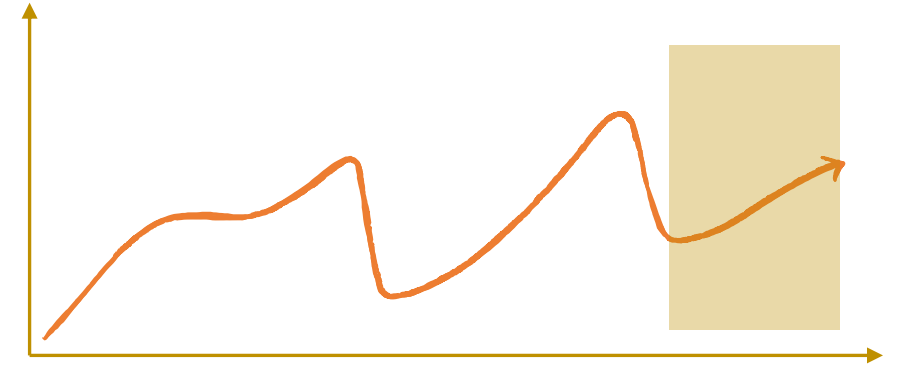
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 - coordinator of a graduate school
 - “other tasks” now also important



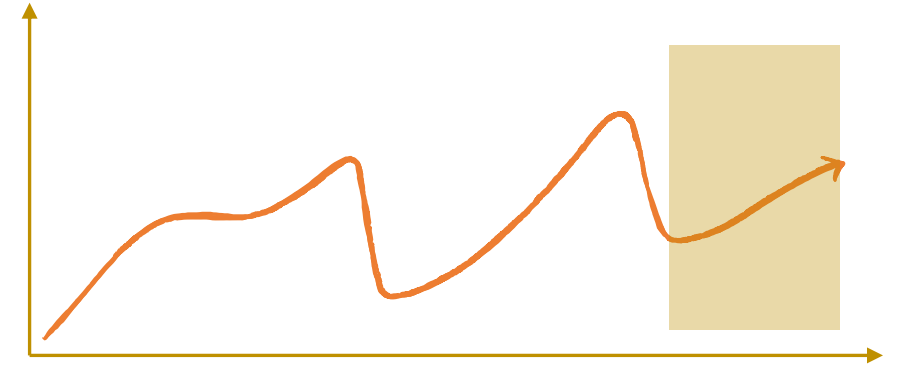
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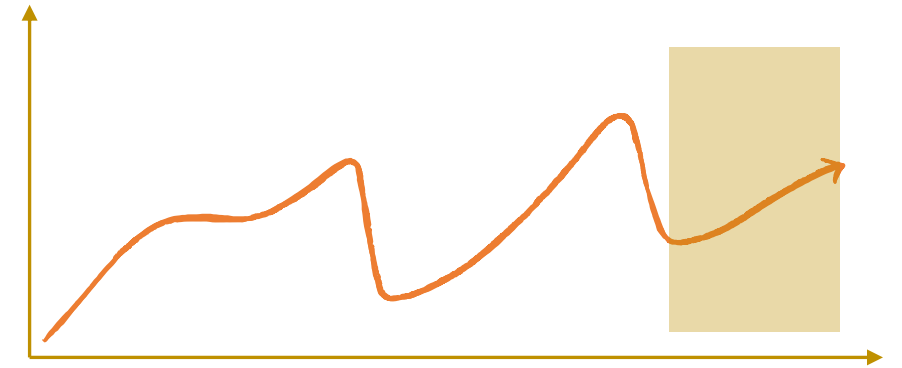
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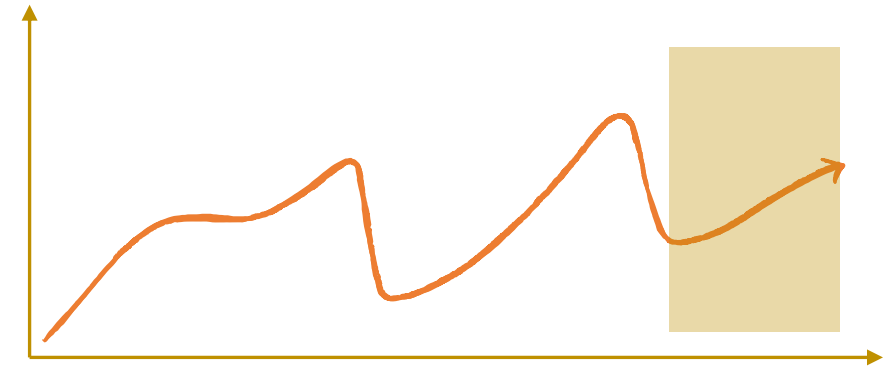


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Excursion 4: Psychological aspects I still (have to) work on

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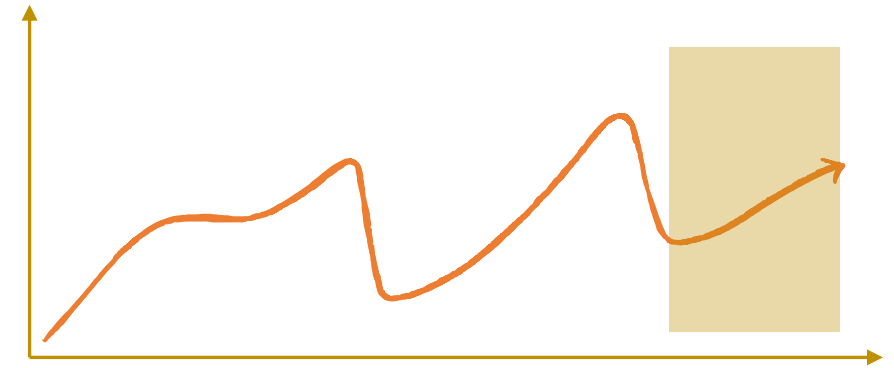
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Excursion 4: Psychological aspects I still (have to) work on

→ (non-)communication of limits

→ comparison with others

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Remarks / Questions?