

The Connection Between Gender Budgeting and Academic Housekeeping in RPOs

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Abstract: Gender Budgeting is a tool to apply the gender mainstreaming perspective to the accountability process in order to give evidence of the unequal distribution of public resources between women and men. Academic Housekeeping is any task “low-status, time-consuming, largely invisible, and that nevertheless needs to be done” (Kalm, 2019) in the academic daily business. It is a source of gender inequality since it is largely ascribed to women. Money and time are two sides of the same coin of Gender Inequality in Academia and therefore need to be identified and managed with an holistic approach that recognizes the interconnections between them. The results chain of the Performance-Oriented budgeting approach is therefore used to describe the transformation of the budget for salaries into the value of researchers’ work through time, activities, products and results. In this process, Academic Housekeeping emerges as a matter of Gender Budgeting, too. Literature describes Academic Housekeeping as an inequality regime echoing the domestic sphere and bringing its biases and limitations to the scientific race of competitiveness. The Housekeeping tasks are assigned largely arbitrarily and with unintentional side-effects. Its negative gender impact on women’s career is also clearly recognized by four main studies, in every field and with further intersectional spill overs. Gender Budgeting reports in Academia therefore do need to embed a Gender impact assessment of Academic Housekeeping in every step of the main methodologies adopted: Identity, Context Analysis, Planning Analysis, Budget Reclassification, Implementation and Performance Audit. The conceptual framework that emerges from the paper confirms the benefits that might arise from further researches on this field. The paper stems from the LeTSGEPs European Horizon Project (Leading Towards Sustainable Gender Equality Plans RPOs)

Keywords: gender budgeting, academic housekeeping, women’s academic career, gender equality

1. Introduction

Gender Equality (GE) in Research and Performing Organizations (RPOs) may be achieved by addressing the multiple gender biases and discriminations that affect women’s careers, empowerment and quality of their research. The different issues involved in the gender (in)equality process are all part of the same system and are interdependent on each other. For this reason, concepts that may appear distant, like Gender Budgeting (GB) and Academic Housekeeping (AH), have indeed strict cause-effect relationships.

GB is a tool to apply the gender mainstreaming perspective to the accountability process in order to give evidence of the unequal distribution of public resources between women and men.

On the other side, AH concerns any task “low-status, time-consuming, largely invisible, and that nevertheless needs to be done” (Kalm, 2019) that is a source of gender inequality since it is largely ascribed to women.

These two gender issues deal with the management of money (GB) and time (AH) and have both a strong impact on gender inequalities. Even though at a first sight they may appear independent issues, in this paper we demonstrate for the first time in literature the links between them and how they need to be managed together in order to achieve a better understanding of gender inequalities and to develop new strategies for GE.

We first describe the relationship between GB and the time use, highlighting AH as a significant source of gender inequality and of loss of productivity and budget efficacy (section 2).

A further in-depth analysis of literature and recent studies on AH provide a better understanding of the framework conditions (section 3), the impact of its unequal gender distribution (section 4) and its related negative effects on researchers’ careers and on the budget efficacy.

Finally, a possible methodology for tracking AH and its impact into the GB process is outlined (section 5) with some provisional data from a survey on Italian universities. Conclusions confirm the initial aim and offer the reasons for other and more in-depth research on this topic in the future (section 6).

This paper stems from the Horizon 2020 project LeTSGEPs (Leading Towards Sustainable Gender Equality Plans RPOs, Leading Partner University of Modena and Reggio Emilia).

2. GB and time use in AH along the results chain

In general terms, GB is the:

"..Application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It entails a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process, and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality..." (Council of Europe, 2005)

Pursuing this general objective, literature has developed over the years some specific GB objectives:

- "..1. to promote equity, efficiency and effectiveness (the 3 Es) in planning and policies implementation - ABA - The account Based Approach (Sharp, 2003)*
- 2. to favour transparency in the allocation and redistribution of public resources;*
- 3. to increase awareness through information and stakeholders' involvement;*
- 4. to increase the development of human capabilities from an equality perspective..." (Addabbo et al, 2021)*

RPOs' budgets are composed of different items, which each require specific tools to evaluate their gender impact. In the case of the expenditures related to the researchers' salaries, GE is formally ensured by National Collective Labour Agreements, where in place. Nevertheless, some gender wage gap may be observed as a result of the vertical segregation (with the lower probability for women to achieve the better paid Grade A level) (European Commission, 2021). Other sources of gender wage gap can be also related to the variable part of the remuneration (such as payment levels due to job experience, retention or performance bonuses). A third gender inequality topic, that we analyse here, is related to the different time use of men and women in Academia for the same pay.

Actually women tend to cover a higher share of AH, which refers to the assignment of institutional tasks like bureaucratic, logistic, organizational, representational tasks etc (see section 3 and 4). These tasks are highly time consuming and, when unequally shared, represent a source of inequality in terms of raising higher obstacles for assigned researchers to engage in core research activities, with costs in terms of career perspective and recognition.

Still time use is often not measured and thus the distribution of earnings on the different academic activities cannot be pursued. Nevertheless, it is possible to include AH in the GB analysis when the RPO accountability system considers expenditures on goods, services, but also, considering human resources, on time.

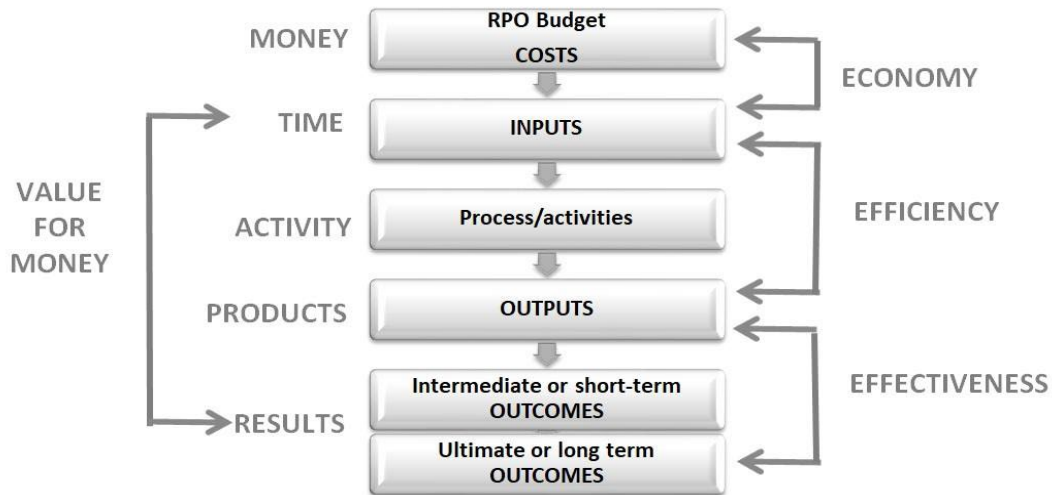
The budget allocated for human resources is directly connected to the time use, despite it is difficult to concretely monitor in the research field, both in general terms and specifically as for its gender impact, beyond the fulfilment of working time officially coded by National Labour agreements.

Mainly in the case of researchers, whose effective working conditions are not adequately monitored, this area hides serious gender inequalities, of which AH is a significant part.

The conceptual framework that allows to include the gender impact of AH within the wider process of GB may be developed by adapting the Results chain of the Performance oriented GB approach (Sharp, 2003):

With reference to the specific RPO's results chain of AH we identify:

Costs: The money allocated in the budget for researchers' salaries.



Source: Our elaboration on Sharp R., 2003

Figure 1: Results chain

This money is gender neutral in this first phase since RPO’s research contracts recognize the same pay for the same role in careers.

Inputs: The time that researchers actually spend for their paid work at RPOs.

This time should reflect the paid work in general terms, but in concrete there is not a mandatory rule in the research field that controls and limits the same maximum amount of daily hours of work for everybody. The freedom that researchers have in deciding how much time they spend in their work for the same amount of salary represents a first source of unfair competition between men and women, mainly for those with family care responsibilities. This unbalance represents a limit to women’s overall work productivity.

Process/activities: The work that researchers do for the salary they are given.

These process/activities may include for example: Research implementation, fundraising for research, project design, lobbying, teaching, and AH.

RPOs recognize a different value to these processes/activities in terms of institutional power and prestige. It is possible to outline a rough classification of these activities in terms of institutional value that enables researchers’ careers advancement and empower their freedom of research.



Source: Our elaboration

Figure 2: The pyramid of power values of RPOs activities

AH represents an essential activity for the RPOs' daily operation, but, since it is considered at the bottom of the scale of values of the institution in terms of power and prestige, it is usually avoided as much as possible by the more competitive researchers. In the end it is often assigned to the researchers considered weaker and less competitive, mainly belonging to minority groups, in terms of gender, ethnicity ecc (section 4).

At this step of the results chain women already suffer a double discrimination, since they have to:

- 1. struggle more than men to spend daily the same amount of hours to equally compete at their work as researchers,
- 2. accept an amount of undervalued hours for AH that is bigger than men's.

Outputs: the concrete results of researchers' work.

RPOs' outputs may be monitored with indicators like: number of publications, citations, amount of funds raised, number of teaching hours, projects submitted or implemented. They may be analysed under a gender perspective monitoring the "who did what" indicators that usually give evidence of a significant gender imbalance due to decisions and unequal competitive factors that took place in the previous phases of the results chain.

Usually, outputs related to lobbying and AH are not accurately accounted for: researchers' timesheets, whenever in use, don't reflect properly these activities. Besides, researchers often self-limit the effective number of hours they declare in time-sheets preferring to select core activities like research and teaching or due to the need of respecting a fixed amount of working hours.

This unreported and unaccounted amount of hours therefore hides two main activities that have a great impact on RPOs and on researchers' careers. Since lobbying and AH are respectively at the top and at the bottom of the pyramid of the RPOs scale of power values, it's not a coincidence that they are highly gender imbalanced.

Outcomes: The consequences of researchers' work.

Researchers' outputs may achieve numerous outcomes at a double level.

From the individual perspective there is no doubt that avoiding AH saves hours of work to concentrate on the more valuable activities and to increase chances of careers' advancements. Since women are more involved in AH (section 4), there is no doubt that they are highly disadvantaged and hampered in their career path.

From the institutional perspective having an unbalanced distribution of AH tasks implies limiting women's talents growth and reducing their contribution to the research achievements of the RPO.

3. Characteristics of AH within the academic framework

AH is a concept that describes the observation that women and persons from minority groups in academia are more likely than men to perform work that is "low-status, time-consuming, largely invisible, and that nevertheless needs to be done" (Kalm, 2019b). This shows parallels to the distribution of work in private households according to traditional gender roles, hence the reference to "housekeeping" tasks. So far it has been mainly used in the US, at European level (Heijstra et al., 2017) and in Sweden (Kalm, 2019). Despite literature on this topic is rather poor, it is possible to describe AH through four main features:

a) AH shares the same inequality regime with domestic distribution of tasks

Authors like Kalm (2019a) and Heijstra et al. (2017) see the phenomenon as a remnant of the historically based gendered division of labour, which dates back to pre-industrial times with women to a large extent being excluded from paid work and restricted to the domestic sphere. The jobs that were open for women were of the same nature and conceptually connected to housework: caring, service and cleaning tasks, which were unskilled and undervalued - a situation which still resonates in the private as well as in the work sphere today, so they argue. In reference to Acker 2005 the boundary between the two spheres is seen as fluid (Acker, 2005, p. 110) with the same "inequality regime" (Kalm, 2019a, p. 7) being in effect in both, with undervalued tasks being executed more often by persons with lower social status - based on categories like gender (identity), class

and ethnic origin (Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group, University of Oregon, 2017). The nature of AH tasks makes them low-promotability tasks, compared to high-promotability tasks like for example research (Babcock et al., 2017).

b) AH is a point of weakness in the Academic competitiveness race

The slogan “Publish or perish” is commonly used as a description of the big pressure for researchers on all different steps of the career ladder. The reason is obvious: the higher the position, the fewer positions are available - the academic pipeline is leaky by design (while it is even more leaky for certain groups). This high selection pressure is combined with an ideology of meritocracy (Heijstra et al., 2017, p.202): hard-working researchers, persevering, dedicating their life above all to their scientific progress are rewarded by the scientific system. An American study with Postdocs has confirmed the high pressure this system puts even on persons not completely new to the job, evoking feelings of failure, loneliness and inferiority on a large scale with a tendency to not criticize the system but oneself (Müller and Kennedy 2014).

The pressure is being individualized, while the precariousness of jobs and the shortage of work force is often a part of the system - with higher education institutions growing, administrative tasks increasing and administrative personnel not being increased by the same extent (the so-called Bologna Process of standardizing European higher education degrees step by step over the last twenty years has a part in this increase in bureaucratic tasks).

So while the academic system on the one hand “doesn’t create incentives for helping out; instead, it rewards pushing others aside and focusing entirely on your own career.” (Kalm 2019), it urgently needs willing personnel to fulfil its need for institutional “lubricant” in the form of AH tasks.

“It should be remembered here that not everyone is in the same position to act strategically in academic contexts....factors such as gender, race and class tend to determine one's ability to choose a strategy.” (Kalm, 2019a, p. 21)

According to literature, it accordingly seems as if the persons with the least good standing, social status and support are most disadvantaged in the assignment of AH tasks in academia (Kalm 2019b, Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group, University of Oregon, 2017) .

c) AH tasks are distributed arbitrarily and the role of gatekeepers

A study using qualitative data conducted in six countries (Heijstra et al., 2017) has furthermore described how unequally and arbitrarily AH tasks - and on the other hand the privileges of being free of them - can be distributed.

The tasks that come with an employment contract in academia are often not explicitly fixed (this applies at least to the situation in Sweden (Kalm 2019a) and Germany) and there is little orientation of how much time should be spent on which part of the job and few official documentation of how academic personnel actually uses its time.

Who ends up with the AH tasks seems to be largely determined by senior academics which act as gate keepers to privileges and appear to be very powerful with interviewees stating that it would be “impossible to say no” to their requests (Heijstra et al., 2017, p. 209).

Senior academics role can be perceived either as negative, and bringing a burden upon the individual researchers, or positive - as interviewees also explained to be “protected from teaching” (Heijstra et al., 2017, p. 208) and being given space to focus on their research by their supervisors.

So there seems to be a mechanism for supervisors informally assessing which of their subordinates should be given time for their research and which should fulfil certain service tasks - while the criteria for their judgement stay unclear, arbitrary and certainly often not pondered.

d) AH may cause unintentional side-effects of commitment for diversity and gender equality goals

Many RPOs, aiming to implement gender equality and diversity policies, prescribe the representation of different constituent groups of the RPO, especially women and men, in an equal way. This increases the workload for underrepresented groups - namely senior female academics - while their taking part in committees is less beneficial for their career (support for this fact see Babcock et al., 2017, p. 715) and takes time away from their research. Gender Equality committees and working groups are also mentioned as time-consuming AH tasks (Heijstra, 2017; Kalm, 2019a, p. 203), which are predominantly performed by female academics.

Besides these official commitments to tasks in the name of equality, some study results suggest that unofficial support and mentoring for persons of underrepresented groups also contributes to a high service workload for academics from underrepresented groups as well.

This is supported by findings especially for academics of colour in the US (Shavers et al. 2014) and for underrepresented groups in general by findings from the Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group of the University of Oregon (2017).

4. The gender impact of AH

Literature on the gender impact of AH is sparse so far: after a wide and in-depth research only four papers focused on this topic emerged. All of them were in any case clear on recognizing the gender impact of AH and the intersectional aspects that also have to be taken in consideration.

The first study - Heijstra et al., 2017 - is an explorative study with the aim of *testing the concept of AH* for its applicability to the setting in *different European countries* and fields. For this purpose it examines how early-career academics deal with AH tasks and the possible consequences of this undervalued work.

This study gives evidence to the gender impact of Academic Housework tasks in all of the six research organisations analysed, from different European countries and for both Social Science and Humanities (SSH) and Science, Technology, Engineering e Mathematics (STEM) departments, even if with different features. In the SSH departments, statistically more feminized, the interviewees are generally more negative towards AH tasks, complaining more often about them and specifically mentioning teaching as a part of those tasks. Academics from STEM departments, on the other hand, mainly mention more research-related service tasks like administrative tasks due for international research projects, the reviewing process of scientific articles or creating safety instructions for laboratory use. They also believe more often that they could benefit from these tasks. The differences in the tasks and in the strain they produce on SSH and on STEM academics is explained with a smaller student-teach ratio in STEM and with better job alternatives outside academia.

The second study - Babcock et al., 2017 first tests presumptions regarding the *promotability of tasks* with a survey on 48 faculty members from Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, USA: among them there is a broad agreement that people are more likely to be promoted when they use more time on research and less time on service tasks. 89,6 percent of the participants rate working on research papers and participating in conferences as more important than serving on the faculty senate or serving on an undergraduate curriculum revision committee.

In terms of gender impact, the study examines whether men and women react differently to requests to perform low-promotability tasks, whether there is a difference in the frequency of being asked and which factors contribute to the differences found. An important result of these experiments is that the *willingness to volunteer* for a task that everyone prefers to be done by another group member depends on the gender composition of the persons present.

When women and men are present in the lab, women are 50 percent more likely to volunteer than men, while this gender-gap is eliminated when in the room there are only persons of the same sex. This seems to be an effect of the belief that women are more likely to volunteer than men. Further experiments show that women are also *more often asked to volunteer* than men - by women and men alike. While a direct request increases the rate of volunteering for men and women, it is still higher for women. The difference in volunteering is therefore not based on different preferences but merely by the beliefs and expectations regarding gender roles.

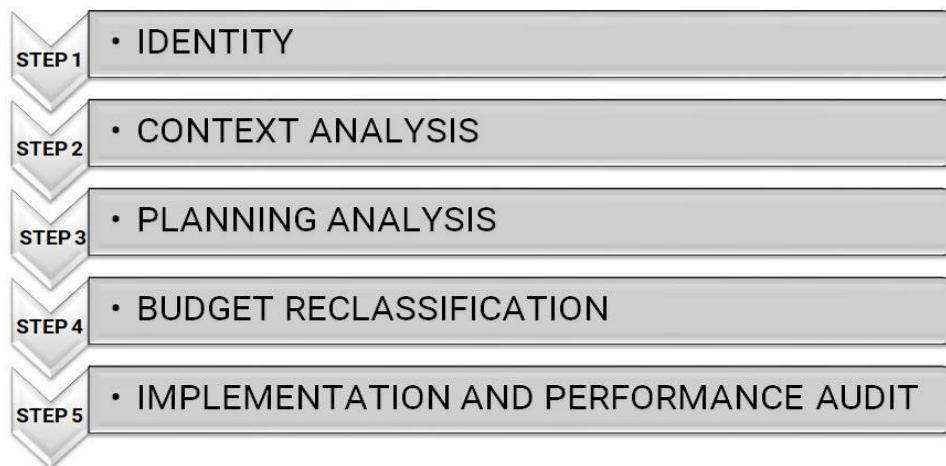
The third study - Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group, University of Oregon, 2017 - uses *time-use journals* to investigate AH on a sample of tenure-track academics. Despite the small sample and pre-selection of certain types of academics participating in the study affects the results in terms of gender differences, this experiment evidences the importance of considering also the intersectionality of different personal characteristics connected to marginalization in time-use studies. The actual dividing line in the data is found between non-marginalized (12 persons) and marginalized academics (people of color, sexual minorities, persons from a working class-background) (14 persons). Results in this study are very clear, especially at the rank of assistant professor: the time that non-marginalized assistant professors spend on research is four times the mean of the time marginalized professors spend on the same activity. On the other hand, the time spent on service for marginalized assistant professors is also roughly four times the mean of non-marginalized professors. For full professors the differences is still visible with marginalized full professors having done more than two-times the amount of teaching than the non-marginalized full professors.

The fourth study - Guarino and Borden, 2017 – analyses two big US data sets from *surveys of academics from more than 140 US universities*. Controlling for rank, ethnicity and field of study, both data sets show that on average female academics perform significantly more service than male do. This difference is driven mainly by *internal service tasks*, benefitting the department, the campus or the whole university, while the difference regarding *external service* for local, national or international communities is smaller. An important result is also that there is lots of heterogeneity in task distribution across fields and disciplines.

5. How to embed AH into the GB methodology

Considering the intersections with the GB process mentioned in Section 2, AH therefore needs to be included into the RPOs GB reports as one of the main issues under examination.

The review on main GB methodologies experimented in European RPOs, made within LeTSGEPs project (Addabbo, 2020) has outlined 5 main steps that most of these experiences share. These steps have been described in the LeTSGEPs Manual (LeTSGEPs, 2020) and need to be all implemented with the AH gender impact analysis in the future.



Source: Our elaboration

Figure 3: The 5 steps to RPOs GB Report

- *Identity:*

While reflecting on the RPO's identity in terms of GE values, it is advisable to discuss how AH is considered among the RPO's values. It's very important to make explicit the position of AH in the RPO's pyramid of power values (Section 2), whether it is considered as a burden to assign to the marginalized groups of academics, or a set of essential activities for the RPOs functioning. Considering that GE and diversity policies are considered AH tasks, the contradiction between investing in them and at the same time penalizing academics mainly committed to these tasks should be clearly evidenced and solved.

- Context analysis:

Monitoring and recognizing the amount of AH work, in terms of hours, commitment and devotion is a fundamental step that allows the development of specific tools to make gender inequalities emerge.

Categorization of AH tasks should always start from the common characteristics of their being low-status, invisible and time-consuming (Kalm, 2019) and take account for possible differences on a countries' general conditions, on the type of institution, the institution's mission and structure and on the field of research. Especially teaching is an activity that can be categorized quite differently depending on the circumstances. A field-check of categorization as done in Babcock et al., 2017 is therefore advisable. Criteria for career progression and to what extent different time use are evaluated for this purpose should be described. Reconstructing the different AH workload by gender and grade one can also detect to what extent the AH is provided in crucial points of the career ladder.

Keeping diaries on the allocation of time can be used to disentangle the different use of time by gender and grade.

A first descriptive analysis based on time use data from 20 Italian universities that have participated to a survey proposed by the National Conference of the Italian University Equal Opportunities bodies allows to have a first picture on the allocation of time by gender.

As the tables show, one can observe a higher research activity as main activity by men in all grades. The gap widens in the researcher position. Being evaluated on the basis of research outcomes, this gender gap in research activities can have as a side-effect a negative impact on the chances of progressing in academic career for women.

On the other end networking and institutional activities do play a major role in the academic activities of women than for men with a higher gap in grade A.

Activity	Full Prof		Associate		Researcher		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
research	7,8	6,1	11,0	9,2	18,6	14,5	12,0	10,1
teaching	23,3	19,3	36,4	36,0	43,8	40,0	34,3	33,7
research coordinator	17,3	12,3	12,9	12,5	8,6	11,0	13,2	12,0
networking	2,9	6,6	4,7	3,5	5,9	8,3	4,4	5,5
institutional	48,7	55,7	35,0	38,8	23,1	26,2	36,2	38,7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Obs.	353	217	476	524	297	296	1126	1037

Activity	Grade			
	A	B	C	Total
	M-F	M-F	M-F	M-F
research	1,7	1,8	4,1	1,9
teaching	4,0	0,4	3,8	0,6
research coordinator	5,0	0,4	-2,4	1,1
networking	-3,7	1,1	-2,4	-1,1
institutional	-7,0	-3,8	-3,1	-2,5

Figure 4: Time use in 20 universities by gender and grade

- Planning analysis

Results from the Context Analysis are meant to support the evaluation of the current GE strategies of the RPO, in this case with a specific attention to AH. New measures and actions may also be planned in terms of new rules and organizational processes and structures.

It is possible to tackle the AH problem on a double level.

At individual level, initiatives aimed at awareness-rising for senior academics and department teams, can help. This can be done for instance, within mentoring activities, by a specific mentorship on the allocation of time and the effect of it on career progression.

Specific empowering measures for academics overwhelmed by AH tasks is another counteracting element. These measures are especially helpful to counteract the taboo of complaining or even speaking of the burden of AH (Heijstra et al., 2017, p. 211) and the mostly unconscious mechanisms of self-fulfilling beliefs coming from gender roles (Babcock et al, 2017). Mentoring of younger academics from marginalized groups by senior academics on finding strategies to avoid a high AH workload, or role modelling of senior academics can also contribute to changes for affected individuals.

At Institutional level, RPOs have various possibilities for changing the framework conditions that contribute to the phenomenon of AH, as shown in section 3 - by establishing alternative values and culture, by making sure that the number of administrative personnel fits the actual workload, by creating visibility and regular monitoring of workload. The senior academic staff can be held responsible for gender-parity in task distribution and for introducing a clear and fair distribution of tasks to avoid any bias or arbitrariness, as simple as turn-taking.

- Budget Reclassification

The budget reclassification in itself, as detailed in section 2, doesn't allow a direct analysis on the consequences of gender inequalities in AH from a monetary perspective. However, considerations on academic staff earnings by Grade and level of career may give evidence to inequalities in career advancement for which the impact of AH can be better explored.

Reasons explaining gender imbalance in projects' fundraising may be better analysed keeping in consideration the AH impact.

In the process of financially valorising the benefits of AH, it is important to remember that

"For example, teaching and advising are central to student recruitment and retention. In an era where the academy is being defunded and institutions compete for students, faculty time that increases student retention is monetarily valuable. Developing systems that link such labor with its economic value can validate faculty work and render this labor more visible." (Social Sciences Feminist Network, 2017)

- Implementation and Performance audit

This step may refer to both specific measures adopted to counteract the negative impact of unequal AH, and to a gender mainstreaming approach aimed to investigate the hidden impact of AH on researchers' productivity, effectiveness and the RPO competitive capabilities.

6. Conclusions

In general terms, although there are still few studies on the matter, early researches show that AH exists, has an evident gender and intersectional impact, is a source of inequality and results in loss of diversity benefits for RPOs. Its connection with the efficiency of academics earnings accounted for in the RPO budget along the results chain (Section 2) broadens the perspective of AH it into the GB process as a matter of hidden Gender inequality that deserves to be further explored.

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