

Jan Hrček, Biology Centre, Czech Academy of Sciences

- ❖ LS8: Ecology, Evolution, Environment
- ❖ 2019 StG, interview, A score
- ❖ 2020 StG, no interview
- ❖ ERC-CZ (6/2020 - 5/2025)
- ❖ 2022 CoG, interview, ERC awarded
(2024 – 2028)

janhrcek@gmail.com

<http://lab.hrcek.net>



Image: Chia-Hua Lue

Key ingredients of ERC project

Idea

Feedback

Unique strength (why you?)

Be connected in the community

Key ingredients of ERC project

Idea

- ❖ clear, simple question/hypothesis test
- ❖ single entry point, focus

Feedback

- ❖ all aspects: idea, methods, presentation in the proposal, mock interviews

Unique strength (why you?)

- ❖ method, preliminary data, experience

Be connected in the community

- ❖ conferences, prestigious institutions

Be connected in the community

- + PhD in heavily international research group (in České Budějovice), prof. V. Novotný
- +++ three-year postdoc at Oxford
- Low attendance at conferences (1-2 per year, no organizing)

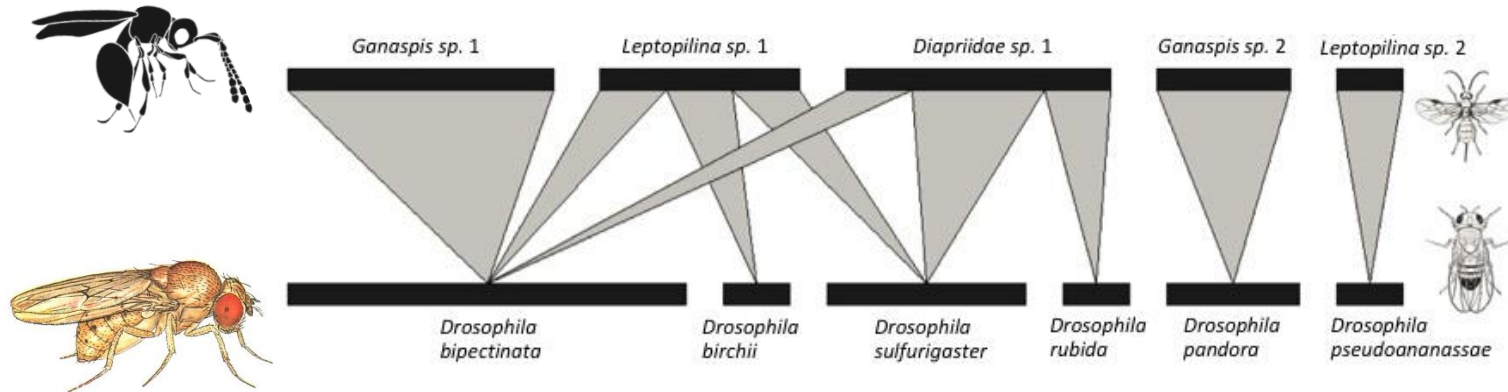
- ❖ People known to panel members generally do better (not my case)
- ❖ Connections led to my involvement in a new model system

Unique strength (why you?)

method

+ new old model system (use of *Drosophila* in community ecology)

+++ ability to keep multi-species system stable in laboratory



experience

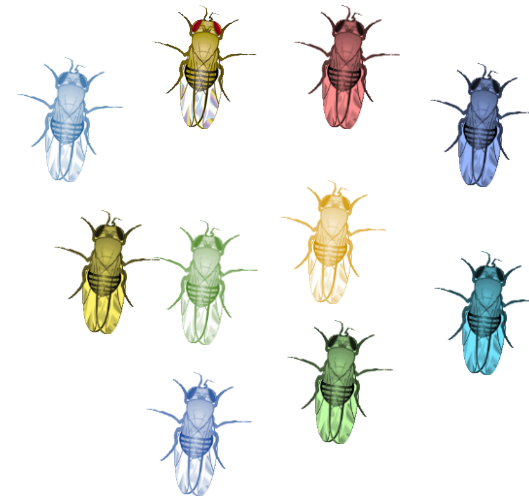
+ experience with both field surveys and laboratory experiments

Feedback

- ❖ I had a unique strength, could address many ideas
- ❖ **We started an informal ERC writing group** (4 people, same panel)
Major factor in success! (1x ERC, 1x ERC-CZ)
- ❖ Helped me to pick the most interesting idea
- ❖ **Sent B1 to ~15 colleagues for feedback**
- ❖ Countless mock interviews (1-2 people is enough, repeat many times)

Idea

Connections between maintenance of diversity and variation in nature



How is diversity maintained?



Diversity despite competition, predation, and parasitism

How is variation maintained?



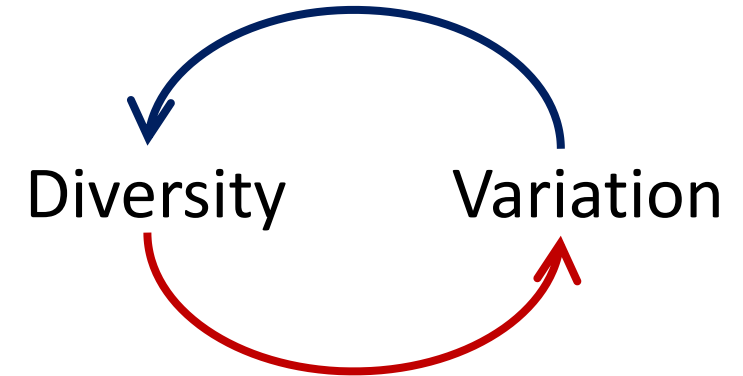
Variation despite selection and drift

Project Outline

Hypotheses

Variation improves maintenance of diversity

Diversity improves maintenance of variation



Laboratory experiments



Natural context



Mechanisms

- ❖ evolved rare advantage
- ❖ selection for polymorphism

Conservation implications