Having an academic career

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Outline

• My academic journey so far
• “How did I decide to…”
• The good and the bad of academia
• Some misc. tips and advice
My academic journey

BSc
Biology/Psychology

PhD
Social Neuroscience

2017-2020
PostDoc
Sustainability via psych/neuroscience

2011-2012
MSc
Neuroscience

2007-2011

@jayvanbavel

Fellow
Intergroup dynamics

Sept. 2020!
How did I decide...

• to do a master?
  • I loved neuroscience
  • (I also wanted to move to Europe)

• to do the PhD?
  • I still loved neuroscience
  • I found a project that seemed interesting!
  • I also had no idea what else there was to do...
  • (and Canada is just too cold.)

• to stay in academia?
  • After the PhD:
    • I saw a job posting that looked awesome...
  • The next phase (i.e. going to NYU):
    • I love science (*not academia*) and wanted to continue with my line of study!
Things *not* to love about PhD life/academia...

*This is an adaptation of the figure. Source: https://www.unige.ch/rectorat/egalite/ancrage/statistiques/

Equality:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>MOYENNE F PROF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other academic grievances:

- Publish or perish culture
- Lack of job security
  - 1 year contracts?!
  - number of tenured positions ≠ number of PhDs given out per year!
- What do you do if you don’t want to be a professor?
- $$$
- Work life balance

Source: Nature PhD Survey 2019

36% of respondents have sought help for anxiety or depression caused by PhD studies. One-third of them sought help from places other than their institution, and 18% sought help at their institution but didn’t feel supported.

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Some of the good things

• Freedom
  • choose to study what you want/care about
  • to set your own schedule

• Teaching and mentoring

• Conferences and travel
  • scientific exchange

• Potentially change the world
Why should you continue in academia?

• Academia is hard.
  • (and the system is broken)
• Things are starting to change
  • change is faster the more people push for it!
How to decide to continue in academia

• **DO YOUR RESEARCH**
  - read blogs, magazines, articles, books, etc. about the pros and cons of academia
  - “Letters to young scientists” in Science Magazine
  - follow @jayvanbavel
  - if you don’t know, google.
  - talk to everyone

• Make a career plan
  - (google that too)

• Get a mentor.

Tips, Tricks, & “Advice”

- “Statistics of Doom” channel on youtube!
  - Dr. Erin M. Buchanan Missouri State University
  - www.statstools.com

- Tailor your career plan to the position of your dreams
  - e.g. if you want to be a prof in Swiss, look at the SNF’s website “research output list”, and “CV requirements”

- A bit of wisdom passed down:
  - “Do not take anyone’s advise in these matters, including my own.” ~Prof. Sophie Schwartz
ACADEMIA

PRO
YOU CAN WORK WHENEVER YOU WANT! EVERY DAY IS A SATURDAY!

CON
YOU WORK ON SATURDAYS.

www.phdcomics.com