



A JOURNEY AND A RAT RACE

**THE PROFESSIONAL SOCIALIZATION
OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS**

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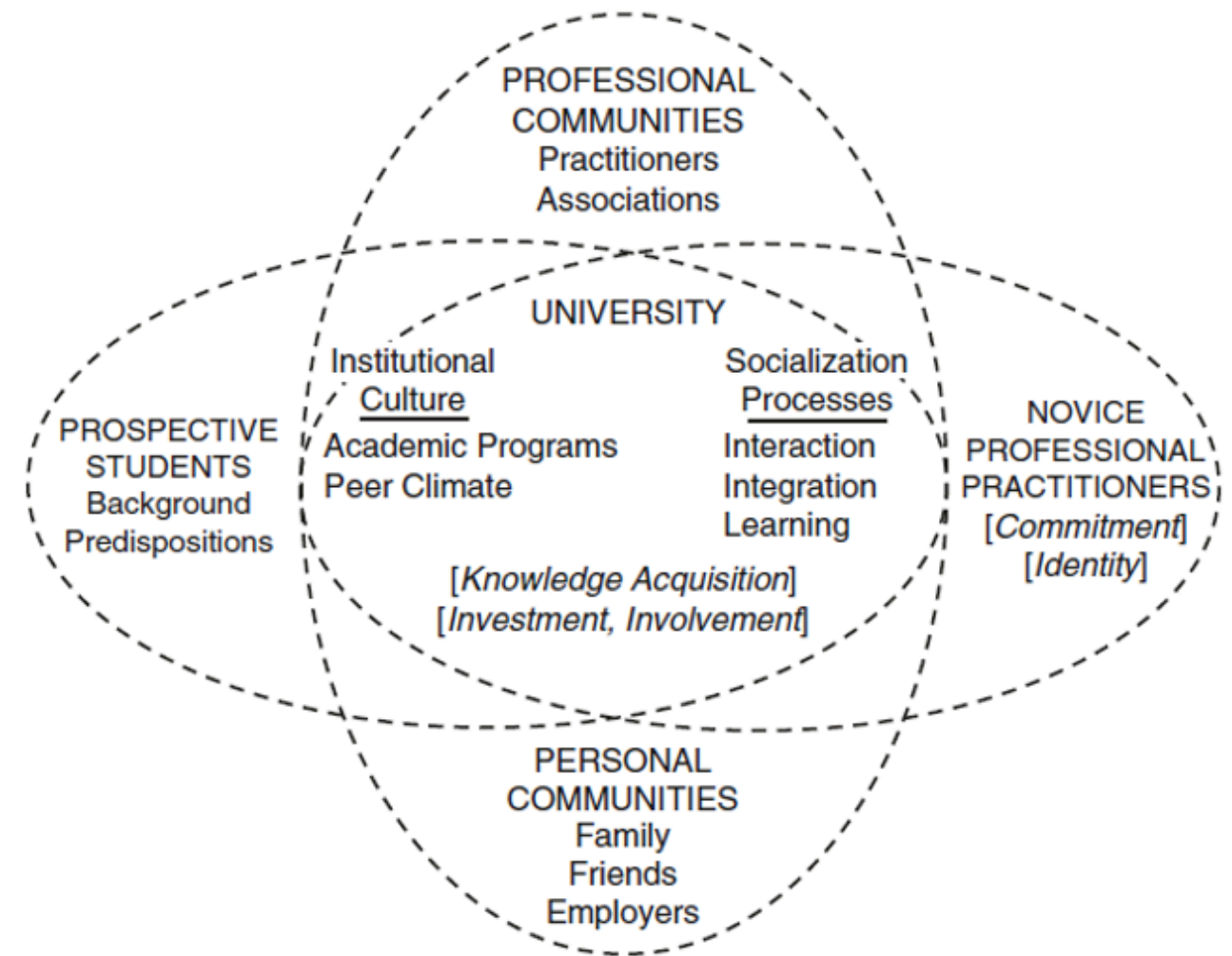
ELTE PPK INSTITUTE OF INTERCULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION



THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The professional socialization of doctoral students as a fluid phenomenon

Today's presentation:
Motives that are overarching the dimensions of this model in time and space




(Weidman, 2020)

DIMENSIONS OF THE DOCTORAL SOCIALIZATION PROCESS



- University
- Personal communities
- Professional communities

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- Prospective students
 - Active students
 - Doctoral graduates

OVERARCHING MOTIVES

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- Parental family
 - Social diversity experiences
 - Own family
 - Professional communities

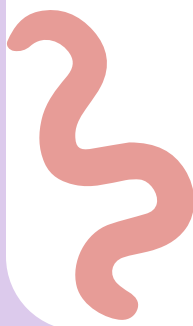
- Advisor
- Mentoring
- Scientific communities at the university
- Scientific communities outside the university



RESEARCH IN THE FIELD

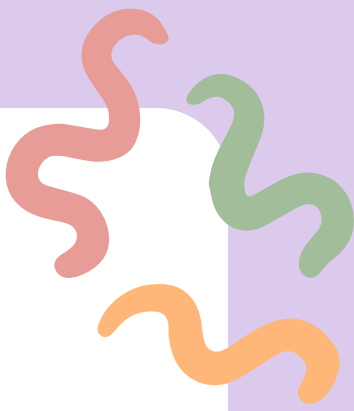
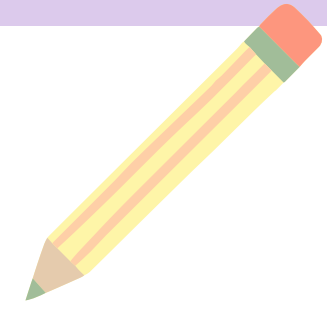


Parental family & higher education

- from the 1970's: demographics & performance in HE
 - from the 2000's: how parents are involved in HE (Howe, 2006)
 - research focuses on the patterns of the upper middle class families, little attention on first generation, low income, non-dominant families (Kiyama, 2018)
 - Doctoral students specifically
 - regular communication with the family on doctoral-process related issues = support (Weintraub 2020)
 - Frequent communication on personal issues = failure
 - Communication patterns (Weintraub, 2020):
 - high income students (high parental expectations, regular communication) - white & SE/E-Asian
 - low income students (turning to peers for advice) - other ethnic groups
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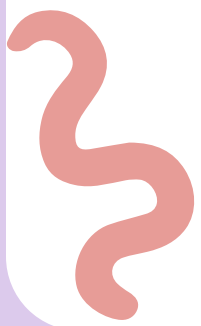


RESEARCH IN THE FIELD



Social and cultural diversity

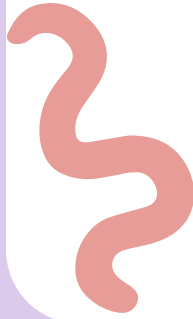

- For ethnic minority students institutional support is more important than family support (Hurtado et al., 1996)
- Minority students personal research interest is often harshly questioned (Gay, 2004)
- Frequent micro-aggressions targeting members of non-dominant groups (Yosso et al., 2009)





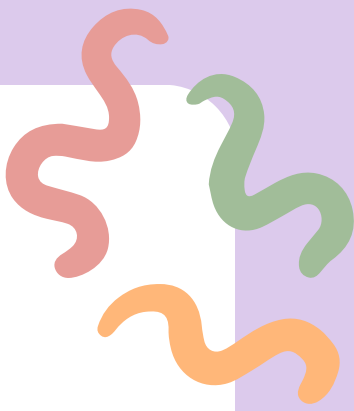
RESEARCH IN THE FIELD

Own family

- parallel roles in family and the doctoral school => generates role conflicts
 - for 37,2% of doctoral students the most stress comes from relationships with their own family and friends (Reilly & Fitzpatrick, 2009)
 - Defining "own family" is a challenge
 - A meaningful inclusion of the family
 - support = "unconditional love and motivation, being proud of them, thinking of obtaining a doctoral degree as a positive thing"
 - lack of support = "not understanding the value of a doctoral degree, study takes time away from the family" (Breitenbach et al., 2019)
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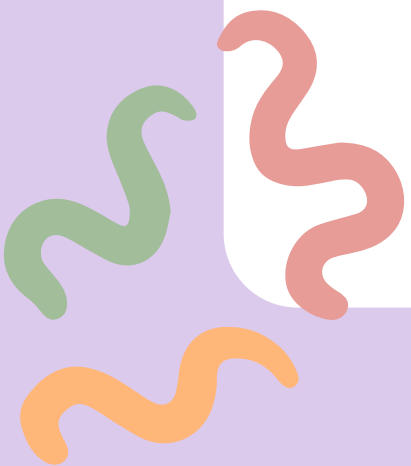


RESEARCH IN THE FIELD



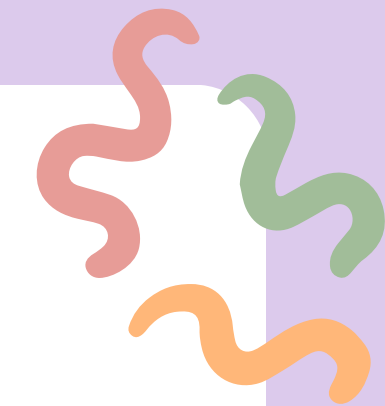
Advisor

- Role in preventing dropout and obtaining the degree (Kiley, 2011),
- Ideally: a critical supporter throughout the process
- 4 roles of advisors (Barnes & Austin, 2009): Collaboration, Mentoring, Advocating, Chastising
- Time span: starts before entering the doctoral school and lasts well after: often advisors help young researchers to find a job (German et al., 2018)
- Good relationship with the advisor shortens the time of obtaining the degree and finding a job (Platow, 2012)
- Insufficient relationship with the advisor:
 - lengthens (average time USA 7, Australia 4,2 (full time), 6.3 (part time) (De Valero, 2001; Kiley, 2011)
 - dropout (Sinady, 2009), endangers the research and the publications, causing health problems (Helfer, 2019)





RESEARCH IN THE FIELD

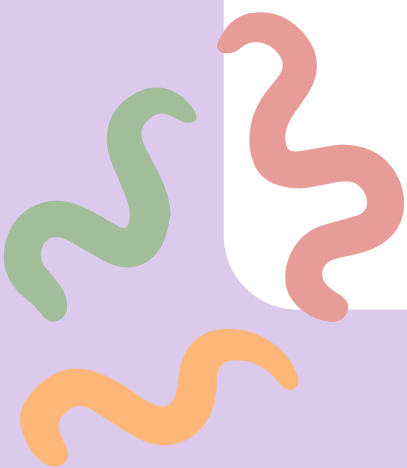


Mentor

- Voluntary support work of an other lecturer, researcher than the advisor
- No administrative role
- Often strong, trustful, supporting relationship between the mentor and the student
 - Supports to obtain the degree in time
 - Diminishes the loneliness-feeling of the students
 - Supports career planning and building

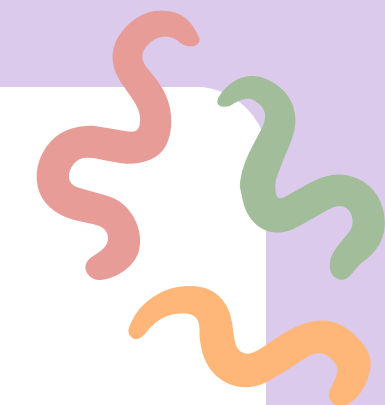
(Nettles & Millet, 2006, Carpenter et al., 2015)

- Gap of research: advisor-mentor relationship



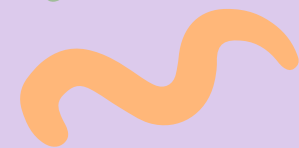


RESEARCH IN THE FIELD



Scientific communities at the university

- Learning the modus operandi and the ethos
 - unwritten rules (Austin, 2002)
 - complex nature of scientific and university work (Sutherland, 2018)
 - research, teaching, administrative and other tasks, e.g. being in touch with actors outside of the university, or delegating and managing roles
- The learning environment structured by the scientific community impacts the success of the doctoral training
 - 1/3 of doctoral students do not have a sense of belonging to the scientific community (Pyhälä et al., 2009)
- An important function of the doctoral schools is to develop a wide range of skills so doctoral students will be able to function in the complex world of science and HE





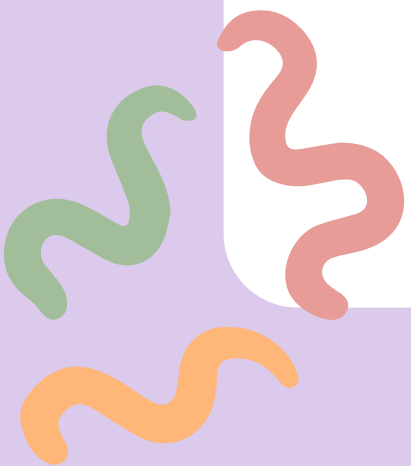
RESEARCH IN THE FIELD



Scientific communities outside the university

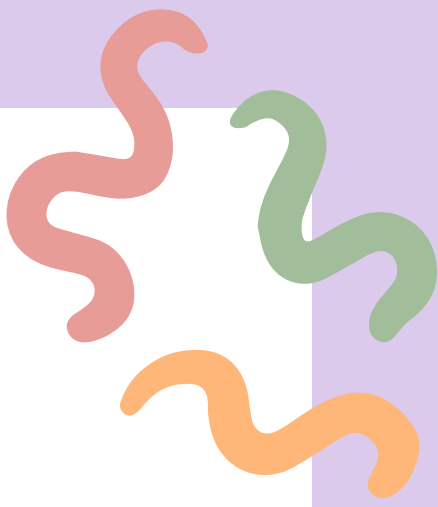
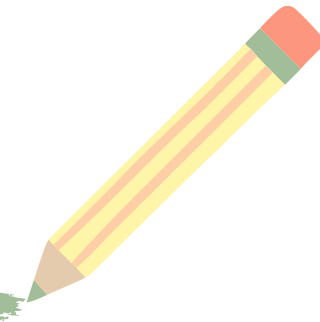
- Many PhDs will work in government, business, NGO positions (Neumann, 2009)
 - Structure of the doctoral program => later career (Kim et al., 2019)
 - Staff (cooperation with, invited advisors, mentors from diverse sectors)
 - Value system (how other than scientific experiences are valued)
 - Access to research tools and new results
 - Reflection to the needs of. non-scientific sectors
 - danger: keeping independence (Altbach, 2006)

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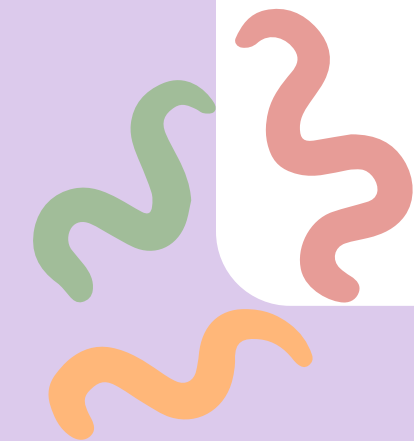


AIM OF THE RESEARCH



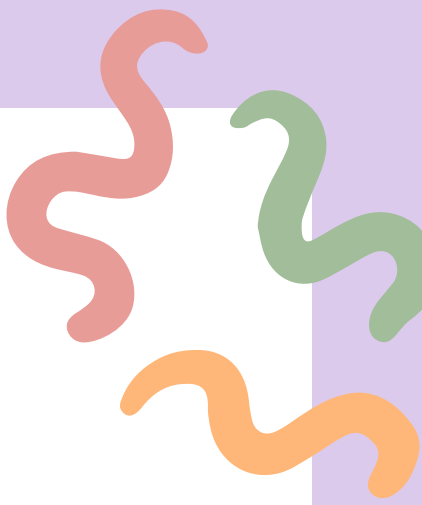
To explore doctoral students' narratives about their journey through their training and to understand, what factors they identify as key in their professional socialization in doctoral programs in Hungary.

- Interviews (2023-2025) + validation or related scales (2024) + survey (2025)
- Interviews: 18 Hungarian-speaking students (May - July 2023), 12 international students (June 2023-Jan 2024) + 20 international students from Asia (ongoing)
 - Research assistants: Hanis Habila, Sonesacksith Sivongyax, Yaqing Zhu





DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING



- Online interviews (TEAMS)
- Duration: 40 minutes - 2:30 hours
- Transcription: with TEAMS & Airite then manual correction
- Anonymisation: strict transcription that anonymises both discipline and affiliation
- Data processing: MaxQDA software
- 1st thematic analysis, ongoing: IPA

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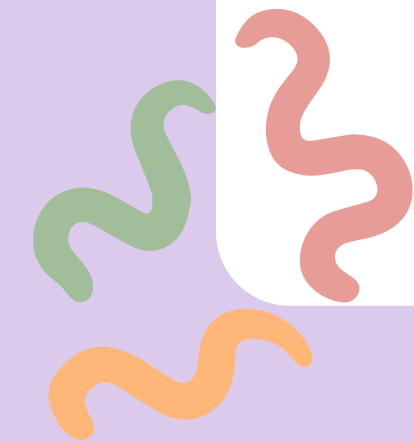
#Respondent 2:21

I'm studying at the [#University] and in the [#Faculty], my program is actually in the [#Institute].

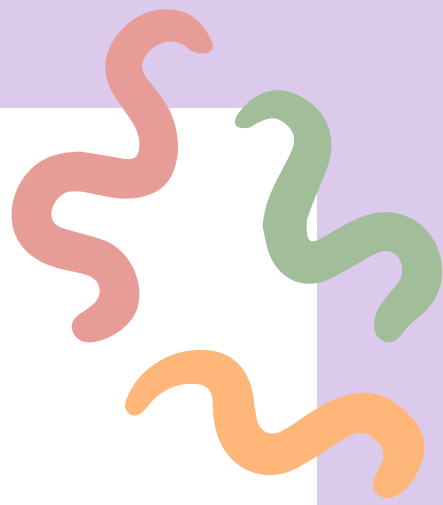
My research focus is on the [#research focus]

Umm, particularly looking at it from the perspective of the [#research focus] markets.

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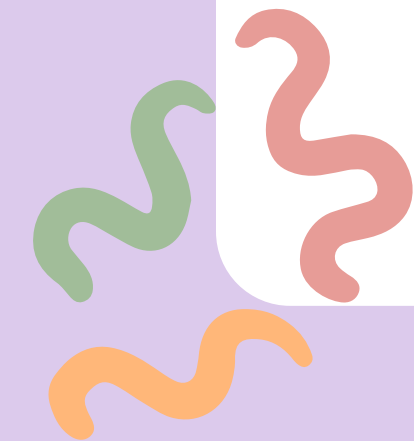


PERSONAL COMMUNITIES AND THE MOTIVATION FAMILY OF ORIGIN



- First generation VS Academic routine
 - Pathways: narrow, circling and long VS Wide and short
 - Use of space: Limited by budget and self-confidence VS Innovative, goal oriented
- Parents with academic routine
 - motivation
 - scientific growth = personal growth

"I actually inherited this interest, because at home, well, at home at our house, there were so many old books on [#science] on the bookshelf, and I was obviously looking at them as a little child, because even as a very small child it was interesting. And then later on it wasn't always obvious that this was going to be the case, but later on I found my way back to this subject." (O17, PhD, male)



PERSONAL COMMUNITIES AND THE MOTIVATION FAMILY OF ORIGIN

- Parents with academic routine
 - motivation
 - scientific growth = personal growth

"on the other hand, it's probably a family thing, because everybody in my family is pretty perfectionist, and I thought it was very important to follow that family tradition of getting a PhD. And then I thought about it a lot and it's not necessarily a healthy attitude, but yeah, I think that was pretty much the starting point."

(012, student, female)

"I've basically been running a [#company] for 25 years, and I thought, at this age [#age of interviewee], what if I started a career in academia. Obviously there's a tradition of that in the family, my father is a professor, although he's in [#other disciplines]."

(003, student, female)

PERSONAL COMMUNITIES AND THE MOTIVATION FAMILY OF ORIGIN

- First generation doctoral students
- Science as a tool for social transformation
- Elaboration of traumas
- Random choice of disciplines

"I and my brothers and sisters got a lot of bullying because the family had very little money, and my dad did a training, I don't remember the exactly, but my parents talked a lot at home, and it seemed like a good way to do something. [...] Of course, to put it nicely, at the age of 18 or 19 I only had such world-changing ambitions, that [#science field 1] was better than [#science field 2] and that's why I ended up with [#science field 1]" (015, PhD, male)

"I also have a childhood experience, which I later recognised, that probably influenced me [...] I have such an experience, such an experience that there is always something from which I am excluded. And in high school, it was that my class teacher was quite racist, and she removed [#ethnic group] students from our class within a year. And then I actually started to get more involved with this, so I joined this path" (007, student, female)

PERSONAL COMMUNITIES AND THE MOTIVATION OWN FAMILY

- Financial challenges
- Acceptance of the doctoral process
- Inclusion of the family

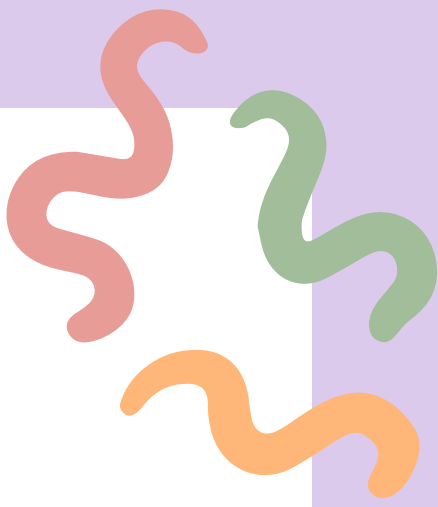
"I'm the first, both from my own side of the family and from my wife's side of the family, to have a scientific degree, so there was no experience in the family. [...] obviously the disadvantage is that the family is not aware what it means to go to graduate school and get a degree. It is a work that has no immediate results, as opposed to just painting the fence where the invested work can be seen. So there is no such visible result. But it's difficult to deal with this within the family, because there's no one to talk to about where I am at the moment, or what my dilemmas are, or what it makes sense to do..." (001, PhD, male)

"It's best if you can involve your wife or husband in a topic, do something together, it's fun, it's entertainment. For example, my wife really likes it when I administer an exam, because the day before, I test the exam with her and I always help her solve it. Anyways, all I wanted to say, is that the family programme should be equally there besides the PhD."

(011, student, male)



TOPIC SELECTION



Topic selection => successful process + staying in science

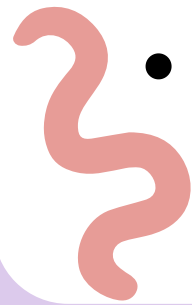
Positive factors

- previous work experience in the field
- personal commitment to the topic (transformative goals)
- deeply rooting personal interest

Negative factors

- random topic selection
- topic suggested by supervisor
- motivation is not the topic, but the degree

Since I had my thesis defence, more than six months ago, I have not been able to look at my PhD topic. I know it should be written, I know it's important to publish it, but I don't have the strength, I want to forget it, I've been too much under pressure" (O18, PhD, female)





TOPIC SELECTION + ADVISOR'S ATTITUDE



First generation students

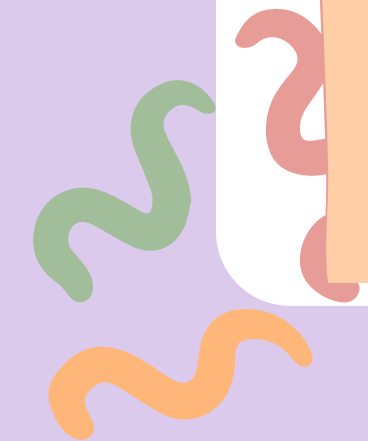
- strong commitment
- difficult way to acceptance
- attitude of the advisor

"I think it's no coincidence that I didn't push so hard for conference attendance either, because I know my writings will not be read by the leaders of our program. However, attending a conference can have a bigger resonance, so that's probably why I wanted to strengthen myself professionally so much, so that it wouldn't be a problem." (007, student, female)

"my biggest success is that a lot of people doubted whether this [#science field] was appropriate for graduate school, that I was doing [#research methodology], and one of the biggest opponents was the president of the graduate school, and then, but then he gave me the opportunity to test what I had developed within the graduate school, and that he followed through. And since then I think he's been a much bigger supporter of me, and that was the biggest thing for me, that it was actually such an acceptance, that I was able to change his way of thinking a little bit, this was an important thing." (005, student, female)

not-supportive
evasive strategy

supportive advisor
open field battle



ADVISOR



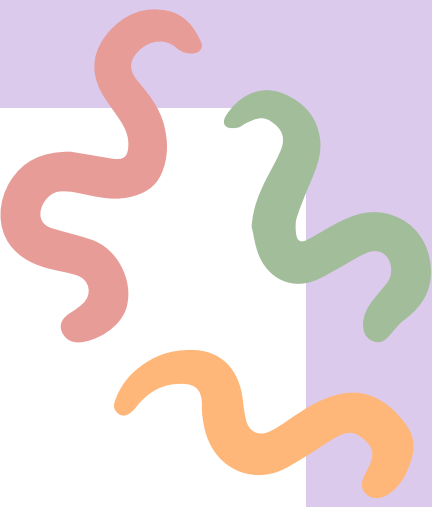
Complex role

- positive
 - support the formation of the topic
 - admin support
 - offering job opportunities (research projects or business)
 - giving recommendations
 - support publications
 - standing up for students
- negative
 - not accessible
 - only admin
 - create obstacles
 - overuse, bullying, shaming of students
 - difficulty of change

"it's very difficult to make an appointment with him, and when we finally meet, he talks more about the university and his personal life, and it's very difficult to get advice from him. And that's why I had such a low point last year, that I wanted to ask a co-advisor to join, or maybe I ask him to leave me alone, and then I ask someone else, but it's also a question of whom I ask instead of him for this topic" (O12, student, female)



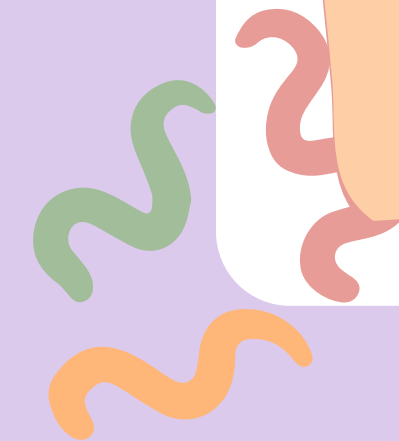
MENTOR



- Same university or outsider
 - 1st step is often an email or a chat at a conference, initiated by the student
- mostly when the collaboration is not going well with the advisor
 - can support career choices

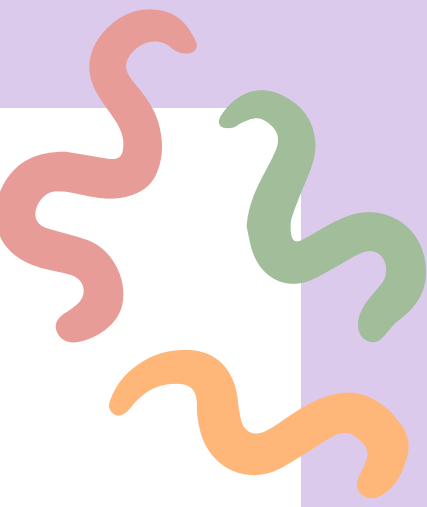
"I think I'm very lucky because I got help from an other university. So it meant a lot to me. There is someone else in the country who is a researcher on this subject, yes, yes, and we were able to consult with her."
(008, student, female)

"So, I briefed her on everything, she knew everything, even the process of the defence was the like that. So when there was something, I would go to her very often, in quotes, for "political advice". Now by political I mean how to communicate." (013, PhD, male)





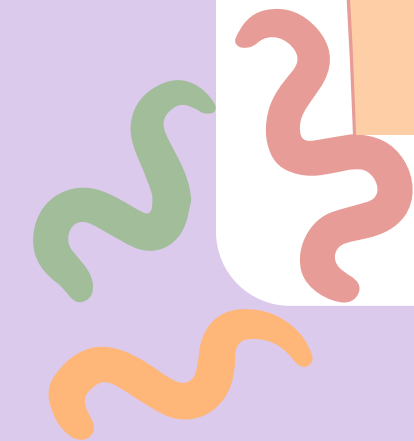
SCIENTIFIC PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITIES



- Students reaching out
- A good practice: Excellence centers

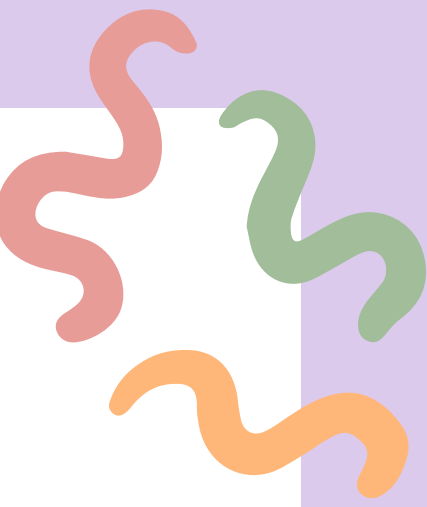
"I contacted one of the project coordinators and I introduced myself, introduced my research and I wasn't expecting the feedback I got. I was thinking well because that was not my first time of contacting persons and not getting responses. But she was actually open, she was like this is interesting."

"So to have a centre of excellence where only these researchers work, I think that's a huge advantage, and they're very open to PHD students, so they immediately suck us in and we get to see how these things work. They also have contacts in companies, so if there's a conference, we're always welcome to come, which is great because then we can see not only the academic, theoretical side, but also the practical side of how everything we're researching is being implemented." (002, student, female)



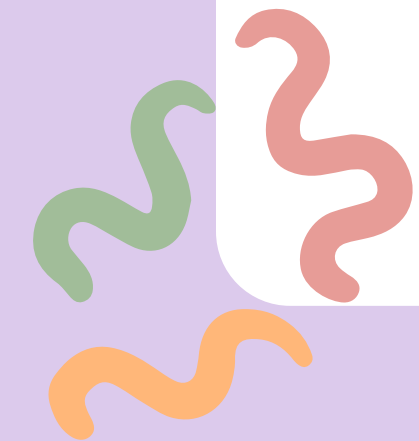


NON-SCIENTIFIC PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITIES



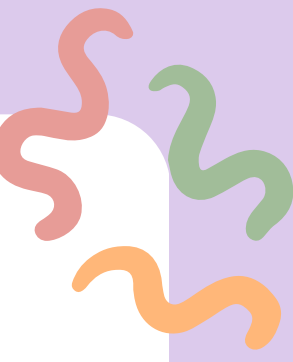
- If the advisor have such connections the student will also have them

"my own advisor and I have also worked together, so there is this [#topic area] expert status. And my advisor has such a status, and then she involved me in this kind of work, and then there were times when she came to me, and then we worked together on this kind of work. There were some where she was just, let's say, in a consultative role, but there were some where we actually worked together, so she was as involved as I was in putting the material together." (O17, PhD, male)





PROFESSIONAL NETWORK BUILDING



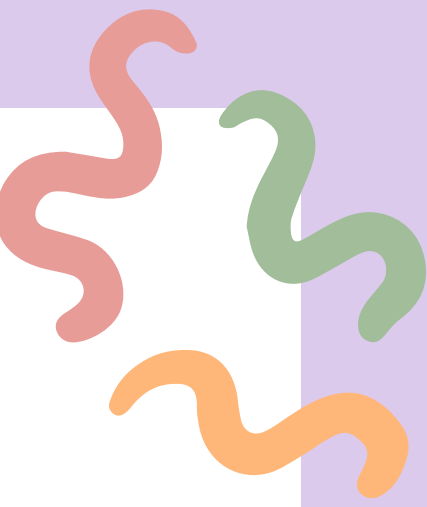
- Forming their own support groups
- Joining research teams
- Enrolling in globally renowned universities

And I have also planned to take on some professional specialization courses before I wrap up my doctoral program in one of the top universities. The other time I'm actually considering London School of Economics, I wanted to take the course this year, but the somehow I could not meet the timeline, but I believe that after these first two phases of my studies, when I have more time I could enroll for that course.

Recently I formed a group of researchers from from different countries in Africa and the group is looking promising because we are already discussing on publishing a paper on a certain topic. And people in this group are actually people positioned in various fields in their country. I mean position strategically in the frontline of various interesting specific areas in our profession, in their countries.



FUTURE PLANS



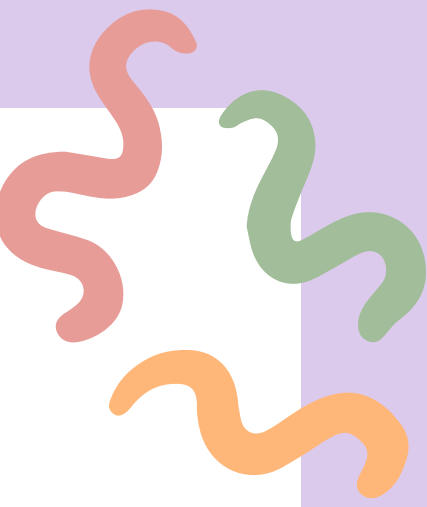
- Uncertain visions, rat race

How do I see my future career? Well, I would say my own perspective of future is not what is yet to come. My perspective of future is what is happening now, what we are doing right now.

You know the doctoral journey is a journey that has been focused on you getting to the end and often that is the rat race. We are all concerned about getting to that end and then it is only when you get to the end, you know, start looking at OK, now that that is over what next? Yeah, that future is still not so clear to me yet.



FUTURE PLANS



- Postdoc
- Industry and academia parallel
- Business OR industry OR government in the field
- Detour

So I want to see myself in the future where I will be relevant to the academics and also relevant to the industry.

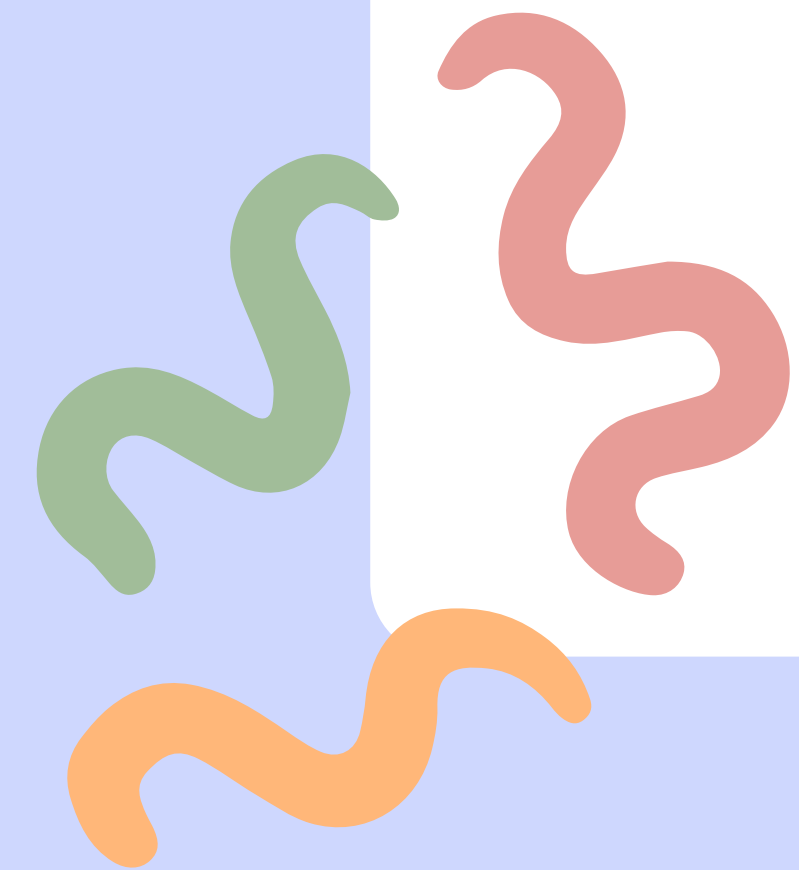
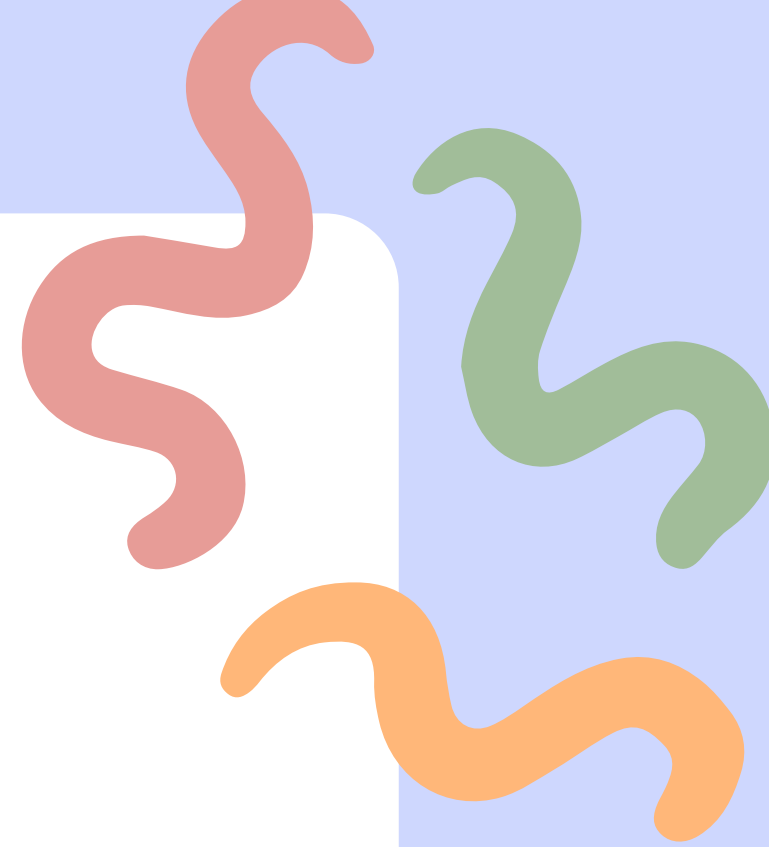
Actually, these are the two things on my table, either being a consultant in a business firm or you know in the organizational setting or be a researcher continuing to post doctorate and go ahead.

THANK

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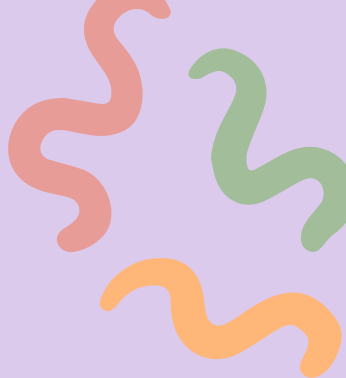
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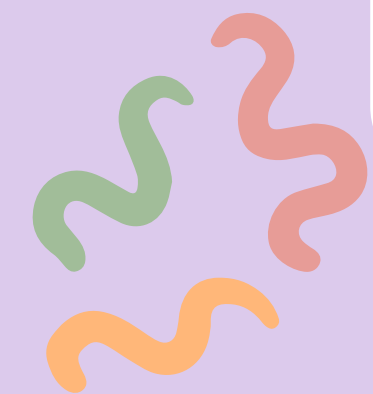




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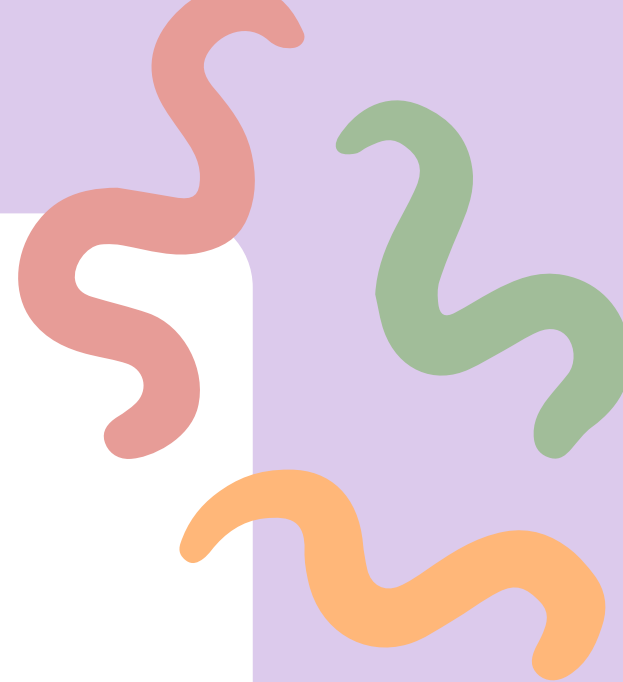


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