Qualitative Findings
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Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
What Qualitative Data Can Tell Us

- Qualitative data provide glimpses into the *whys* and *hows* of phenomena
- Data are descriptive rather than predictive
- From these data, we can begin to understand how STEM faculty experience their work lives at Mizzou
- From IR data, we know women are underrepresented—but what does that mean for them and for MU?
Qualitative Methods

• All associate and full women faculty invited to participate (N=40)
• 25 agreed to participate in semi-structured climate interviews (~1 hour each)
• Matched samples created
  – Each participant had 3-5 matches
  – Matches based upon rank, field/discipline, time in rank
Qualitative Methods

- 25 matched males agreed to participate in semi-structured climate interviews
- 50 senior STEM faculty participated
- All interviews but one recorded and transcribed verbatim
- Transcripts analyzed for salient and saturated patterns and themes
- Independent analysis by 3 researchers
Career Pathways

Men

Women
Networks as a Pathway

• Off
  – The guys just usually don’t tell you things for whatever reason. They may tell each other things. They did not pass a whole lot on to me but I had some colleagues in other departments which sort of helped me out. (full professor, female)

• On
  – As a result of partnering with him...we did a heck of a lot of work and he recognized me from the standpoint of putting me on publications. (full professor, male)
Resources as a Pathway

• Off
  – I don’t know how the department allocates resources….I mean my program has grown so big if I really want to stay at this institution, I need institutional support. I have money but I can’t buy equipment because they can’t provide me the facility. (full professor, female)

• On
  – It’s about a $900,000 instrument. So you can see why [the university] didn’t already have one but nonetheless it’s a standard in the field so finally after 6 years of me being here we got one of those...So I started in the early 2000s looking for a another job and I got a job offer at a med school, got a good offer there and was close to going there but then the university made a counter, which included going for a [top of the line] instrument, which is what kept me here happily...So what has become a real limitation on my productivity scientifically has now become a strength and an asset. (associate professor, male)
Division of Labor

- Who Does What?
- Service
- Teaching
- Informal Advising
Labor as a Pathway

• Off:
  – That one is huge frustration, absolutely a huge frustration because I am a female and because I am in STEM which means that … I am on every committee known to humankind and my male colleagues because there are so many of them they are on this committee or that committee. (full professor, female)

• On:
  – When I came here and there were not, I got no graduate students my first year and that’s very difficult in my program. I said to … the person in charge of recruiting and I said I don’t have enough graduate students and he said fine, why don’t you sit on the committee for admissions and you tell me how many students you want and who you want and so I did. So I took over basically admitting the students in my area … They basically gave me whoever I wanted. (associate professor, male)
Work/Family as a Pathway

• On:
  – Not being married right now … has helped a lot. I cannot imagine having to go home at 5 to make dinner for somebody or running kids around on the weekend. I spend weekends on the bike, or in the garden, or in the lab… I am sure at some point I might regret not having a family of my own, but I haven’t so far. (female, associate professor)

• Off:
  – I essentially have a babysitter on Sunday afternoon when [my daughter] is taking her nap and I come in and work for 4 hours but it is a constant, and not very successful, struggle… And I spend $200 a month on babysitters outside of day care and you know the chair wants us to come to an evening reception for the new faculty candidate or whatever and I have to hire a babysitter to do that. I try to do some of that and I will think, ok I have not left her with a sitter more than once this week, so I can. (female, associate professor)
Conclusions

• Pathways are gendered
  – For women, pathways tend to be longer
  – Women experience more “off-ramps”

• Cumulatively, detours create work and sense that one must work harder, despite professional success

• Data and model help explain why women feel less valued and less of a full academic participant

• Women perceive themselves as less integrated into the department and institution
Conclusions

• Improving the status of women requires intervention into the institutional factors that influence faculty success (e.g., promotion, merit, publications, grants):
  – Access to network interaction and collaboration
  – Allocation of resources
  – Operation of equitable division of labor