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Abstract

Current literature about intersectionality focuses on analysing how does an intersectional approach look like and how it is being put into policy-making practice. This paper aims at filling the existing gap within Portuguese literature, which has hardly ever addressed this topic. The main objective is to shed light on how and to what extent this new strategy is becoming embedded in Portuguese policy processes and structures. Following Hancock's typology, I will argue that Portugal is applying a mixture of approaches, where both a unitary and a multiple perspective are present (Hancock, 2007). The former is mostly represented by anti-discrimination legislation and equality machineries, which still try to combat inequalities separately. For analysing the introduction of a multiple perspective, I will have a look at very recent plans (integration of migrants, social inclusion etc.), which not only include a more complex diagnosis where inequalities are seen as connected, but also introduce some key shifts which aim at tackling intersections among different inequalities (interdepartmental agencies, new methodologies etc.). Finally, Portuguese tradition on creating participatory councils will be considered in order to assess the extent to which an intersectional approach is likely to be introduced. I will argue that all of those elements are contributing to the inclusion of a multiple approach as well as to the development of a particular way of dealing with intersectionality.

Key words: intersectionality, Portugal, inequalities, multiple approach

1. Introduction

During the last decades, the feminist research agenda has widened in order to grasp not only inequalities related to gender, but also its intersections with other strands such as class, race or disability (See for instance Crenshaw, 1989, 1993, 2002; Brewer *et al.*, 2002; Browne and Misra, 2003). The underlying aim is to highlight the extent to which women's experiences are shaped by more than one inequality. This combination of strands does therefore not merely represent an addition of oppressions but an intersection among them which creates a unique and qualitatively different situation. Parallel with this general concern, literature has recently opened a new avenue of analysis. Here the aim is not only to scrutinize the effects of the cross-cutting axes but also to explore how these intersections have been tackled by public policies, if this is the case. Generally speaking, scholars have claimed that in order to implement better and fairer policies where women -and men- were not considered as homogeneous, an intersectional perspective is needed (Lombardo and Verloo, 2009, 2008; Squires, 2005; Beveridge and Nott, 2002). This new approach is expected to overcome a common shortcoming based on a twofold tendency to *super-inclusion* (a group-centred problem is seen as general) and to *sub-inclusion* (a general problem is seen as group-centred), which are both related to the incapability to consider those individuals at the intersections (Crenshaw, 2002). Given this new approach, the interest on studying whether or not intersectionality has been introduced in policy making has clearly increased. The guiding question of this emerging research agenda is, can we find any evidences indicating that intersectionality is being put into practice? In other words, are the public policies being revised in order to take into account the fact that inequalities are not always independent? And going a step forward, is this new strategy being institutionalized?

As literature has pointed out when referring to gender mainstreaming, the transversal inclusion of a transformative aim is far from being smooth. Rather, this strategy has been described as mostly diluted in the mainstream –or *malestream*–, trapped both by its misunderstanding and its limited implementation (See for instance Beveridge and Nott, 2002; Daly, 2005; Mósesdóttir and Erlingsdóttir, 2005). Besides, its main requirements –political will, resources, knowledge and specific actions- are far from being fulfilled. Given this discouraging landscape, this former experience should be used in order to address intersectionality, trying to learn lessons from gender mainstreaming (Woodward, 2008; Squires, 2008a). Although both strategies seek to combat structural inequalities (gender, race, sexual orientation, disability etc.) by revising the existing policies¹, intersectionality adds a greater degree of complexity by considering not only each inequality by itself but also their intersections. Adaptation to this new perspective seems to be even harder than the challenge represented by gender mainstreaming a few years ago. Complexity of goals, the level of expertise that would be needed, along with other factors such as the expected resistances, might make the introduction of intersectionality rather rough. Due to this, scholars have also discussed how we can address intersecting inequalities and which are the main requirements for better implementing this strategy (See for instance Lombardo and Rolandsen, 2009; Verloo, 2006; Center for Women's Global Leadership, 2001).

¹ Although here we identify intersectionality with gender mainstreaming, intersectionality might actually encompass the three main types of equality policies, that is, equal treatment, positive actions and mainstreaming. As we will see, it is often more identified with anti-discrimination law and therefore, with equal treatment.

The Portuguese case offers a great opportunity for exploring these two emerging questions –institutionalization and potential requirements-, since this country is undertaking its first steps towards intersectionality, as well as developing a particular way of dealing with it. Inequalities are increasingly treated as intersecting, moving from the former *unitary* approach (Hancock, 2007), where they had been treated as completely independent, to an incipient *multiple* approach, where additions and interactions are at least mentioned. Growing cooperation among equality bodies as well as the approval of several policy plans focused on tackling several strands at the same time, indeed point to the emergence of a more complex perspective. Besides, Portugal has a special feature, that is, its long tradition on setting up participatory councils focused on engaging civil society organizations. Currently, there are thus not only old councils attached to the equality machineries, but also new emerging structures, which are clearly and intentionally intersectional. Both elements give us the opportunity to explore the extent to which an evolution towards an *intersectional* approach is likely to occur, as well as to assess these participatory experiences. In doing so, I will start by addressing the literature on intersectionality, seeking to explore some of the main pending questions. Subsequently, I will analyse the Portuguese main pieces of law concerning anti-discrimination and equality bodies, as well as the most recent policy plans. In addition, several exploratory interviews with policy makers and civil society actors will help to complete and contrast the information included in these policy documents². The core idea is to map the introduction of intersectionality in this country, to highlight its specificities, and finally, to explore how can this instance contribute to the whole debate on this topic.

2. Institutionalising intersectionality: debates and pending questions

During the 90s, the EU witnessed a debate on the necessity to broaden the equality agenda beyond gender, seeking to spread the feminist achievements to other inequalities (Bell, 2008). The first steps towards these new priorities took place in the 80s with the inclusion of a social dimension in the EU policies. However, this issue gained momentum in 1997 with the approval of the Treaty of Amsterdam, which by covering discriminations based on six different strands meant a clear ‘non-return’ point. Directives 2000/43/CE concerning race and ethnic discrimination along with Directive 2000/78/CE guaranteeing equal treatment in work indeed confirmed that, at least, there was a clear political will on reinforcing hard law concerning anti-discrimination, as well as on translating these achievements to the Member States. During the 00s, the strategy was that of developing soft instruments such as plans, communications and specific programs. The *European Action Program Against Discrimination (2001-2006)*, the program PROGRESS or the *European Year for Equal Opportunities for All* are relevant examples of this new approach. Hence, the purpose is not as tightly connected with the transposition of legislation as it was in the past. The underlying idea was instead to spread a more flexible approach where the emphasis put on anti-discrimination was

² The interviews took place in Lisbon on 2-4 March. The interviewed were Dina Canço (Main Advisor of the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality), Gonçalo Moita (Advisor of the High Commissariat for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities), Timoteo Macedo (President of Solidaridade Imigrante), Carmen Rasquete (Advisor of APAV), Paulo Côrte-Real (President of ILGA-Portugal), Manuela Góis, Joana Sales and Manuela Tavares (Executive Members of UMAR). The idea was that of including representatives of the main equality machineries as well as of relevant civil society associations, representing different strands and which take part in the Portuguese participatory councils.

combined with proactive equality policies. Besides, inequalities were no longer seen as merely separated but as added and/or intersecting. The necessity to combat multiple discrimination and to adopt an integrated approach indeed became a *locus communis*.

This new equality agenda and its influence at the national level opened a new field of analysis focused on addressing its implementation not only in the EU but also in the Member States. One of the first debates concerns legislation, since the approval of key texts such as the Treaty of Amsterdam and the abovementioned Directives has raised the question of how to better protect individuals against discrimination. Generally speaking, these norms have been positively valued since they not only mean an enlargement of rights, but also a movement towards the removal of the former hierarchy among strands (Skjeie and Langvarsbraten, 2009; Bell, 2008). Their binding character also entailed a direct impact on the national legislation, though with remarkable variations among countries (See for instance Squires, 2007; Mabbet, 2005). Nevertheless, there is still a debate on the efficiency of this integrated approach –one piece of law for all the axes-, since there is no evidence of its capacity to address multiple inequalities (Kantola and Nousiainen, 2009; Fredman, 2005; Harnett, 2003). In addition, there is neither a consensus on the appropriateness of the inclusion of closed lists with concrete grounds of discrimination, where groups might once again fight for their recognition and inclusion (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

When referring to the equality bodies, there are also strong controversies linked with the emergence of this integrated approach. The European strategy centred on creating one equality body for all the strands, along with the inclusion in the ‘Race Directive’ of the obligation to this inequality to be covered by a concrete machinery, has triggered a countless set of shifts in the national realm (Bell, 2008; Squires, 2007, 2008b; Cormack and Niessen, 2005). Thus, both the ‘soft’ and the ‘hard’ pressure caused the Member States to rethink their institutional instruments for dealing with inequalities. Expectedly, these emerging shifts are far from being smoothly accepted. On the contrary, there is both a feminist concern on how not to lose the improvements already achieved –gender mainstreaming, equality machineries etc.-, and a general discussion on what are the main advantages and challenges posed by these single bodies. Regarding the former, scholars and activists have reflected on the extent to which this integrated and anti-discriminatory approach could undermine the feminist transformative and structural perspective (Lombardo and Verloo, 2008; Bustelo, 2008). When it comes to the latter, the thing is whether or not the advantages of having a single body – more influence, adaptation to individuals’ complexity, coherence etc.- can counteract its evident challenges –complexity, contradiction among objectives, decrease of resources etc.- (Niessen and Cormack, 2004).

Besides this general debate, literature has been focusing on how to implement intersectionality. There is a general concern regarding what is the appropriate approach for dealing with this new strategy. Hancock’s typology is frequently invoked as a meaningful tool for assessing its implementation. It allows us to make a distinction between approaches based on three main elements: how many categories are addressed, what is the relationship posited between them and how they are conceptualized (Hancock, 2007). The *unitary* approach corresponds to those policies/analyses where each inequality is treated as separate and mostly static. Instead, the *multiple* approach tends to address more than one inequality though also in a very fixed way. The emphasis is put on intra-category diversity and policies tend to focus on concrete intersectional groups. The *intersectional* approach nuances this limited conception and treats the relation between categories as an open empirical question, with a very dynamic perspective. Here, inequalities are conceived as mutually constitutive and

policies tend to take into account all possible groups. Case studies have shown the extent to which the unitary and the multiple approach still prevail, with a combination of traditional one-strand policies and actions considering concrete intersecting groups (See Bustelo, 2008; Alonso and Nunes, 2008; Forest *et al.*, 2008).

Whilst wondering how to move towards an intersectional approach, scholars have also highlighted that some elements might be necessary for making this approach possible. In addition to some general recommendations concerning data bases, rights protection systems or contextual analysis (See for instance Center for Women's Global Leadership, 2001), participation and consultation have emerged as one of the most recommended actions (Lombardo and Rolandsen, 2009; Squires, 2008b; Yuval-Davis, 2006). The engagement of civil society in the policy process thus appears as an accurate tool for hindering both an *oppression olympics*³ within which several groups might compete for resources and recognition, and the potential pitfall of reifying identities and reproducing the internal hierarchies (Squires, 2008a; Crenshaw, 1993). Finally, it seems to be useful in order to know more about people at the intersections (Lombardo and Verloo, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Donaghy, 2004).

Following sections will seek to contribute to this emerging research agenda by exploring the specificities of the Portuguese case. The core idea is to shed light on how the legislation, the equality machineries and the engagement of civil society have been shaped in order to deal with intersectionality, if this is the case. Additionally, I will try to fill the gap present on Portuguese literature which has been more centred on providing a snapshot of the individuals at the intersections than on analysing how multiple inequalities should be tackled by public policies⁴.

3. Institutionalising intersectionality in Portugal: cross-cutting approaches

Anti-discrimination legislation and equality machineries: the unitary approach

Until very recently, Portugal has developed a unitary approach with some privileged strands. In line with other countries, inequalities have been mostly seen as independent, having separate bodies and pieces of law (See for instance Squires, 2007). Gender, race⁵ and disability have enjoyed a prevalent position while other axes such as age or sexual orientation have been mostly ignored. When it comes to legislation, the Constitution represents the most relevant umbrella against discrimination, stating that each citizen has the right to enjoy equal treatment regardless his/her ancestry, sex, race, language, country of origin, religion, political or ideological convictions, education, economic situation, social condition and sexual orientation (art. 13). This closed but exhaustive list was enlarged in 2004 in order to include sexual orientation, which had not been covered by any law yet⁶. This fact meant that Portugal became one of the first countries in the world to constitutionally protect against this sort of discrimination

³ Martínez quoted by Hancock (2007).

⁴ Even though there are remarkable studies on the interactions between class and gender (Estanque, 2004; André, 1996; Ferreira, 1994), on the special situation of male and female migrants (Peixoto, 2008; Teixeira and Albuquerque, 2005; Wall and São José, 2005) as well as on social movements, there is not a great emphasis on studying intersectionality. Great exceptions are those addressing dynamic interaction among strands (See Santos, 2004; 2006; Albuquerque, 2005) or the inclusion of more than one strand on public policies (See Cardoso, 2000).

⁵ I will use the term race when referring to what in Portuguese policies and laws includes race, nationality, colour and ethnicity.

⁶ Constitutional Law 1/2004 of 24 July (Sixth Constitutional Revision).

(Roseneil *et al.*, 2008). The Labour Code goes even a step further and includes a very exhaustive list of nineteen inequality axes. Thus, after the transposition of Directives 2000/43/CE and 2000/78/CE in 2003 and the modification of this Code in 2009, a wide variety of discriminations are mentioned, from ancestry to education or political convictions⁷. In spite of this broad legislation, hierarchy among inequalities can be inferred by having a look at the specific pieces of law concerning each strand, since some of them enjoy a special position. When referring to gender and disability, legislation has been developed since either the last years of the *Estado Novo*⁸ or the very beginnings of the democratic period⁹. After that, the tendency was that of reinforcing the previous guarantees by successive pieces of law. While in the case of gender the core idea was to conquer equal treatment with respect to men, disability related policies were closely linked to specific measures focused on facilitating social integration. Even though race has been covered neither as soon nor as deep as these strands, *Law 134/1999 forbids discrimination based on race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin* was passed one year before the approval of the ‘Race Directive’¹⁰. This premature development shows the extent to which these sort of inequalities had already entered in the Portuguese agenda during the 90s. It must be noted that, in spite of this wide range of legislation, multiple discrimination is still to be covered since, in line with many countries, complaints must be presented at separate institutions in order to be accepted. This means that for instance a complaint made by a migrant women, where both sexism and racism were relevant, has to be presented simultaneously to the women’s and the migrant’s respective bodies.

Equality machineries directly reproduce this unitary and hierarchical approach. Like the abovementioned legislation, gender and disability issues have their own body since the 70s. The former showed an outstanding and extremely premature development in Portugal. The embryonic version of the current equality body, the *Working Group for the Participation of Women in the Economic and Social Life*, was indeed created in 1970, four years before the *Carnation Revolution*. The intention of the *Estado Novo* to implement some reforms focused on liberalization, along with the presence of some gender –or women- advocates inside the regime, facilitated this early development (Valiente, 1998)¹¹. These specificities distinguish Portugal from other countries whose institutional feminism is to be understood as a matter of women’s movement claims¹² or left-wing governments (1998). The first democratic governments instead of eliminating the working group opted for setting up a stable body, the *Commission of the Feminine Condition*, which was officially created in 1977¹³. Work related to the *1st Conference on Women* of the UN as well as a general interest on modernization and democratization acted as main incentives for this consolidation (Valiente, 1998; Tavares, 2000). What is

⁷ See the last version of the Labor Code, Law 7/2009 of 12 February, approving the Labor Code.

⁸ See for instance Law 6/1971 of 8 November, approved the basis concerning rehabilitation and social integration of individuals with deficiencies.

⁹ See for instance Law 392/1979 of 20 September, guarantees equal opportunities and equal treatment in work and employment for women.

¹⁰ In spite of this previous piece of law Directive 2000/43/CE was in any case transposed by Law 18/2004 of 11 May.

¹¹ The role played by Maria Lourdes Pintasilgo is frequently highlighted in order to emphasise the presence of key policy advocates (See Monteiro, 2008).

¹² Even though activists were well organized during the first wave of feminism, when associations such as the *Portuguese Women National Council* were quite active, the ban imposed by the Salazar’s government as soon as they became not comfortable for the regime (Gorjão, 2002), determined that during the transition those movements were rather weak and had actually to be ‘reconstructed’.

¹³ The *Commission of the Feminine Condition* worked informally since 1975, though it was officially created by Law-Decree 485/1977.

more, in 1979 state feminism was reinforced by creating a specialized body focused on promoting gender equality on training and employment, the *Commission for Equality on Work and Employment* (CITE). This extremely early development depicts the extent to which the policies related to women have a long and stable trajectory in Portugal. In spite of a few reforms, subsequent decades witnessed the consolidation of this institutional feminism. However, the last shift, the replacement of the former *Commission for Equality and Rights for Women* by the current *Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality* (CIG), meant one of the most relevant modifications ever introduced. The purpose was that of broadening the previous competencies by including a general promotion of citizenship as well as an explicit reference to gender instead of women. Previously, the equality bodies only include women in their respective nomenclatures. Now, the CIG intends to emphasise the term gender in order to include men as part of the problem and the solution. This structural perspective can slightly be perceived by having a look at the current equality policies, namely the *III National Plan for Equality: Citizenship and Gender 2007 – 2010*, where men are at least partially conceived as policy targets. Still, policies are far from adopting a strong transformative framework, where women and men were equally involved. On the other hand, the reference to citizenship is tightly linked to the intention to cover sexual orientation, which does not have any specific machinery yet¹⁴. The idea is that of including this type of discrimination in the equality agenda, at least for what refers to equal treatment related policies. Likewise, the term citizenship is referred to the growing interest on addressing women's multiple inequalities¹⁵, since interactions between gender and other strands are expected to be tackled. As we will see in the following sections, these shifts let us to intuit that a new equality agenda is being introduced in this institution.

Disability is also an example of a strand with a long institutional history. The very first body was established in 1971, when the *National Rehabilitation Secretariat* was created aim at integrating people with deficiencies¹⁶. In line with other equality bodies, during the last decades this institution has witnessed a countless variety of reforms. The last one occurred in 2007, when the *National Institute of Rehabilitation* (INR) was set up, consolidating a policy issue with more than thirty years of history. Currently, integration of disabled goes with a clear emphasis on equal opportunities, which means that discrimination must be combated and people with disabilities must be socially valued. When it comes to race, the first steps towards institutionalization happened in the end of the 90s. They were mostly caused by the presence of a second wave of immigration taking place in the country. Although Portugal is historically an emigration state, both the decolonization process and the inclusion in the EU triggered two main waves of immigrants occurred in the 70s and the 90s respectively (Abranches, 2008). Due to this, the government opted for creating two different bodies aim at dealing with this new reality. On the one hand, in 1996 a *High Commissioner on Immigration and Ethnic Minorities* (ACIME) was established with the purpose of

¹⁴ Beyond the LGBT activism, this introduction is to be understood because of the addition of some elements. First, we must take into consideration the role of Elza Pais as president of the CIG, who has been awarded by ILGA-Portugal because of being one of the few Portuguese politicians who explicitly refer to gays, lesbians and transsexuals in the official discourses. Likewise, the government of the *Socialist Party* has also shown a clear will on adapting their agenda to the LGBT movement claims. Indeed, same sex marriage is supposed to be included in its next electoral program.

¹⁵ Interview Dina Canço (Main Advisor of the CIG).

¹⁶ Here, I mention the term deficiencies instead of disabilities because it is still commonly used in Portugal, even when referring to official institutions and social movements. In any case, it is worth to note that the *National Institute for Rehabilitation* is trying to progressively introduce the term disabilities.

promoting social dialogue with immigrants. Even though it started with a very limited staff and conceptualized as an individual position, the tendency was that of increasing its resources and shifting it into equality machinery¹⁷. Thus, since 2002 it was no longer a commissioner but a commissariat. The last shift, occurred in 2007, meant the replacement of the former ACIME by the new *High Commissariat on Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue* (ACIDI), which was conceived for making immigration policy more transversal as well as for fostering dialogue among cultures, ethnicities and religions. Besides this body, Portugal also set up a *Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination* in 1999. It is conceived as an independent institution, focused on accompanying all the existing complaints and monitoring policies in this field. Still, it is integrated both by institutional and civil society representatives, which in fact constitutes a limited degree of independency (Malheiros, 2007).

These strong bodies go with the presence of other machineries covering inequalities such as the *Portuguese Institute of Youth* (IPJ) or the *Commission for Religious Freedom* created in 1993 and 2001 respectively. Differences as regards to the history, the resources and the policy outcomes depict a slight hierarchy among bodies, with gender, disability and race as the most relevant strands.

This general landscape informs us about the extent to which the unitary approach has tended to prevail in Portugal. There has been a long tradition on tackling discriminations based on sex and disabilities, along with the emergence of race and age during the 90s. All of these bodies have been centred on their own strand and there has been no place for considering multiple discriminations. Although cooperation among bodies has seldom occurred, almost all the bodies have been placed in the *Presidency of the Council of Ministers* since their creation. This meant that with the exception of the INR which has been always included in the *Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity*, inequalities have always been addressed as transversal issues, requiring a slight holistic approach. This striking pattern started with the *Commission of the Feminine Condition* placed in the Presidency since its very beginnings, and continued with the subsequent bodies. What is more, the inclusion of this Commission in a concrete ministry during the 90s triggered a deep conflict and even caused its president's demission (Valiente, 1998). This fact shows the extent to which the Portuguese equality bodies are used to enjoy a prevalent and transversal position. Anyhow, we must have a look at very recent policies in order to notice a multiple approach.

New policy plans and emerging bodies: introducing the multiple approach

Given this fragmented landscape, the European integrated approach based on a single body covering all strands might be challenging the Portuguese way of dealing with inequalities. Generally speaking, both equality and general policies are quite influenced by the EU. When referring concretely to intersectionality, the CIG and the ACIDI take part in the EU most relevant networks of equality bodies, that is, of the EQUINET and the *Fundamental Rights Agency*. It would be rather expectable that this engagement as well as the European priorities could influence these national bodies. As scholars have shown, the strategy focused on setting up single bodies has triggered a variety of reactions depending on the country and/or the institution. This means that both strong resistances (Lombardo and Verloo, 2008) and smooth acceptance (Squires,

¹⁷ See Law-Decree 251/2002 and Law-Decree 27/2005.

2007) have been reported. When addressing Portugal, it is noteworthy that the creation of a unique equality body is not being taken into consideration at all. Rather, this country seems to opt for maintaining its 'old' bodies. In any case, we can infer the extent to which a multiple approach is gaining momentum by looking at the most recent policies.

First of all, the reform that took place in 2007 in the Presidency of the Council of Ministers acted as an opportunity for these machineries to be reformed¹⁸. The ACIDI opted to broaden its scope of competencies by stating that immigration policies must be transversal, integrated and coherent, which entails a greater emphasis on the engagement of the whole government. On the other hand, the CIG added a key reference to the promotion of citizenship which is strongly related with its increasing concern on how to deal with other inequalities beyond gender. As I have mentioned above, one of the main purposes was to cover sexual orientation discrimination. Nonetheless, the reform also stemmed from the emerging emphasis put on women's multiple inequalities. This concern is especially evident when having a look at the last gender equality plan where it is explicitly recognized that "women have to face multiple discrimination based on their race, territory of origin, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation". This reference makes a difference with the previous plans, where multiple inequalities were implicitly and marginally included. Likewise, the emerging agenda is also present on policies tackling some types of gender violence, namely human trafficking and genital mutilation, which not only had never been considered before but that have also represented the inclusion of other strands besides gender. Finally, its *Advisory Council* has been modified for including a wide variety of organizations so that inequalities interacting with gender can be considered (See section 3.3). All these examples show the extent to which multiple inequalities are becoming part of the equality agenda.

In addition to these general shifts regarding equality machineries, last years have also witnessed the inclusion of a multiple approach in policy plans. Even though until very recently policy documents were mostly blind to the presence of intersecting inequalities (Alonso and Nunes, 2008)¹⁹, the newest texts concerning the equality agenda reflect a growing interest on overcoming the unitary approach (Table 1.). First of all, there are many examples of policy plans which either explicitly or implicitly recognize that inequalities can no longer be addressed as if they were isolated. What is more, most of them include a concrete reference to the existence of multiple discriminations, as the gender equality plan has shown. Combination of strands tends to be limited by the presence of a prevalent axis, which is quite expectable in specialized documents addressing concrete issues such as the integration of disabled. Documents regarding consolidated policies and 'old' equality bodies therefore maintain their respective focus on a specific strand, although with a relevant openness to other inequalities. This means that only the plan related to the *European Year for Equal Opportunities of All* and the one concerning human trafficking, show an almost infinite combination of oppressions. Generally, all those references, even if they might be only rhetorical, mean that policies are no longer blind to intra-group diversity. Rather, quality of equality policies seems to have been improved by recognizing some intersectional groups and by taking into account their special situations.

¹⁸ Law-Decree 202/2006 of 27 October approves the organic Law of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

¹⁹ The analysis of the texts selected in the QUING Project corresponding to the period 1995-2007 was not very useful for addressing intersectionality in Portugal since it is only present in the very recent documents. For more information see Alonso and Nunes, 2008.

When referring to the strategies, it is worth to highlight that anti-discrimination legislation and equal treatment are not the sole options. Instead, specific measures and to a lesser extent mainstreaming seem to be also part of the Portuguese equality policies. For instance, the *III National Plan for Social Inclusion* includes a special methodology for dealing with these multiple discriminations. In this case, *mainstreaming social inclusion*, that is, to take into consideration the promotion of social inclusion in all policies, is expected to be implemented. Even if its concrete results are almost null until now, the introduction of this new strategy obviously raises the question of its compatibility with gender mainstreaming, which is supposed to be present since the approval of the first gender equality plan in 1997. As scholars have pointed out when referring to *mainstreaming diversity*, this coincidence does not exclude the possibility to witness a conflict between two types of mainstreaming and/or an evolution towards gender disappearance (See for instance Woodward, 2008).

Table. 1. Type of approach and type/s of strand/s included per policy plan²⁰.

PLAN	APPROACH
III National Plan for Equality: Citizenship and Gender 2007 – 2010.	Multiple (<i>gender</i> + race, territory of origin, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation)
Plan for the Integration of Immigrants	Multiple (<i>race/ ethnicity/ color/ religion</i> + gender)
I Action Plan for the Integration of People with Deficiencies or Disabilities 2006-2009	Multiple (<i>disability</i> + sex, social condition or ethnicity)
III National Plan for Social Inclusion 2006-2008	Multiple (<i>class</i> + age, gender, citizenship, disability or ethnicity)
National Plan for the European Year for Equality for All	Multiple (<i>gender</i> + age + sexual orientation + race/ethnicity + religion + belief + disability)
I Plan Against Human Trafficking	Multiple (<i>class</i> + gender + age + ethnicity + race + citizenship)
Program against Genital Mutilation	Multiple (<i>gender</i> + age, race, citizenship, religion)

Source: own data.

These policy documents are not only relevant when addressing the individuals at the intersections, but also for entailing a great degree of cooperation among the equality machineries. Due to the complex aims to be accomplished as well as the strands to be considered, all of these plans state that many governmental areas must be involved in their design and development. As it has been noted, Portuguese equality bodies have the special feature of taking part in the Presidency of the Council of Ministries since their creation. This fact has facilitated not only a mutual knowledge but has also generated a broad strategy based on coordinating all the governmental plans, leading to a dense ‘net’ of policies²¹. When referring to equality policies, this cooperation goes with the creation of a wide range of interdepartmental structures (Table. 2). The sole example of a stable structure set up by law is the *Inter-Ministerial Section* belonging to CIG, which seeks to involve all the governmental areas into gender policies. Anyhow, although the other ones are temporary structures attached to concrete actions, it is worth to note that they indicate the presence of a clear strategy based on considering that all of those issues - integration of migrants, social inclusion, human trafficking etc.- are not only transversal

²⁰ In Italic the prevalent axes.

²¹ Coordination goes beyond plans attached to the equality machineries and has indeed been amplified to other plans that have indirectly to do with equality such as the *National Plan for Employment* or the *Health National Plan*.

but also referred to several inequality strands. The presence of the CIG and the ACIDI in all these interdepartmental bodies shows the extent to which gender and race are considered both horizontal and interconnected issues.

Table 2. Type of member/s per institution.

STRUCTURE	MEMBERS
Inter-Ministerial Section of the Advisory Council (CIG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o All the Ministries
Mission Structure (European Year for Equal Opportunities of All)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o CIG o ACIDI o IPJ o INR o 2 departments o Coordination of the National Plan for Social Inclusion.
Working Group (National Plan for Social Inclusion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o INR o CITE o CIG o ACIDI o 9 departments o 2 external committees
Inter-ministerial Commission (National Plan for Social Inclusion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o CIG o ACIDI o 12 departments o Autonomous Regions (Açores and Madeira)
Inter-ministerial Commission (Plan for the Integration of Immigrants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o ACIDI o 7 departments o General Labor Inspector
Technical Commission (Plan Against Human Trafficking)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o CIG o ACIDI o INE o 14 departments
Inter-sector Group (Program against Genital Mutilation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o CIG o ACIDI o 3 departments
Interdepartmental Group (I Action Plan for the Integration of People with Deficiencies or Disabilities 2006-2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o INR o CIG o 14 departments

Source: own data.

As opposed to other countries, it seems that Portugal opted for an intermediate strategy, neither maintaining completely isolated bodies nor setting up a single one. Here, the EU model has a limited impact. Although some European priorities such as the social inclusion programs or the European years –for equal opportunities and intercultural dialogue- have had a clear impact on the Portuguese policies, it is evident that Portugal is far from adopting faithfully the European integrated model. Instead, a *third way* of dealing with intersectionality can be inferred. ‘Old’ equality bodies are far from being questioned since they are indeed leading many of these ‘new’ structures, which gives them a chance to be reinforced. Even if there is still a limited real cooperation among machineries, this Portuguese way of dealing with intersectionality provides a new manner of solving the single body ‘dilemma’. Thus, this combination of independent equality machineries with several coordinating and decisional bodies might overcome the weaknesses attached both to the separate (independent bodies) and the integrated model (single body). In this case there is a ‘watchdog’ coupled with each inequality, seeking to guarantee that it is transversally combated instead of transversally diluted. Parallel, the main role played by these ‘old’ bodies is balanced by the creation of these ‘new’ structures focused on coordination, negotiation and mutual knowledge, which could represent an appropriate manner for tackling intersecting inequalities. This

intermediate model actually raises the question of the extent to which the integrated approach is actually better. Literature has often taken for granted that the integrated approach means a step towards intersectionality, since separate equality bodies are linked to the traditional unitary approach. The Portuguese instance nevertheless gives the opportunity to explore whether or not an alternative model would be better for overcoming intersectionality main pitfalls, besides facilitating the introduction of a multiple inequalities agenda.

Participatory councils and the engagement of civil society: a window towards intersectionality?

Parallel with the abovementioned requirements -legal protection, coordination among equality bodies, consideration of intersectional identities in the equality plans etc.-, literature has also generated a debate on whether or not civil society participation is also needed for implementing an intersectional strategy. On the one hand, intersectionality not only represents a great opportunity for broadening and problematizing the equality agenda, but also a strong challenge to those inequalities – machineries, advocates and civil society organizations- that have already been consolidated. This fact raises the question of how to deal with this winners-losers ‘dilemma’ and its respective *oppression olympics*²². In this sense, some studies have underlined that the movement towards an integrated approach has indeed triggered a certain degree of competition among inequalities (Rolandsen, 2008; Lombardo and Verloo, 2008). Due to this, the engagement of civil society voices in policy making appears as a relevant tool for channelling this underlying and almost inherent tension. What is more, dialogue among groups is appropriate for diminishing essentialism and questioning internal hierarchies, blurring the division between *insiders* and *outsiders* (Squires, 2008a; Crenshaw, 1993). Previous unitary approaches indeed ended up reifying identities and giving little place for those individuals at the intersections. Intersectionality is expected to nuance this pattern by promoting external –coalitions, alliances etc.- and internal debate, as well as by addressing inequalities in a more deliberative and *open way* (Cole, 2008; Squires, 2008a; Yuval-Davis, 2006). In line with this, participation seems to be one of the best ways for avoiding some of the most relevant shortcomings attached to gender mainstreaming, that is, its technocratization and depolitization (See for instance Squires, 2005, 2008a). The core idea is to overcome the bureaucratic approach which has been labeled as neither transformative nor participatory, and to promote a more deliberative process. Finally, from a more practical point of view, consultation with civil society is also appropriate for acquiring an accurate knowledge about the individuals at the intersections. Given the complexity to achieve an infinitive variety of disaggregated data as well as the risk to be trapped in the Crenshaw’s ‘dilemma’ –visibility vs. stigmatization-, the presence of civil society groups appear as an easy and reliable way of grasping intersectional inequalities. The EU is one of the institutions that has bet for the presence of these ‘experts through experience’ the most. Thus, the strategy has been that of financing transnational NGOs networks and of establishing that civil society involvement is a main mean for achieving the EU targets²³.

When it comes to Portugal, participation also plays a relevant role. As opposed to other countries, structures focused on engaging civil society exist since the very

²² Martínez quoted by Hancock (2007).

²³ See for instance the *European Action Program Against Discrimination (2001-2006)*.

beginnings of each equality policy. The CIG and the INR thus set up their respective advisory councils in 1977, parallel with their own creation. The same occurred in the ACIDI, whose council was set up in 1998. It has been argued that this special feature is to be understood as a consequence of the corporatist tradition of this country, starting from the Salazar's regime (Nicholls, 2007). The *Estado Novo* was considered a paradigmatic example of a corporatist regime where the organization of workers into official unions was used by the regime in order to hinder oppositional groups, channel selective social policies and co-opt new elites (Wiarda quoted in Lucena, 1981). These precedents along with the *top-down* approach that still prevails in Portuguese policy-making determine that these participatory councils should be considered more as merely *consultative* than *incorporative* (Nicholls, 2007). In other words, the intention seems to be more that of engaging social movements in order to profit from their capabilities (knowledge, implementation tasks etc.) than a pure process of participation in the decision-making. Anyhow, these councils have been a relevant element for creating official ties with civil society organizations aim at facilitating their contributions. Due to this, it is worth to explore their potential role with regards to intersectionality.

Concerning the gender equality machinery, contacts with women's associations were already established in 1974 in order to prepare the *1st UN Conference on Women* held in Mexico. These informal ties were consolidated in 1977 when, parallel with the creation of the *Commission*, an *Advisory Council* was set up. It had a twofold objective²⁴. First, civil society engagement was guaranteed by the presence of a NGOs section, where women's and feminist associations were represented. Besides, an Inter-ministerial section was in charge of involving all governmental areas by gathering many ministerial representatives. Both elements point to the presence of a premature interest on horizontal implementation and social partnership²⁵. In comparison with other countries, Portugal has the special feature of not only having institutional feminism before a relevant feminist movement, but also of being the machinery which treated to engage civil society since its very beginnings (Valiente, 1998). In spite of its stable thirty-year trajectory, NGOs section has experienced three main stages. During the 70s and the 80s, it actually had a salutary effect on women's movement, facilitating the creation of ties and cooperative relations²⁶ (Tavares, 2000). The 90s witnessed the first conflicts concerning the equality body. Not only the inclusion in a concrete ministry was controversial, but also the reform of the advisory council, which led to several general organizations not related to women to be included (Tavares, 2000; Bento, 2000). The consequence was that of decreasing the activity and the common actions. Last shifts on the equality machinery along with the growing interest on addressing multiple inequalities caused the last modification of this participatory council which took place in 2007. The idea was to include both the LGBT movement and other sort of associations representing different inequalities such as disabilities or race, which are expected to facilitate a multiple approach. These new participants led to women's associations with a long trajectory to be excluded. Unsurprisingly, these shifts have been criticized once again by highlighting that this structure is progressively losing its feminist perspective²⁷. The strategy based on tackling women's multiple inequalities 'without' women has therefore not been accepted.

²⁴ Law-Decree 485/77.

²⁵ See www.cig.gov.pt.

²⁶ This cooperation meant that some non consensual topics such as abortion were kept out of the agenda.

²⁷ See for instance the opinion of two of the oldest feminist organizations, the Portuguese Communist Women (MCP) [http://www.pcp.pt/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=31701&Itemid=195]

As well as the CIG, other equality machineries have set up their respective participatory structures since the beginning of each policy issue. This is the case of the *National Council for the Rehabilitation and Integration of People with Deficiencies*²⁸ belonging to the INR, the *National Council of Youth*²⁹ attached to the IPJ and finally the *Advisory Council for Immigration Affairs* corresponding to the ACIDI³⁰. Even though all of them are focused on fostering civil society engagement in their respective fields, the latter council has the special characteristic of giving to the immigrant communities the responsibility to decide their own representatives³¹, which entails a greater degree of participation. The core idea is that of making policies not only *for* immigrants but also *with* immigrants³².

Given both this Portuguese tradition on creating participatory structures as well as the European interest on promoting them, it is rather expectable that the 'new' equality bodies also seek to involve civil society actors. This is the case of the national plans for social inclusion and for the *European Year for Equal Opportunities for all*. The former counts with a *Non Governmental Forum for Social Inclusion* (FNGIS), created in 2006 so that civil society can contribute to the design, implementation and evaluation of these sorts of policies. Its emergence can not be understood without considering EU policies, since civil society engagement is one of the four pillars of the EU social inclusion strategy and in addition, this institution did not hesitate on asking Portugal for fulfilling this requirement³³. As a result, the third and the fourth national plans have already been enriched with the contribution of a wide variety of NGOs. Likewise, this experience has triggered a quite active and independent network of associations working in the field of social inclusion. Regarding the *European Year for Equality for All*, it could be expected that the EU model was also relevant. Anyhow, the CIG, which was in charge of leading this plan in Portugal, profited from this opportunity for fostering the multiple approach it was already treating to introduce³⁴. For doing so, a special structure representing six equality strands plus some intersectional identities was set up (EMAEIOT).

All these participatory structures stem from the interest on involving civil society in policy making. But, in order to introduce an intersectional perspective, more than one axis should be represented. In this sense, it is worth to raise the question of who is represented in the participatory councils. (Table 3). In other words, is there an evident intention to represent several strands? And, has the structure been modified in order to do that? Generally speaking, their composition partially reflects the type of approach adopted by the plan/machinery they belong to³⁵. Thus, a *continuum* -'unitary-multiple' composition- can be drawn from those developing an evident unitary approach (INR), those including a slight multiple approach with more than one strand to be

and the Women's Democratic Movement (MDM).

[http://www.mdm.org.pt/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=102&Itemid=42].

²⁸ It was created by Law-Decree 346/77 of 20 August.

²⁹ It was initially created by Law-Decree 333/93 of 29 September.

³⁰ Law-Decree 39/98 of 27 February.

³¹ In Portugal, immigrants' associations are usually divided by country or region of origin. In line with this, the COCAI is integrated by one representative for each PALOP country (ex colonies with Portuguese language), that is, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea, Angola and Santo Tome, and one representative per each new community (Chinese, Eastern and Romanian).

³² Interview with Gonçalo Moita (Advisor of ACIDI).

³³ See for instance *European Council report on Social Integration* (15223/01 ADD 1).

³⁴ Interview with Dina Caço (Main Advisor of the Presidency of CIG).

³⁵ Here we assume that civil society organizations would push primarily for the advancement in those inequality fields they are specialized in.

represented (ACIDI and IPJ) and, finally, those that inform us about the presence of an incipient multiple perspective (CIG, FNGIS, EMAEIOT). Concerning the latter, structures attached to the CIG –advisory council and EMAEIOT- as well the one corresponding to the social inclusion plan, include a wide variety of organizations. When referring to CIG, this composition can not be understood without considering its growing interest on addressing women’s multiple inequalities. The presence of some intersectional identities representing ‘minorities within the minorities’ –lesbians, migrant women etc.- indeed highlights this emerging concern.

Table 3. Type of strands represented per participatory council.

COUNCIL	INEQUALITIES
NGOs Section of the Advisory Council (CIG)	Gender + citizenship + sexual orientation + disability + age+ religion +intersectional identities
Advisory Council (ACIDI)	Citizenship /ethnicity /race + class
National Council for the Rehabilitation and Integration of People with Deficiencies (INR)	Disability
National Council of Youth (IPJ)	Age + intersectional identities
Non Governmental Forum for Social Inclusion (Ministry of Work and Social Solidarity)	Gender + citizenship + disability + ethnicity + age
EMAEIOT- Mission Structure for the European Year for Equal Opportunity for All (CIG)	Gender + citizenship + sexual orientation + disability + ethnicity + age+ religion + intersectional identities

Source: own data

Due to this intersectional composition and their participatory aims, how do the civil society organizations assess these sort of structures? Do they consider them as an opportunity to build coalitions? As a challenge to what they have already achieved? The oldest and most relevant council is the one belonging to the CIG, with more than thirty years of experience. As it has been noted, its progressive modifications have been criticized because of the decreasing presence of the women’s movement. Additionally, some voices have questioned the extent to which this council has contributed to feminist NGOs to be instrumentalized and neutralized, keeping many relevant issues out of the agenda (Bento, 1998; Amâncio, 1998). The independency of the feminist and women’s movement was therefore questioned, arguing that it has been co-opted both by the state and political parties. Given this context, it is worth to scrutinize how other councils are being valued. Exploratory interviews with civil society representatives have provided us with some remarkable clues. Although NGOs are aware of their limited impact in the policy making, it must be highlighted that participatory councils are positively appraised. They are indeed labeled as an appropriate way of making contacts with other groups, of managing divergences and of improving the awareness concerning multiple discriminations. Regarding the LGBT movement, participation means even more that this, since sexual orientation related NGOs had never been represented in official bodies before. This involvement has thus contributed to the visibility and the legitimation of these groups. When asked about the emergence of conflicts, all the interviewed agreed on the presence of an inherent tension among associations. Curiously enough, this fact has been positively valued, stating that divergences are not only expectable when gathering many different groups but also desirable. This means that rather than being

rejected, differences are considered as a positive effect stemming from social diversity. In spite of this smooth acceptance, it is also commonly claimed that, besides tackling multiple inequalities and fostering this participatory process, specific policies and machineries are still needed. The main concern is that of recognizing that each inequality has its own characteristics. In words of one of the interviewed, “it is only possible to elaborate a plan which addresses a lot of discriminations, if the specificities of each one are taken into account”³⁶. This nuance poses the challenge of how to hinder the approach “one size fits all”, which disregards that there is no a magic recipe for dealing with all inequalities (Verloo, 2006). Another idea that has been repeatedly mentioned is the necessity to hinder stigmatization. Although NGOs are aware of the presence of multiple discriminations, they point to the potential pitfall of reifying stereotypes about concrete groups. The Crenshaw ‘dilemma’ emerges once again by underlining that to address an intersectional inequality and to stigmatize a group are extremely close processes (Crenshaw, 1993). To sum up, social movements have intuitively pointed to the intersectionality main pitfalls, highlighting that its inclusion can go with several unintended consequences.

This quite smooth acceptance of participatory and partially ‘intersectional’ councils is far from being accidental. Rather, civil society organizations have been developing a cooperative strategy since the beginnings of the 00s, when the *Portuguese Social Forum* took place. This event acted as a turning point, triggering very strong ties among civil society organizations and paving the way for a stable partnership (Santos, 2005). After that, the tendency was that of reinforcing common campaigns -Gay Pride, Women’s World etc.- as well as of increasing their concern on intersecting inequalities. When referring to the former, NGOs have developed a wide variety of alliances, provoking that individual actions seldom occur. Portuguese ‘hottest’ debates, that is, the approval of laws concerning legalization of abortion and same-sex couples, were indeed a milestone in this evolution. Social mobilization was extraordinary, especially during the second referendum concerning abortion in 2007, and cross-cutting alliances, mainly between women’s movement, trade unions, LGBT associations and migrants, were a noticeable element on explaining the successful achievements. Partnership between women’s and LGBT movements is especially remarkable, since patriarchy has acted as a strong liaison facilitating a stable collaboration. Due to these external contacts, the internal way of dealing with inequalities has also been affected. Many organizations have not only improved the awareness on their own diversity, but have also created special sections aiming at debating on how other strands might affect their members³⁷.

This tendency might indicate a slight evolution from traditional coalitions, that is, agreements concerning concrete issues where differences among groups are merely hidden, to *rainbow coalitions*, where specificities are visible, debates about oppressions are open and mutual support goes beyond occasional moments (Young, 2000)³⁸. In this case, boundaries between insiders and outsiders become blurred and there is more room for considering individuals at the intersections.

³⁶ Interview with Paulo Côte-Real (President of ILGA-Portugal).

³⁷ See for instance the Group GIRLS (*Group for Intervention and Reflection on Lesbianism*) belonging to ILGA-Portugal and the *Women’s Migrants Group* corresponding to Solidaridade Imigrante. The creation of the latter group had much to do with its participation into the Women’s World March 2000.

³⁸ This concept was introduced by Sheila Collins aim at analysing the coalition of blacks, Latinos, Asian Americans, American Indians, and poor whites during the US presidential election in 1984 (See Collins, Sheila (1986), *The Rainbow Challenge: The Jackson Campaign and the Future of U.S. Politics*, New York: Monthly Review Press.). Young introduces it as part of her analysis concerning a heterogeneous public space.

The ‘new’ and the ‘old’ participatory councils, especially those which are more intersectional, seem to contribute to this incipient cooperation, creating new ‘meeting points’ for civil society organizations. Generally speaking, Portuguese long tradition on creating these sort of structures as well as civil society experiences on building coalitions seem to have paved the way for constructing a potential deliberative way of dealing with intersectionality. Although these are only advisory councils with little impact on policy making, they represent a clear example of how to open the possibility to fulfil of some of its proposed requirements: representation, knowledge and deliberation.

4. Conclusions

This article sought to capture what is the Portuguese way of dealing with intersectionality. In so doing, Hancock’s typology has been used as a key analytical tool in order to clarify how, when and by whom are inequalities tackled. The main conclusion is that Portugal is progressively moving towards a multiple approach. Equality bodies and legislation still show a strong unitary perspective, since they are mostly conceived for addressing one-single axis. Likewise, the hierarchy among inequalities is still to be removed. There are in fact some inequalities with a long tradition, namely gender, disabilities and race, and others that have just been taken into consideration. Very recent plans and the new institutional architecture nevertheless point to an incipient multiple approach. The equality agenda has been broadened in order to encompass multiple and/or additive inequalities, mainly by considering some individuals at the intersections. The quality of equality policies has thus been improved by considering the heterogeneous composition of target groups, by strengthening the presence of a gender perspective in other equality policies or by including new issues in the policy agenda. It is worth to note that this new approach is remarkably present with regards to gender policies, since women’s multiple inequalities take already part in the agenda. Cooperation among equality bodies has also contributed to this emerging model. Rather than introducing the EU integrated approach, the strategy is that of maintaining several bodies centred on concrete strands, along with a growing interest on considering that both policy aims and their respective institutions must be interconnected by a ‘net’ of policies. In addition to this, Portugal has also shown a great interest on engaging civil society actors into policy-making. Due to a long tradition on creating participatory councils, new equality policies opted for involving a wide variety of NGOs, representing different strands. This recent shift could potentially treat intersectionality as an *open empirical -and political- question*.

What is interesting in the Portuguese case is its special institutional arrangement. Literature has usually explored intersectionality by employing a dichotomist model, based on the presence of a pure separated approach, with several equality bodies focused on unitary policies, and an integrated approach, with a single body embracing all the strands and their respective interactions. The evolution towards the latter model has been usually identified as positive, since policies would supposedly adopt a more intersectional perspective. However, the possibility to adopt an intermediate model has not been considered yet. Here, Portugal shows an example of a *third way* of dealing with intersectionality, where neither an integrated approach nor a pure separate one have been implemented. Rather, the idea was that of maintaining the old equality bodies, though establishing a strong cooperation among them, aim at considering multiple inequalities. This *coordinated model* goes with policies adopting an incipient

multiple approach. Thus, they are targeted at concrete groups at the intersections, giving more room for intra-category diversity. It could be argued that the Portuguese model is under-developed when comparing with the integrated approach that other countries have just introduced. These single bodies have indeed been described as more accurate for tackling intersecting inequalities. However, so far we do not know much about the outcomes of these sort of bodies and/or whether they can actually implement transformative and intersectional policies. What is more, there is nor a deep knowledge on how to implement policies which systematically consider inequalities as mutually constitutive. What is nevertheless commonly accepted is that policies addressing structural inequalities are likely to be poorly implemented as well as diluted in the mainstream. Given both elements, the *coordinated model* appears as an alternative and potentially more realistic way of approaching this issue. Although inequalities might not be treated as intersectional, coordination among specialized equality bodies could provide with some key elements such as knowledge, tools or policy networks, which have been described as crucial when referring to other policies, namely gender mainstreaming. Furthermore, the coordinated model may contribute to overcome main shortcomings attached to the integrated model –lack of expertise, lack of resources, contradictory goals, workload etc. - as well as to provide with some of their main advantages –transfer knowledge, address multiple inequalities, coherent policies etc.-. If moving beyond institutional architecture, the coordinated model also gives the opportunity to rethink the concept of velvet triangles (Woodward, 2004). The presence of a net of equality bodies might in fact lead to the construction of cross-cutting alliances gathering policy makers, academics and activist focused on different inequalities. Here, we could propose the term *rainbow triangles* as an appropriate manner of capturing this emerging complexity and exploring new venues for intersectionality politics.

To sum up, intersectionality theory has insisted in the necessity to consider inequalities as mutually constitutive and to move beyond former policies targeted at concrete intersectional groups. However, it has been rarely discussed the feasibility of this new approach and their likelihood to be successfully implemented. The Portuguese instance gives the opportunity to explore an alternative model, based on a multiple approach. Further research is needed in order capture the extent to which this *coordinated model* can contribute to an intersectional perspective to be actually included.

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