

# Towards Equitable Academia: Examining Gender Social Responsibility (GSR), Gender Budgeting (GB) and Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) in Italian Universities.

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## *ABSTRACT*

This study explores the evolving landscape of gender equality within corporate and institutional frameworks, focusing on the roles of Gender Social Responsibility (GSR), Gender Budgeting (GB), and Gender Equality Plans (GEPs). The research examines the impact of these mechanisms in promoting gender parity, particularly in the contexts of the University of Bari (UniBa) and the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (UniMoRe). Despite legislative efforts, gender disparities persist, necessitating targeted interventions. The GB is highlighted as a crucial tool for integrating gender perspectives into organizational planning, aiding in the rectification of gender inequities and enhancing accountability. GEPs complement GB by providing strategic frameworks mandated by regulatory bodies like the European Commission to foster long-term gender equality. The study reveals the challenges in implementing gender mainstreaming in Italy, where female employment rates are lower than the European average. The paper concludes by advocating for structural transformations and a gender mainstreaming culture to ensure equitable opportunities across all sectors.

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I will not be free until every woman is free,  
even if her chains are very different from mine.

*Audre Lorde*

## *Introduction*

Contemporary discourse on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) acknowledges the emergence of Gender Social Responsibility (GSR) as pivotal in recognizing gender's fundamental role in social and economic progress. This investigation delves into the evolving landscape of gender equality in corporate and institutional realms, focusing on the functions of GSR, Gender Budgeting (GB), and Gender Equality Plans (GEPs). Through a comparative analysis of Gender Budgeting at the University of Bari (UniBa) and the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (UniMoRe), the study addresses the following query: "How do CSR initiatives intersect with GSR in European institutions, notably in research and innovation (R&I) organizations, and what are the principal challenges and strategies for promoting gender equality, as demonstrated by UniBa and UniMoRe in Italy?". Despite legislative efforts, gender disparities persist in European institutions, necessitating targeted interventions. While gender mainstreaming principles are endorsed, their application remains challenging, particularly in nations like Italy, where female employment rates lag behind European norms. GB emerges as a vital analytical tool in both public and private sectors, aiding the integration of gender perspectives into organizational planning and resource allocation. By examining expenditure and revenue through a gender lens, GB aims to rectify gender inequities and enhance accountability. GEPs complement GB by providing strategic frameworks for integrating gender considerations into institutional policies, mandated by regulatory bodies like the European Commission to foster long-term gender equality. However, GEP effectiveness relies on alignment with GB initiatives to comprehensively advance gender equality within institutions. Italy's academic context offers insights into gender dynamics, with initiatives like Equal Opportunity Committees (EOCs) and Positive Action Plans (PAPs) showcasing institutional commitments to gender parity. Yet, low GEP adoption rates underscore the need for more effective strategies. Using GB as a lens, the paper explores gender dynamics in Italian universities, revealing disparities, especially in advanced academic roles. Achieving gender equality requires collaborative efforts, sustained commitment, and inclusive strategies like GB and GEPs to foster an eq-

uitable academic environment. The investigation aims to scrutinize gender integration in organizational planning, emphasizing top management commitment and effective strategies. It also explores the intersectionality of GSR and sustainable development, highlighting the need for gender equality advancement across public and private spheres. In research and innovation, GEPs play a crucial role in addressing gender biases, with initiatives in Italian higher education institutions aimed at promoting gender equality. Analysing challenges in achieving gender parity underscores the importance of inclusive policies. In conclusion, the research advocates for structural transformations and a gender mainstreaming culture to advance gender equality across sectors, ensuring equitable opportunities for all individuals, regardless of gender.

*Advancing Gender Parity and Accountability: Exploring the Role of Gender Social Responsibility (GSR) and Gender Budgeting (GB) in Corporate and Institutional Frameworks*

In the domain of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Gender Social Responsibility (GSR) is progressively gaining significance. This entails recognizing gender as a pivotal factor in economic and social advancement, with the objective of fostering parity between genders, acknowledging gender disparities within organizational frameworks, incorporating gender mainstreaming principles into corporate practices, and ultimately instituting a tangible framework for corporate gender certification<sup>1</sup>. For a considerable period, European institutions have undertaken multifaceted initiatives through Directives, Recommendations, and Guidelines to mitigate gender disparities and advocate for equal opportunities, regarded as fundamental tenets of the EU. This commitment has been underscored by the acknowledgment and endorsement of gender mainstreaming principles. Despite the enactment of "positive actions," legislative measures, and decrees aimed at aligning national policies with Community Directives concerning gender equality, significant gender discrepancies persist within our nation. For instance, Italy continues to fall behind the European norm concerning the disparity

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<sup>1</sup> Cfr. G.E.L., *Gender equality leccese: un modello di certificazione di genere*, Franco Angeli, Milano 2008.

in female employment rates compared to males. Examining Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) through a gender lens within both public and private sectors, and its correlation with sustainable development, is progressively emerging as a pivotal strategy to advance gender parity in work environments<sup>2</sup>. This approach entails integrating a gender perspective into organizational planning and strategic frameworks to address the requisites and aspirations associated with gender equality. Consequently, closely intertwined with the Social Report, which delineates an organization's ethical and social decisions, the Gender Budgeting emerges as a significant analytical instrument geared towards gender mainstreaming. By scrutinizing resource management and evaluating the efficacy and efficiency of interventions through a gender lens, the Gender Budgeting (GB) facilitates the reclassification of domains with pronounced gender implications. Moreover, it advocates for the reallocation of resources to mitigate disparities and inequalities between genders<sup>3</sup>. The Gender Budgeting (GB) is regarded as a pivotal link connecting the gender mainstreaming strategy with the principle of accountability. The impending task facing public administrations lies in transitioning from gender analysis within budgetary frameworks to the formulation of precise budgets from a gender-centric viewpoint. This transition is seen as vital for achieving a comprehensive gender accountability cycle<sup>4</sup>. The dual nature of the Gender Budgeting (GB) manifests in its external and internal objectives: externally, it scrutinizes and assesses the impact of formulated, planned, and executed policies on the community; internally, it investigates the extent of male and female participation across all organizational echelons, thereby gauging its gender equality status, with the aim of recalibrating its strategies to address gender disparities<sup>5</sup>. The Gender Budgeting (GB) commences with a contextual analysis to illuminate gender-based disparities in needs and expectations, followed by the development of gender-sensitive policy frameworks tailored to identified needs. Subsequently,

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<sup>2</sup> Cfr. L. Pulejo, *La gender equality nell'economia dell'azienda. Strategie e strumenti di mainstreaming di genere per lo sviluppo sostenibile*. Franco Angeli, Milano 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Pubblica Amministrazione di Qualità, *Come redigere un bilancio sociale in ottica di genere*, 2015. Available at: <http://qualitapa.gov.it/sitoarcheologico/customer-satisfaction/ascolto-e-partecipazione-dellutenza/rendicontazione-sociale/bilancio-di-genere/index.html>, (accessed 15/04/2024).

<sup>4</sup> G. Galizzi, *Il Bilancio di Genere negli enti pubblici territoriali. Origini, strumenti e implicazioni aziendali*, Franco Angeli, Milano 2012, pp. 31-32.

<sup>5</sup> GERPA, *Bilancio di Genere per le Pubbliche Amministrazioni*, Jovene, Napoli 2015, pp. 1-3.

it encompasses a phase of gender auditing, which entails monitoring enacted activities to report on outcomes (accountability)<sup>6</sup>. In recent years, various organizations and institutions, recognizing that budgetary frameworks encompass both resource management and a reflection of societal and gender dynamics, have adopted Gender Budgeting for multiple purposes. These objectives include scrutinizing expenditure and revenue to identify their differing impacts on men and women, conducting comprehensive cognitive analyses through a gender-sensitive lens to highlight gender disparities and pinpoint areas of inequality, assessing the gender implications of implemented policies by considering the distinct needs and requirements of men and women, developing strategies and institutional measures that acknowledge and address divergent conditions and needs effectively, reassessing areas of significant gender relevance and reallocating resources to reduce gender disparities, and evaluating the effectiveness of policies in narrowing the gender gap<sup>7</sup>. Due to its distinctive attributes, the Gender Budgeting (GB) significantly advances core governance objectives, enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and equity of political endeavors<sup>8</sup>. By discerning the distinct needs and utilization potentials of men and women concerning provided services, it facilitates the development and execution of governmental measures optimized for cost-effectiveness, thus ensuring a more precise and targeted response to expressed needs. Moreover, by elucidating the decision-making processes underpinning gender policies and their outcomes, it fosters heightened awareness and transparency in policy actions. Furthermore, by furnishing mechanisms to address the unequal circumstances and specific requirements of women and men differentially, the Gender Budgeting (GB) fosters greater equity in political actions. It contributes to shaping an agenda cognizant of gender disparities and endeavors to redress and transcend such inequities<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> L. Pulejo, “Il ‘bilancio di genere’: uno strumento di analisi e di programmazione per le Università nell’ottica della strategia di gender mainstreaming”, in «Annali della Facoltà di Economia dell’Università degli Studi di Messina», Vol. 3, 2013, p. 125.

<sup>7</sup> Ufficio Parlamentare di Bilancio. *Il Bilancio di genere; un inquadramento generale*. Focus Tematico n°. 7, 2016, pp. 2-6. Available at: [http://www.upbilancio.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Focus\\_7.pdf](http://www.upbilancio.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Focus_7.pdf). (accessed 15/04/2024).

<sup>8</sup> G. Galizzi, *Il Bilancio di Genere negli enti pubblici territoriali. Origini, strumenti e implicazioni aziendali*, cit., pp. 31-32.

<sup>9</sup> G. Vignelli, “Il Bilancio di Genere negli enti locali”, in *I confini della cittadinanza. Genere, partecipazione politica e vita quotidiana*, Del Re A., Longo V. and Perini L. (edited by), Franco An-

*Gender Equality in Organizational Frameworks: Exploring the Role of Gender Budgeting and Gender Equality Plans in Public and Private Institutions*

The inception of Gender Budgeting (GB) primarily emerged within public and elected bodies, initially focusing on assessing the gender impacts on both male and female citizens<sup>10</sup>. However, recent trends indicate its adoption by other public entities such as Chambers of Commerce, Universities, and Research Centres, which, although lacking direct democratic processes like elections, serve distinct target stakeholders such as companies and academic communities<sup>11</sup>. Concurrently, Research Performing Organizations (RPOs) have long engaged in Gender Equality Plans (GEPs), strategic frameworks integrating gender as a pivotal criterion to mainstream gender considerations into policies and assess gender equality<sup>12</sup>. Institutional recognition of GEPs was solidified in 2007, with their inclusion in funding opportunities under FP7, the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme, thereby prompting several RPOs to explore tailored methodologies addressing key gender issues like career advancement, work-life balance, and discrimination<sup>13</sup>. However, the full potential of GEPs necessitates complementarity with Gender Budgeting (GB), which embeds a gender perspective throughout the budgetary process to promote gender equality comprehensively<sup>14</sup>. Given that budgets reflect societal power distributions between genders, they play a pivotal role in actualizing decisions<sup>15</sup>. Yet, prevailing gender imbalances in decision-making councils impede budgetary allocations from accounting for divergent roles, needs, and rights of men and women, perpetuating gender discrimination<sup>16</sup>. Consequently, embracing GB within RPOs becomes paramount, catalysing a broader analysis encompassing various budgetary do-

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geli, Milano 2010, p. 105.

<sup>10</sup> T. Addabbo, G. Badalassi and C. Canali, "Gender budgeting in academia: a powerful tool for gender equality." *ICGR 2021 4th International Conference on Gender Research*. Academic Conferences Inter Ltd, 2021, pp. 1-7.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

mains than conventionally addressed by GEPs. The integration of GB in RPOs, initially centred on context analysis, is gradually evolving towards incorporating financial perspectives to discern their impact on gender equality processes. Notably, RPOs in countries like Italy<sup>17</sup>, where GB has been trialled at territorial levels within public administrations, exhibit heightened interest in scrutinizing resource allocations' gender impacts. Nevertheless, the proliferation of GB within RPOs has been sluggish, attributed to factors like the specialized skill sets required for gender budget analysis and the absence of standardized guidelines comparable to those for GEPs at the European level<sup>18</sup>. The gender equality plan (GEP) functions as a strategic policy instrument utilized by Research and Innovation (R&I) institutions to undertake targeted and substantive measures aimed at rectifying gender disparities and advancing gender-related initiatives within specific domains. As delineated by the European Commission<sup>19</sup> (2021), a GEP is characterized as "a set of commitments and actions intended to promote gender equality within an organization through a process of structural transformation<sup>20</sup>." The emphasis placed by the European Commission on 'structural change' is of particular significance as it distinguishes the GEP not only as a transitory tool for addressing existing gender inequalities but also as a mechanism tailored to instigate profound and enduring structural and cultural shifts with medium to long-term effects. In order to meet eligibility criteria, a GEP must encompass a minimum of four mandatory process-driven actions and address five recommended content-related areas as stipulated by the European Commission (2021)<sup>21</sup>. These mandatory actions necessitate the GEP to be formalized as a public document, endorsed by top management to signify an unequivocal commitment to gender equality, and to allocate dedicated resources in terms of personnel and financ-

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<sup>17</sup> T. Addabbo, G. Badalassi and C. Canali, *Gender budgeting in academia: a powerful tool for gender equality*, cit., pp. 1-7.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> European Commission, Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, 2021, p. 5. Available at: <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/876509>, (accessed 20/04/2024).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

es for the design, implementation, and monitoring of proposed actions<sup>22</sup>. Moreover, the GEP must incorporate provisions for data collection and monitoring to ensure evidence-based decision-making grounded in sex-disaggregated data, and it must be reinforced by training and capacity-building initiatives<sup>23</sup>. These process-related actions are mandated to ensure that GEPs can effectively catalyse the structural changes envisioned by the EC<sup>24</sup>. The inclusion of gender data collection addresses the 'no data, no problem, no policy' principle, emphasizing the importance of understanding the scope and specificity of the problem at hand<sup>25</sup>. Furthermore, training and capacity-building activities are integral to effecting structural changes capable of addressing cultural barriers and unconscious biases that perpetuate gender inequalities<sup>26</sup>. Additionally, the five thematic areas recommended to tackle the primary challenges of gender inequality encompass crucial domains such as work-life balance, leadership parity, recruitment equity, and measures against gender-based violence<sup>27</sup>. Excluding gender mainstreaming in research and teaching content, these thematic areas represent common issues affecting gender equality across R&I organizations, underscoring the need for structural changes conducive to creating fairer and more equitable working environments<sup>28</sup>. However, the efficacy of GEPs in addressing inequalities hinges on the implementation processes, emphasizing the significance of governance structures, top management commitment, participatory approaches, resource allocation, realistic goal setting, and monitoring mechanisms as highlighted in existing literature<sup>29</sup>. In essence, the mere formal approval of a GEP by an institution does not guarantee the desired outcomes promoted by the European Commission, thereby necessitating careful consider-

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<sup>22</sup> M. Cellini, E. Carlini, C. Ranzuglia and I. Di Tullio, *Piani di Uguaglianza di Genere nelle Università Italiane: Una Prima Analisi Descrittiva*, IRPPS Working Papers, 2022, pp. 1-19.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> European Commission, Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, cit., pp. 8-9.

<sup>25</sup> M. Cellini, E. Carlini, C. Ranzuglia and I. Di Tullio, *Piani di Uguaglianza di Genere nelle Università Italiane: Una Prima Analisi Descrittiva*, cit., pp. 1-19.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> M. Cellini, E. Carlini, C. Ranzuglia and I. Di Tullio, *Piani di Uguaglianza di Genere nelle Università Italiane: Una Prima Analisi Descrittiva*, cit., pp. 1-19.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*



ation of implementation strategies to avoid relegating the GEP to a perfunctory exercise. Gender equality and gender mainstreaming within the realm of research and innovation stands as a paramount objective within the European Research Area (ERA) agenda<sup>30</sup>. The European Commission advocates for Research Performing Organizations (RPOs) to formulate gender equality plans aimed at identifying and rectifying gender biases inherent within institutional frameworks through impact assessments and audits of operational procedures and practices. These plans are expected to implement innovative strategies to redress any identified biases, establish clear targets, and monitor progress using relevant indicators<sup>31</sup>. Additionally, gender equality in research and innovation is underscored in the European Commission's Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2025, wherein further advancements in this domain within RPOs are anticipated to be contingent upon the implementation of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs), which will become prerequisites for accessing EU funding. To bolster gender equality within Horizon Europe, the Commission intends to introduce new measures, such as mandating applicants to submit a Gender Equality Plan and initiatives aimed at fostering women-led technology start-ups. Concurrently, funding opportunities will be earmarked for gender and intersectional research<sup>32</sup>. As per a reputable doctrine, for the enhancement of efficacy and the capacity for transformation of GEPs, it is advocated that their assessment ought to be grounded in metrics specifically related to gender<sup>33</sup>. The European Commission's progress report on ERA implementation from 2016-2018 noted progress in developing comprehensive strategies for gender equality in Research and Innovation (R&I) across most countries. However, disparities persist, necessitating continued efforts to bolster women's enrolment and retention in science, institute work-life balance policies, mitigate the gender pay gap, disman-

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<sup>30</sup> European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. A Reinforced European research area partnership for excellence and growth*, COM 392 final, 2012, pp. 5-7.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025*, COM 152 final, 2020, pp. 10-11.

<sup>33</sup> T. Addabbo, V. Naciti, G. Noto and C. Vermiglio, "Budgeting for gender equality in Research Performing Organizations", in «Politica economica, Journal of Economic Policy », Vol. 3, 2020, doi: 10.1429/100371, pp. 417-437.

the barriers to women's career progression, and enhance gender integration within R&I content<sup>34</sup>. Against the backdrop of a pervasive gender imbalance within RPOs, as highlighted in the latest She Figures report, efforts are warranted to address discrepancies in educational attainment and career progression. Vertical and horizontal gender segregation within academic careers underscore the need for targeted interventions to rectify these imbalances<sup>35</sup>. The efficacy of voluntary affirmative action in addressing career disparities between genders in higher education settings has been evidenced, exemplified by initiatives like the Athena Scientific Women's Academic Network (SWAN). Instituted in 2005, SWAN has supported and acknowledged higher education institutions' efforts to advance women's careers through various mechanisms<sup>36</sup>. Furthermore, tying research funding to GEP implementation, as witnessed in the UK's National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) through the Athena SWAN charter, has shown promise in incentivizing gender equality measures within RPOs. However, the effectiveness of such measure hinges on their enforceability, the presence of robust monitoring mechanisms, and the choice of appropriate evaluation indicators<sup>37</sup>. Notably, the prevalence of new public management paradigms, emphasizing academic excellence and resource allocation towards male-dominated domains, has contributed to exacerbating gender inequalities within academic institutions<sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> European Commission, *ERA Progress Report 2018. The European Research Area: Advancing together the Europe of research and innovation*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg 2019, pp. 24-27.

<sup>35</sup> European Commission, *She figures 2018*, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg 2019, pp. 86-91.

<sup>36</sup> A. Graves, A. Rowell and E. Hunsicker, An impact evaluation of the Athena SWAN Charter, 2019, pp. 5-7. Available at: <https://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Athena-SWAN-Impact-Evaluation-2019.pdf>, (accessed 15/04/2024). See also Y. Xiao, E. Pinkney, T.K.F. Au, et al., "Athena SWAN and gender diversity: a UK-based retrospective cohort study," in *BMJ Open*, 10(2), e032915, doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2019-032915, pp. 1-4.

<sup>37</sup> B. Erbe, "Gender mainstreaming in public financing of universities: Central findings for Germany", in «*Politica Economica/Journal of Economic Policy*», Vol. XXXI (2), il Mulino 2015, pp. 213-232. See also P.C. Salinas and C. Bagni, "Gender equality from a European perspective: Myth and reality", in «*Neuron*», 96(4), pp. 721-729; H.P.M. Winchester and L. Browning, "Gender equality in academia: A critical reflection", in «*Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*», Vol. 37(3), 2017, DOI: 10.1016/j.neuron.2017.10.002, pp. 269-281.

<sup>38</sup> F.S. Steinþórsdóttir, T.M. Heijstra, T. Einarsdóttir and G.M. Petursdóttir, "Gender budgeting in

*Advancing Gender Equality in Italian Academia: A Comprehensive Analysis of Methodologies and Initiatives*

Given the focus of my investigation on scrutinizing processes and protocols directed towards fostering gender equality in Italy, it becomes imperative to furnish a comprehensive exposition of the prevailing methodologies within the Italian context. Subsequently, attention will be directed towards an evaluation of gender budgetary frameworks implemented by the University of Bari and the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. The historical trajectory of initiatives aimed at fostering gender parity within Italy has invariably been intertwined with the regulatory framework, directives, and recommendations emanating from the European Union (EU)<sup>39</sup>. In contrast to other nations, Italy has witnessed the dissemination of gender budgeting initially at the local level rather than at the national level. The inception of gender budgeting dates back to 2001, marked by three notable initiatives<sup>40</sup>. Initially, the Emilia Romagna region, along with the district and town of Modena, pioneered these efforts, followed by the Municipality of Sestri Levante in the Province of Genoa, and subsequently, the Province of Siena in 2002<sup>41</sup>. Subsequent years, particularly between 2003 and 2010, saw significant advancement in gender budgeting, characterized by a grassroots approach that originated at the level of Provinces and Municipalities<sup>42</sup>. This bottom-up trajectory gradually extended to include Regions and eventually the Italian Government, alongside a few targeted gender budgeting endeavours in select Universities and local Chambers of Commerce<sup>43</sup>. This grassroots approach stands as a unique phenomenon within the European context, as gender budgeting initiatives in other nations typically commence at the national level<sup>44</sup>. Over the

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academia”, in «Garcia Working Papers», (eds.), No. 8, 2016, pp. 4-6.

<sup>39</sup> M. Cellini, E. Carlini, C. Ranzuglia, and I. Di Tullio, *Piani di Uguaglianza di Genere nelle Università Italiane: Una Prima Analisi Descrittiva*, cit., pp. 1-19.

<sup>40</sup> T. Addabbo, G. Badalassi, and C. Canali, *Gender budgeting in academia: a powerful tool for gender equality*, cit., pp. 1-7.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

preceding decade, Italy has embarked upon a series of measures to advance gender equality, commencing in 2006 with the establishment of Equal Opportunity Committees (EOCs) pursuant to Decree Law No. 198 of 11 April, enshrined within the Equal Opportunities Code. Subsequently, in 2008, the formation of a Network of Representatives of the Equal Opportunities Committees of Universities by the National Conference of Equality Bodies of Italian Universities sought to enhance collaboration through convening conferences and providing training sessions for both students and staff<sup>45</sup>. The enactment of Article 21 of Law 183/2010 in 2010 mandated the creation of Single Guarantee Committees for Equal Opportunities in Public Administrations (CUGs), tasked with safeguarding the welfare of workers and combatting discrimination, thereby superseding, in most instances, the preceding EOCs, albeit with some universities retaining both a CUG and an EOC<sup>46</sup>. This legislative provision also necessitated public administrations to appoint a Confidential Advisor, entrusted with the responsibility of forestalling, addressing, and facilitating the resolution of instances of workplace discrimination, psychological harassment, moral harassment, sexual harassment, or mobbing and straining<sup>47</sup>. Furthermore, the fortification of CUGs was realized through Directive 2/19, promulgated by the Ministry of Public Administration in 2019, which underscored the pivotal role of gender equality in fostering equitable opportunities and well-being<sup>48</sup>. Article 48(1) of the Equal Opportunities Code (2006) mandates public administrations, inclusive of universities and research establishments, to devise and implement triennial Positive Action Plans (PAPs), the contours and spheres of intervention of which were delineated in 2007 by the Prime Minister's Directive of 23 May<sup>49</sup>. While statutory exigencies compel public administration entities to formulate PAPs, the evolving landscape necessitates the development of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) by most universities and research institutions, often leveraging existing PAP frame-

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<sup>45</sup> M. Cellini, E. Carlini, C. Ranzuglia and I. Di Tullio, *Piani di Uguaglianza di Genere nelle Università Italiane: Una Prima Analisi Descrittiva*, cit., pp. 1-19.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

works and extending their purview<sup>50</sup>. These emergent frameworks delineate the concerted efforts and measures undertaken by each institution to achieve gender parity. Recent empirical investigations reveal a disparity between the EU and Italy concerning GEP adoption rates, with the latter lagging behind at 39% compared to the EU average of 56%<sup>51</sup>. Consequently, the imperative to institute measures conducive to augmenting gender parity within academia is accentuated within the Italian milieu, characterized by entrenched gender disparities. Notably, the European Commission<sup>52</sup> documents that in 2018, women constituted 33.8% of researchers in Italy, with female researchers encountering impediments in career advancement. This is evinced by the discrepancy in representation, whereby in 2018, while comprising 50.13% of D-grade staff, female researchers accounted for a mere 23.74% of A-grade staff. Hence, it behooves Italian institutions to formulate more efficacious strategies, fostering greater stakeholder engagement and attunement to the distinctive needs of women in the realms of research and higher education."

*Gender Mainstreaming and Equity in Italian Universities: A Comprehensive Examination of Gender Dynamics Across Multiple University Domains.*

In the light of pervasive gender disparities within universities, manifested in both horizontal and vertical segregation, where men and women are unevenly distributed across disciplinary sectors and academic career hierarchies respectively, recent documentation by the Ministry of Education, Universities, and Research<sup>53</sup> (2018) underscores the imperative of gender mainstreaming within higher education institutions. Proposing the implementation of Gender Budgeting

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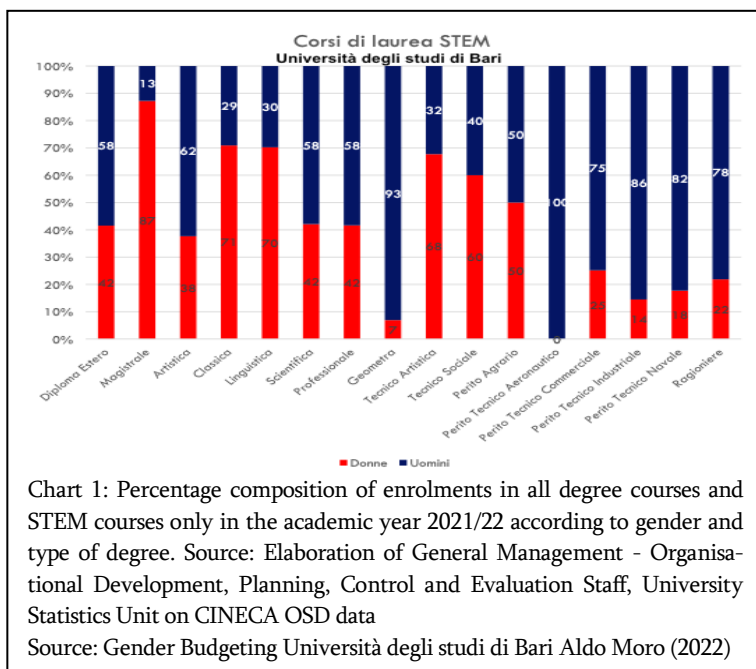
<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

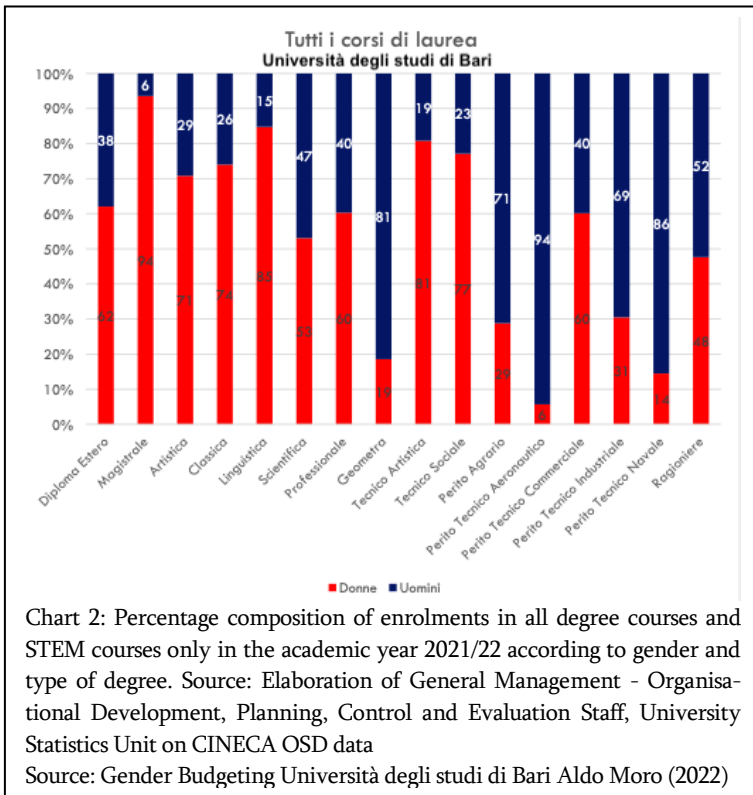
<sup>51</sup> MoRRI, *Final report – Summarising insights from the MoRRI project*, Technopolis Consulting Group Belgium, 2018. Available at: <https://morri.netlify.app/reports/2018-05-24-final-report-summarising-insights-from-the-morri-project>, (accessed 20-04-2024).

<sup>52</sup> European Commission (2021), cit., pp. 6-7; see also European Commission (2019), cit., pp. 86-91.

<sup>53</sup> MIUR, *Indicazioni per azioni positive del MIUR sui temi di genere nell'Università e nella ricerca*, 2018. Available at: [https://www.miur.gov.it/documents/20182/991467/Documento\\_+Indicazioni\\_a\\_azioni\\_positive\\_MIUR\\_su\\_temi\\_genere.pdf/23e81cb6-f15a-4249-9bd6-cf4fdcd113a8?version=1.0](https://www.miur.gov.it/documents/20182/991467/Documento_+Indicazioni_a_azioni_positive_MIUR_su_temi_genere.pdf/23e81cb6-f15a-4249-9bd6-cf4fdcd113a8?version=1.0), (accessed 20/04/2024).

(GB), the Ministry advocates for the systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data to illuminate gender dynamics across university domains. Emphasizing the utilization of gender-sensitive methodologies and tailored indicators, these sheets aim to discern distinct gender needs and evaluate the gender impact of resource allocation and interventions. Such critical assessments serve as foundational elements for devising policies geared towards fostering greater gender equity. Specifically focusing on the University of Bari and the University of Modena, the Gender Budgeting scrutinize the gender composition of key university constituents - students, faculty, and staff - offering a pertinent and insightful overview of gender representation as of 2022.

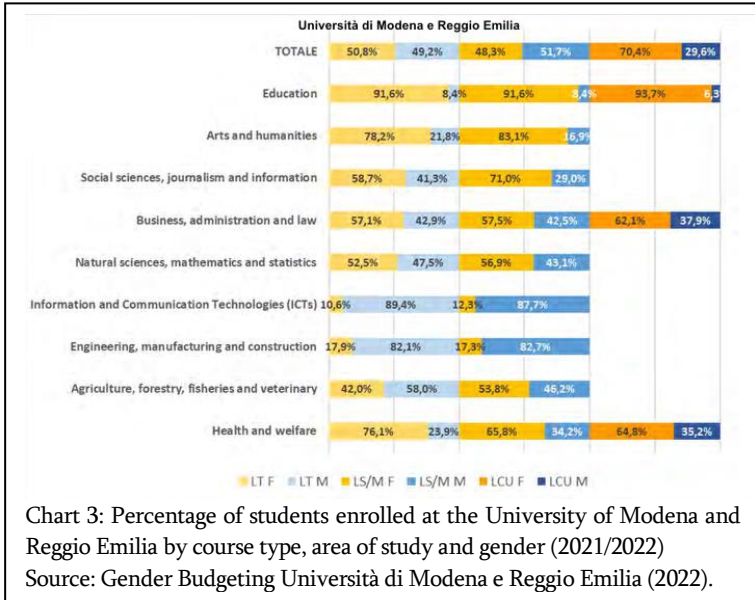




### *Student component*

The student demographic at the University of Bari and the University of Modena presents a nuanced landscape characterized by gender disparities across academic disciplines. Female predominance is observed in humanistic-social courses, whereas STEM fields exhibit a higher male presence. Nonetheless, the University of Bari demonstrates an overall greater female participation in degree programs compared to Modena, indicating institutional variances in gender composition. In terms of international mobility and academic performance, both universities display gender parity in participation rates in international programs, with women achieving higher average graduation grades and demonstrating greater consistency in degree completion. However,

er, persistent gender gaps in employment rates and salaries persist, with men exhibiting higher rates of employment and earning, particularly notable among bachelor's degree holders. Addressing these challenges necessitates targeted interventions aimed at fostering gender equality in both educational opportunities and employment prospects, necessitating actions at both institutional and systemic levels.



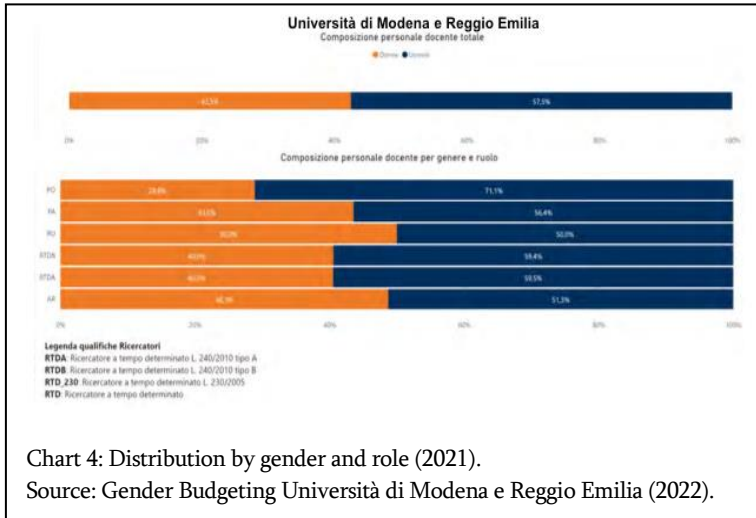
### *Teaching and research staff*

The Universities of Modena and Bari offer insightful perspectives on the progression of academic careers in Italy, with a particular emphasis on gender dynamics. Both institutions present thorough examinations of the demographic makeup of their teaching and research faculties, delineating similarities and disparities in observed trends.

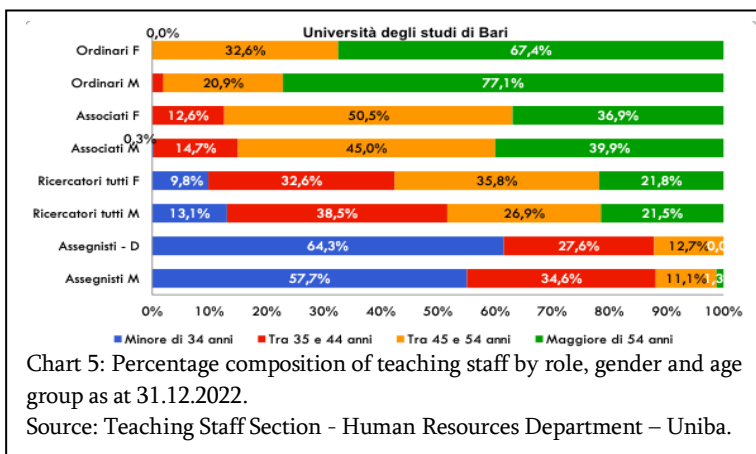
In Modena, a semblance of gender balance is noted in less secure positions like research fellows and among tenured researchers, while a male majority is evident in fixed-term research positions and full professorships. Despite a gradual increase in female representation over the past decade, gender differ-



entials persist, particularly in more advanced academic roles. Additionally, notable age discrepancies emerge, with female academics often older than their male counterparts, particularly in senior and research positions. Analysis across disciplinary areas conducted by CUN reveals disparities in female representation compared to the national average, with some areas surpassing national figures while others lag behind.

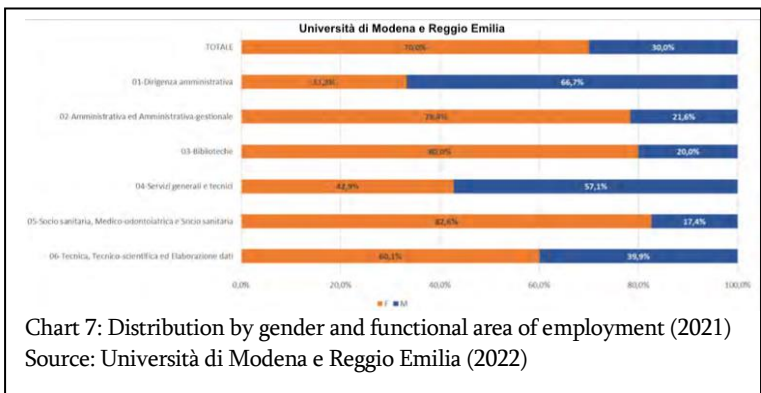


Conversely, Bari exhibits a higher proportion of male teaching staff, with a decline in female representation as academic roles advance. Nonetheless, there is a consistent upward trend in female presence over time, although gender gaps persist, especially among full professorships. Age distribution data indicates a predominance of older males, juxtaposed with greater female representation in intermediate age brackets. CUN area analyses unveil varying degrees of female representation, with some areas exceeding national averages while others fall below

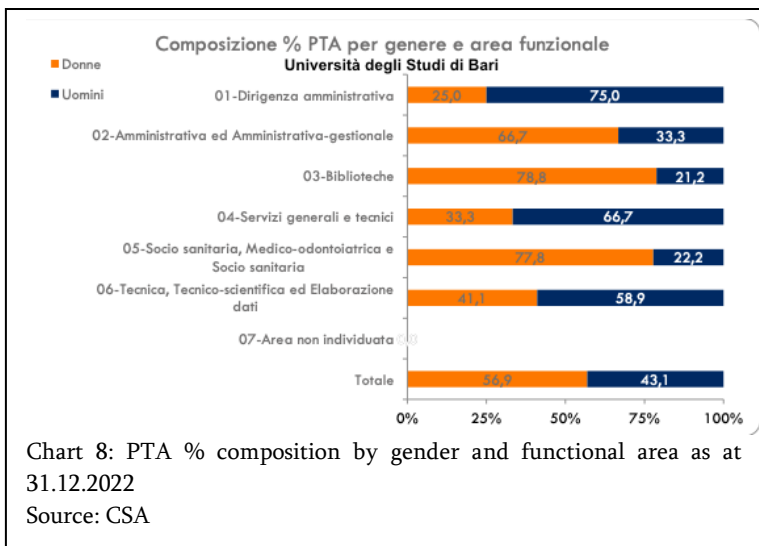


AREA CUN	Ordinari		Associati		Ricercatori		Ricercatori TD A		Ricercatori TD B		TOTALE		Incidenza % delle donne per Area CUN
	D	U	D	U	D	U	D	U	D	U	D	U	
1-Scienze matematiche e informatiche	7	5	20	23	5	5	4	8	2	9	38	50	43,2
2-Scienze fisiche	1	10	4	16			3	5	3	7	11	38	22,4
3-Scienze chimiche	3	18	29	27	2	3	10	10	6	5	50	63	44,2
4-Scienze della terra	2	3	10	24	3	4	6	1	2	4	23	36	39,0
5-Scienze biologiche	10	11	49	31	20	4	18	5	9	7	106	58	64,6
6-Scienze mediche	14	43	27	71	26	24	17	11	5	21	89	170	34,4
7-Scienze agrarie e veterinarie	9	29	46	56	7	10	9	11	6	13	77	119	39,3
8-Ingegneria civile ed architettura				1	1						1	1	50,0
9-Ingegneria industriale e dell'informazione		4	2	7	1	3	1	5	1	1	5	20	20,0
10-Scienze dell'antichità, filologico-letterarie e storico-artistiche	6	8	49	26	7	5	3	6	10	4	75	49	60,5
11 -Scienze storiche, filosofiche, pedagogiche e psicologiche	11	6	25	18	11	5	10	11	5	5	62	45	57,9
12-Scienze giuridiche	16	41	29	32	27	14	6	10	7	6	85	103	45,2
13-Scienze economiche e statistiche	6	20	19	34	18	9	8	6	4	9	55	78	41,4
14-Scienze politiche e sociali	1	3	8	7	2	2		3		4	11	19	36,7
<b>TOTALE</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>688</b>	<b>849</b>	<b>44,8</b>

Chart 6: Distribution of teaching staff by CUN Area, role and gender as at 31.12.2022.  
Source: Teaching Staff Section - Human Resources Department – Uniba.



Both universities delve into research-related issues, highlighting the under-representation of women in leadership positions and disparities in funding allocation and project distribution. In summary, both institutions underscore the imperative of addressing gender inequities within the academic sphere, identifying strengths and weaknesses and proposing measures to foster gender parity in academic career trajectories.



## Technical Administrative Staff

In the comparison between the University of Modena (UniMoRe) and the University of Bari (UniBa), interesting disparities and similarities emerge in the composition and gender dynamics of the Technical Administrative Staff (PTA) and the roles of responsibility.

University of Bari	2020			2022		
	Donne	Uomini	Totale	Donne	Uomini	Totale
<b>Forbice delle carriere - numeri assoluti</b>						
COLLABORATORI ED ESPERTI LINGUISTICI (CEL)	28	12	40	29	10	39
CATEGORIA B	78	107	185	94	122	216
CATEGORIA C	300	234	534	306	238	544
CATEGORIA D	280	213	493	340	197	537
CATEGORIA EP	42	34	76	31	23	54
DIRIGENTI DI 2 <sup>a</sup> FASCIA	2	5	7	2	6	8
DIRETTORI GENERALI		1	1		1	1
<b>TOTALE</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>1.336</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>1.399</b>

Chart 9: Career Scales - Absolute numbers

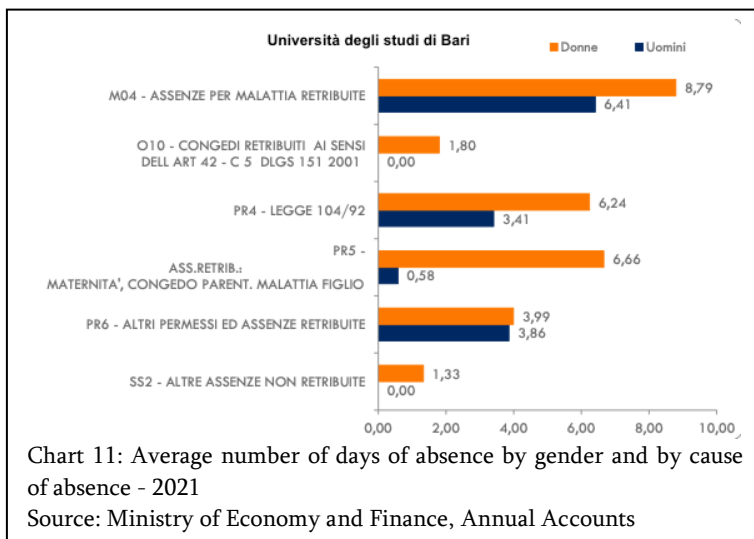
Source: Proper – CSA

Firstly, the analysis of the distribution by gender shows how, in both institutions, women are numerically prevalent in the PTA, although with slightly different percentages: 70% at University of Modena and 56.9% at University of Bari. This female dominance is particularly evident in some functional areas, such as libraries and administration, reflecting a consolidated trend. However, the analysis of career progressions and responsibility allowances reveals significant inequalities. At University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, career progressions in 2021 concern only 1% of women, while at the University of Bari the values remain stable between the categories in the 2020-2022 period, with a greater gender gap in the positions of second-rank managers. Moreover, responsibility allowances are mainly enjoyed by male staff, especially at University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, with only one equal category (Category E).

University of Modena and Reggio Emilia	2021	
	UOMINI	DONNE
Indennità di responsabilità di categoria A	73,53%	26,47%
Indennità di responsabilità di categoria B	74,36%	25,64%
Indennità di responsabilità di categoria C	70,97%	29,03%
Indennità di responsabilità di categoria D	78,43%	21,57%
Indennità di responsabilità di categoria E	50,00%	50,00%
Indennità di responsabilità di categoria F	80,00%	20,00%
Indennità di posizione EP fascia I	60,00%	40,00%
Indennità di posizione EP fascia II	80,00%	20,00%
Indennità di posizione EP fascia III	85,71%	14,29%
Personale EP senza incarico	100,00%	0,00%
<b>Totale complessivo</b>	<b>71,63%</b>	<b>28,37%</b>

Chart 10: Distribution by gender and responsibility allowance (2021)  
Source: Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia (2022)

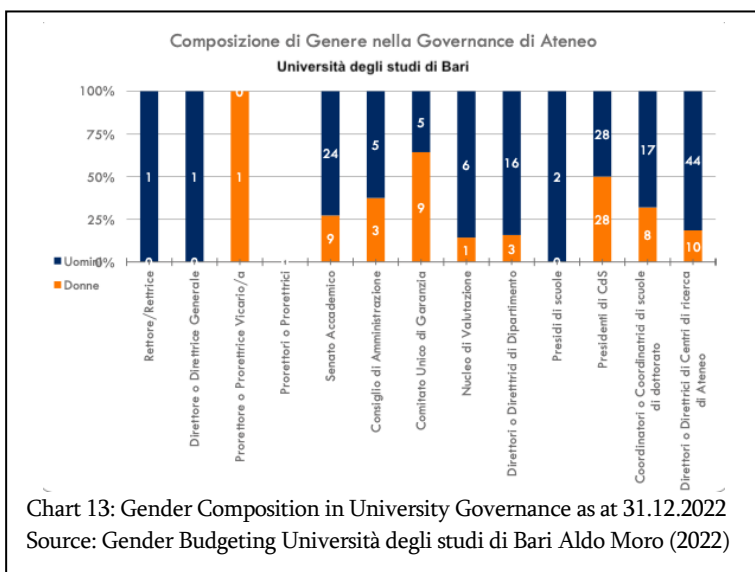
When comparing average days of absence by gender, a higher number of absences of women is observed in all types, indicating possible challenges related to caring roles in the family context. This is particularly significant in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, with an increase in paid sick leave and maternity absence.



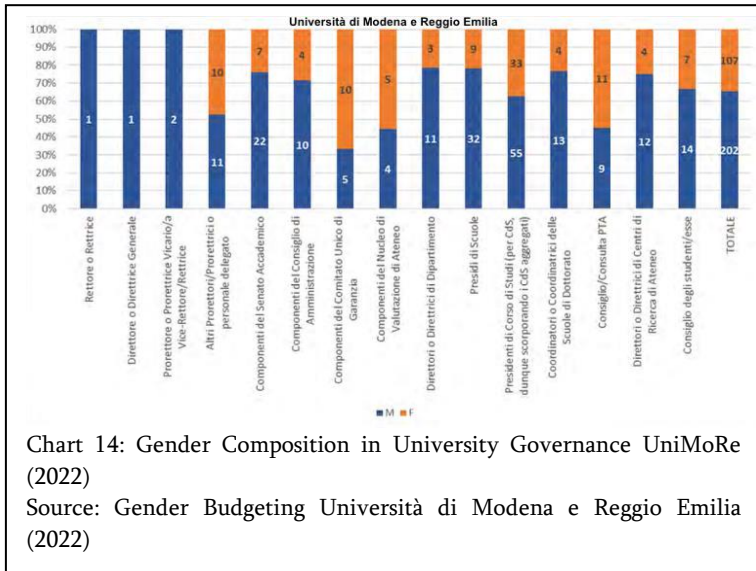
As regards responsibility roles, both universities show a higher percentage of women than men, which has remained constant over time. However, the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia presents some peculiarities, such as the exclusively female presence in the library poles and the responsibility of the staff of the General Management/Rectorate Office.

Università degli studi di Bari	2020		2021		2022	
	DONNE	UOMINI	DONNE	UOMINI	DONNE	UOMINI
Altre posizioni di III livello	66,7%	33,3%	62,9%	37,1%	43,8%	56,3%
Coordinatore di Dipartimento	56,5%	43,5%	47,6%	52,4%	31,6%	68,4%
Direttore di Polo Bibliotecario	100,0%	0,0%	100,0%	0,0%	100,0%	0,0%
Responsabile di Sezione	52,4%	47,6%	50,0%	50,0%	59,3%	40,7%
Responsabile di Staff della Direzione Generale/Ufficio del Rettorato	77,8%	22,2%	77,8%	22,2%	81,8%	18,2%
Responsabile di Unità Operativa	57,2%	42,8%	58,6%	41,4%	57,8%	42,2%
Titolare di altro incarico	56,3%	43,8%	57,5%	42,5%	59,3%	40,7%
<b>Totale complessivo</b>	<b>58,0%</b>	<b>42,0%</b>	<b>58,8%</b>	<b>41,2%</b>	<b>57,4%</b>	<b>42,6%</b>

Chart 12: Distribution by gender and responsibility roles (2020 - 2022)  
Source: Internal database; CSA



Finally, analysing the governance of the two institutions, a picture emerges of female under-representation, with women occupying less than 33% of positions of responsibility in bodies such as the Board of Directors and the Directors/Directors of Departments, with a fairer distribution only for the Presidents of degree courses.



In summary, while showing a predominance of women in the PTA, both universities face significant challenges in terms of gender parity in career progression, access to tenure and representation in leadership and governance positions. These findings underline the importance of inclusive strategies and policies to promote gender equality and equity within academic institutions.

### Conclusions

The comprehensive examination of gender dynamics within Italian academia underscores the persistent challenges and imperative for inclusive strategies to promote gender equality and equity. Through the lens of Gender

Budgeting (GB) and Gender Equality Plans (GEPs), both public and private institutions endeavour to address gender disparities across multiple domains, from student enrollment to faculty composition and administrative staffing. The adoption of Gender Budgeting (GB) represents a significant step towards institutionalizing gender mainstreaming and fostering accountability within universities. By systematically collecting gender-disaggregated data and evaluating the gender impact of resource allocation and interventions, GB facilitates critical assessments essential for devising policies aimed at fostering greater gender equity. The analyses conducted at the University of Bari and the University of Modena provide valuable insights into the gender composition of key university constituents, highlighting areas of strength and areas needing improvement. In examining teaching and research staff, both universities reveal nuanced patterns of gender representation, with disparities persisting, particularly in more advanced academic roles. Age discrepancies further underscore the complexity of gender dynamics within academic careers. Additionally, the analysis of technical administrative staff elucidates disparities in career progression and responsibility allowances, reflecting broader challenges in gender parity within organizational hierarchies. Despite these challenges, the commitment to addressing gender inequities remains evident, with both institutions proposing measures to foster gender parity in academic career trajectories. Strategies such as targeted interventions, inclusive policies, and enhanced governance structures are essential for promoting gender equality and equity within academic institutions. In conclusion, the journey towards gender equality in Italian academia requires concerted efforts, collaborative initiatives, and sustained commitment from all stakeholders. By embracing inclusive strategies and leveraging tools like Gender Budgeting and Gender Equality Plans, universities can pave the way for a more equitable and inclusive academic environment, reflecting the principles of social justice and fairness central to higher education.



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