

A LETTER TO MY FORMER SELF: THE ONLINE PHD AS A TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY

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why this study?

limited research on online part-time PhDs

we are aware of doctoral challenges...

but what about the positive impacts?

The background of the slide is a high-resolution photograph of water. It features a series of concentric ripples expanding from a central point, with a small, dynamic splash of water droplets visible on the right side. The overall color palette is a range of blues, from deep navy to lighter, misty tones.

methodology

in-depth interviews

24 online part-time PhDs

thematic analysis



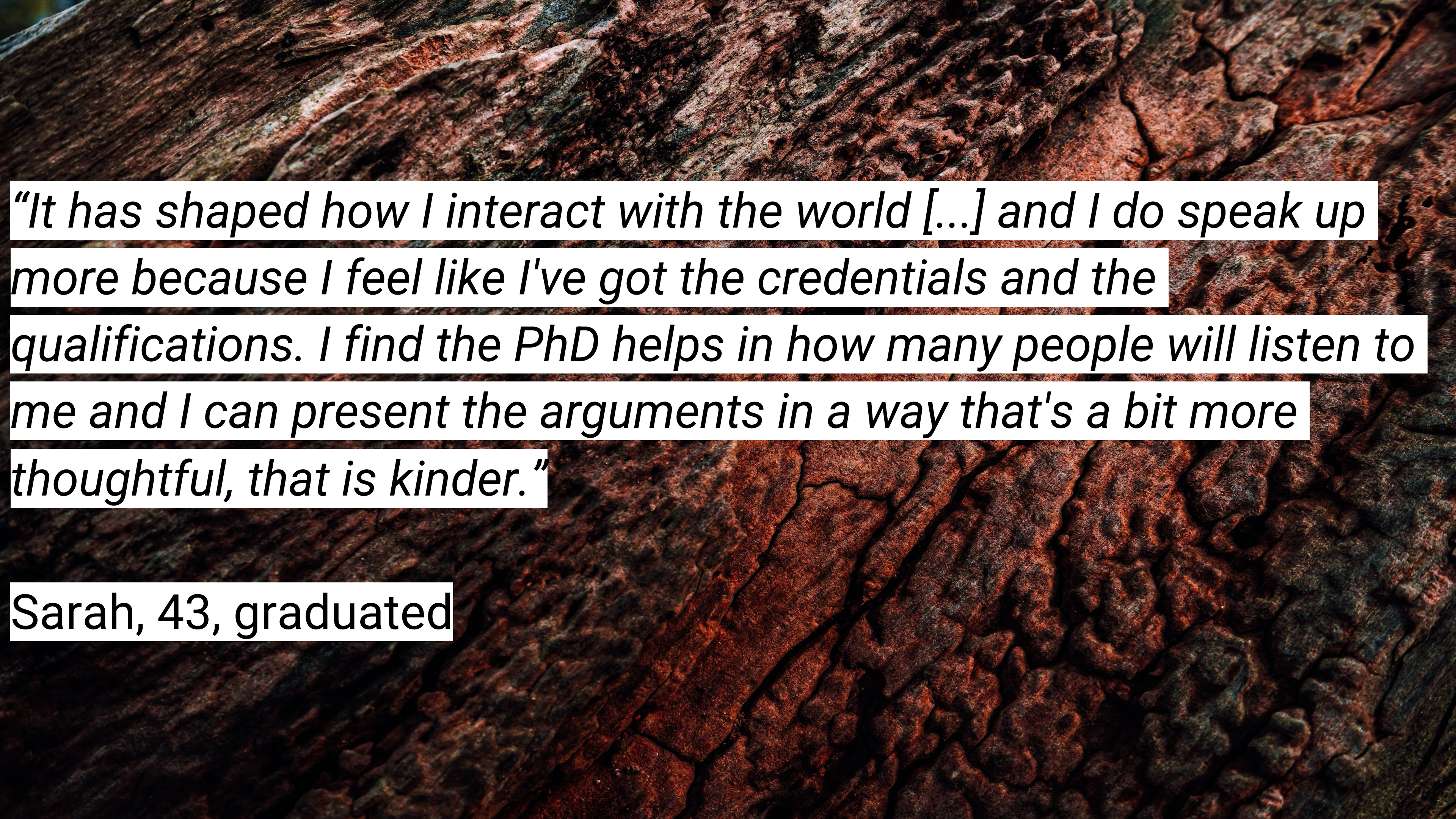
preliminary results:
transformations

I've found my voice

I'm more conscientious

it has opened me up to connections/worldviews

I've experienced growth



“It has shaped how I interact with the world [...] and I do speak up more because I feel like I've got the credentials and the qualifications. I find the PhD helps in how many people will listen to me and I can present the arguments in a way that's a bit more thoughtful, that is kinder.”

Sarah, 43, graduated



preliminary results:

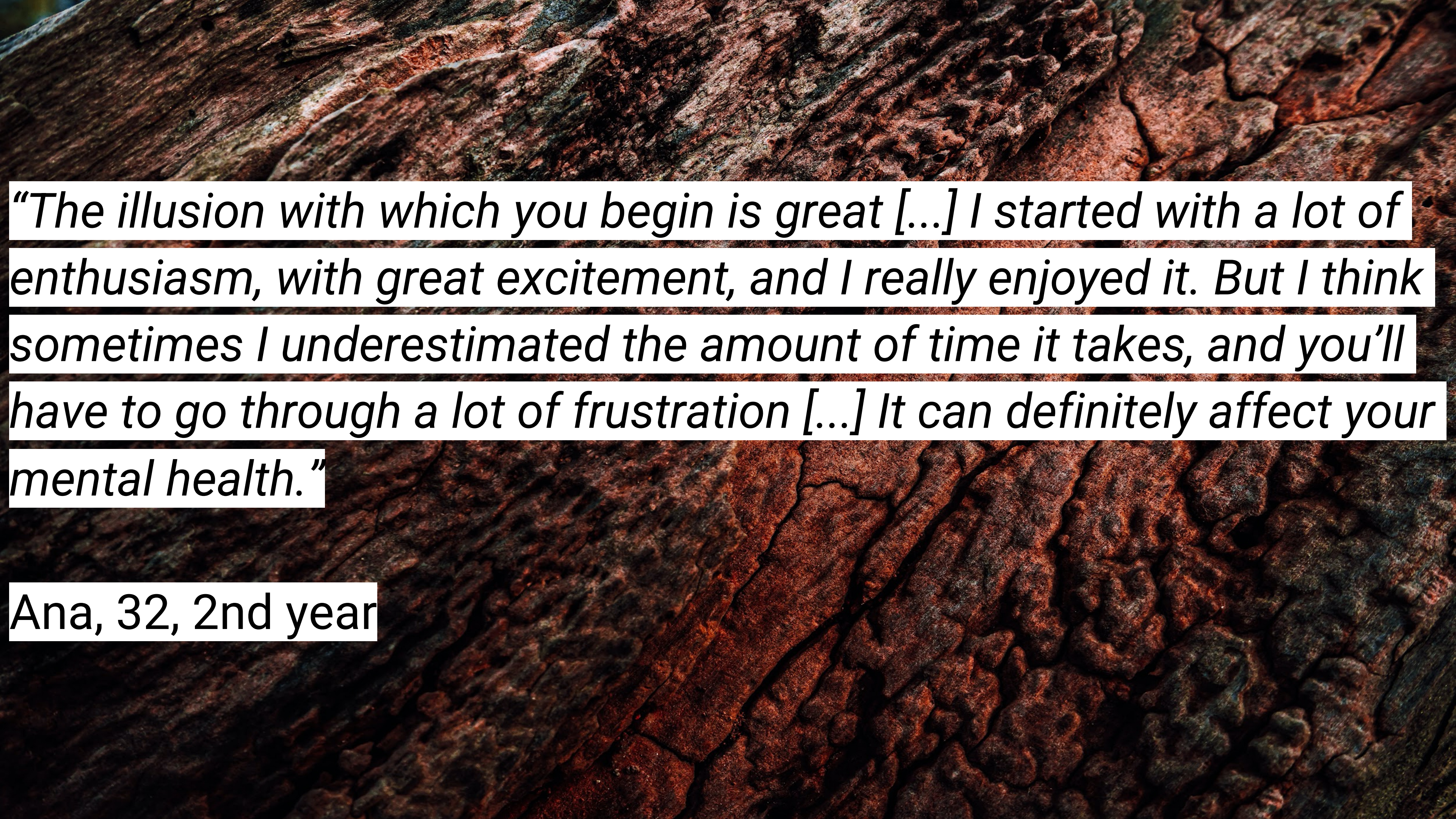
advice

seek support

learn to deal with rejection


trust your gut

set boundaries with supervisors



“The illusion with which you begin is great [...] I started with a lot of enthusiasm, with great excitement, and I really enjoyed it. But I think sometimes I underestimated the amount of time it takes, and you’ll have to go through a lot of frustration [...] It can definitely affect your mental health.”

Ana, 32, 2nd year



implications

students: adjust expectations

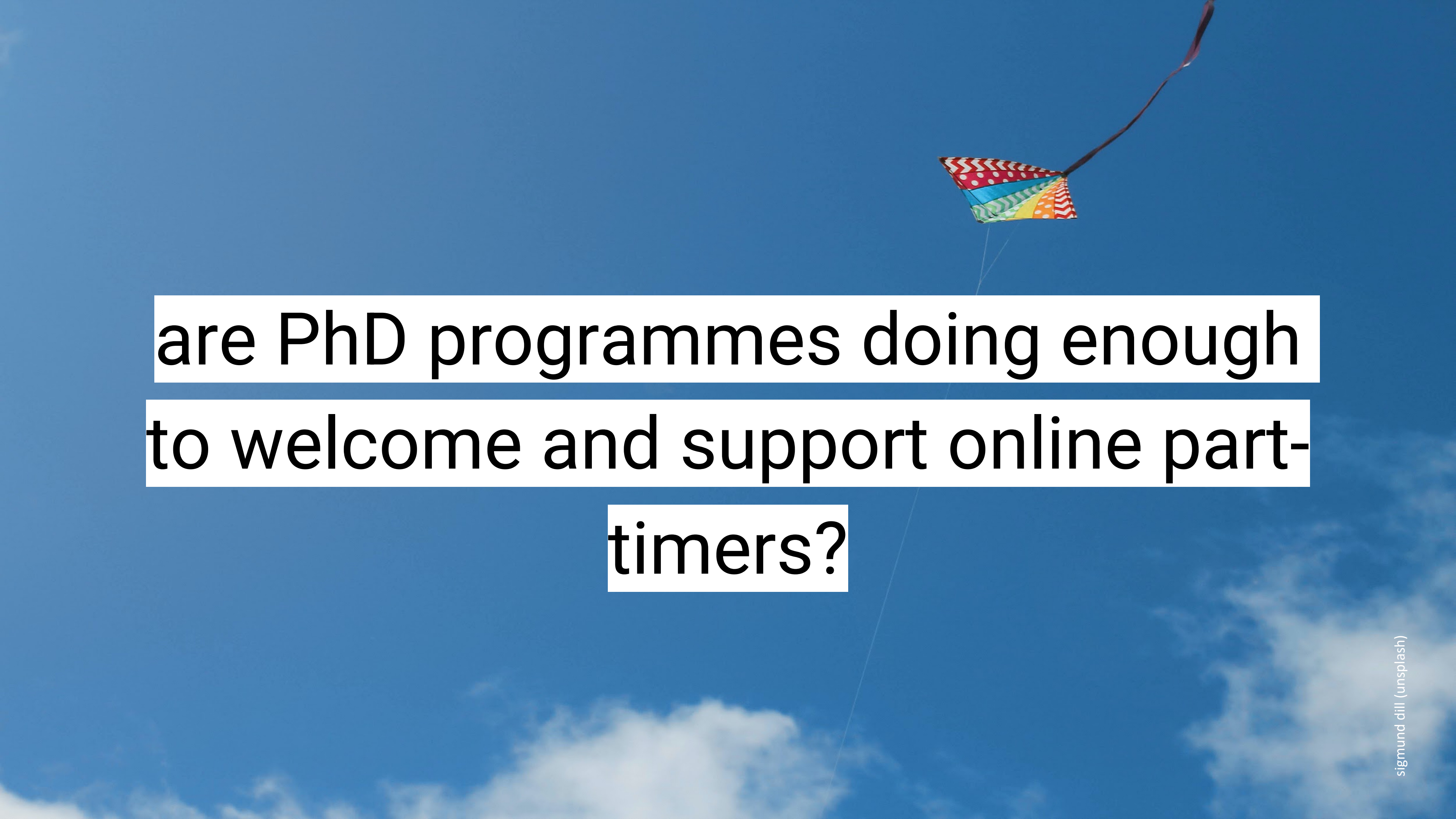
faculty: adjust programmes

future research

experiential changes

identity transitions

focus on gender, age, ethnicity

A colorful kite with a rainbow pattern and a long red tail is flying in a clear blue sky with scattered white clouds. The kite is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the image.

are PhD programmes doing enough
to welcome and support online part-
timers?

thank you!

