A NEW BATTLE EVERY DAY?
HOW TO APPROACH DIFFERENT “ACADEMIC TRIBES” AS AN RMA

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DAILY PROBLEM
WHAT TO EXPECT IS EXPECTED?
THE 3 TRIBES
IN THEORY

The knowledge structures of disciplines (the academic territories) strongly condition or even determine the behavior and values of academics, who live in disciplinary tribes with common sets of practices.

Tribes do create differences in practices between the academics:
- how and how much academics communicate with each other
- in how they address research problems
- what they consider important and trivial

(Tony Becher’s 1989: Academic Tribes and Territories)
STUDIED PHENOMENONS

• Rural vs. Urban

Urban disciplines are characterised by intense interaction and a high people–to–problem ratio → *Teams!*

Rural ones have bigger territories, less interaction and a lower people–to–problem ratio → *Loners!"
FUNDING NEEDS

> Different funders and funding sizes
PURE VS. APPLIED

• *Pure* disciplines are self-regulating and not directly applied to the professions or problems in the outside world.

• *Applied* disciplines are regulated by external influence to some extent

*The drive now is towards performativity ... among academics the need to solve problems—usually identified by business* (Becher 1989, 15)

> Different funders
MINISURVEYS

• 3 SHH, 3 STEM, 3 LS
• Email or short interviews in Finland, Norway and Japan

Questions on:
• Research teams and social environment
• Funding sources, what do you need funding for?
• View on Research management and administration (RMA) support
TEAMNESS

“A Chance to collaborate and exchange ideas… with whom it’s easy to work with” (SSH)

“Being a PI is much more a manager job than a researcher job” (SSH)

“Ideal Team should be about 10 people with overlapping technical expertise “(LS)

“Has to be a team work because of the experimental component.” (STEM)
INDEPENDENCE

"I try to encourage everyone to be their own kind of researcher (=freedom), but of course so that all the necessary work get done (=responsibility). “ (SSH)

"You have to be independent, basically from your PhD. Otherwise you don’t continue in science." (STEM)

"Very independent, [but] we write internally with the team members, PI is the last author" (LS)
FUNDING AND FUNDING NEEDS

Across countries: use of national and international sources

• "We need everything, where I work is soft-money based" (STEM)
• "Salary and travel. Not really equipment, as I am in SSH" (SSH)
• "Equipment, consumables, travel. Maintain wet lab" (LS)
HELP WHERE HELP IS NEEDED

• "Ordering things, hosting workshops, hiring people" (LS)
• "It would be useful to get help on all of this. Also in legal consortium agreement" (LS)
• "Always” (STEM)
• “I need support with budgeting and the application texts, reading and commenting plus figuring out financial issues” (SSH)
VIEWS ON RMA

• "OK. Easy going people" ; "trustworthy" (LS)
• “…a stereotype that the administration is always there to bother you. That is not my impression. I think it is very helpful to have people to support there who can initiate or point out opportunities…” (SSH)
• “The RMA support has to be here at the fundamental level, that’s why we don’t notice it unless it is missing” (STEM)
HOW TO APPROACH?

• "E-mail or in person” (LS)

• "E-mail” and ”being invited to seminars and events” (SSH)

• “It depends on which state. If it is more for information, I think email is best. Really going through proposal drafts, it could be useful to meet in person, actually. When it is very general information it could also be in a group setting, but email is enough.” (STEM)
USER PERSONAS TO IMPROVE RMA SERVICES

- Inquiries & Goals
- Interviews & Observations
- Data Analysis
- Personas
- Strategy & Execution
AGE: 38
WORK: Assistant Professor
CHARACTER: Lab dweller crossed with a social butterfly
FUNDING SOURCES: Government, private and internal
PUBLISHING: Top journals preferably with open access, papers and book chapters
CONTACT ME: By email and we’ll meet

PERSONALITY

- Team: High
- Collaborator: High
- Writing in groups: High
- Independence: Low
- Loner: Low
- Writing alone: Low

NEEDS

- Funding: High
- Equipment: High
- Institution: High
- RMA support: High
AGE: 47
WORK: Just tenured professor
CHARACTER: Versatile, social and sometimes paranoid
FUNDING SOURCES: Government and some foundations
PUBLISHING: Monographs, edited books and national and international articles
CONTACT ME: help with the budget, but when F2F needs emerge

PERSONALITY
- Team
- Collaborator
- Loner
- Writing in groups
- Writing alone

NEEDS
- Independence
- Funding
- Equipment
- Institution
- RMA support
AGE: 47

WORK: Tenured professor

CHARACTER: Nerdy, busy, friendly if we met in person

FUNDING SOURCES: Government, Research Council, international funding (i.e. EU)

PUBLISHING: Top journals

CONTACT ME: I contact you. Or you drop by.
TAKE HOME

• Tribes do exist and you should understand where they stem from

• You can build your own user ‘persona’

• It is not our battle in the end – let’s provide our researchers with the best possible support

• Adjust, but still always keep an open mind!