My personal experience as a Marie Curie Fellow @ CERN

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CERN,
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the plan

- I will describe my experience before/during/after the Marie Curie Fellowship.

- i.e.:

- the application itself,

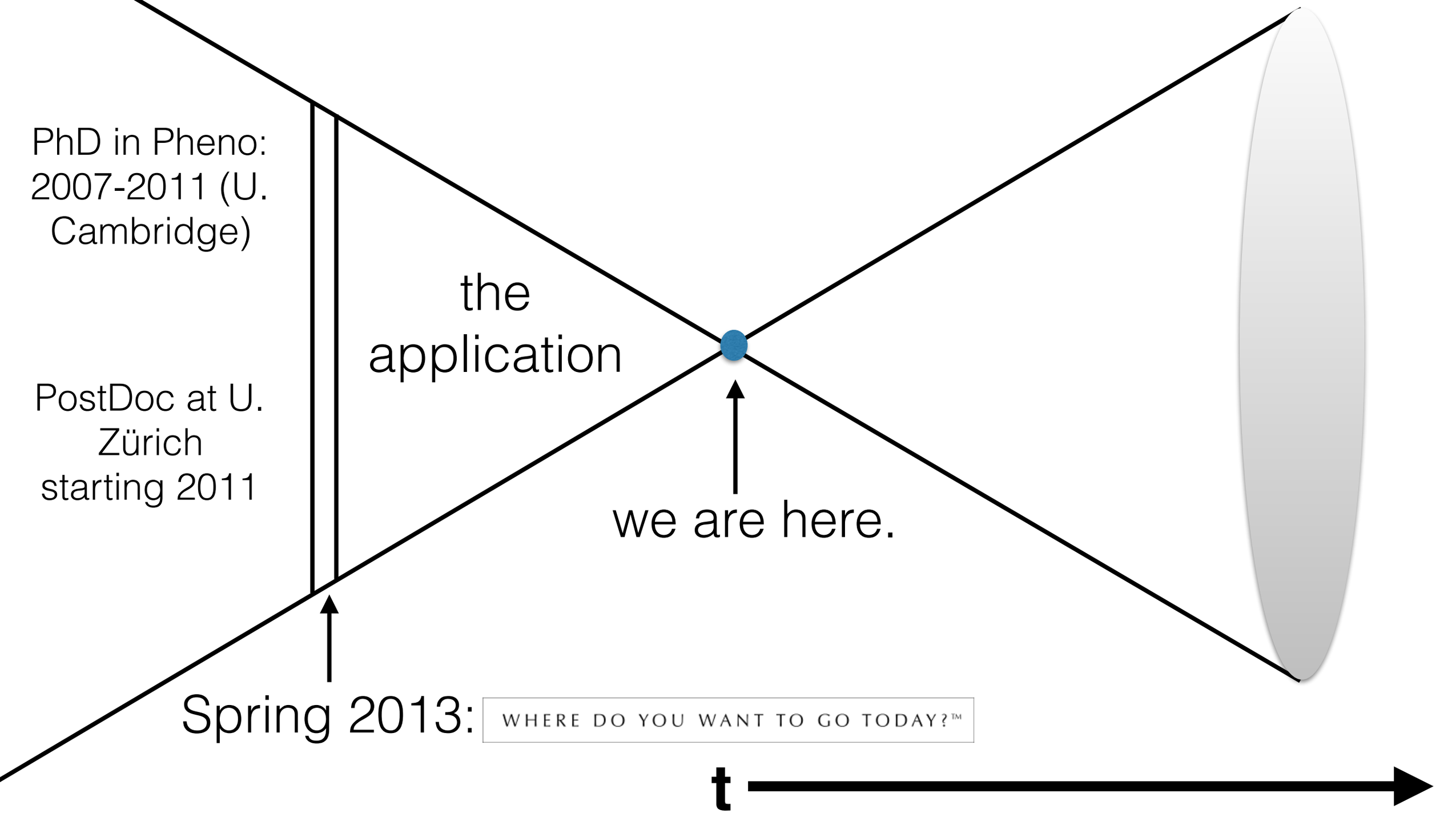
- aspects of my experience during the two years of the Fellowship.

note: all I will be discussing is relevant to the previous European Commission framework, FP7.

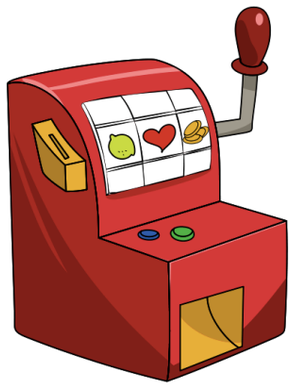
There will be differences with respect to Horizon 2020!

I expect that in spirit at least, they should be similar.

my light cone



the application



keep in mind:

no sure-fire way to get a Marie Curie Fellowship, or other grants at this level.

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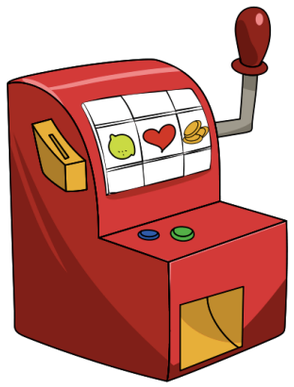
the application



keep in

no sure

Fellows

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level.

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before the application

- Spring 2013 (~4-5 months before submission deadline on the 14/08/2013):
  - European Comission's: FP7-PEOPLE-2013-IEF (call published March 2013).
  - started reading all documentation available on the European Comission's website relevant to the call (April-May 2013).
  - Things to find out:
    - Am I eligible? e.g. mobility requirements.
    - what are the first steps?

before the application

- First steps:
  - choose a place that would be easy to justify!
  - decided where I would like to go: CERN.
- Eligible? Yes: CERN is an international organization and it does not “count” as Switzerland.
- Contacted Michelangelo Mangano to ask for support (3rd of May 2013) and he agreed.

writing the application

- reading through the Call's documentation and highlighting the important points is a good start.

- what I found useful:

  - successful applications: they give you a good idea of what you may write in the different sections.

  - (I had an application of Juan Rojo, who was a MC Fellow at CERN previously.)

  - online blogs with 1000s of comments! (e.g. http://hubpages.com/education/EU-FP7-Marie-Curie-People-program-IOF-IEF-IIF-tips)

  - many institutions provide advice to potential applicants: available online.

writing the application

- one needs to strike a balance between “realistic” and “innovative”.
- make sure you use the right templates!
- some example points to keep in mind:
  - the research has to diversify or complete your expertise and
  - reinforce your position towards professional maturity and independence.
  - contribution to the European Research Area (i.e. how?).

writing the application

- once the content is there:
  - read it again and again!

- give it to someone else to read (your supervisor, your contact point at the institution where you are applying + more).

- submit in advance of the deadline.

writing the application

- some data:
  - it took me about 3 weeks to write the proposal.
  - after it was done, I was refining for 1-2 weeks.
- the submission was smooth and I received confirmation on the 16th of August 2013.

evaluation

“Invitation to negotiate” ~a few days later

Evaluation report received:
28th November ’13.

14th August ’13.

evaluation

Proposal Evaluation Form

European Commission	**EUROPEAN COMMISSION** 7 th Framework Programme for Research	**EVALUATION SUMMARY REPORT**

Call : FP7-PEOPLE-2013-IEF
Funding scheme : MC-IEF (Intra-European Fellowships (IEF))
Proposal number : 622071
Proposal acronym : HiggsSelfCoupling
Duration (months) : 24
Proposal title : Precision Higgs Boson Self-Coupling Measurements

N.	Proposer name	Country	Type	Total cost (€)	%	Grant req. (€)	%
1	EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION FOR NUCLEAR RESEARCH	CH					
			Total:				

Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowships for Career Development (IEF)

SCORING
Scores must be in the range 0-5. Decimal marks may be given.
Interpretation of the score:
0- The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.
1– Poor. The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
2– Fair. While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses.
3– Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary.
4– Very good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible.
5– Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

evaluation

e.g. “scientific and technological quality”:

Strengths of the proposal:

- The objectives of the project are described clearly.
- The study of the process of Higgs boson pair production and measurement of the Higgs boson self-coupling is highly relevant and timely.
- The project proposes innovative methodology in the accurate and precise determination of the self-coupling.
- The project is challenging considering that Higgs boson pair production has a very low rate and will require an improvement in analysis techniques.
- The applicant will have the opportunity for close contacts with experimentalists.
- The scientist in charge is an internationally recognized expert in the thematic area of the proposal.

Overall score (Threshold: 3.00/5.00, Weight: 0.25) **4.70**

e.g. “Implementation”:

Strengths of the proposal:

- The CERN theory group possesses the necessary infrastructure for the successful completion of the project.
- The scientist in charge is a world-wide expert in particle physics.
- All practical arrangements will be taken care of by the CERN administrative staff.
- The work plan is presented in detail, and includes credible objectives and milestones.

Weakness of the proposal:

- The interaction of the applicant with experimentalists is not described.

Overall score **4.60**

after invitation to negotiate

- most of the bureaucratic part after receiving the invitation to negotiate was (is) arranged by Seamus Hegarty here at CERN (many thanks!).

- starting date chosen to be 1st of November 2014.

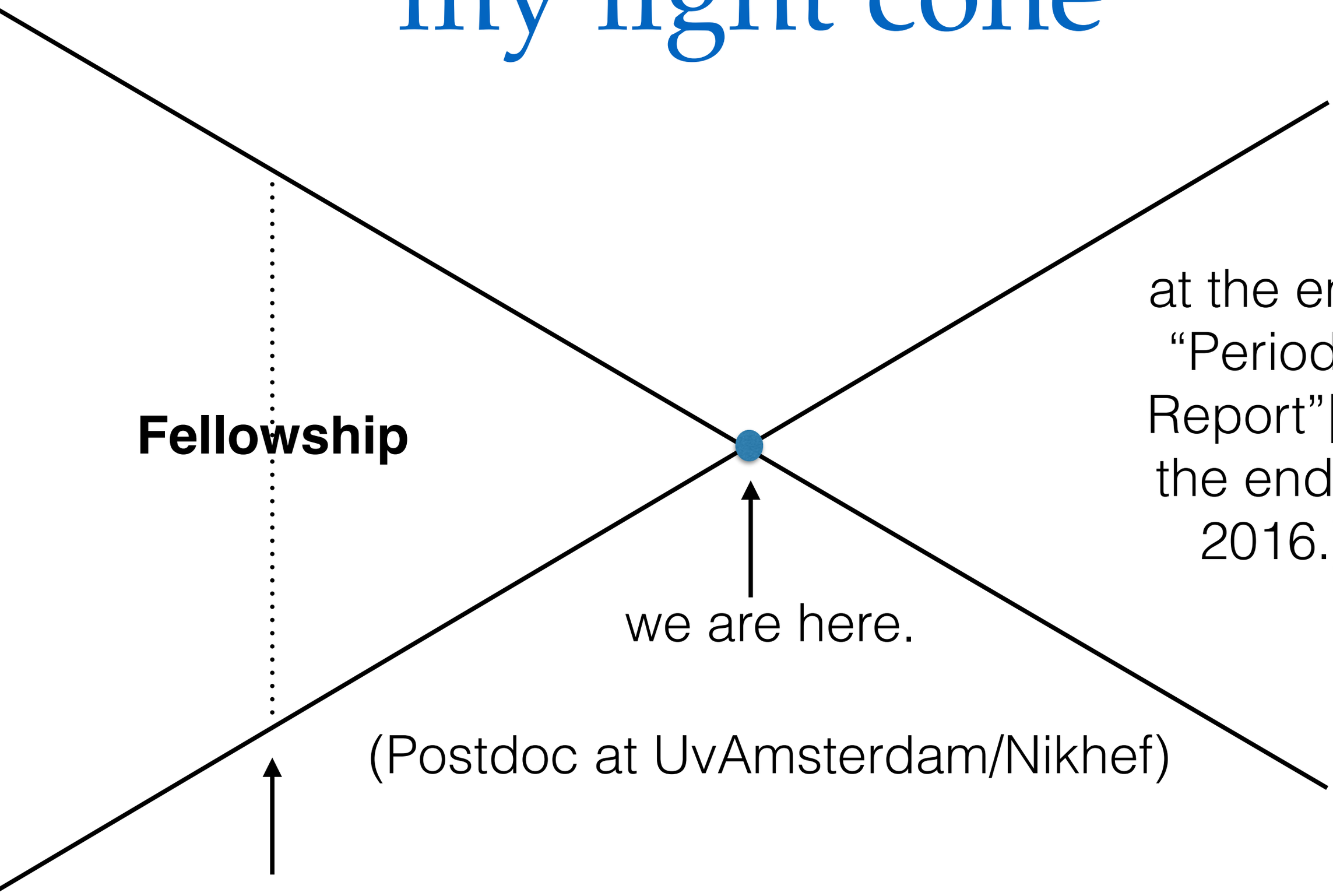
being a Marie Curie Fellow @ CERN

- the MC travel budget is generous.
- (and can be used to buy books as well.)
- how much did my produced research results match the research proposal?
  - some projects became less relevant and new things appeared, but looking back I would say 3/4 of the application's plans have been accomplished.

being a Marie Curie Fellow @ CERN

- working at CERN as a Marie Curie Fellow has been a very rewarding experience:
  - close contact with experimental colleagues (for a phenomenologist).
  - a lively international environment with highly-motivated, highly-skilled people.

my light cone



Thanks for your attention!
& Please feel free to ask questions!