

Gendered devaluation underlies faculty retention

Katie Spoon

University of Colorado Boulder

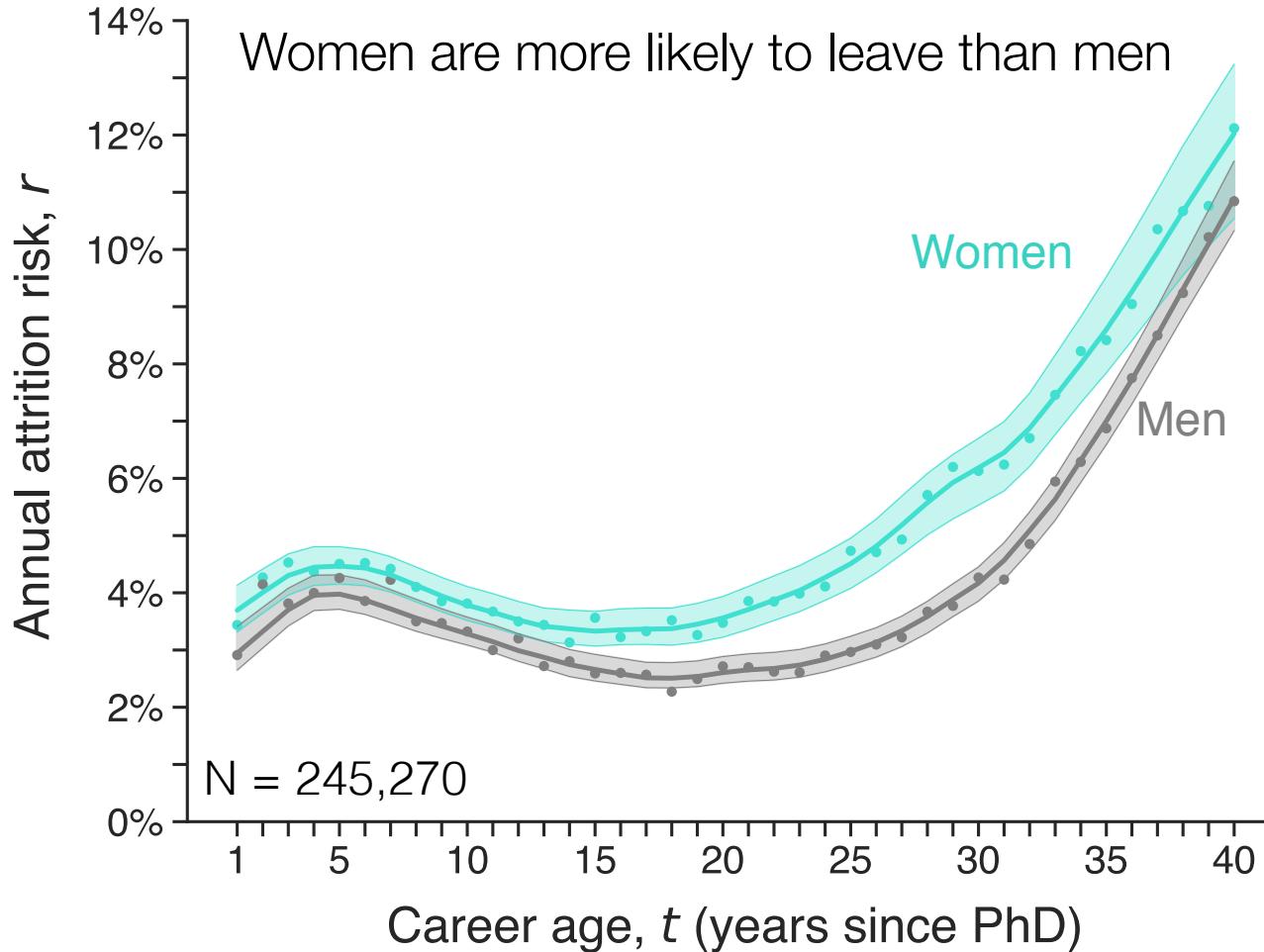
In collaboration with Joanna Mendy, Maria Martinez, Mirta Galesic, Daniel Larremore, Aaron Clauset, and Lauren Rivera

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Gender and retention patterns among U.S. faculty

Katie Spoon^{1*}, Nicholas LaBerge¹, K. Hunter Wapman¹, Sam Zhang², Allison C. Morgan¹, Mirta Galesic³, Bailey K. Fosdick⁴, Daniel B. Larremore^{1,5}, Aaron Clauset^{1,3,5*}

Science Advances 9(42) eadi2205 (2023)

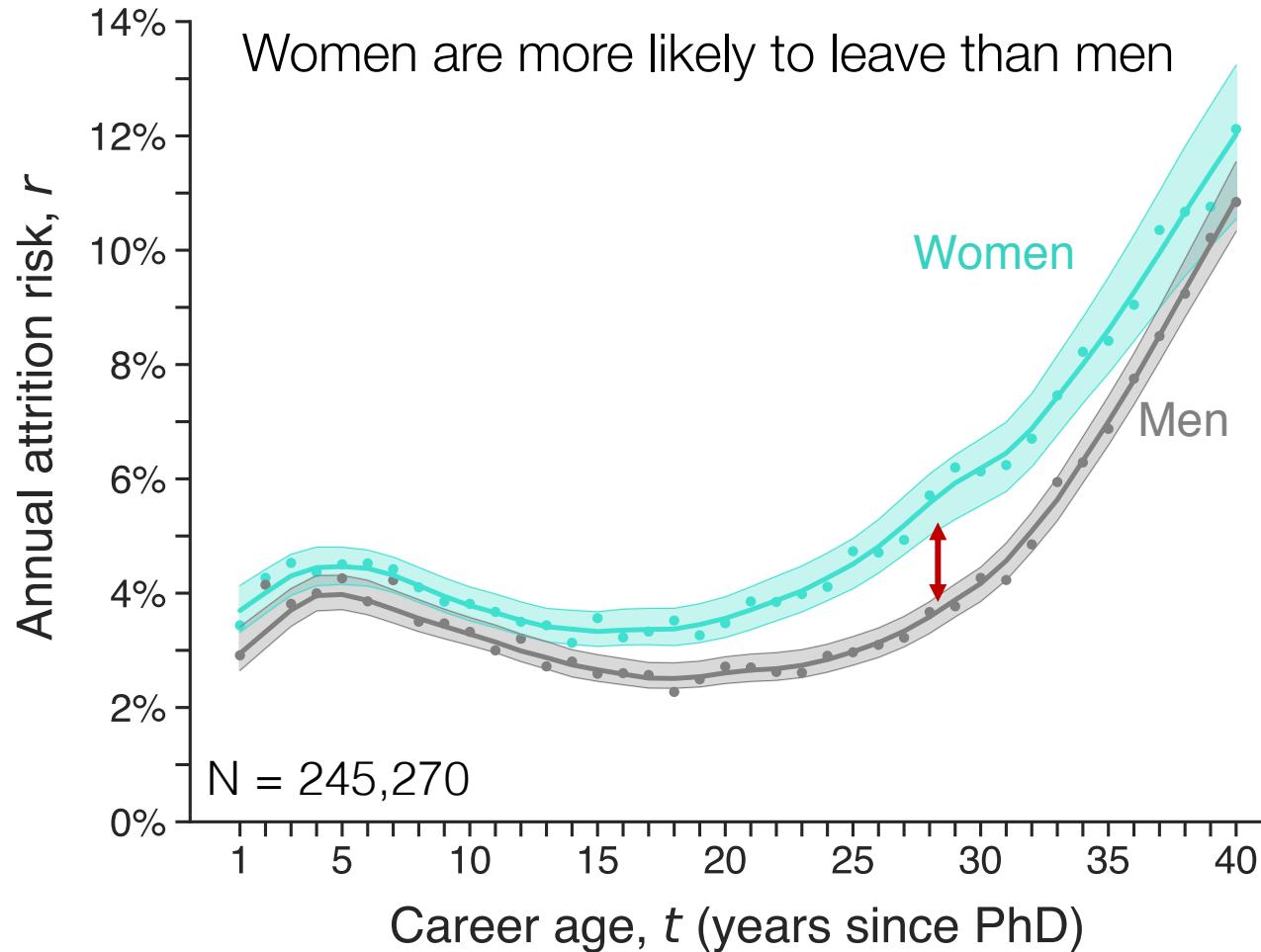


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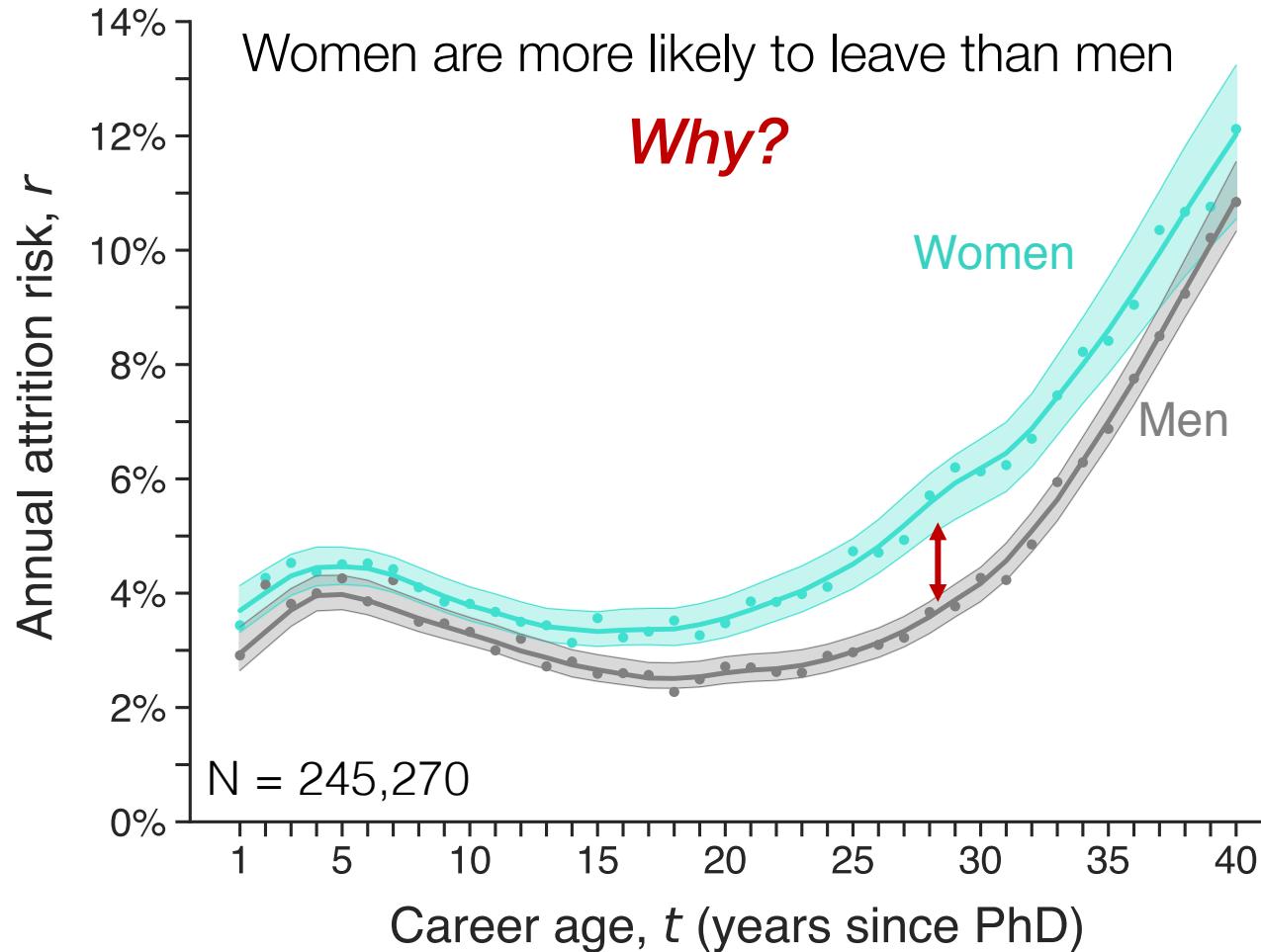


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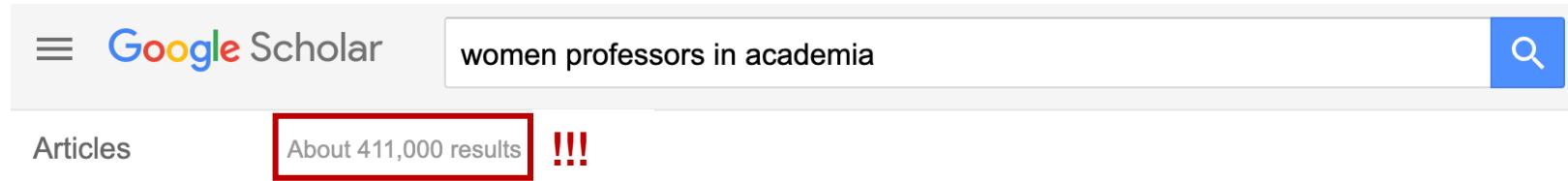
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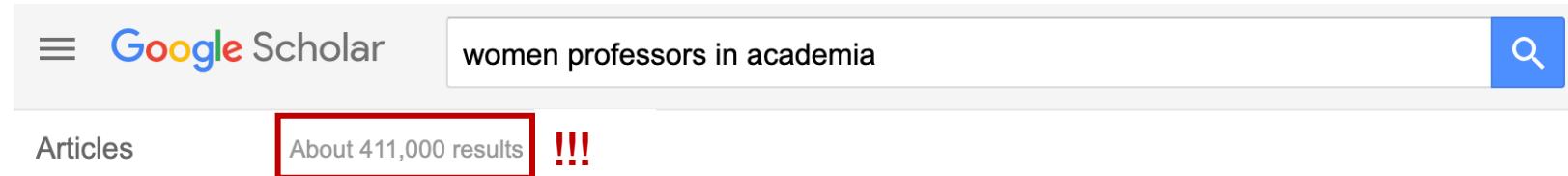


Literature is deep



Women experience academia differently from men in a variety of ways.

Literature is deep



Teaching, service, mentorship

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The Impact of Gender and Department Climate on Job Satisfaction and Intentions to Quit for Faculty in Science and Engineering Fields

Ronda Roberts Callister 

Gender (in)equality in the academy: Subtle mechanisms and the production of inequality

Patricia A. Roos ^a , Mary L. Gatto ^b 

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But which are most gendered, and which are most connected to retention?

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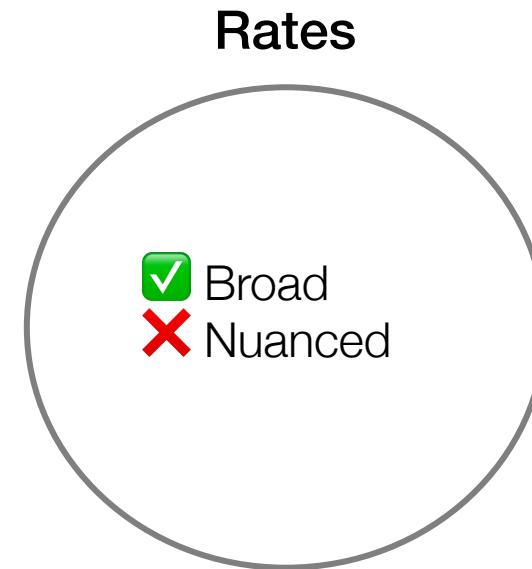
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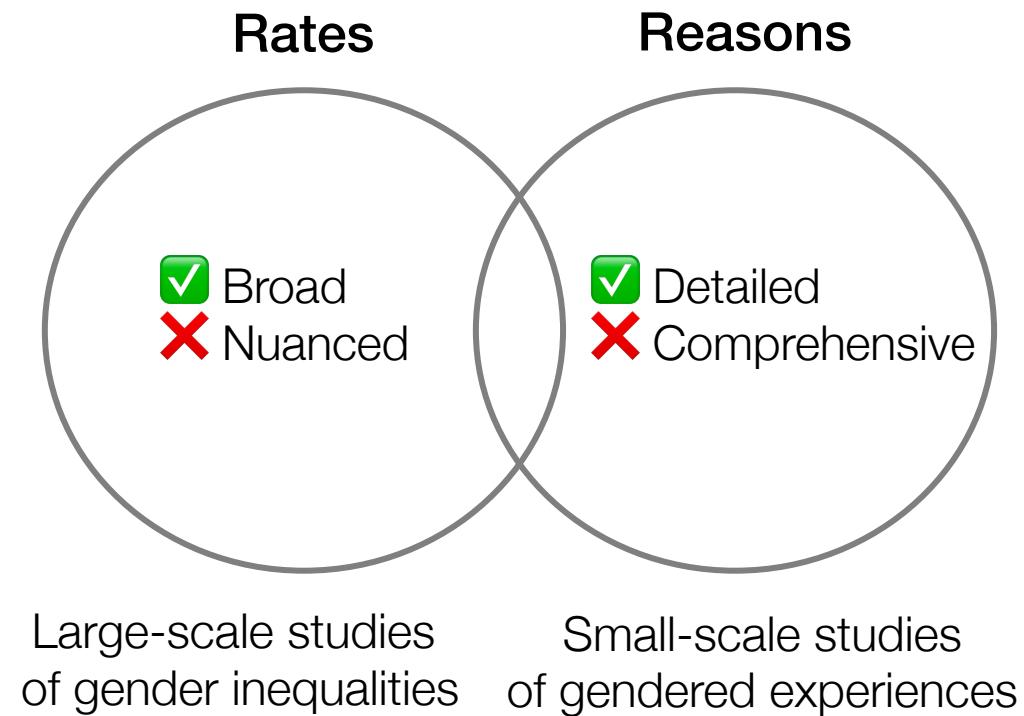
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Literature is deep, but siloed

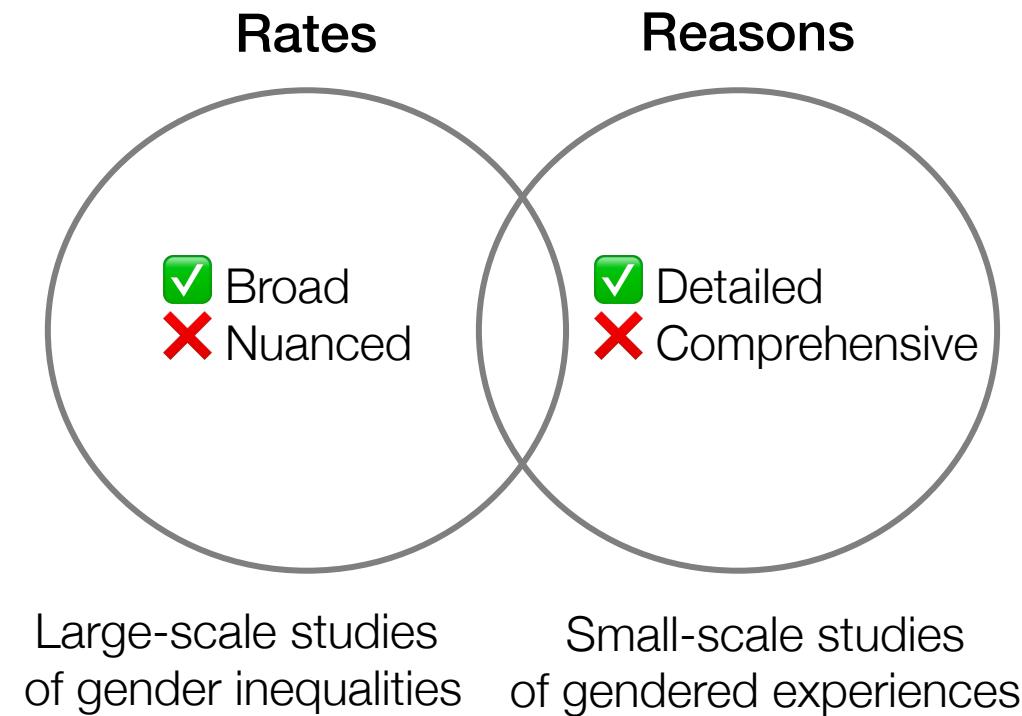


Large-scale studies
of gender inequalities

Literature is deep, but siloed



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Focused mostly on:



Assistant profs

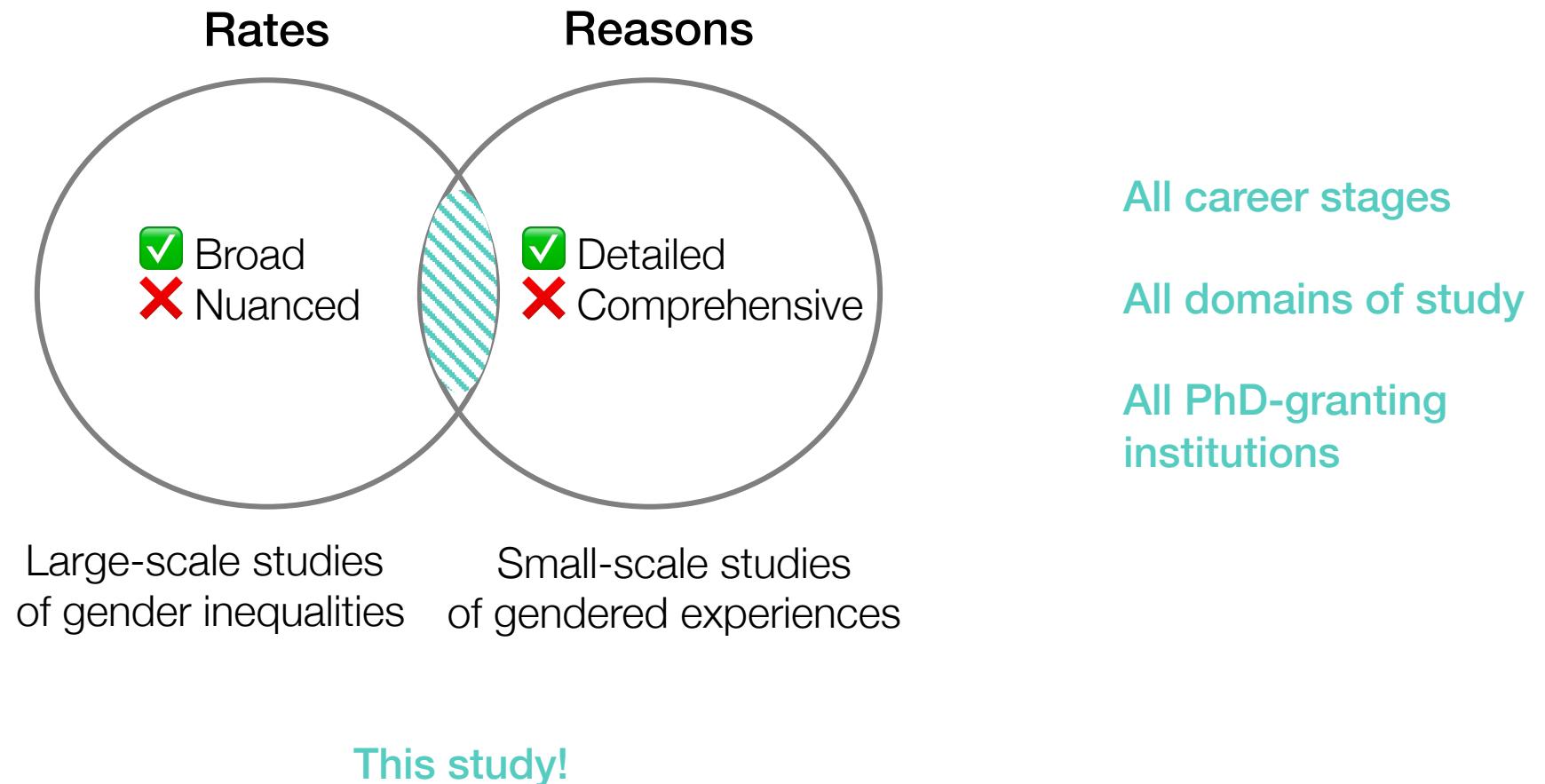


STEM

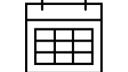


Elite schools

Literature is deep, but siloed



Free-text data

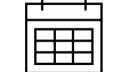
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-  325 U.S. PhD-granting institutions
-  29 academic fields
-  Fall 2021

“What needs to be different to reduce the stress you feel in your position?” (N = 4,340)

“What needed to be different for you to stay in your position?” (N = 2,197)

*sampled from census of all faculty whose employment records were used to generate figure on first slide

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Which topics discussed are most gendered?

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Which perceived experiences are most gendered?

Work-related	Structural	Life-related	Relational
Research, teaching, service	Organizational decisions, policies, resources	Workload and non-work responsibilities	Informal or evaluative interactions with colleagues

Which perceived experiences are most gendered?

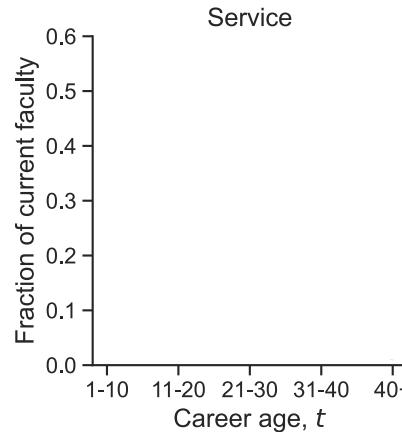
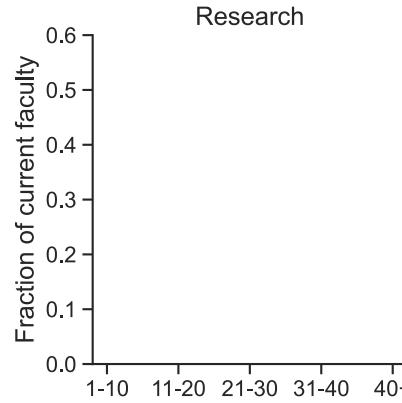
 Women
 Men

Work-related

Structural

Life-related

Relational



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Responses for current faculty only (N=4,340) but patterns from former faculty are similar; devaluation is more gendered among former faculty

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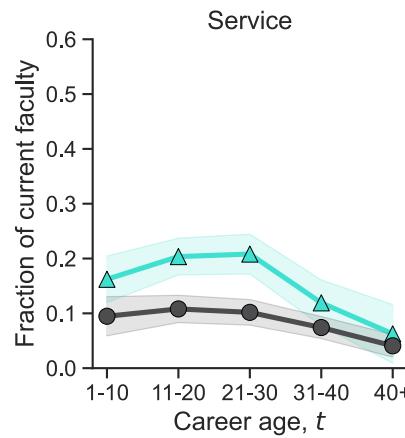
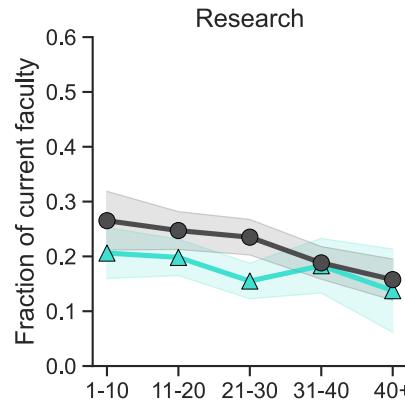
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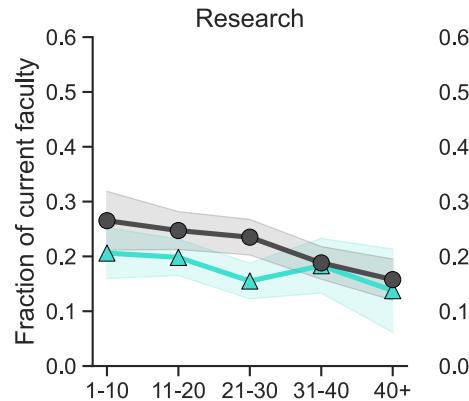
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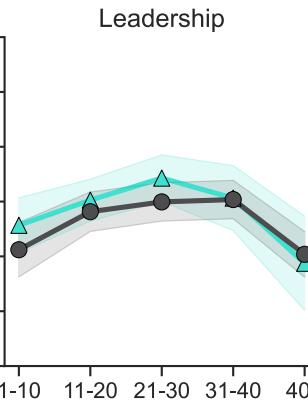
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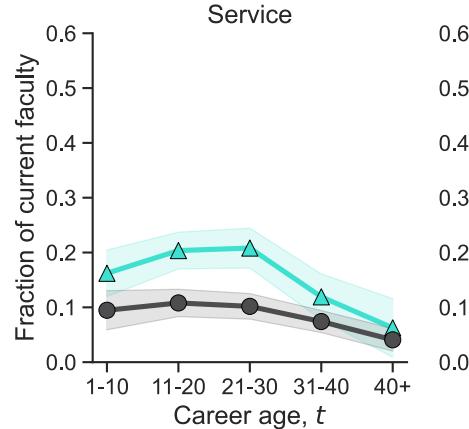
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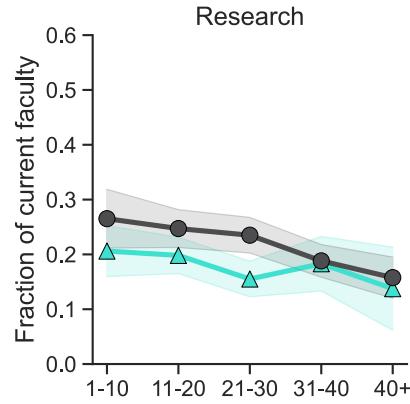
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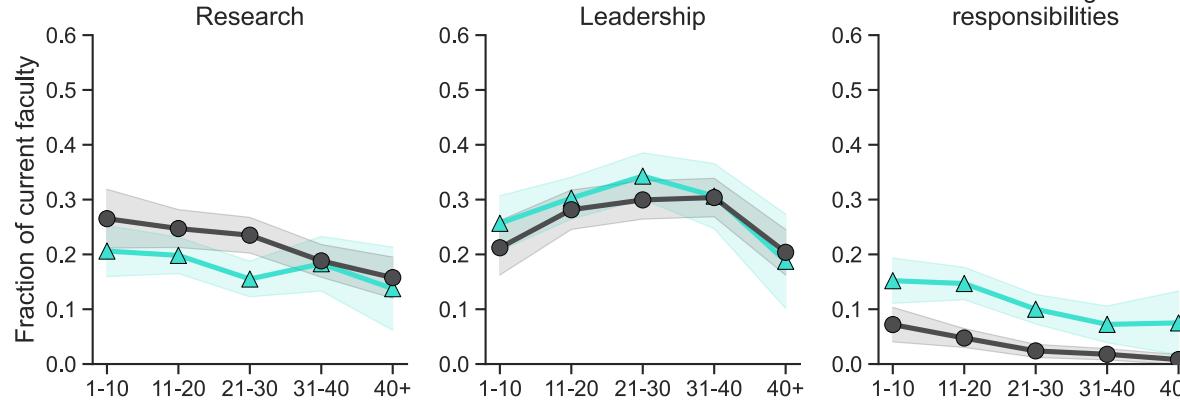
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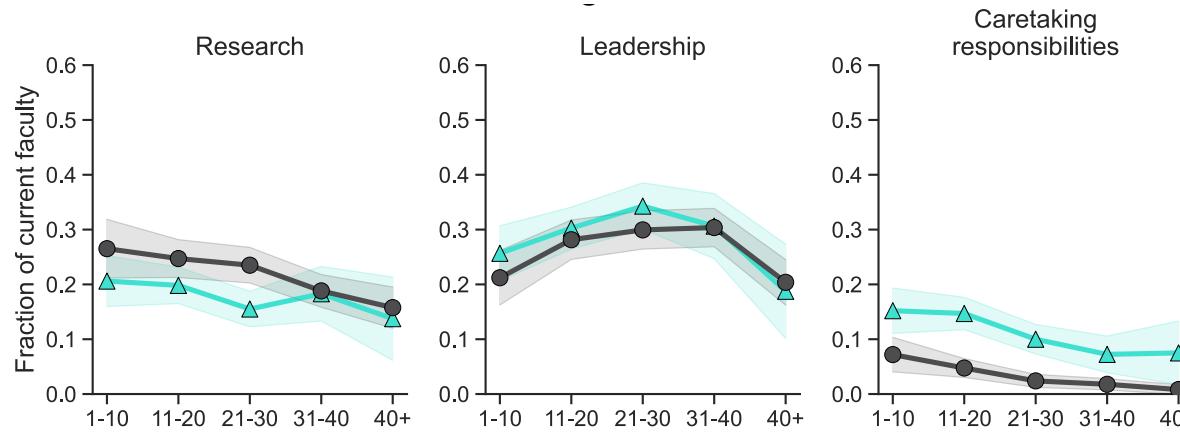
Work-related



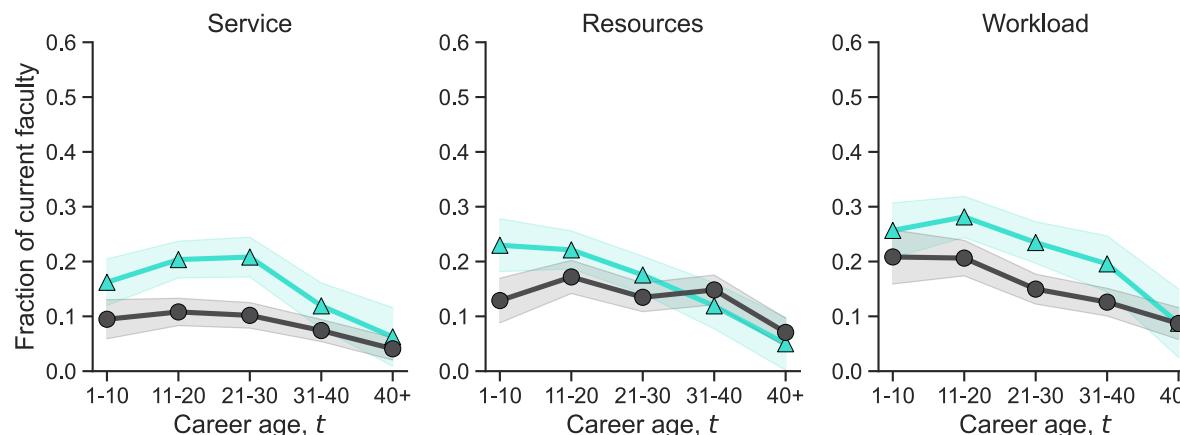
Structural



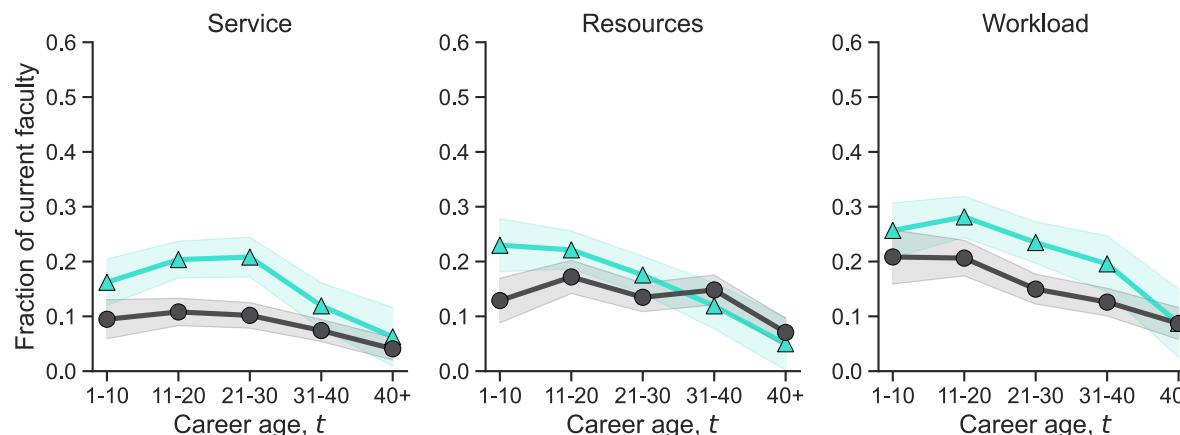
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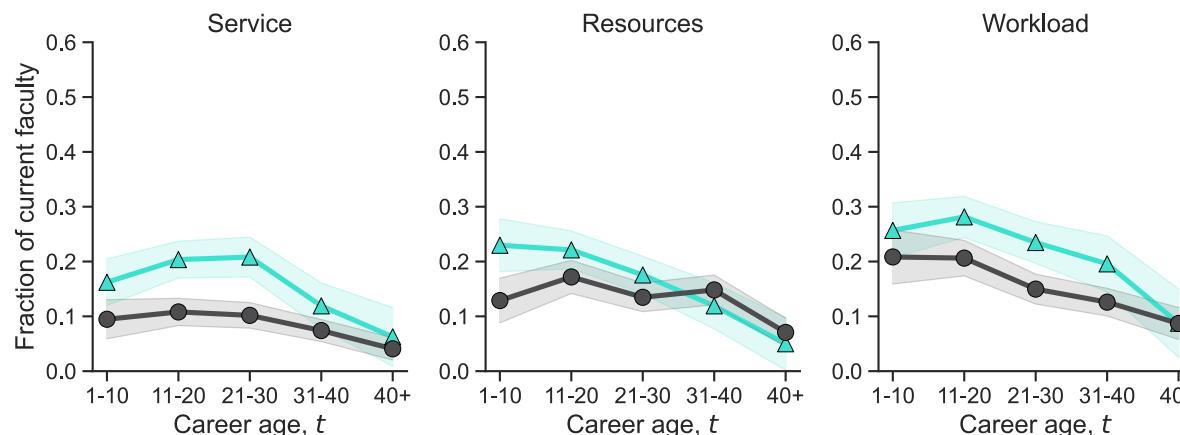
Relational



Resources



Workload



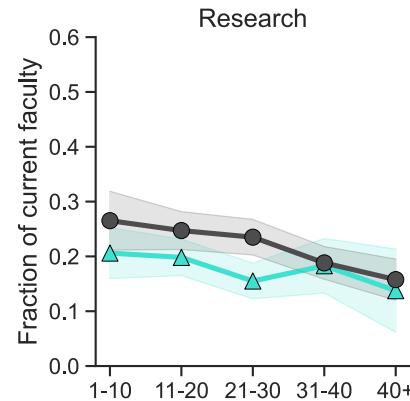
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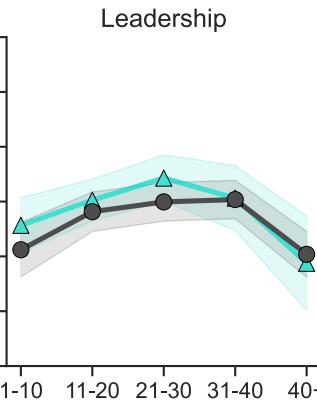
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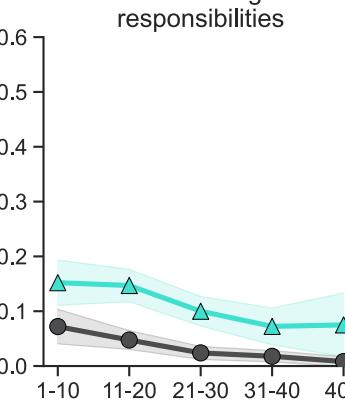


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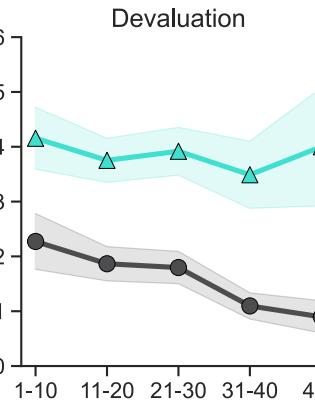
Life-related

Caretaking responsibilities

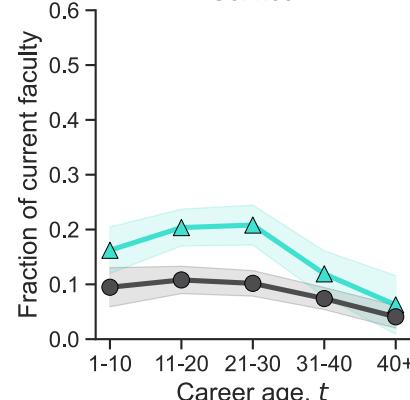


Relational

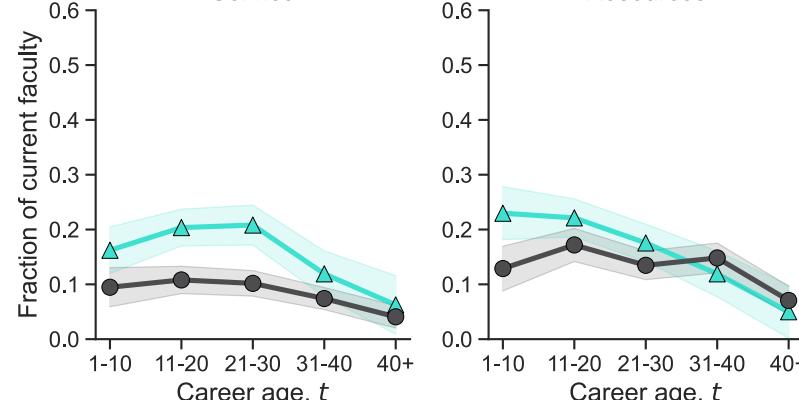
Devaluation



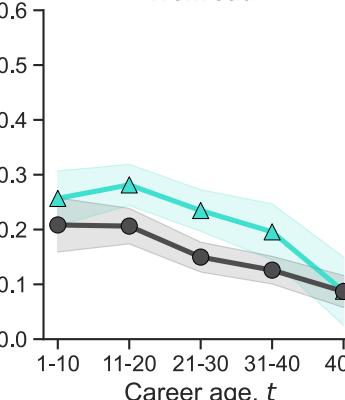
Service



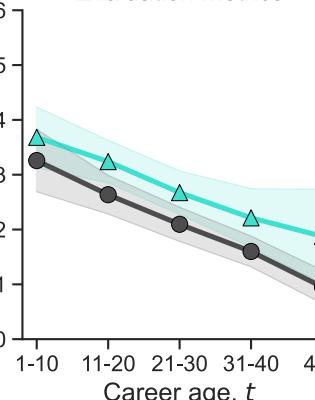
Resources



Workload



Evaluation metrics



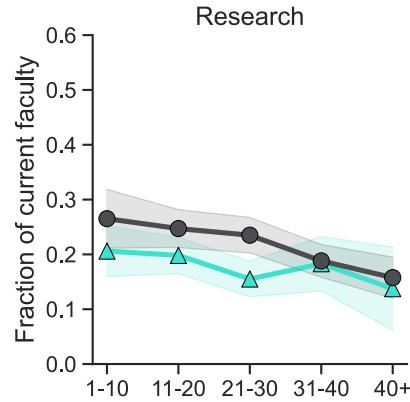
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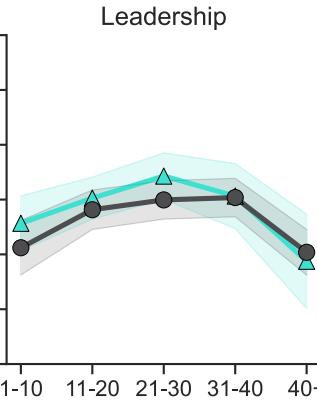
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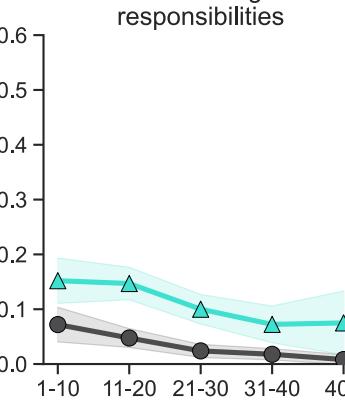


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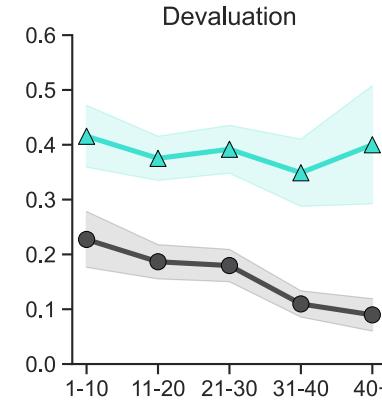
Life-related

Caretaking responsibilities

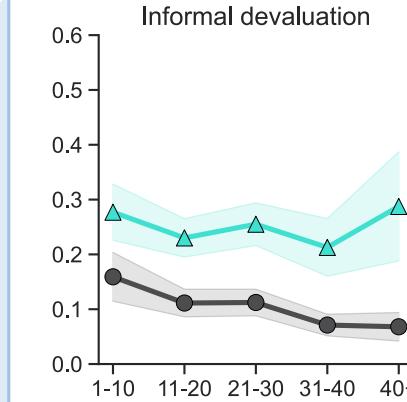


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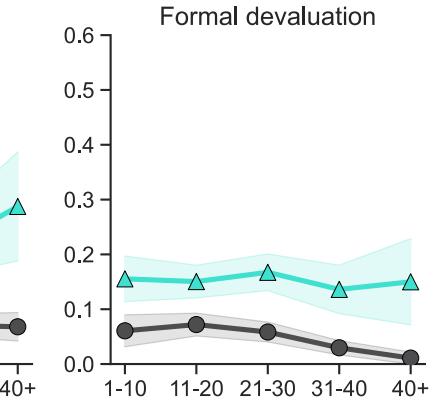
Devaluation



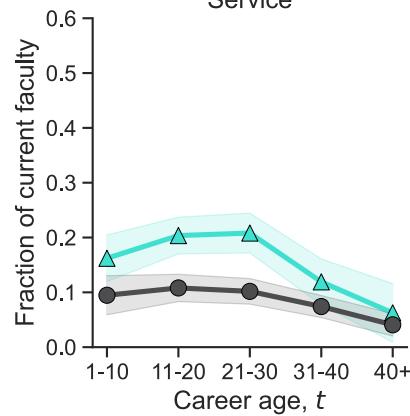
Informal devaluation



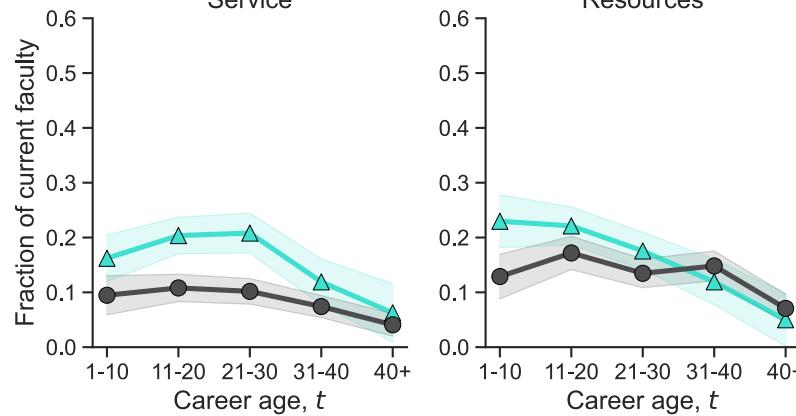
Formal devaluation



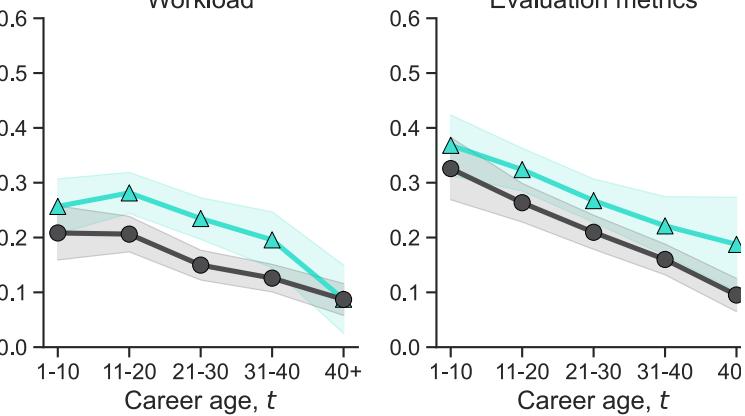
Service



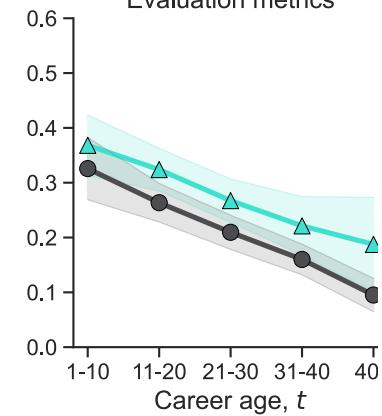
Resources



Workload



Evaluation metrics



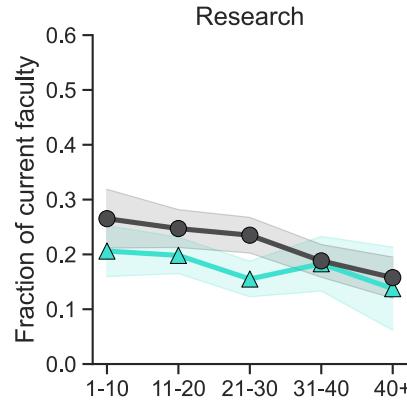
Only a subset of topics shown due to space limitations; see pre-print for all topics

Responses for current faculty only ($N=4,340$) but patterns from former faculty are similar; devaluation is more gendered among former faculty

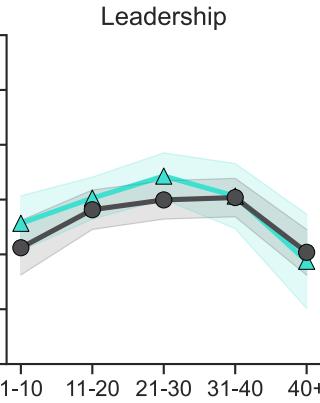
Which perceived experiences are most gendered?

Women
 Men

Work-related

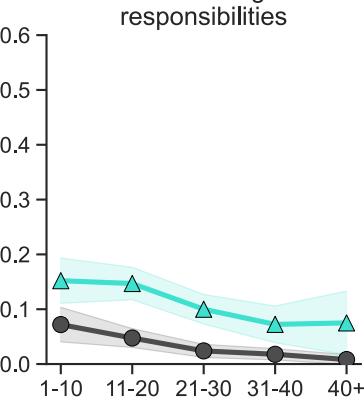


Structural



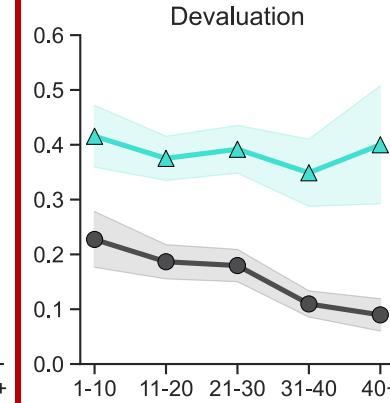
Life-related

Caretaking responsibilities

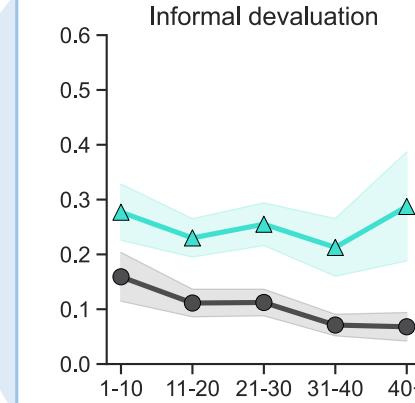


Relational

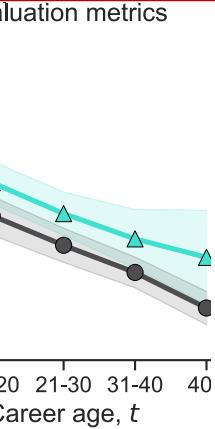
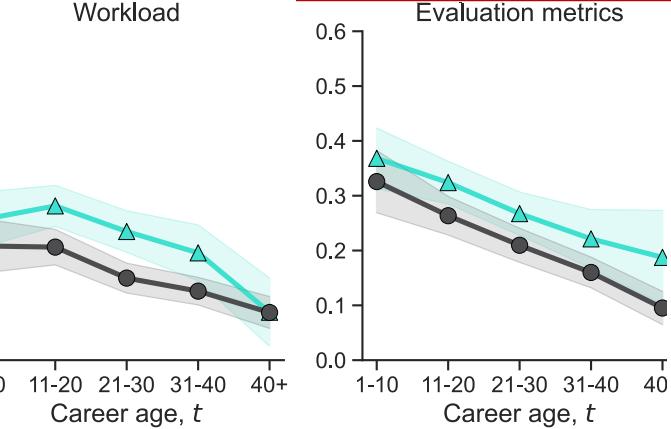
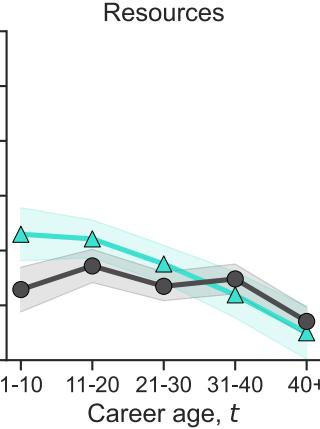
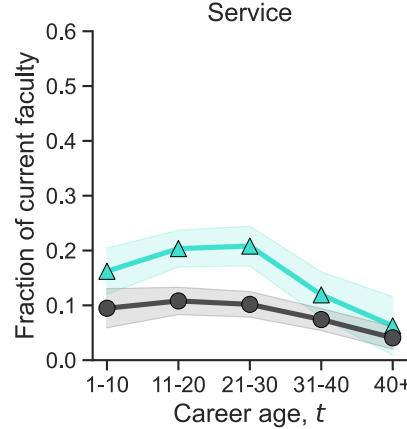
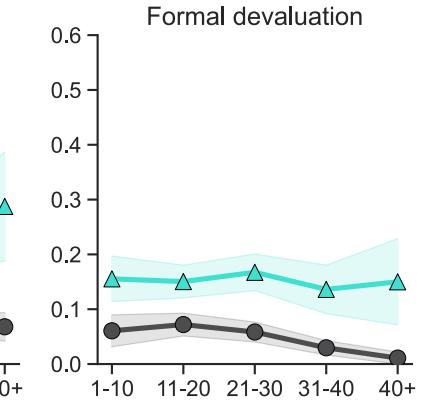
Devaluation



Informal devaluation



Formal devaluation



Devaluation is the only topic where the gender gap **grows** over a career

What is devaluation?

Formal devaluation *for example, in salary, tenure & promotion, etc.*

Higher expectations with fewer rewards and resources

Achievements unnoticed or diminished

Lack of fairness

Must make a comparison to someone else's experience (as they perceive it)

Formal devaluation

+

Informal devaluation

for example, interpersonally

Subtle exclusionary behaviors

Overt mistreatment

The university is often silent or action is performative

"My department has large disparities in rates of promotion by gender and race. My presence as a [woman of color] is often referred to as a sign of diversity, and yet my serious requests to review inequities in promotion have been ignored, denied, or seen as special treatment." - woman of color

Formal devaluation

+

Informal devaluation

+

Lack of institutional response

Many women in our sample reported the combination of:

Systemic, sustained **formal devaluation** and **informal devaluation**

With **the lack of institutional response**

Formal devaluation

+

Informal devaluation

+

Lack of institutional response

→

Attrition

Many women in our sample reported the combination of:

Systemic, sustained **formal devaluation** and **informal devaluation**

With **the lack of institutional response**

Leads them to consider or make plans to leave their jobs

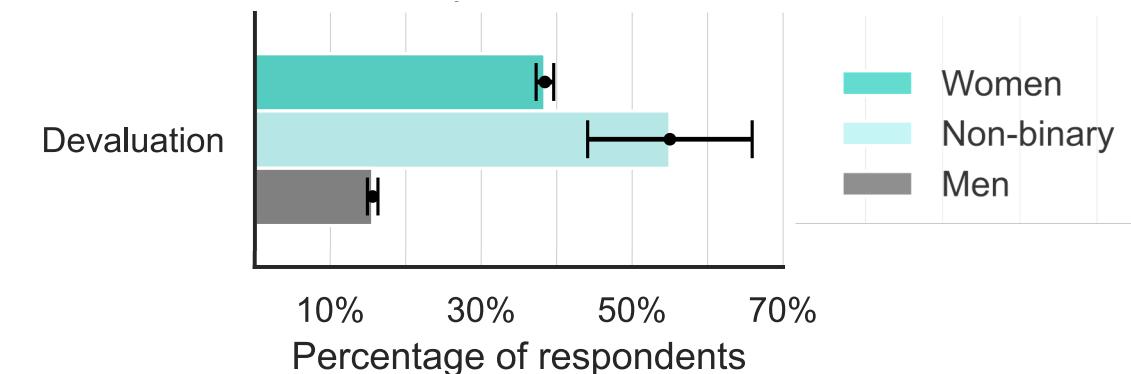
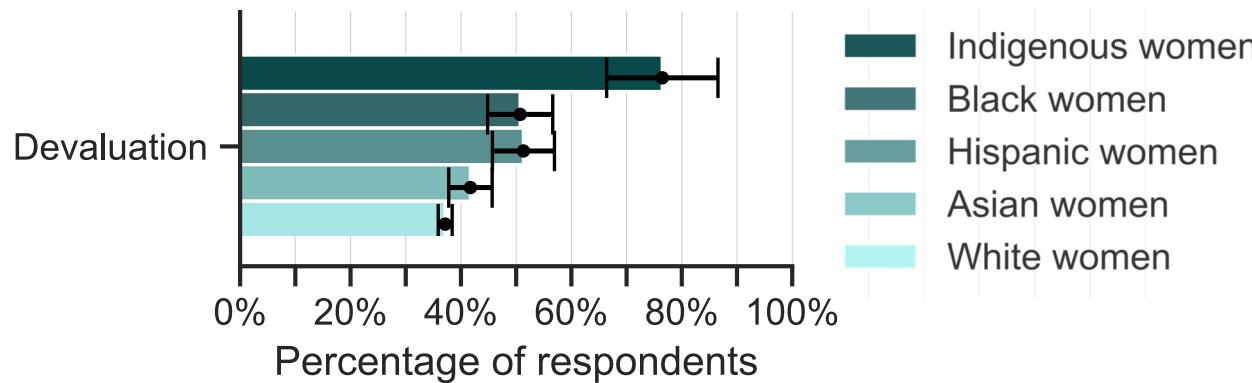
“I've had to fight for every raise I've received...the university does not have my back with respect to gender equity. If I could see leaders...trying to solve these problems in earnest and large-scale ways, I may be tempted to stay.” – white woman

Takeaways

- Devaluation is:
 - the most gendered topic
 - the only topic that becomes more gendered over time
 - the topic most often discussed when women mention leaving their faculty jobs

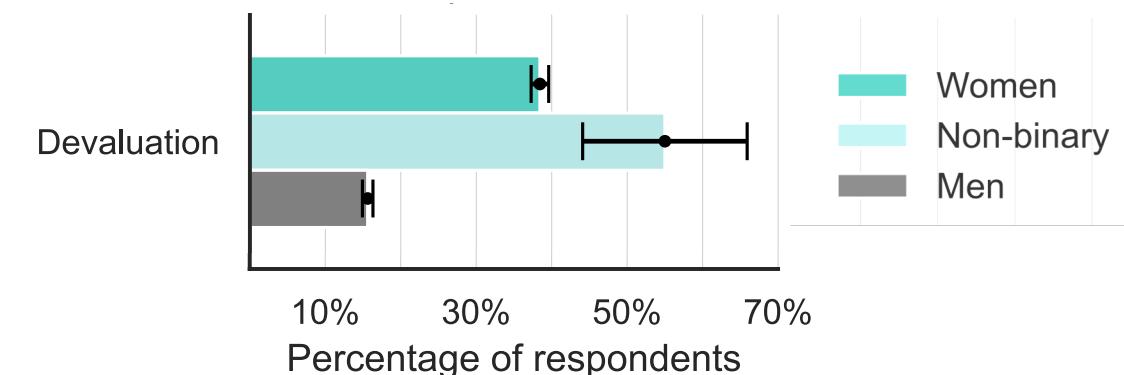
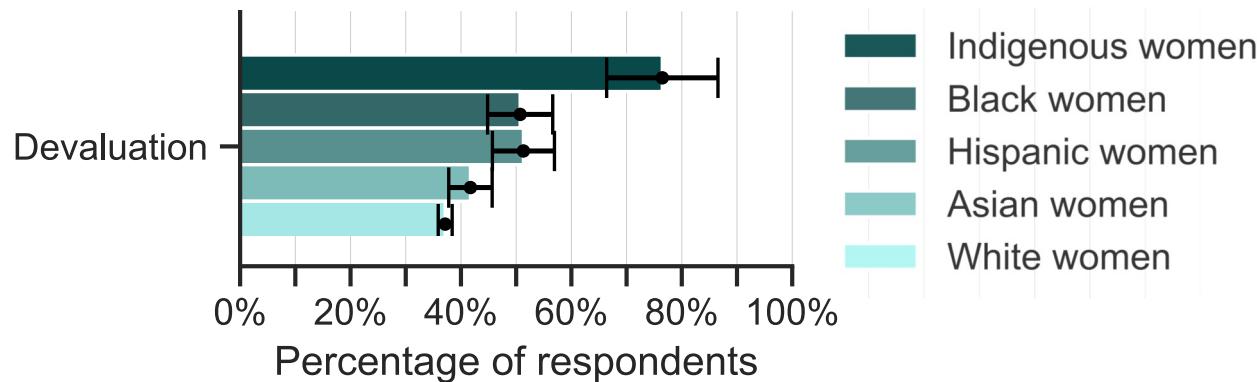
Takeaways

- Devaluation is:
 - the most gendered topic
 - the only topic that becomes more gendered over time
 - the topic most often discussed when women mention leaving their faculty jobs
- However, not all gender-marginalized faculty's experiences are the same



Takeaways

- Devaluation is:
 - the most gendered topic
 - the only topic that becomes more gendered over time
 - the topic most often discussed when women mention leaving their faculty jobs
- However, not all gender-marginalized faculty's experiences are the same
- There is no silver bullet – ask & listen in each specific context, rather than assuming what is needed



Thank you!

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<https://katiespoon.github.io>

Questions?



Joanna Mandy



Maria Martinez



Mirta Galesic



Dan Larremore



Aaron Clauset



Lauren Rivera



Preprint!



We thank all survey participants for sharing their stories with us



University of Colorado **Boulder**

Extra slides

Study design

To investigate gendered retention patterns in academia...

Combine **broad faculty employment data** with **social survey of faculty**



from Academic Analytics Research Center **AARC**

questions about stress & reasons for leaving

*Current & former faculty
self-reported gender, race, parenthood

Do women and men leave *for different reasons*?

Which forces (push or pull) and what reasons, led or would lead faculty to leave their jobs?

Push "I am unhappy, stressed, or otherwise less than satisfied with my current position"

Pull "I am drawn to, excited by, or otherwise attracted to a different position"

Neither wanted to retire / would not leave



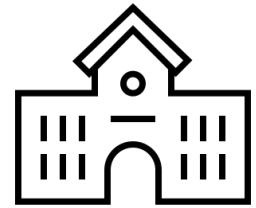
Professional reasons

- expectations of productivity
- obtaining external funding
- expectations of topics
- lack of recognition
- salary
- low acceptance rates
- poor admin support



Work-life balance reasons

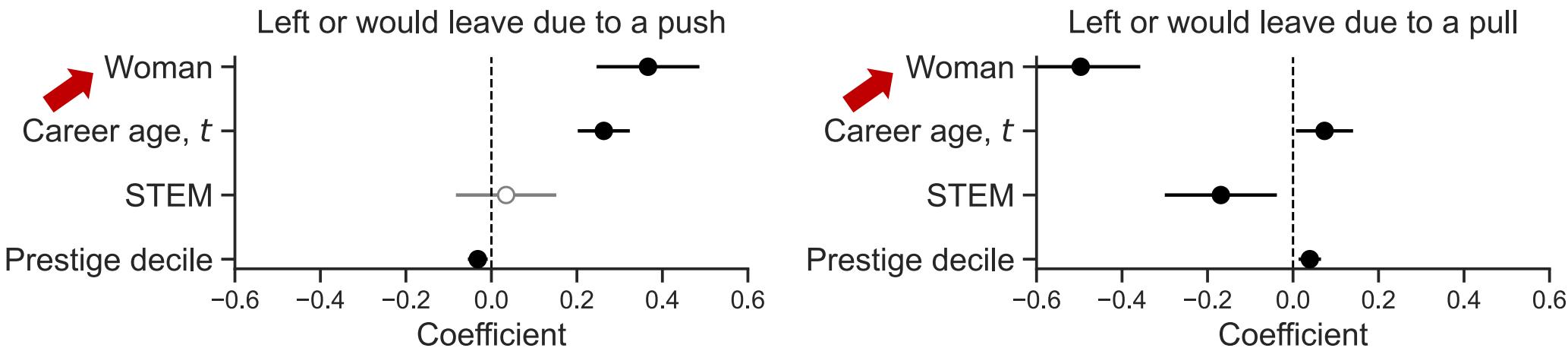
- caring responsibilities
(children, partner, parents, etc.)
- partner's career
- lack of time for hobbies
- long hours
- personal issues (divorce, illness, etc.)



Workplace climate reasons

- dysfunctional leadership
- feeling need to prove myself
- lack of belonging / fit in department
- lack of belonging / fit at institution
- lack of belonging / fit in field
- harassment
- discrimination
- how competitive academia is

1. Women and men leave in response to different forces



Gender was the **strongest predictor** of feeling pushed/pulled, out of gender, STEM & prestige, controlling for career age

Push "I am unhappy, stressed, or otherwise less than satisfied with my current position"

Pull "I am drawn to, excited by, or otherwise attracted to a different position"

Neither wanted to retire / would not leave

2. Women and men leave for different reasons



Professional

Funding, admin. support, etc.



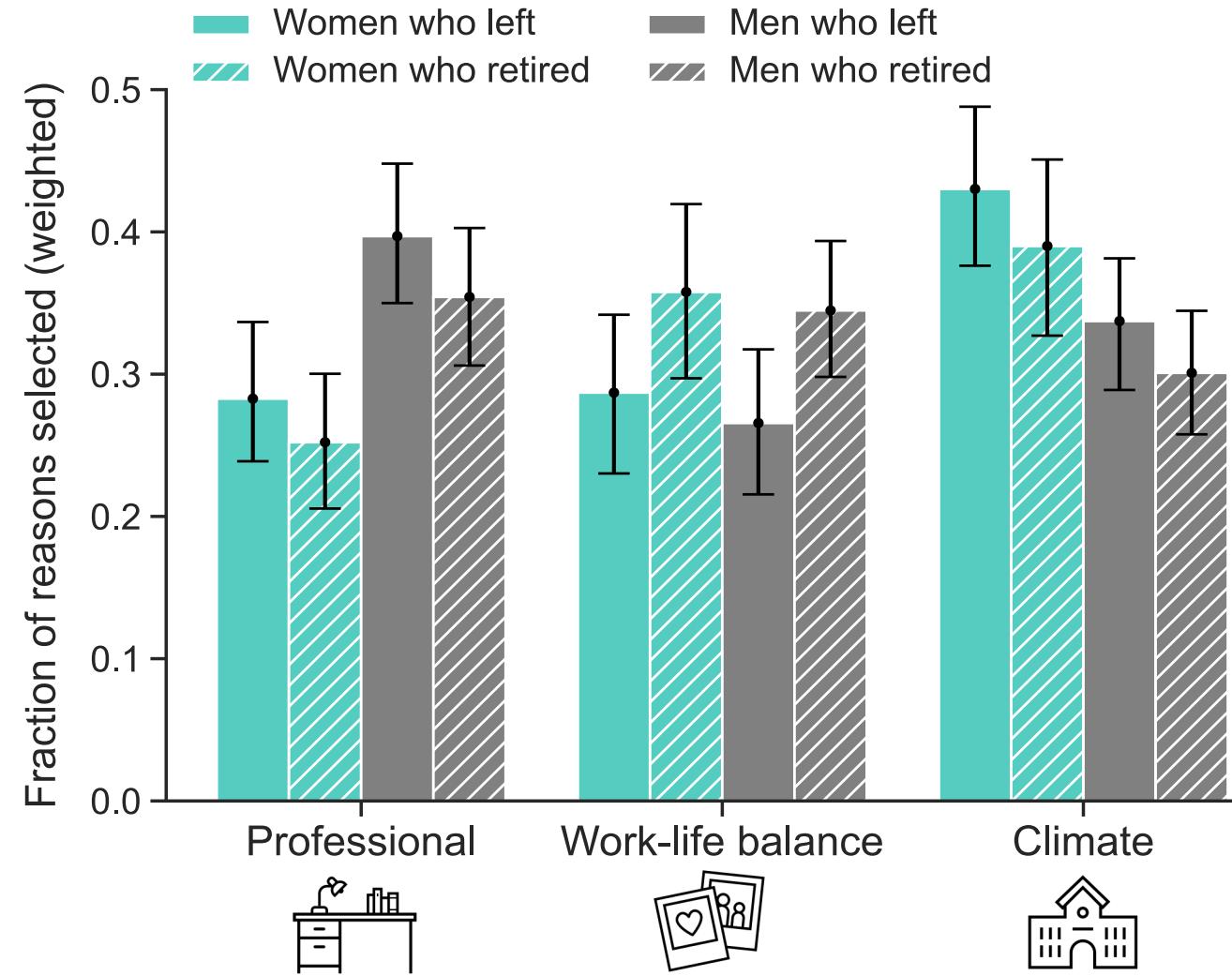
Work-life balance

Kids, hours, etc.



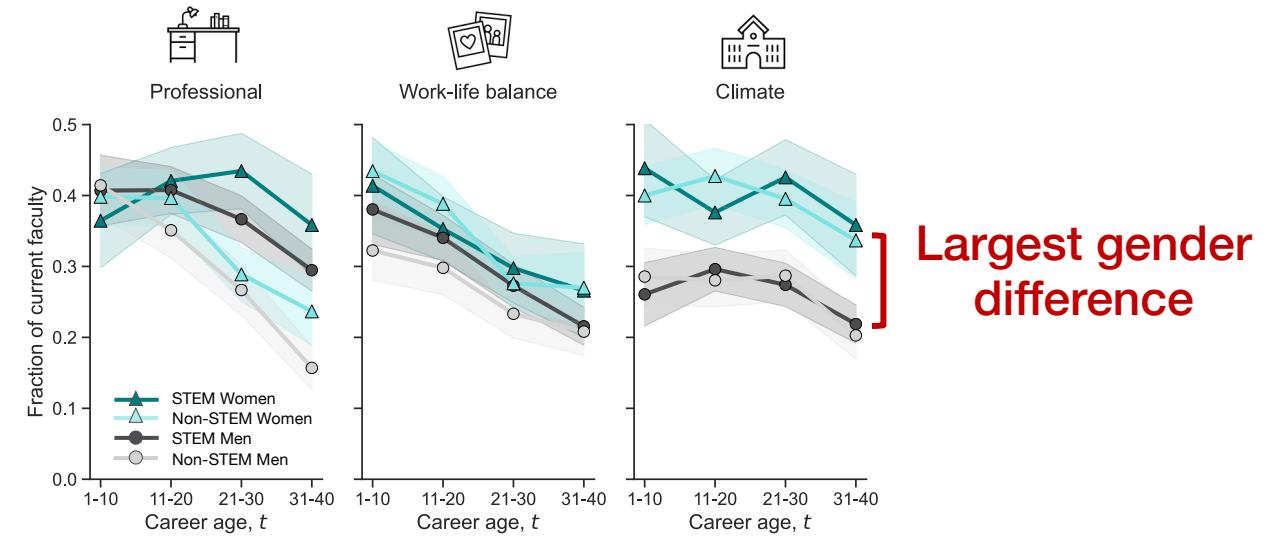
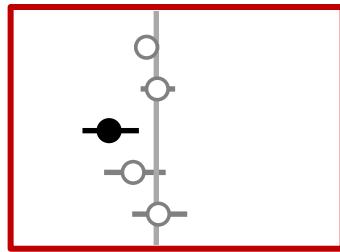
Workplace climate

Competition, not belonging, etc.



Takeaway: Even in cases where there is no visible gender gap in retention (or early-career engineering, where men are more likely to leave)... women still leave for different **reasons** than men (climate!), so we should focus on reasons, not just rates, to improve gender equity in academia

STEM	117,991
Natural Sciences	66,271
Engineering	25,816
Math & Computing	22,856
Medicine	20,532



What is it about workplace climate?

- Qualitative inductive (bottom-up) analysis
- Team of 5 people developed separate initial **codebooks** for (1) current faculty & (2) former faculty
- Iteratively updated the codebook through testing & inter-coder reliability

CODEBOOK				Example
Themes			Description	Include
Primary	Secondary	Tertiary		
NULL	Work	Research	Do not code if they do not mention any stressors or if their stressors relate to other people's identities	"Sorry no time"
			Funding	Difficulties getting funding, issues with the funding system (what type of research/expenses are funded, etc.)
			Peer Review	Related to the peer review process of publishing papers or getting grants
			Research Group	Relates to the hiring, managing, training, supervision and quality of research assistants (students and postdocs) working in their research group / lab
			Teaching	Teaching load, support/resources for teaching, students
		Service		"There is too much pressure to change our traditional curricula and values to adapt to societal influence."
				Administrative work, (1) to the institution (e.g., serving on committees) or (2) to the broader community (e.g., reviewing, conf. organizing).
	Work-life balance	Caring	Caring responsibilities for children, partner, parents, etc.	"For myself and other women with small children, they seemed to think that homeschooling our kids was no problem..."
		Time	Related to the time constraints someone has due to the job	"I think the work-reward ratio in academia is out of control, with ridiculous amounts of work"
	Culture	Workplace culture	Inequitable responsibilities	The inequitable distribution of administrative service, informal duties or responsibilities among peers or between faculty & administrators
			Climate	How people view ME (or my peers) as a person, NOT my work, & how they interact with me (or my peers), in my immediate environment
		Evaluation philosophy		How people evaluate/view my WORK, including metrics, pressures, expectations for productivity, and ambiguous tenure process
		Mistreatment		Includes bias, harassment, prejudice, discrimination, etc. (either localized or systemic)
	Organization	Department	Resources	Administrative support / more staff, and programs or services (which require staff to run)
			Leadership (chair)	Specifically mentions their department chair or department head
		Salary		Issues with salary/benefits, includes inequitable compensation, such as gender wage gaps.
		Institutional Leadership		Mentions administrators, institutional practices, communication, choices/decisions by "the university"
		Specific Policies		Mentions a specific, existing policy that they have a problem with (e.g., tenure, parental leave)

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 - 3 of us **read all 6,537 responses** (2 people/response)
 - Disagreement meetings with a mediator

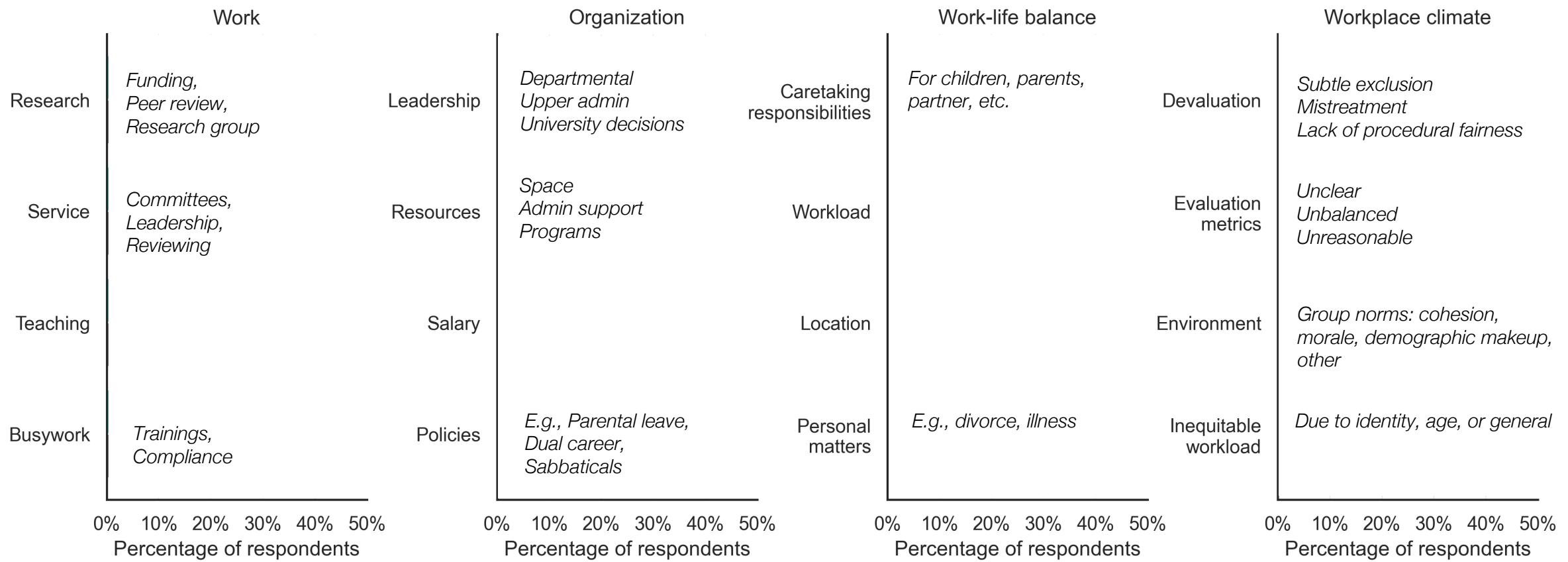
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 - Refined the categories through a second pass

What is it about workplace climate?

Women
Men

Inductively analyzing **4,340** qualitative responses from **current faculty** allows us to measure which aspects are **gendered**



What is it about workplace climate?

Women
Men

Inductively analyzing 4,340 qualitative responses from **current faculty** allows us to determine which aspects are **gendered**



We found that **devaluation** (formal & informal) is the aspect with the most distinctly gendered difference.

We describe how this devaluation manifests in the academic workplace and what professors suggest we do with illustrative quotes

Formal devaluation *for example, in salary, tenure & promotion, etc.*

Higher expectations with fewer rewards and resources

“I was told that I needed 15 papers to get tenure, when the guys ahead of me got tenure with 2-3 papers [each]...to prove I could be productive ‘even with having a baby’...standards in our department are only high for the women and men seem to be able to just trip over a bar that is at ground level and be highly rewarded and compensated.” - white woman, mother

Achievements unnoticed or devalued

“No matter how hard you worked and how great your proposal is, you received the CAREER award because you were a woman or minority.” - white woman

Unbalanced service loads & caretaking responsibilities

“Many many women I know are simply burned out because they are often primary caregivers in their personal lives and are also caretaking their departments.” - white woman, mother

Formal devaluation

+

Informal devaluation

for example, interpersonally

Subtle exclusionary behaviors

“I have gotten ALL the things: Left off invites to visit with out-of-town speakers...comments ignored in meetings...explicitly told ‘I didn’t know you were a “real” professor’...Literally ALL the things. It is very tiring, to say the least.” - white woman

“Constant discrimination that is subtle and awful. Example - promoted in 2018 and nameplate not changed. A man was promoted last month and has a new name plate. In fact all people promoted since me have a new title on their door. Mine does not.” - woman of color

“Climate!!! I am tired of feeling the need to justify my existence and prove my credentials on a regular basis.” – white woman

Overt mistreatment

Formal devaluation

+

Informal devaluation

+

Lack of institutional response

The university is often silent or action is performative

“My department has large disparities in rates of promotion by gender and race. My presence as a [woman of color] is often referred to as a sign of diversity, and yet my serious requests to review inequities in promotion have been ignored, denied, or seen as special treatment.” - woman of color

Institutional reporting structures don't keep women safe

“A department chair discriminated [against], retaliated against, and harassed multiple women. These women came forward. The university found no wrongdoing. The women, on the other hand, were labeled as troublemakers, and false narratives were written about them in permanent university documents. Administrators backed up the chair. Women's careers are meaningless and can be destroyed, while the institution claims to care about equity.” – white woman