



Quality in Gender+ Equality Policies

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Elena Del Giorgio, Emanuela Lombardo,
Valentina Longo, and Francesca Vianello

Report Analysing Intersectionality in Gender Equality Policies for Italy and the EU

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1. Introduction

This STRIQ report on the Italian case focuses on the way in which the effects of intersecting inequalities are framed and regulated in gender+ equality policies in Italy. It addresses the question of intersectionality considered as both an analytical tool and a policy practice. The concept of intersectionality has been progressively employed in the past decade in the fields of political theory, law, and sociology (see Crenshaw 1989; Walby 2007; Verloo 2006). In particular, it has been used to show that inequalities, in specific cases, can intersect by producing consequences that go beyond the mere sum of the different inequalities taken separately, and by discriminating groups at the points of intersection. Whilst from the theoretical point of view the resonance of idea of intersectionality is established, systematic and broad empirical political research on the topic has only recently started to develop. This report aims at contributing to fill this gap by providing an analysis of the Italian case. In particular, the main question that it addresses is: to what extent is an intersectional approach present in Italian gender+ equality policies?

As it will emerge in the sections of this report, an intersectional approach has not yet fully entered Italian legislation. Some first attempts at identifying intersecting discriminations of different nature are very recent and in these cases intersections are rather framed in terms of “multiple discriminations”. The recently developed institutional approach to multiple inequalities seems to be a unitary and separate one (see Hancock 2007), and the framing of intersectionality in policy debates appears rather inarticulate or additive. Yet the Italian case is interesting from several points of view. Traditionally a country of emigrants, Italy has been facing regular immigration flows only from the 1990s. Such a structural development is raising new questions and introducing the need for new regulations on several topics. The way in which ethnicity, citizenship status and religion are discussed and treated vis-à-vis already established inequalities such as those of class and age can thus provide us with interesting results. Italy is also a country traditionally marked by strong ideological divides and where the influence of the Catholic hierarchies is particularly strong. This is reflected particularly in the issues of intimate citizenship and gender based violence and can help us in considering the way in which the broader cultural and social context affects the use and the content of intersectionality. Moreover, Italy exhibits another peculiarity; whilst not being a federal state it shows remarkable territorial differences. The analysis of the way in which national legislation includes and treats this source of inequalities is also of interest. The increasingly relevant demographic problem linked to an ageing population and a low birth-rate brings an age dimension onto the agenda, emerging in the debate on pension reform in relation to class and gender. The prevalence of the class component is also part of the Italian Communist Party heritage, and it appears in non employment issues in different political dynamics. A rich civil society context also characterises the Italian case, showing differences in the political articulation of intersectionality between institutional and civil society actors. Finally, another relevant question concerns the influence of the European level on domestic regulations. The extent to which European Directives and general discourses penetrate the national level are of particular importance in a comparative project such as QUING.

Besides the previously mentioned general question, the report will address further more specific questions. These can be mainly divided into three sections: The first concerns the way in which gender equality and intersectionality are framed in the Italian case; The second focuses on the way in which intersectionality has been institutionalized and treated in Italian legislation and gender equality machinery; Finally, the report will investigate the relation between civil society associations and institutional actors, trying to assess the extent to which civil society is influencing the way in which an intersectional approach is introduced.

The structure of the report is aimed at covering these three specific questions. First of all, a review of the existing literature on intersectionality in Italy will be provided. The Italian literature, while not explicitly naming intersectionality, provides important analyses of single inequalities and, in some cases, multiple inequalities. The literature also reflects broader structural developments in the country, mainly focusing on issues related to the labour market and to the family and only recently having started to tackle the issue of immigration and, in particular, of sexual orientation and ethnicity.

Section 3 and section 4 will be devoted to the analysis of the way in which gender equality and intersectionality are framed in the four QUING issues in the Italian case. As shown in section 3, the framing of gender in Italy reflects the main approaches that have traditionally marked Italian feminism: gender as sameness, gender as difference and more recently gender as transformation. As to the broader framing of gender equality, *equality* appears to be the predominant frame in the four sub-issues. In the non-employment issue, however, the *economic development* frame is also frequently present. In general, what can be defined as the *familism* frame is often used. In Section 3 the main axes of inequalities considered in Italian policies and political debate will be identified, noting that class and age appear to be the axes that are most often considered, followed by citizenship status, marital status and sexuality.

Section 5 will be devoted to the analysis of the way in which intersectionality has been institutionalized, considering the general legislation as well as the more specific legislation across the QUING sub-issues. Furthermore, the analysis will examine the national gender equality machinery in order to assess – using Hancock’s categories (Hancock 2007) – whether a unitary, multiple or intersectional approach is prevailing. It will be argued that in Italy a rather unitary and separate approach is present since different discriminations tend to be addressed by *ad hoc* bodies. Yet, some attempt at introducing a multiple approach has been recently been made, especially through the inclusion of civil society actors in the machinery. This process, however, is generally linked to the colour of the party in Government; with left-wing Governments proving more likely to employ the term ‘multiple discriminations’ and being more open towards civil society.

With regard to the latter topic, Section 6 will analyze the way in which civil society actors frame intersectionality as well as their capacity to influence legislation and engage with gender equality machinery. On the one hand, the peculiar features of the Italian feminist

movement – being rooted mainly at the local level; the traditional autonomy vis-à-vis the institutional realm theorized and practiced by some of its most influential parts; and the ties with left-wing trade unions – have largely affected the degree of and the type of institutionalization of gender equality policies and intersectionality. On the other hand, a closer analysis of the Italian political system and its political divides help in understanding institutional-civil society relations.

Finally, in Section 7 the main legal changes in which landmarks of intersectionality can be detected will be described and interpreted. In this section we will also focus on very recent developments in Italian legislation and machinery on gender equality. The updating of the results gathered through the initial document analysis will help in distinguishing possible regularities and/or trajectories with regard to intersectionality.

At the end of the report some conclusions on the Italian case will be drawn by comparing and summarising the previous sections. The conclusions will be followed by an Annex that includes tables which summarise the occurrences of intersectionality in QUING coded documents together with some methodological reflections.

2. Literature review

In Italy the literature related to intersectionality is scarce and predominantly descriptive. It provides some analyses of existing inequalities, but only seldom offers interpretations of such phenomena. Most of the literature that we review does not directly analyse the mechanisms through which intersections are built and the reasons why they produce inequalities. Nevertheless, it is possible to trace such phenomena in studies related to the female condition and to social inequalities.

In order to frame the Italian analysis on multiple inequalities, an important contribution is that of Bimbi (2003). In her study, the author proposes an outline of sociological surveys on 8 issues considered as particularly significant in order to analyze the ways in which feminist studies risk remaining invisible or marginalised. The book focuses on the following issues: employment, education, political representation, poverty, health, domestic and sexual violence and prostitution. In her introduction Bimbi traces the complex intersections between feminist reflections and their reception by sociology and statistics, trying to connect the spread of a differentialist paradigm within Italian feminist thought with more general processes of 'otherness', definition and construction that are typical of multicultural societies. In this volume the contributions that emphasise the serious Italian problem of insufficient statistical data are particularly important, because they explain the difficulties in the analysis of the intersections. For instance, Ruspini (2003) observes that it is very difficult to analyse the gender dimension, since many studies and official statistics often do not regularly provide information disaggregated by sex.

Also the book edited by Leccardi (2002) reflects upon the issue of intersectionality. The editor stresses how this approach paying attention to the intersections of gender with culture, ethnicity, etc., has only recently been embraced by a new generation of Women Studies' researchers and academics in Italy, who for a long time have based their analysis on the classic distinction between gender and sex.

The more developed branches of research in which it is possible to detect intersectionality are: 1) the studies on social inequalities taking into consideration the *inequalities in the labour market*, 2) the studies investigating the correlation between *gender and the status of immigrant*, and 3) the studies analyzing *familism and heteronormativity* from the policies and the labour point of view.

1) Studies on inequalities and/in the labour market

Maria Luisa Bianco is one of the most representative authors of this branch of research. Her book *Italy of inequalities* (2001) is a collection of studies on the production and reproduction of inequalities in different local societies that are considered ideal-types: Turin, a society with a rooted Fordist tradition; two industrial districts compared with their tertiary cities, Prato and Florence in the first case, and Montebelluna and Padua in the second case; and Naples, a large Southern city. The study of intersections among *class, gender* and the different

geographical areas is particularly widespread in Italy, given that there are deep differences between the North and the South of the country (the so called *questione meridionale*), but also between and within regions. For instance, women living in Southern Italy have a quadruple probability in comparison to those in the North of being unemployed (Gambardella, Morlicchio 2005). By now, the awareness that inequalities are produced and reproduced according to the local social, economic and cultural context is shared among social scientists. Bianco (2001) studies these inequalities in the labour market from a gender point of view. Thus, the intersectionality that she considers is that between *gender, geographical area and familial status*. The author finds that, despite the fact that differences among men and women in the labour market have been reduced in the last decades, a system of inequality in the modality of participation in the labour market still persists. Within the labour market married women are more disadvantaged than unmarried ones, because the former have more discontinuous careers (due to the uneven division of care responsibilities between the sexes and the insufficient childcare and other public care services). The research highlights that marriage has negative implications for women's professional development, in particular for those less educated, and it is one of the main causes of the reproduction of gender inequalities. Indeed, a lot of women leave their job after marriage and some of them also prior to their marriage. The data gathered allow the definition of three different situations from a gender perspective related to geographical areas:

1. North-West/Centre: in this area, careers are more stable and continuous, with a high quota of women working full time and in the industry. In this area, the lack/insufficiency of a public system of care services is the principal reason for women leaving the labour market.
2. South: in this territory working opportunities are few for both women and for men, with 40% of women having never entered the labour market.
3. North-east: here the model of female participation in the labour market is largely non-existent because the priority is given to the family. In addition, men have a lot of possibilities of upward mobility, while women have few chances of professional improvement and greater risk of losing their social status. Usually women do unskilled and ungratifying jobs that offer few possibilities to take part to a social network with high social capital.

The poor workers issue is analysed by Ruspini and Saraceno (1999), and Morlicchio (2000), who highlight the intersections between gender, territorial context and familial status. According to these researchers, female workers more affected by poverty are single women in Northern Italy and lone mothers and women living with a partner with children in the South. The relatively high presence of single poor working women in the Centre-north is explained by the intersection between *class and age*: in Northern Italy there are a high proportion of single elderly women.

In the branch of research on social inequalities there is also a book edited by Gambino, Mingione and Pristinger (2003), in which the reproduction of inequalities and the relevance of social capital is investigated in two case studies, both of them situated in Veneto region:

Padua and Montebelluna. The research studies the evolution of social inequalities from a historical perspective taking into consideration the economic and social development of these two contexts starting from the post-war period. Therefore, the intersection between the territorial specificity and the female condition reappears again. Furthermore, particular attention is devoted to the role of social networks and to the ways of activation of social capital, comparing gender and generations. The most notable chapter is edited by Emanuela Abbatecola ("Female work. Working trajectories and relational models among gender and generations"). Abbatecola, both in this contribution (2003) and in another monograph (2002), shows that the reproduction of gender inequalities is due, besides the pattern of work division, to the typology of women's social networks. Usually, women are polarized around private friendship networks that are based on relationships among people that share an elective affinity but not an activity. Men, on the contrary, become friends with people with whom they share an activity. Female networks are less exploitable from the occupational point of view than the masculine ones, since they are more homogeneous. Furthermore, women attend public places less than men and this fact limits their social relations to the private sphere. It has to be noted though that this pattern is now changing because young women, more educated than their mothers, are more present in the public sphere and have relational strategies more similar to those of men.

Another study related to the intersection between gender and territorial context in the production of inequalities is *Territorial patterns and gender differences* by Biadene, Cacioppo, Icone, Peducci and Piazza (1994). The investigation introduced in this volume concerns the education, work and family trajectories of adult women living in the Veneto region. Veneto is an Italian region that at the time of the research was experiencing remarkable economic and social transformations. The research investigates the implications of the transformation on female life conditions and on models of female identity. In comparison with other regions of Northern Italy, Veneto is characterized by the presence of marked gender inequalities. Two-thirds of the sample do not have qualifications higher than the compulsory school attendance, women tend to enter the labour market soon after school but also exit it relatively early (often after the birth of their first child) and two-thirds of employed women are low skilled employees.

Finally, continuing in the branch of studies that intersects gender with territorial context in order to analyse the production of social inequalities, there is the book of Donatella Barazzetti (2007). It connects two fields that the sociological tradition has rarely examined together: market based work and care work. The author devotes a section of the book to the analysis of the literature that has examined women's work conditions in Southern Italy from the 70s. Barazzetti notes that a fundamental shift in the feminist reflection on gender inequalities in Italy took place at the Messina AIS (Italian Sociological Association) conference of 1992, "Women of the South", because the possibility to speak of Southern women as a homogeneous category emerged (p. 62). In addition, the author dedicates a broad section to female migrations and examines in particular the intersection among *gender, race and class* that is essential to research on immigrants involved in domestic work. The author analyses especially the category of race that has still little diffusion in Italy.

Barazzetti quotes some studies on female immigrants' working conditions in Italy (Andall 2000; Anderson 2000; Scrinzi 2004). Such studies highlight the racial division of care work and the existence of asymmetrical race and class relations among women. In synthesis, the interpretation of these scholars is that a racial and sexual segmentation of the division of labour is in progress. Such segmentation would produce in unskilled, underpaid and unrecognized sectors a racialized female work force (see also Eurispes 2002; Zanfrini 2005).

Campani (2000) analyzes, for the first time in Italy, the intersection among *gender, ethnic group and class*. Campani introduces the Anglo-American literature on female migrations and states that in order to articulate the variables of gender, ethnic group and class, women have to be analysed both as a female component of migrations and as a migrant component of women as a group. The author investigates the specificities of female migrations concerning social exclusion and social networks and concludes her book with the analysis of the Maghrebine women's migratory experience in Italy, detailing in particular their relationship with Islam and the necessity to find new paths of intercultural education.

2) Studies on gender and immigration

The literature related to female immigration is well developed, though there are few studies on social inequalities concerning this group. Mariti (2003) investigates the 'loneliness period' that makes migrant women particularly vulnerable, a period that begins on arrival and finishes when they start to rethink their vision of the world and begin to form new relationships. The author proposes some indicators, based on the Agil pattern, in order to analyse social loneliness and the level of integration. On the integration issue we can also find D'Ignazi's book (2004), which collects narrations by foreign women living in Italy. The women interviewed talk about their experience as immigrants in a society that is increasingly multicultural and about the redefinition of their female identity which is placed between two different cultures, that of the origin community and that of the country of destination.

Lombardi (2005) studies the correlation between differences and gender inequalities, health conditions and cultural patterns, focusing attention on reproductive health as an indicator of well-being and of social development. Thus, the volume examines the intersection between the *status of immigrant and reproductive health*, where data are easier to find considering the strong medicalization of female body in the western countries. According to Lombardi, the dimension of health is a fundamental element in understanding patterns of inequalities. The book suggests that female immigrants' health condition is similar to the male condition, even though there is some specificity linked to migratory typology and to gender. The author quotes the data from research into immigrants' perception of health, showing that Eastern European women point to psychological factors as a risk for their health, while North-African women point to the difficulties in communication as a risk factor for their health. The book also contains an analysis of good practice, using the example of a family advisory centre (*Consultorio familiare*) in Milan that reorganized its services following an increased number of foreign women among its patients.

The correlation between health condition and the status of immigrant is also named in Facchini and Ruspini (2001). Their book draws out the intersection between *health, gender and poverty*. The authors notice how an accumulation of multiple inequalities is visible through the analysis of health conditions. Indeed, many studies highlight that precarious health conditions are often correlated to bad working and living conditions, difficulties in accessing medical care and heavy care work responsibilities. Payne's essay, "Illness and female roles: economic dependence, care responsibility and poverty", tackles the interrelation between care responsibility, domestic work and female health. Payne argues that women doing a lot of domestic work pay a price in terms of health, both mentally and physically, since such work includes muscular tears, exposure to toxic chemical substances, anxiety, stress, depression and low self-esteem. Payne further observes that maternity worsens women's health conditions, particularly if they are poor, because becoming mother means an increase of responsibility and, therefore, of stress. Another intersection considered is between *gender and age*. In old age, gender differences in health and economic conditions become stronger. Women are more affected by illnesses and have a higher risk of poverty. "Elderly women are poorer, because of domestic and care responsibilities assumed in the past" (p. 198). Consequently, due to the close connection between poverty and illness, elderly women are more easily affected by chronic illnesses.

3) Studies on gender, familism and heteronormativity

The studies that analyze the implications of familism and heteronormativity on policies and access to the labour market highlight that having a family has a negative influence on women's life trajectories. Ruspini (2000) broadly analyses the intersections between the *gender dimension of poverty and age, family status, working conditions and territorial context* in the production of social inequalities. The author synthesizes the results of the National Research Project "Paths and processes of poverty feminization in Italy" (coordinated by Prof. Enzo Mingione). This project provides profiles of the women who are at risk of poverty in the North and the South of the country. The first profile that emerges from the study is that of single mothers, who experience serious difficulties in the reconciliation of family and working life. In second place are unemployed women, or women with a low wage or precarious job, who are dependent upon their partner. The research highlights that low personal autonomy produces poverty and further dependence. In third place are housewives of large families and women in families with serious problems (for instance, having a disabled family member or dependent elderly relatives). Finally, there are elderly women who lack self-sufficiency (from both the health and economic point of view) and who are affected by isolation (Trifiletti 1996, 1999; Zanatta 1997; Facchini 1994, 1996, 1997, 1999). Concerning the intersection between gender and territorial context, the research highlights that in Northern Italy the more vulnerable female category comprises lone elderly women (Mingione 1997; Sgritta, Gallina, Romano 1997; Facchini 1999), while in the Southern Italy it is working class housewives (Cammarota 1999; Morlicchio 2000). This aspect is also confirmed by more recent research (Gambardella and Morlicchio 2005) which highlights that in Naples poverty is more prevalent among large families, and it concerns primarily adult or elderly women, mainly housewives or informal workers.

In Italy, studies on 'new families' have particular importance, often such studies analyse the category of single mothers (Zanatta 1996, 2003; Bosco 2000; Bimbi 2000; Bimbi, Trifiletti 2006). This literature takes into consideration the relation between female poverty and the status of single parent. Usually, the burden family responsibilities, added to low incomes and precarious housing conditions, results in single-parent families falling into poverty. The aim of the book edited by Bimbi (2000) is to look at welfare state policies and their transformations to understand what happens to family centred policies in a process of defamiliarization of society and with increasing instability of family relations as traditionally defined in marriage boundaries. Single mothers are discovered to be 'embarrassing' characters in a familialist welfare state. This is because dependency on family relations and networks no longer works as a resource for them. The analysis takes into consideration the social security privileges given to married couples in order to unveil the apparently neutral civil rights policies as inherently discriminatory ones. Starting from the historical and comparative perspective of the first essays (Ruspini 2000; Simoni 2000; Terragni 2000), Bimbi conducts a policy analysis showing how lone mothers have become invisible at the time when entitlements have been targeted directly to children. Finally, empirical analysis details local policies for single mothers in some provinces (Venice, Naples, Ravenna) and traces the ways social service operators and staff construct definitions of single mothers, operating various forms of ambiguous stigmatization of their behaviours, often with an implicit moral judgment of the single or divorced clients.

Bimbi and Trifiletti (2006) examine the single-parent family topic, looking at single mothers in different territorial contexts (Milan and Naples) and widening the analyses to new typologies of families. They take into consideration gender relations from three axes of intercultural comparison: women and men's cultures; native and migrant cultures; heterosexual and homosexual cultures. Therefore, families with single fathers, those with distant mothers and those with homosexual parents are all analysed.

Minor literature for 'new' inequalities

Beyond these well-developed research branches there are other less developed ones that analyse important intersections: 1) *gender and sexual orientation*; and 2) *gender, ethnic group and sexual exploitation*.

The literature on homosexuality is not very developed in Italy, particularly on lesbians, probably due to the strong social invisibility that still characterizes this group. There are two notable texts of interest for the QUING project. Both are based on questionnaires compiled by lesbians and not on official data since official statistics never report on people's sexual orientation in order to protect their privacy. The first one is an article edited by Ruspini and Zajczyk in 1993. The research summarized in the article was based on a sample of 465 interviewees, of which only 30 were women. The difficulty in identifying and contacting the interviewees in a general context of invisibility of the issue from Italian social sciences' studies and policies is mentioned as the main reason for the imbalance in the sample. The

investigated issues concern the reality and feelings of being discriminated against in the workplace, and trust in trade unions and associations defending gay and lesbian rights. Discrimination and homophobia are found as being concrete phenomena differentiated along class and gender lines: male teachers and women show the highest degrees of victimization for their sexual orientation even if the latter ascribes it more to their being women than lesbians. The second text is a book edited by the Group for Lesbian Subjectivity and the Free Women University of Milan (2005). It shows the results of 700 questionnaires compiled by lesbians. The brief section devoted to the work environment shows there is a certain resistance to declare sexual orientation in the workplace because of the fear of discrimination. This concern is particularly experienced by women working in the educational sector.

The intersection of gender with immigrant status re-emerges concerning sexual exploitation. Academic focus on the issue of forced prostitution has started recently, often paying attention to the intersections of gender and ethnicity especially after the increased presence of migrant women among trafficked persons sold within the sex market. Many of the books and articles focus on the implementation and the limits of Law 269/1998 on sexual exploitation and prostitution of minors and others, and aim at giving practitioners methodological tools to work with women prostitutes. The literature shows how prostitution among foreign women does not derive from a personal or voluntary decision, but from entry into an organized market that exploits women's desire to migrate (Parmagnani 2000). The literature often examines the policies and the experiences of social intervention directed at, for instance, the points of entry into prostitution and to the construction of exit paths, in order to identify good practices (Progetto Integra-Ippolita 2000). The book by Carchedi, Piccolini, Mottura and Campani (2000) aims at clarifying the complex interrelations between migration, prostitution, and trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation. They frame their sociological reflections and analyses within the international debate on the issues. They provide a detailed description of the Italian situation based on data from national surveys and they identify typologies and forms of prostitution, ethnic differences and the situation of transsexual people. The main policy guidelines for interventions are presented together with laws for repressing traffickers, preventing trafficking and encouraging victims provide information, as well as social policies. An entire chapter details the Italian legal developments and normative framework (proposed bills are included) while the last 3 sections collect and present a selection of best practices for social interventions from Italy, Spain and Greece. Abbatecola (2005) analyses the labour inclusion paths of migrant women from a particular viewpoint, the work experiences of foreign women, formerly forced into prostitution, who have joined social protection programmes. Abbatecola (2006) offers an analysis of migrant prostitution basing her reflections upon rich research material from intense field work in two metropolitan contexts, Milan and Genoa. Finally there is a very specialized literature that examines from a legal and cultural point of view a particular kind of gender based violence, that of female genital mutilation (Corti 2006, Facchi 2004; Miazzi, Vanzan 2006).

2.1 Concluding remarks and emerging questions

Literature on intersectionality as it has been conceptualized in the most important theoretical contributions and empirical studies on the issue (Crenshaw 1989, Hancock 2007) as well as within the QUING project itself (Verloo 2006, Walby 2007) is rather absent in the Italian case. Yet Italian academics have often broadened the analysis on gender to consider the effect of other axes of inequalities on specific social categories. As demonstrated above, most studies tackle intersections among *class*, *gender* and the different *geographical* areas in the labour market due to the importance of the Italian territorial differentiation. Another branch of studies focuses on gender and migration, exploring in particular the intersection of *health*, *gender and poverty*. A third group centres on the intersection among *gender and family status*, *sometimes in relation also to poverty, age, working conditions and territorial context*. More recently emerging research tackles the intersection of gender and sexual orientation, and of gender, ethnicity and sexual exploitation.

The larger branch of literature mainly focuses on the effect of the organization of the labour market in specific local contexts on women and on gender relations. Another important part of the literature addresses the question of the gender distribution of roles within the families as well as those issues related with heteronormativity. These two strands of academic work reflect both traditional structural characteristics and the main cultural patterns of Italian society. On the one hand, the still pervasive concern with class-based issues rooted in the Italian socialist/communist cultural and legislative tradition re-emerges. On the other hand, the organization of Italian society around the 'family' as the constitutive social unit has prompted scholars to investigate familiar relations and their consequences from a gendered point of view. Italian literature, moreover, pays widespread attention to the geographical factor based on the significant differences existing between diverse regional/local contexts in terms of economic development, social services, political culture and broader social organisation. Literature on immigration, whilst already well developed, is more recent. In contrast, few and even more recent, are those contributions concerning sexual orientation and ethnicity. The growing immigration flows over the past decade and the increased visibility of the LGBTQ 'community' have introduced 'new' potential foci which are only just beginning to be analysed.

Considering these peculiarities of the Italian case, in this report we will try to answer the common QUING research questions on intersectionality in gender+ equality policies and to raise and address some further **questions** more specific to our case study.

The first general and underlying question is:

- To what extent is intersectionality present in Italian gender equality policies?

From this broad question we can derive further sets of questions:

- How is gender equality framed in Italian legislation?
- How is gender conceived or constructed?
- Is gender equality de-gendered?

Once the way in which gender equality is framed in the four sub-issues in the Italian case is established, a further cluster of questions will be raised directly concerning intersectionality:

- What are the main axes of inequalities regulated by Italian gender policies?
- How is intersectionality framed?
- To what extent are Italian equality policies marked by an intersectional approach?
- If present, what kind of approach prevails? Is it a unitary or a multiple approach?
- When new axes of inequalities are introduced, do policies become de-gendered?
- To what extent do the persisting 'ideological fractures' marking Italian society and political culture – mainly that between the “white” conservative Catholic subculture and the “red”, laic, socialist/communist subculture - affect the way in which intersectionality is framed and put into practice?
- Are specific institutional actors or bodies 'better' at framing intersectionality than others?

Another set of questions concerns analysis of the ways in which intersectionality has been institutionalized:

- What is the main legislation about gender equality?
- What are the main bodies dealing with gender equality?
- To what extent and how do they address more than one inequality?
- To what extent do the different bodies carry out coordinated and/or joint activities?
- What are the main legislative turning points concerning intersectionality?
- Is Italian gender equality machinery consistent with the legislation?

Other questions address the relationship between institutional actors and civil society organizations:

- How do civil society organizations frame intersectionality?
- What are the relations between institutions and civil society actors? Are civil society actors included in some way in the institutional machinery?

3. The range of the meanings or frames concerning gender equality in gender+ equality policies

This section will be devoted to the analysis of the main frames underlying gender+ equality policies in Italy. In all of the four QUING issues the question of whether and in what terms gender is invoked and understood will be addressed. Furthermore, the following paragraphs will provide an account of the different interpretations of gender equality emerging in the documents examined as well as of the consequences of these framings on specific policy actions and on the practice of gender equality in general.

3.1 The range of the meanings or frames of gender equality in general legislation and machinery

The Italian women's policy machinery is established during the eighties, especially in the field of labour¹, and during the nineties is consolidated both at the national and local levels. During the eighties feminist mobilizations in Italy dramatically decline. On the one hand, the political and social context has profoundly changed: the conflicts that had violently shaken Italian society during the 70s are pacified, the economic situation is particularly favourable and many of the rights the movement had struggled for are part of Italian legislation. On the other hand, internally the feminist movement is marked by a progressive process of 'atomization' and, in some cases, by conflict. The most radical components maintain and even reinforce their position of autonomy and distance vis-à-vis the institutional realm. At the same time, the culture of equal opportunities and women's empowerment belonging to other parts of the movement and favoured by what Calabrò and Grasso define as "widespread feminism" begin to enter the official political debate (Calabrò, Grasso, 2004).² Several female politicians, trade unionists and scholars, start to raise the question of the low participation rate of women in political institutions. The debate develops within the Communist Party in particular, leading to significant changes in its organization and the introduction of internal quotas.

The reorganization of the gender equality machinery during the nineties, however, is mainly due to the transposition of European Directives. The Ministry for Equal Opportunities is established in 1996 by the centre-left Government led by Romano Prodi after the *Charter of Rome* is signed by all Ministers for Women's Affairs of the EU at the end of the European

¹ In 1983 the National Committee for Implementing the principles of Equal Treatment and Equal Opportunities among women and men workers (Comitato Nazionale per l'Attuazione dei Principi di Parità di Trattamento e uguaglianza di opportunità tra lavoratori e lavoratrici) is established within the Ministry of Labour. In 1984 the Counsellors for Equality are created with the aim of acting as "watchdogs" of gender equality especially in workplaces. They are nominated by the Minister for Labour together with the Minister for Equal Opportunities and their role is reinforced in 1991 and 2000, also in different areas than that of the labour market. In 1984 a National Commission for Equality and Equal opportunities (Commissione nazionale per la parità e le pari opportunità) is created to advise the Prime Minister. In 1990 the national Commission is formalized by law n. 164/1990.

² By "diffused feminism" the authors refer to "the nowadays reality which seems to be characterized by the presence, in the most diverse social formations, of women who express a female identity marked by feminist consciousnesses". The book "From the feminist movement to diffused feminism" was originally published in 1985.

Conference “Women for the Renewal of Politics and Society”. The Minister has the right to a deliberating vote in the Council of Ministers and is responsible for coordinating general politics for Equal Opportunities within other Departments of the Government.³ Nevertheless, the Ministry has no financial autonomy and its ‘strength’ largely depends on the broader political context and on the general governmental orientation. In general, according to Donà, its activities are not well coordinated within the government system and have not yet fully permeated the activities of other Ministries. Moreover, the proliferation of bodies with partially overlapping functions, such as the Ministry for Equal Opportunities, the National Commission for Equal Opportunities and the Committee for Equal Opportunities within the Ministry of Labour leads to some confusion with regard to specific duties and responsibilities. Generally speaking, however, Italian women’s policy agencies show a division of responsibilities between institutional bodies that address gender equality in the workplace and structures that deal with equality in all other areas (Guadagnini, Donà 2007).

Concerning the QUING period, an important initiative undertaken in 1997 by the Prime Minister Prodi and the Minister for Equal Opportunities Anna Finocchiaro is the National Directive 7th March to promote actions aiming at the attribution of responsibilities and rights to women. The Directive officially introduces the goal of mainstreaming gender equality in all institutional activities and policies. In particular, it ratifies the European Fourth Action Programme on Parity and Equal Opportunities approved by the European Commission (1996-2000) and shows the impact of the UN Beijing Conference on Italian gender policies. The Directive is the first initiative of the Ministry for Equal Opportunities and indicates to all Ministries some guidelines to implement the Beijing Platform using a mixture of the many languages that have been conflicting in Italian feminism: sexual difference; equal opportunities; and women’s protection. Its main goals are gender mainstreaming and empowerment but also training in a culture of gender difference, development policies and enhancement of women’s employment, professional growth and female entrepreneurship, health protection and prevention, gender statistics and gender impact assessment. The Directive is shaped as a general programme that needs to be complemented by specific legislation. Its impact, however, proves to be long-lasting and it affects gender equality policies over the following decade.

While during the nineties the fracture among the different gender theories is partly restored⁴ (Calloni 2006), when the centre-right Berlusconi’s coalition wins the election in 2001 a new fracture takes place and most of the femocrats who played a role in the previous centre-leftist government leave. As Marina Calloni states: “the political choice made by the new coalition was very clear: to eliminate any trace of previous cabinets. This decision was confirmed by a symbolic act performed by the [new] Ministry for Equal Opportunity: the dismantling and destruction of the archive with materials that were put together in the five years of the

³ In 1997 the Department for Equal Opportunities is created within the Ministry to support the Minister through research, information, consultative activities.

⁴ Traditionally the formal top-down model of Equal Opportunities is criticised as an empty initiative by the feminists who adopt a bottom-up model developed through the practices of sexual difference. This historical division within the women’s movement is partly overcome through the debate developed from the Communist Women’s Charter (1986) and the consequences of the latter.

previous three cabinets” (2006: 64). The new Minister is Stefania Prestigiacomo, a young entrepreneur and activist of Forza Italia (Berlusconi’s party), who has no connection with the feminist movement (Guadagnini, Donà 2007). The 2004 (Legislative Decree n. 266/2003) replacement of the ‘National Commission for Equality and Equal opportunities’ with another body named ‘Commission for Equal Opportunities between Men and Women’ causes heated debates and a definitive divorce between feminists and institutional actors.

The last institutional structure which is created in the QUING period is the UNAR (Italian National Office Against Racial Discrimination). In 2003, it is established within the Department of Equal Opportunities of the Ministry for Equal Opportunities. The Office is created to comply with the EU anti-discrimination Directive 43/2000/EC. It functions as facilitator in legal cases involving victims of discrimination, can promote autonomous inquiry, helps private and public bodies adopt positive actions and organizes training or research. Even if it is part of the organizational structure of the Ministry for Equal Opportunities, until now the UNAR has not explicitly “mainstreamed” gender within its own activities. Very recently, as shown in Section 6, new institutional bodies dealing with gender based violence, disability, children and sexual orientation have been introduced within the Ministry for Equal Opportunities. The Minister Barbara Pollastrini of the centre-left Prodi’s Government (2006/2008) has proved to be particularly active. In this regard, the 2007 selected document called the “National Plan for the European Year for Equal Opportunities” drafted by the Minister has also proved interesting since, for the first time, it explicitly addresses the issue of “multiple discrimination”.

Gender and gender equality in the documents

With regard to the gendering of the policies, general legislation and machinery is the sole issue of the four QUING issues in which gender is always invoked. With regard to its conceptualization, the general legislation documents largely frame gender as socially constructed. In particular, this is the sole conceptualization emerging in the 2007 National Plan promoted by the Ministry for Equal Opportunities and it is dominant in the civil society text (Shadow Report 2004) and law document (1997 National Directive Prodi Finocchiaro). Out of the five documents selected, in only one is gender predominantly interpreted as biologically determined, in the text of the (at that time) Forza Italia MP Mara Carfagna. The 2006 parliamentary debate document reporting Carfagna’s voice is also the only one in which the use of gender equality is not listed as relevant as well as the only one in which the main policy frame is that of “familism”. Carfagna’s intervention, indeed, is built around the idea of promoting measures that can allow women to reconcile work and family life in order to protect families and women (as the pillar of the family). Her position vis-à-vis these issues, however, is particularly relevant since Mara Carfagna has become, after the national elections of April 2008, the Minister of Equal Opportunities in the centre-right Berlusconi Government. With regard to the machinery documents it is generally not possible to say if gender is considered as social or biological. However, interestingly only one policy appears to be degendered: the document by Minister for Equal Opportunities Barbara Pollastrini concerning the first year of activities of the UNAR - National Office against Racial

Discrimination. This exception is relevant because it seems to suggest that when another inequality is significantly present in a policy then gender tends to fade away.

With regard to the importance of gender equality in the documents, gender equality is the most important frame in almost all the gender legislation documents whereas it is listed as important in only one document concerning machinery: the May 2007 Presidential Decree aimed at reorganizing the Commission for Equal Opportunities between Men and Women – where, not surprisingly, gender equality is seen only as a means and as a strategy. The remarkable difference between legislation and machinery documents as to the relevance given to gender equality can be better understood by considering some peculiar features of the Italian case as well as the way in which they affect the framing of gender equality itself. In general, the definition of gender equality largely depends on the year in which the analyzed document has been written and on the body/actor that issued it. In chronological terms, major differences can be found following the change of the Governments and the kind of relations (more or less cooperative) that have been established between civil society feminists, femocrats and institutions. In the legislation documents in which gender equality is relevant, it can be understood as an end in itself in two governmental documents (The 1997 Prodi-Finocchiaro Directive and the 2007 Policy Plan), both issued by centre-left Governments, as well as in the civil society text. In contrast, gender equality is mainly considered as a means to reach other policy goals in the 2006 Audition by the Minister for Equal Opportunities in front of the 1st Committee of Constitution where Minister Pollastrini connects gender equality and economic development. The strategic focus on women's labour market participation is particularly developed in right-wing deputies' parliamentary debates. In contrast to Minister Pollastrini's audition, however, in these cases women are referred to exclusively as mothers within the family.

Care work – considering both the asymmetrical gendered distribution of tasks and the lack of acknowledgement of its social value - is named as a problem within the 1997 Prodi-Finocchiaro Directive as well as in civil society texts. Such a (rare) convergence can be understood in the light of the specific kind of development of the Italian machinery in the mid-90s. The newly established Ministry for Equal Opportunities, in the first years following its introduction, proved particularly favourable towards cooperation between feminists and governmental equality institutions (1996-2001). The first of the three Ministers for Equal Opportunities during the three different Governments of the left-wing legislature were a feminist and lawyer, Anna Finocchiaro, followed by Laura Balbo (a sociologist) and Katia Belillo (an activist of the *Partito dei Comunisti Italiani*). These three Ministers all had experience both in political parties and in the feminist movement and tended to grant access for feminists to the institutional scene. On the other hand, during the centre-right Government led by Berlusconi (2001-2006), paralysis in the dialogue between the feminist world(s) and the institutions emerged. This can be seen quite clearly in the analyzed documents: parliamentary debates and civil society texts concerning the Italian machinery express opposite diagnoses depending on whether actors belong to right-wing parties or left-wing parties and civil society groups. The reform of the National Commission for Equality and Equal Opportunities by the right-wing government, in particular, is widely criticised by civil

society and left-wing women MPs. The new evident subordination to the executive power of the Commission which was previously independent as well as the exclusion of migrant women and female representatives of political parties from the reformed body are repeatedly referred to as negative aspects of the reform. In line with the more general Italian tendency of a lack of dialogue between the feminist movement and the parliamentary and governmental politicians and a certain weakness of the machinery itself, the problem pointed out by left-wing MPs and civil society is lack of dialogue between the Ministry for Equal Opportunities and other institutional actors and with civil society actors. For these reasons, the debate on the Italian machinery as it emerges from the documents tends to crystallise in a sort of meta-discussion about the 'rules of the game' rather than addressing the contents and strategies related to gender equality itself.

For a better understanding of the meaning of gender equality in the documents, it is also useful to consider where the diagnosis and prognoses are located. Polity and economy, especially the labour market, are the most common locations within diagnosis: often these two domains are both present. Limited female labour market participation is connected to the lack or inefficiency of active policies of access and permanence in paid work and, above all, to the insufficient provision of childcare and efficient reconciliation policies. The strong presence of both economy and polity shows a tendency to place general gender equality within the economy realm; equality should be achieved through economic "emancipation" and labour market participation. Polity on its own is used in documents that refer to machinery and its way of working. Intimacy is present when taking into consideration the redistribution of care work, both within civil society documents and parliamentary debates by centre-left politicians.

In order to achieve gender equality, the targets of the policies are often groups of persons (from a very general category of discriminated persons or women to more specific social groups such as disabled people, LGBTQ, old persons and multi-discriminated persons in the most recent documents). These groups are coherent with those named as passive actors. Some intersectionality is found when recent governmental plans talk about multi-discriminated groups, but the intersections are only named without any articulation of the analysis. Men and women are target groups for objectives linked to the redistribution of care work and the promotion of a gender perspective in education. In relation to mainstreaming, ministers and other institutional actors are also present as target groups.

Concerning subjects responsible in policy actions, most are related to the Ministry for equal opportunities with the participation of NGOs, local and regional authorities and trade unions. Target groups of goals and policy actions are coherent, even if most of the actions are at a dissemination-knowledge level, thus not impacting structural inequalities directly.

3.2 The range of the meanings or frames of gender equality in non employment

Debates on non employment in Italy between 1995 and 2007 – especially those in which an explicit gender approach has been invoked - have mainly focused on the sub-issues of ‘reconciliation of work and family life’, and ‘care and domestic work’.

Concerning more specifically an intersectional approach, the debate on care and domestic work is particularly relevant because of the high presence of migrant women in this sector. Due to many factors, such as the weakness of the Italian Welfare State and a national culture emphasizing women’s role as mothers and care givers, the 1990s represent a period when the chronic lack of services for children and elderly people explodes as an urgent problem. The increase of women’s employment rates (particularly in Northern Italy) and the pressure of EU policies and the Lisbon Strategy goals, means that work-life reconciliation becomes a problem to be solved in order to support women’s access to the labour market.

While until the turn of the century the debate was framed around the reduction of working time and promoted by women MPs and feminist networks, at the beginning of the new century the debate on work life reconciliation is definitely much more intertwined with the one on labour market reforms; it will take time to gain a gendered perspective on precarious and flexible jobs and with an initial confusion between the two concepts, part time work and new unstable forms of contracts are identified as work life reconciliation measures which can be particularly fitting to women’s needs. Apart from these more general considerations, there are scarce traces of a gendered framing of the problem. Over recent years, after the Labour Market Reform (Law n° 30, 2003) was passed, some limits and contradictions have been stressed by experts and social/feminist movements, especially in relation to the new flexible/unstable jobs introduced by the reform itself. Some kinds of contracts are not included or are inconsistently treated by the law (interim-provisional contracts, job sharing, but also autonomous workers and professionals) and this has resulted in discrimination against precarious women workers.

The pension debate between the end of the 90s and the beginning of the new century has mainly been shaped by the contrasting interests of trade unions and employers’ organizations. The former have constantly defended workers’ rights, showing, however, some difficulties in involving and representing the changes within workforces themselves and keeping instead a much closer relation with the traditional working class comprising the subordinate employed with open ended contracts rather than with new ‘young’ flexible and precarious workers.

Policies have focused over the years on parental leave and on measures to encourage women to re-enter the labour market after periods dedicated to care work. Sub-issues such as part time work and flexible jobs as well as the chronic lack of kindergartens have also been tackled. On this topic, the main legislation approved in Italy in the period studied includes Law 53/2000, and Legislative decree n. 151 (*Testo Unico in materia di tutela e sostegno della maternità e della paternità*). These laws promote a new culture of gender

roles within and outside the family and aim at reaching a new work-life balance. The main achievements of these two laws are the following:

- They establish parental (and not just maternal) leave and extension of support to parents with disabled and adopted children;
- They introduce measures to support working time flexibility in workers' favour with the cooperation of enterprises and the unions;
- They promote the coordination of city times
- They promote the use of time for social solidarity aims, for training and courses.

The culture of protecting maternity and women as mothers is constantly reproduced in Italian legislation together with a new attempt to redefine women's and men's roles in children's care through the fundamental distinction of maternity leave from parental leave: the first is a compulsory right/duty not to work for 5 months before/after childbirth (paid at 80% of the salary) while the second is an entitlement of mothers and fathers to take 6 months each until the child is 8 years old (with an additional month recognized if the father uses more than 3 months and 30% of the salary).

The reform of social welfare, promoted through law n. 328/2000 (Outline law to achieve an integrated system of interventions and social services, *Legge quadro per la realizzazione del sistema integrato di interventi e servizi sociali*), is important because of the consequences on the legal construction of gendered citizenship. The law, however, shows some of the inconsistencies of Italian legislation. On one hand it promotes a gender impact evaluation of the social policies (art. 3); on the other hand, introducing the concept of subsidiarity, it gives a central role to intermediate bodies in the implementation of social policies and views State intervention only as a last resort. The first body to be activated in the new home based services (domiciliary services) is the family, namely women.

Domestic and care work is a debate that has been less central than reconciliation in the QUING period but it is interesting as it shows some intersection of gender with inequalities of ethnicity and class. Women's and feminist NGO's often linked with antisystemic movements and the Social Forums have highlighted in the years 2002-2005 the many connections between welfare state service gaps and migration policies which give a temporary status for migrant women to enter in the country as domestic and care workers and leave them unprotected in the black market economy. In 2002 an emergency measure was implemented in order to regularize domestic work. Law n. 189/2002, as modified by the Decree law n. 195/2002 on "urgent measures on the regularization of irregular work of non-communitarians" ("*Disposizioni urgenti in materia di legalizzazione del lavoro irregolare di extracomunitari*") allocated more than 300,000 work permits to women⁵. In spite of the clear gendered effect of the Act, it is interesting to note that the parliamentary debate on it does not have any gendered orientation. Some NGOs have promoted a tentative gendered analysis of Law 189/2002, identifying as most problematic for women the new restrictions on familiar reunification (prohibition to rejoin parents and spouses) and on minors' migration.

⁵ With the regularisation more than 100,000 Ukrainian women receive a contract and a permit to stay in Italy, before there were around 11,000.

Gender and gender equality in the documents

The various sub-issues considered in non-employment are treated in rather different ways by the various actors so it is difficult to find a common theme and a strongly prevailing broader policy frame. Whereas, for instance, gender is always invoked in documents dealing with reconciliation and the gender pay gap, it is only invoked in half of the documents regarding tax benefit policies (only in parliamentary debates) and care work regulations (the lowest number of references in absolute terms among all the QUING sub-issues). This result is probably related to the general framing of the issues at stake. On the one hand, the debate about the pension system reform which has mainly been considered in the tax benefit sub-issue has largely revolved around the more general Italian demographic problem concerning the progressive ageing of the population. A gender perspective has hardly penetrated the debate and the 'women's issue' has mainly been considered from an economic point of view with regard to the different minimum pension age. A general diagnosis in non employment, moreover, concerns the low female employment rate (linked to European objectives) which is seen as causing fundamental problems for the economic growth of the country. The necessity of targeting women with specific policies and the need to increase childcare services is often raised but mostly framed in terms of economic sustainability. As to care and domestic work, on the other hand, the debate mainly focuses on the presence of migrant women performing such work and on their legal/irregular status. In this case, the main underlying frame is again that of economic growth and sustainability whereas the existence of gender based inequalities is barely mentioned. Generally speaking, most of the texts in non-employment are de-gendered. Documents which relate to the pension reform, in particular, focus on new and old workers' rights and social expenditure, neglecting to use gender as an 'analytical lens'. NGO documents and left-wing MPs' texts are those which show the most gendered vision. In these documents gender is mainly addressed as socially constructed and only in very few cases as biological.

Gender equality in non-employment is considered as relevant only in 8 documents out of 21 (mainly in NGO documents and in parliamentary debates on parental leave, the labour market and pensions). In these texts, a framing of gender equality in terms of acting as a means to other policy goals slightly prevails over an interpretation of it as an end in itself. NGO texts and parental leave debates from the left-wing side are those which have a transformative and to a lesser extent sameness conception of gender equality as a vision. Gender equality as strategy can be found in two governmental plans drafted by the 2001-2006 right-wing Government led by Berlusconi (the 2003 White Book on Welfare and the 2001 White Book on the Labour Market), in the law on parental leave passed by the left-wing coalition (equal treatment), and also in one civil society document (even though the conceptualization of gender equality as strategy is minor in comparison to gender equality framed as vision).

The dominant broad framing in non-employment policies, as anticipated, is that of economic development. Equality is far less frequently used, even though it is more relevant in the reconciliation sub-issue, both within parliamentary debate and in the civil society text drafted

by CGIL trade unionist Laura Basso. Centre-right and centre-left political actors tend to develop shared diagnoses concerning the need to extend parental leave, involving not only mothers but also fathers, as well as a common understanding with regard to the need to improve childcare services. Besides these common analyses, however, substantial differences emerge from the analyzed documents. The high cost of leave for employers is pointed out by a right-wing MP as the main problem in implementing parental leave. In a similar vein, a more recent Governmental Plan (the 2003 White Book on Welfare) by the right-wing Minister for Work and Social Policies points out that the Italian welfare system is in crisis because social expenditure is too high. The document suggests that the egalitarian model of social and fiscal policies in particular is out-of-date. The main goals to be reached are the promotion of networks between individuals and community where families are active actors to be sustained in order to promote community inclusion and to increase intergenerational cohesion. The focus, in this case, is on the family as primary welfare provider and recipient, without questioning the intra-familial division of labour. A gender perspective is thus completely absent in the text. Such a vision of welfare is shared also by the centre-left text (the 2006 Union electoral programme) where emphasis is put on “intermediate bodies” as having a key role in the welfare system; among these, together with not-for-profit organizations, families are named. Familism is thus the main frame of some documents, both from the left wing and the right-wing coalition (parliamentary debate: voice Giaretta, 2002; White Book on Welfare, governmental plan, 2003).

A different vision emerges in centre-left documents that deal specifically with reconciliation, above all in the late 1990s, when the law on parental leave is passed in a context of cooperation with feminist academics and the feminist movement. The parliamentary speech by centre-left MP Elena Emma Cordoni on Law 53/2000 on parental leave underlines the importance of connecting different spheres of life, giving complexity and depth to the timing of work, care and training, and to services and personal desires. Cordoni also focuses on the scarce social recognition of care work. On the basis of such a diagnosis, prognosis concentrates on self-governance of women’s and men’s lifetime which can be achieved by promoting new compatibilities and values (e.g. of a shared care work). Reconciliation measures are the concrete policy actions aimed at reaching such goals, with the introduction of a long parental leave; leave for trainings; and policy aimed at the coordination of city times. A very similar analysis is developed by the text drafted by a CGIL feminist trade unionist; the main goal is achieving a cultural change in the distribution and value attributed to care work that has to involve working women, men and employers. Through such change, gender inequalities would disappear.

With regard to location, polity and economy are the most frequently cited within diagnoses and prognoses, and often appear jointly. In the documents on parental leave, polity is the only location throughout all parliamentary debate diagnoses, in some cases accompanied by economy, and to a lesser extent by intimacy. In prognosis, the economy – alone or together with polity and welfare – is the usual location. In proponents’ speeches, location is often “all social realms” gathering intimacy and polity and in only one case economy. Other less frequent locations are: rights; and joint economy and knowledge. Given that the

parliamentary discussion on care work focused on the regularization of foreign caregivers, the most usual location is polity, accompanied in a few cases by other locations, such as economy, intimacy and labour market. The location is indicative of the framing of the problem as a technical issue, more than political in a broader sense. An exception is the document by civil society (NGO/Network Punto di Partenza), which often uses labour market together with “all social realms”, giving the phenomenon of foreign caregivers a broader and more complex location than the governmental texts. It is interesting that the prognoses in the documents concerning welfare reform of both centre-left and centre-right coalitions point to civil society as an important location, thus emphasising the growing responsibility of such intermediate bodies (third sector organizations and families) in implementing welfare policies.

As we have already stated, the documents are mostly de-gendered. The “neutral” approach emerges also when looking at groups or persons suffering from the problems diagnosed in the document. The most quoted passive actors are workers, while women workers become passive actors when talking about reconciliation measures or low labour market activity rate. In pensions and labour market reform, parliamentary debates or governmental plans only consider the neutral worker – which is implicitly equated to the male one. Target groups are differentiated as: workers, women workers, mother workers and young people. In many cases they are families, again stressing the crucial role of families in the Italian welfare system. A closer look at the different sub-issues, nonetheless, can help in better highlighting significant differences.

With regard to reconciliation, it is possible to note some differences between the centre-right and centre-left documents. In the former, parents asking for parental leaves are named as responsible for causing the problem and employers are passive actors. Mother workers are the main target group, while fathers are not referred to at all. In the same way, even if in a very different context, namely that of the speech by the left wing MP proposing the bill, Elena Emma Cordoni, active actors are not present except in one case, that in which employers are considered responsible for understanding parenthood as a cost. The text focuses on parents, especially women’s needs. Women are the most often quoted passive actors, together with workers, even if to a lesser extent. Target groups in this case are differentiated as: all citizens (because of the need for a cultural change in gendered roles), fathers (with the goal of increasing their participation in care work), working parents, workers, women, working men and working women.

Within the issue of care work, the passive actors are not illegal women working as caregivers, but the families that need them in order to take care of the elderly. It is interesting to note that the passive actors are not the elderly themselves, but the families that are in charge of taking care of them. As in the case of the caregivers, they disappear from the picture even if they are the main recipients of the services at the centre of the discussion. As already highlighted, migrant women disappear from the parliamentary and governmental documents, while they are the main passive actors within the civil society text. Migrant women or migrant caregivers are quoted as passive actors only in the civil society text on

global care chains, in two cases they are mentioned together with women employers and persons who need assistance.

Documents concerning the labour market are generally speaking rather de-gendered. Within the left-wing oriented documents, passive actors and target groups are new (sometimes named “atypical”) and old workers, without any gendered approach to the flexibilization of the labour market. Women workers appear more often as the target group, together with young and old people. Families – often associated with individuals – are target groups of welfare plans and policies of both the centre-right and the centre-left coalitions.

3.3 The range of the meanings or frames of gender equality in intimate citizenship

Generally speaking, in talking about intimate citizenship in Italy it is important to take into account the great power of the Catholic Church in shaping the debates and consequently public policies. Especially after the dissolution, during the early 1990s, of the Christian Democratic party, the Catholic high hierarchies, namely the CEI (Conferenza Episcopale Italiana, Italian Episcopal Conference), have constantly taken a direct public position in the policy debate thereby affecting it widely. The public debates in the QUING period mainly focus on the family and its legitimate form (heterosexual family based on marriage as the “natural base” of society) and on reproductive rights, especially abortion and medically assisted reproduction, in which case the core of the debate has revolved around the possibility of giving subjective rights to the embryo. The idea of recognising such subjective rights was promoted by the Vatican and the Catholics⁶ following the Vatican’s directives, which were used to argue against abortion and to limit assisted reproduction methods. In 1995, the Pope is in the frontline issuing the encyclical letter *Evangelium Vitae* comparing abortion and genocide. The focus is not on women’s health and desires but on the protection of the fertilized cell. The shift in the focus of the debate to the foetus – rather than women - leads to a resurgence in the feminist movement in which women aim at re-gendering the frame of the abortion debate (Calloni 2001). During the 1990s women activists try to prevent a restrictive law on medically assisted reproduction from being passed and this gives new impulse to remove abortion from the penal code (see law proposal about this in Boccia 2005).

During the centre-right Government, Law n. 40/2004 on assisted reproduction is passed. The law renders the freezing or destroying of human embryos a crime; it forbids the use of donated sperm and eggs; it establishes that the number of ovocytes that can be fertilized is limited to three and that all the embryos created must be transferred into the woman’s womb. The use of assisted reproduction techniques is restricted to sterile heterosexual couples in a stable relationship and all forms of pre-implantation genetic testing are banned. During the same year, in July, a referendum is held to amend some articles of the law: article 1 on the

⁶ We would like to point out that despite 90% of the Italian citizens declaring themselves Catholic, there is a variety of ways of believing and practicing Catholicism. The different voices of Italian Catholicism are to be found in the various positions and activities undertaken by different groups: the

prohibition to freeze embryos and to use them for scientific purposes; article 2 on compulsory implantation of three embryos for each treatment; article 3 on the recognition of juridical rights to embryos; and article 4 allowing only homologous fertilization. The article restricting access only to heterosexual couples is not included in the referendum. Large demonstrations are organised by women's movements and all organisations striving against the influence of Catholic hierarchies on political life, those defending the freedom of research, and LGBT associations. The referendum, however, is defeated so the law, as it was drafted, is still valid.

In February 2006 Law n. 54 on shared children's custody is passed. It has been debated for 5 years in Parliament before its approval though not accompanied by a strong public debate among feminists and/or femocrats. It introduces the principle of double parenthood and shared parental authority. Prior to this law, children's custody following divorce was almost automatically assigned to mothers. The law means that even though the judge still has the possibility to attribute custody to only one of the parents, the indication is to recognize equal dignity to fatherhood and to equally share time and responsibility.

Regarding the legal recognition of civil partnership, a compromise in Parliament is found in 2007 under the centre-left Prodi's Government in the so-called 'DiCo' proposal (*Diritti e doveri delle persone stabilmente Conviventi*, Rights and duties of people living together on a stable basis, centre-left government), which extends to unmarried couples (also same-sex couples) some of the rights held by married couples, including healthcare rights and inheritance. The proposal, however, is accompanied by heated debates and will be never discussed in Parliament. In particular, the bishop Camillo Ruini, former president of the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI), is leading a battle against any form of same sex union, even defining the "de facto couples" as unconstitutional. The Italian Constitution, in fact, in its section named "Ethical and Social Relationships" (Rapporti Etico-Sociali), and especially in Article 29, explicitly recognizes the family as "founded on marriage". This, however, does not per se make other forms of partnership forbidden. Moreover, in March 2007 the Italian Episcopal Conference publishes a document in which it takes an explicit position against the legal recognition of same sex partnership, inviting Catholic politicians to "present and sustain laws inspired by values based on human nature, among others the family founded on the marriage between a man and a woman".

Gender and gender equality in the documents

Within intimate citizenship the main discourse is on the legitimate family form, that – according to the Catholic Church and its supporters - has to be composed by a man, a woman and their children. Given such a definition, and also the tradition of the feminism of difference, gender is often used in a biological sense, as equated to motherhood. This interpretation of gender as biological is particularly present in the same sex marriage sub-issue where it is used in the CEI document and by teo-dem MP Paola Binetti to argue against *de facto* couples. In contrast, the only voice viewing gender exclusively as being

range is wide, from the very conservative Movement for life, to more progressive groups belonging to the so called grass-roots Catholicism (Frisina 2006).

socially constructed is that of a Communist MP, Titti de Simone, in the reproduction sub-issue. The incidence of predominantly de-gendered documents in intimate citizenship, however, is quite high.

Concerning the broad frame of the policies, within de facto partnership, familism (natural law) and heteronormativity usually underlie Catholic oriented documents, both at governmental/parliamentary and civil society level, while more secular documents are framed around minimum standard rights for cohabiting partners and as adaptation to change. Children's rights constitute the broad frame of the documents pro shared custody, while capabilities/well being and crime and justice are the frames in the critical document produced by civil society. With regard to reproductive rights, in the documents containing critical statements towards the restrictive law, the broad framing varies from health (main frame within law and governmental plan, and significant within civil society organization), equality in reproductive rights (significant within civil society organization) and self-determination plus subjectivity in the words of a leftist MP (Titti De Simone).

The analyzed documents are generally very normative with regard to how the legitimate family form should be, regarding all connected rights, including reproductive rights, and the "proper" way to understand motherhood and fatherhood. Few differences between right-wing and left-wing voices can be found. The divide along the political spectrum often does not seem to play a large role since discourses of both sides contain a strong Catholic heritage that creates a convergence toward a more or less rigid Catholic family form (heterosexual married couple with children). The most polarized positions can be found within civil society documents. We considered one document by the Catholic Church (Italian Episcopal Conference) and others by feminist associations. Such documents show very different diagnosis and prognosis, since they start from different viewpoints. The former begins from the "natural law" vision; the latter from a vision of family and parenthood as a choice and as a socially constructed phenomenon.

The debate on the legal recognition of de facto partnership became a hot issue when a bill was presented by the centre-left government in 2007. The law proposal, as all Italian legal texts, does not contain any diagnosis of the problem, only a prognosis. The objective of the bill is to regulate the rights and duties of cohabiting persons, "even of same sex people", through a legal recognition of duties and rights of the couple. Legally, it is not a marriage, since - as many MPs pointed out - it would not be "acceptable" to put heterosexual marriage and de facto partnership on the same level.

The diagnosis of the Italian Episcopal conference's document is very clear: the family must be composed by a heterosexual couple with children, so that the so-called Dico bill (*Diritti e doveri delle persone stabilmente conviventi, Rights and duties of people living together on a stable basis*) must be rejected by Catholic MPs. Catholic MPs (belonging both to the centre-right and centre-left coalition) point out that the law would create confusion between marriage and cohabitation, and married couples would be discriminated. It is interesting to note how voices against the legal recognition focused their prognosis on the refusal of it, but at the

same time on the non-discrimination of homosexuals as individuals. This leads to a strong separation between the private and the public sphere: homosexuals are legitimate citizens until they claim rights that make them visible as sexualized individuals within the public sphere; their sexual orientation cannot receive an open recognition but has to be experienced as something private and hidden. Left-wing MPs point out that the discussion is often very ideological and that the “natural society” (definition of the family found in the Constitution) has to be understood in terms of the social relevance of an affective relation and not as the supremacy of the natural law. In this respect, they suggest that the Parliament should legislate with responsibility, giving public and legal recognition to de facto partnership.

The debate on families or partnership, taking into account the centre-leftist Minister for families’ speech, the voices of Catholic MPs belonging both to right-wing and to centre-left wing parties, and the Episcopal Conference, are very focused upon on how families should be. While there are different ideas of the ideal family expressed by these actors, in all cases the analysis is very partial and focused on a precise idea of the family: in the case of the Episcopal conference and Catholic MPs, it is the heterosexual married couple with children; in the case of Bindi (Minister for families of the centre-left coalition) it is vaguely depicted but de facto families remain almost completely absent from her analysis. Even though the law proposal on de facto couples was under discussion in Parliament when the Minister for Family Affairs gave the speech, she does not refer to it; she does not take into consideration any family form other than that defined by the Constitution, making conspicuous by their absence LGBTQ families.

Concerning reproductive rights, we analyzed documents dealing with medically assisted reproduction. The main problems targeted in this case are: the status of the embryo and the recognition of its subjective rights (from Catholic oriented documents); parenthood as a choice; the psychological and health costs for parents, especially mothers, undergoing assisted reproduction procedures (from feminist civil society and MPs, and centre-left governmental policy plan); and finally, the possible conflict between the rights of the mother and embryo. The result of such debate has been a law on medically assisted reproduction that gives the same rights to the mother and the embryo, and very restrictive and difficult access to reproduction techniques. The prognosis, according to voices against the law, should be more liberal and open legislation.

A focus on children emerges in the debate on shared custody. Within both diagnosis and prognosis the “minor’s interest” was quoted as the main rationale for dual-parenthood. Indeed, a general agreement among different voices, including that of the association of separated fathers, emerged from the texts on the importance of children’s well-being and consequently of shared custody as a principle that promotes the balanced and harmonic growth of children. The only discordant voice belongs to the Jurist Women Association, which emphasises that shared custody can work only in cases of agreement between parents, and that it cannot be an obligation. In this issue, children are most often quoted passive actor, though the civil society text stands in contrast since women are the main passive actor.

The way of naming passive actors is relevant since it is not very gendered; this way of constructing those groups that suffer from problems is, again, a means to focus more on the family, taking for granted what its form should be. Apart from women, who are not very present, the actors named are usually: children, couples, parents, and cohabitants. If though the gender dimension does not play such a large role, in the most recent texts another axis appears: within the bill on de facto partnership, for example, beside cohabitants, other target groups are: third-country nationals and cohabitant workers.

3.4 The range of the meanings or frames of gender equality in gender based violence

The issue of gender based violence enters into Italian legislation relatively late. The traditional strong separation between the public and the private sphere whose border has mainly been left to families to watch over, as well as the persistency of a vision of fathers and male components of the family as responsible for safeguarding the health, wealth and 'honour' of 'their' women, have deeply affected Italian regulations on the matter. Law n. 66/1996 therefore constitutes a watershed, not only because sexual violence is finally considered a crime against the person, but also because it unifies in one crime what was previously considered as two different crimes: carnal knowledge and sexual violence which become "sexual violence". Such unification underlines the importance of consent in choosing how to use one's body. The aim of the law is to punish violent sexual acts or carnal knowledge undertaken without mutual agreement.

Regarding domestic violence, in 1996 the National Commission on Parity (Commissione Nazionale Parità) proposes new rules. Domestic violence, historically hidden inside the home⁷, starts emerging as a social problem due to the debate promoted by the women's movement since the end of the 1970s. Law number 154, "Measures against domestic violence", is approved on 4th April 2001. It aims at making the partner (either spouse or cohabitant), father or brother who committed violence (physical, moral or sexual), leave the home. The protection is not limited to the repressive phase, but can and must also be preventive, thus introducing in Italy the protective order (www.telefonorosa.org, accessed on 23/04/2007). The Law follows a long and controversial debate in Parliament and civil society⁸ and is passed 19 years after the first Law proposal by the feminist movement in 1979 together with many other different bills proposed by MPs over the years. It is the effect of a transversal mediation among women's MPs that is remembered as the "pink pact". Even if the Law fills a long standing gap in the legislation, it has been criticised by many feminists and law studies experts, regarded as a "legislative slovenliness" (Virgilio in Romito, 2000) not

⁷ The historical lack of statistical data on domestic violence is a clear sign of the institutional neglect regarding this issue. The first surveys on domestic violence are carried out by independent NGOs, such as Telefono Rosa, (www.telefonorosa.org, accessed on 23/04/2007), while the National Statistical office (Istat) issues a study in 2007: (http://www.istat.it/istat/eventi/2007/violenza_donne_2007/, accessed on 23/04/2007).

⁸ An important role is played by women's organizations like Telefono Rosa active in running Women's Shelters and supporting victims; they are the ones who start a dialogue with women parliamentarians in the first half of the 90s and even write a bill proposal.

connected with former debate and based mainly on a relevant increase of penalties for the perpetrators.

A more general bill on violence is presented in February 2007 by the Minister for Equal Opportunities Barbara Pollastrini, the Minister for Family, for Justice and for Social Solidarity: "Measures to sensitize and prevent, as well as repress crimes against the person and within the family, caused by sexual orientation, gender identity and any other cause of discrimination". The law is focused on violence, within or outside the family, based on gender and other kinds of discrimination. Feminist NGOs, especially the ones managing women's shelters, react positively to the proposal. The women's shelter in Milan, for example, underlines how art. 3 on stalking addresses the lack of concrete measures in the previous legislation. Others are more critical; Marina Pasqua (lawyer of anti-violence centres) for example, states that the law is generally pro-human rights, but completely de-gendered. Moreover, it is ambiguous since it tries to protect incompatible needs, the centrality of the family and combating gender based violence. Art. 8 states that family reunification is one of the services devoted in favour of the victim. In June, the NGO Giuristi Democratici (Democratic Jurists) presents a dossier to the Parliamentary Committee on Justice, which is in charge of discussing the bill, and proposes some modifications. The bill is criticized, in a similar way as some anti-violence centres do, because women are not considered as individuals with a complex subjectivity, but reduced to the role of wife, mother, and victim needing help. The aim of the law seems that of ensuring the moral integrity and the reconciliation of the family unit. Moreover, the law does not seem able to intervene in the unequal distribution of power in relationships between men and women.

During the last decade, due to increasing immigration rates, female genital mutilations and trafficking become an issue in Italy. The front against genital mutilations in Italy seems very united. The debate on genital mutilations is framed around the concepts of women's rights (as human rights) and women's health. Some NGOs, namely AIDOS (Italian Association for Women in Development, *Associazione Italiana Donne per lo Sviluppo*), NPSG (No peace without justice, *Non c'è pace senza giustizia*) and TAMWA (Tanzanian Media Women Association) play an important role in initiating the debate, even though the public debate involving all media started only in 2004. The first institutional initiative is found in 1999, when the Minister for Equal Opportunities establishes a Commission aimed at outlining a general project against FGM. The Commission will, however, be suppressed before accomplishing its tasks. Law proposal n. 150, the first in Italy, is presented in 2001 by MPs belonging to Lega Nord, whose general positioning on immigration and cultural difference is marked by xenophobia. It is called "Dispositions on the prohibition of sexual mutilations" (*Disposizioni concernenti il divieto delle pratiche di mutilazione sessuale*). More than being framed as gender based violence, law proposal n. 150 has a culturalist paradigm; migrants bring to Italy cultures, religions and habits incompatible with Italian culture. Genital mutilations are thus forbidden not only because the state has to assure personal dignity and moral and physical integrity, but also because they are against Italian culture.

In the same context, trafficking has become a publicly debated issue during the last decade. Measures against trafficking are treated in art. 18 of the Law 40/1998 on immigration - passed under a centre-left Government - which has been widely recognized to be innovative and an example of good practice at the international level. It is inserted within the humanitarian aids section and allows delivering a residence permit with or without a victim's legal report to the police. It is usually non-profit organizations which organize and implement different services devoted to trafficked women⁹. Law n. 228/2003 addresses the victims of trafficking and is titled "Measures against trafficking of people" (Misure contro la tratta di persone). The first law proposal was presented in 1999 by Anna Finoccharo, an MP belonging to the centre-left coalition. According to Judge Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, (giudice per le indagini preliminari del tribunale di Roma, NGO Judit), in law n. 228/2003, following the positive results of the policies implemented due to art. 18 of law 40/1998, the penalties nevertheless do not suit the crime; until now most sentences were about exploitation of prostitution and not enslavement. Secondly, women's rights during the penal procedure should be better protected, making sure that the intervention does not become a further stress or victimization factor. This could derive from the inadequate treatment by police or judges.

Gender and gender equality in the documents

With regard to the gendering of the policies, the issue of gender based violence is marked by a rather high number of documents in which gender is invoked (in particular, all documents in the sub-issue of trafficking). In sexual assault, both the law 1996 on sexual assault and voice in the parliamentary debate of MP Bianchieclerici– Lega Nord with regard to domestic violence are de-gendered. In general, a vision of gender as social largely prevails over that of gender as biological, the latter introduced only once in the parliamentary debate on domestic violence by right-wing MP Simeone (Alleanza Nazionale).

The use of gender equality is relevant in domestic violence (3/5) (all documents but law and MP Simeone's voice – Alleanza Nazionale) and it is always considered only as an end in itself and only as a vision rather than as a strategy. Gender equality, however, is barely relevant in sexual assault (2/6) (in the MP's Alessandra Mussolini's voice and in the civil society document, in both cases it is seen only as an end and in the case of NGO as vision in terms of transformation and equal treatment). Gender equality is even less relevant in trafficking (1/6), where it is mentioned only by left-wing MP Cesini and is constructed as an end in itself and a vision.

The debates on these two last sub-issues are often marked by the construction of foreign women as subordinated victims to save, especially by the right-wing parties, which are usually not very sensitive to gender issues. In the gender based violence issue, large differences can be found between right-wing and left-wing parliamentary debates when

⁹ A Report on the Activities of the NGO "On the road" on the implementation of art. 18 is available at the website:
http://www.ontheroadonlus.it/rootdown//RelFinaleArt18_Avviso5_17mag04_16giugno05.pdf (Italian).

framing the problem. While the former put a lot of emphasis on violence as a phenomenon that concerns foreign women, the latter try to give a broader vision of the problem as concerning women of different classes and national backgrounds. Moreover, civil society documents usually have more detailed diagnoses and prognoses than the other texts. Some documents by left-wing MPs (parliamentary debates) use a very similar analysis concerning the systematic and structural problem of gender based violence, using the same concept of “femicide”, while laws and governmental plans promoted by these same political actors tend to lack articulation and depth.

Concerning sexual assault, a sentence passed in 1998 has been analyzed that granted extenuation to the perpetrator because the victim was wearing a pair of jeans. The reason given by the judge was that jeans are not possible to take off without the consent of the person. The sentence, showing a very sexist attitude by the judge, is widely criticized as a step backwards by women MPs belonging to right-wing and left-wing parties. According to them, it shows a lack of equality within society in general and within institutions. Such a lack of equality creates and reproduces a sexist culture. However, in analyzing the problem of rapes in Italy, one female MP belonging to a xenophobic party (Lega Nord) shifts to focus on the presence of immigrants and to migration policies. She links the increase of rape to migrants (often desperate) coming from a very different cultural background to live in a society where women are free and equal to men. Over recent years, such a shift has become the dominant discourse, especially among right-wing politicians, while among left-wing politicians and civil society organizations the problem of gender based violence is analyzed in a more structural and systematic frame of gender inequality.

According to right-wing MPs, migrant women, especially Muslim women, are experiencing very difficult situations; belonging to different cultures, mainly religious cultures, is underlined as a problem of fundamentalism and obscurantism that brings violence, humiliations, and discrimination. They argue that Islam states as dogma the inferiority of women, while the Catholic Church, having an official agreement with the state, has recognized the principles of the Italian juridical order of equality and non discrimination between men and women. The main goal is to stop violence against foreign women and to strongly affirm and protect human and inviolable rights¹⁰. Dissemination is needed, as well as an improvement of foreign women's living conditions through literacy courses, integration into the labour market and promotion of female entrepreneurship.

Among left-wing MPs and civil society organizations the problem of gender based violence is not understood in terms of religion and/or culture; violence against women is not a phenomenon that involves specifically foreign women, but is a general gendered problem. The main problem is that violence against foreign women and violence against Italian women are framed in different ways: the former is analyzed as connected to religion and to the desire to eradicate freedom; the latter is seen as a moment of madness and passion that

¹⁰ It is interesting that the norm human rights, both in gender based violence and in intimate citizenship issue, is used mainly when dealing with foreign women, while when dealing with Italian women other norms are found.

drives the crime, and thus partly justified. The diversified phenomenon of violence against women is based on women's desire for self determination, while perpetrators from different cultures and religions share the same assumption of being the owners of their daughters', wives' and girlfriends' lives.

According to left-wing MPs, a factor deeply affecting the state's interventions on self determination and inviolability of the women's body is religious interference in political life. This connection needs to be broken to build a truly democratic and equal society. Moreover, the government should act in order to remove the bad consequences of the right-wing government with its neo liberal and moralistic policies. The promotion of new citizenship rights for both Italian and foreign women is another goal, a first step would be the modification of the law on migration. Finally, the government is asked to promote a culture of differences and of genders. The 2006 document by civil society introduces the term *femicide* to analyze the phenomenon of gender based violence. Femicide is a social problem, not a private fact, occurring in our "advanced" society where women suffer from violence just because they are women. It is "the major structural problem of society, deriving from the unequal power distribution in women-men relations". Its "privatization" concerns the fact it is not recognized as a public problem and that it usually happens within families, across all social classes; husbands, partners, ex partners, and relatives commit violence on women, and not on an exceptional and occasional basis. The media contribute to framing the problem in the wrong way, as a private matter, and report on the 'monster' underlying such violence as being an outsider (extra communitarian), building the perception that in our society there is no structural problem of gender based violence, it comes from outside. A more general problem concerns the fact that the state offers more protection to families than to women through legislation. Another controversial aspect is that the Ministry for Equal Opportunities, lacking financial autonomy, cannot project and implement a national plan with broad objectives, working on the social, economic, legislative and judicial level.

Gender based violence is the issue where more active actors, compared to the other analyzed issues, are named. They are not only legislators or members of the government or the state, but also other institutional actors (judicial powers), media, men, migrants, partners, husbands, fathers, and also victims (see above the "jeans sentence"). One text by civil society analyses more precisely than usual the role of active actors and the mechanism that makes state intervention weak. The state is responsible because is not very active in finding proper interventions. Apart from the women's shelters often run by feminist NGOs, the social actors (e.g. doctors, police, and judges) who should intervene lack expertise and gender training so they are not even able to recognize the phenomenon. Women are the most frequently mentioned passive actors, thus giving a gendered vision of the problem, although recent discourses on gender based violence also construct a significant differentiation concerning migrant status, with foreign women and Muslim women named as passive actors.

Women are mentioned in almost all documents, except from laws and sentences, which are completely gender blind and talk mainly about victims (and perpetrators). Victims can also become active actors (see above sentence on jeans). Children, old people and young girls

as well as LGBTQ persons are also mentioned as passive actors, but quite rarely and mainly in the most recent documents, except children who are named across all years and especially in legislative documents concerning sexual assault.

Concerning target groups, women are the most frequently named group, but also the whole society. Since a cultural change in terms of gender relations and culture is needed, many objectives refer to society in general, especially documents from civil society and left-wing MPs. In these documents, women's self determination and subjectivity are norms that inform diagnoses and prognoses, as well as violence as public responsibility. LGBTQ persons are named as a target group in one civil society document, and families are also a target group in a document by a right-wing MP, who reads the phenomenon of domestic violence as family pathology, lacking any gender dimension. In this case, violence has to be stopped through the regaining of the familial "natural paradigms".

3.5 Summary and conclusions

Generally speaking, the extent to and the way in which gender is invoked and gender equality is relevant in the documents largely depend on when the text was produced and on the actor who issued it. Indeed, the framing of gender and of gender equality in the policies, seem to reproduce traditional Italian political divides so that the broader frame of *familism* tends to underlie documents drafted under centre-right governments or by more conservative actors, whereas gender equality seen as an end in itself prevails in many voices belonging to left-wing actors and, above all, in civil society documents.

The unemployment issue is the one in which the policies are most de-gendered. Even if the problem of the low participation of women in the labour market is systematically stressed, this is done mainly within a broader "economic development" framework. The debate about pensions, in particular, appears completely de-gendered.

Intimate citizenship and gender based violence are the two issues where the peculiar broad frame related with the Italian social and cultural context- that of *familism*- emerges most clearly. In intimate citizenship, the topic of same sex marriage, for instance, is strongly opposed by Catholic and more conservative voices and seen as a 'threat' to 'normal families'. Also in reproduction, law 40/2004 which grants access to assisted reproduction only to heterosexual married couples, is an example of the "heteronormativity" of Italian legislation.

4. Framing intersectionality in Italy: what inequalities? How intersecting?

In this section we firstly focus on the main inequalities having an impact on and being addressed by gender+ equality policies in Italy. In order to do this, in addition to a more in depth analysis of the different documents, the *summary codes* will be used (situated at the end of each supertext and summarising the main framing of the policy, parliamentary voice or civil society document taken into consideration). Gathering and comparing the results of *point 12* entitled “*intersectionality*” of the different *summary codes*, we construct tables for each issue that summarise the inequalities considered and the relevance they have in each document (expressed in the summary codes by a major/minor binary scale). For each QUING sub-issue, subsequently, we identify the most visible and relevant intersections among the axes in order to assess the extent to which an intersectional approach is present in Italian policies and the implications of different versions of intersectionality for the treatment of each issue.

4.1 Intersectionality in general legislation and machinery

As Table 1. shows, the most important inequalities that intersect with gender in Italian general gender legislation and machinery are *class*, *citizenship status*, *age* and *ethnicity* followed by *sexual orientation*, *marital status* and *religion*.

Axis of inequality	Sub-issues		
	General gender legislation	Machinery	Total
a. ethnicity	1major 2minor	1major	2major 2minor
b. religion	1major 1minor	1minor	1major 2minor
c. class	4major 1minor	1minor	4major 2minor
d. sexual orientation	1major 1minor	1minor	1major 2minor
e. age	2major 2minor	1minor	2major 3minor
f. disability	1major	1minor	1major 1minor
g. marital status	1major 2minor	-	1major 2minor
h. nationality/migrant status	2major 1minor	2major 1minor	4major 2minor
i. other inequalities	-	1minor	1minor

Table 1.: Occurrence and relevance of intersecting inequalities in gender+ equality legislation and machinery.

The fact that intersectionality with *class* is largely predominant in general gender legislation is not surprising considering both Italian history and political culture. At the institutional level, the over 40 year presence in the political system of the strongest Communist Party (PCI) in Western Europe (together with the French PCF) has significantly influenced both broader political discourses and policy development (starting from the Constitution itself). At the civil society level, on the other hand, the development and characteristics of the wave of mobilizations in the 60s and 70s— alliances between students and workers, development of diffused extra-parliamentary radical left-wing groupings, alliances between social movements and trade unions – has also had a lasting impact. In this vein, the Italian feminist movement has been historically engaged with class, both in separate autonomous groups and through the diffused presence of the so-called “double militancies”: women active at the same time in grassroots groups and in left-wing political parties or trade unions.

The attention paid to gender as intersecting with class is also linked to rather structural economic factors. According to the data presented in February 2008 by the Minister for European Politics, Emma Bonino, at the conference “Women, Innovation and Growth: an Italian Problem”, in terms of female employment Italy is rated as the second-last European Country preceding only Malta. The average female employment rate in Italy is 46.3% vis-à-vis the European average of 57.4% and the South of Italy is the European area where female employment is the lowest in absolute terms. Because of these reasons, the intersection between gender and class inequalities is quite relevant. Taking for example the National Plan for the European year 2007, we can see that one of the discriminations considered as most important is gender within the labour market. Employment and the problem of reconciliation are described as the main factors of discrimination but, concerning gender inequality, the low female presence within political institutions is also named as a problem. Such an intersection, however, is often interpreted more in terms of economic development rather than gender equality.

Also, the intersection with *age* is common and occurs mainly in institutional documents regardless of the time span. However, in the 1997 Prodi-Finocchiaro Directive, age refers to young people and to education, whereas in the 2007 Audition of the left-wing Minister for Equal Opportunities the debate over precariousness and the lack of social mobility for “young girls and young boys” enters political discourse. Age is often intersected with more than one other axis of inequality ranging, especially in 2007 National Plan and in Pollastrini’s audition, from sexual orientation to ethnicity and disability. In this latter document, moreover, it is intersected with gender, pointing to the risk of pauperization among old women especially in the South.

The *regional* axis of inequality is also mentioned in general legislation and machinery documents, mainly in the 2007 National Plan for the European Year of Equal Opportunities and in the audition of the Minister Pollastrini in the first Committee on Constitutional Affairs. The mention of this inequality is not surprising in a country like Italy where regional differences, in terms of economic development, employment, culture and local legislation are wide. The regional source of inequality is mostly intersected with gender and class and refers

to statements where the broader framing is that of economic development rather than that of gender equality per se.

The intersection between *gender and citizenship status* emerged and has received increasing attention over recent years. However, the focus tends to be skewed towards immigrant status rather than the gender perspective, the latter remaining quite weak. Inequalities based on *ethnicity/race* which were not addressed in the 1997 Prodi-Finocchiaro national directive aimed at implementing Beijing Declaration and Platform are largely considered in the 2007 National Plan for the European Year of Equal Opportunities, in the 2006 Report drafted by the Ministry of Equal Opportunity describing the first year of activity of the National Office against Racial discrimination (UNAR) and in the 2004 civil society document Shadow Report. The phenomenon of important immigration flows in Italy, in fact, is quite recent so that historically there has been neither particular political engagement nor diffused expertise. Consequently, the different issues related to migration have only fully entered the political and public Italian debate in the last decade. The 2007 National Plan, besides taking into account inequalities based on ethnicity, is also the only document where the entire range of inequalities considered in the Quing project is mentioned. Different inequalities, in particular, are almost always intersected and explicitly labelled as “multiple discriminations”. A vision of the inequalities based on gender, citizenship status and class as mutually constitutive and fundamentally intersected was, however, already largely present in 2004 in the Shadow Report drafted by 42 women’s NGOs in response to the official governmental Report developed for the 49th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York in February 2005. The timeline of the documents as well as a closer look at the Italian context thus suggests that the issue of ethnicity and citizenship status has been rather forced in the institutional debates by civil society actors such as feminist NGOs and trade unions. The EU level has also played a fundamental role in this process, representing both an input and a source of legitimacy for interventions that were already been demanded at the civil society level.

In contrast with the two documents mentioned so far, however, in the UNAR Report ethnicity is intersected with citizenship status and religion whereas gender is not considered. This result is relevant since it seems to suggest that when the problem of ethnicity is treated by a separate body or office the framing of the policies tends to become de-gendered. This hypothesis seems to be confirmed in considering the section in the National Plan devoted to discrimination based on ethnicity, religion and culture. Again in this case the gender perspective tends to fade away as the main fields of discrimination are largely connected to work and the educational system (especially for the Roma population). The same process seems to occur in parliamentary debate documents when the issue of homosexuality is tackled. When the question concerning the introduction of legislation aimed at regulating de facto (heterosexual as well as homosexual) couples is raised, this is done only by referring to inequalities in terms of sexuality and, especially, marital status. Gender disappears as source of intersecting inequality.

Marital status is rarely considered as intersecting inequality in the documents except in the response by Forza Italia MP Mara Carfagna to the audition of the left-wing coalition Minister for Equal Opportunities Barbara Pollastrini held in July 2006. In her speech, Carfagna, largely focuses on maternity and family policies always referring to women as mothers within a heterosexual couple.

Finally, the National Plan for the European year 2007 takes into consideration the intersection between gender and disability, in particular concerning employment. The gender perspective is present when talking about multi-discrimination in relation to the labour market participation of disabled women. Multiple-discrimination is also referred to as a problem to be solved concerning migrant, old persons and children suffering from a form of disability.

While gender equality legislation documents introduce different inequality axes and, particularly the more recent texts, address “multiple discriminations”, gender equality machinery documents are rather ‘silent’ with regard to inequalities in general. The Italian machinery seems to be only partially consistent with legislation. On the one hand, the creation of the UNAR within the Ministry of Equal Opportunities is significant. On the other hand, however, the debate concerning machinery in the last few years has largely revolved around the reorganisation of gender equality institutional bodies. The National Commission for Equality and Equal Opportunities created in 1983 and formalized in 1990 (Law, N.164/1990) was replaced by another body named the Commission for Equal Opportunities between Men and Women in 2004 under the Berlusconi Government. As we anticipated in section 3, this has been accompanied by much criticism both from MPs of the opposition in the Parliament (as it emerges from parliamentary debates documents) and, above all, by civil society organisations. The previous body was aimed at advising the Prime Minister (who designed its chair), had coordination functions for all Government initiatives on equal opportunity and was composed by representatives of different organisations such as NGOs, trade unions, political parties, and industry associations. After Legislative Decree n.266/2003 is passed, the new Commission is instead chaired by the Minister of Equal Opportunities and no longer has the task of coordinating government action on gender equality. The initiative undertaken by the Berlusconi Government has produced a split between femocrats, feminists and the institutional machinery. The Shadow Report addresses this issue stating that: “the transformation of an autonomous body into an Executive dependent body has cancelled the Commission’s basic principle. The former Commission had a transversal and pluralistic character, interpreted women’s expectations, played a role of initiative and promotion of gender policies and above all it was autonomous” (Shadow Report 2004: 4). Moreover, the Shadow Report underlines how the gender policies promoted by the Berlusconi government are completely lacking a gender mainstreaming approach.

4.2 Intersectionality in non employment issues

As shown in Table 2. legislation as well as the broader debate about non-employment in Italy is largely built around the analysis of three main inequalities: *gender, class and age*.

Axis of inequality	Sub-issue				Total
	Tax	Care work	Reconciliation	Gender Gap	
a. ethnicity	-	-	-	-	
b. religion	-	-	-	-	
c. class	2major 1minor	2major 3minor	2major 2minor	1major 4minor	7major 10minor
d. sexual orientation	-	-	-	-	
e. age	2major 4minor	1minor	-	2major 1minor	4major 6minor
f. disability	-	1minor	1minor	1minor	3minor
g. marital status	-	1minor	1major	-	1major 1minor
h. nationality/ migrant status	-	4major	-	-	4major
i. other inequalities	1minor			1minor	2minor

Table 2.: Occurrence and relevance of intersecting inequalities in non-employment.

No intersections and de-gendered policies in tax and benefits sub-issue

There are several reasons which explain why *age* is widely considered in the documents. Italy has a clear demographic problem due to the ageing population and the low birth-rate. The old pension system proved to be inadequate and therefore in need of reform. The debate on the pension reform has been very hot in Italy in the last decade. The 'Maroni Pension Reform', enacted in 2004 by Law n. 243¹¹, sets the retirement age at 65 for men and 60 for women and establishes that from 2008 the minimum contributory period will increase from 35 to 40 years, independently of age. A combination of contributory history and age will allow for early retirement of those who are at least 60 years old starting from 2008. Regarding women, a special regulation on early retirement makes it possible to receive a pension when reaching 57 years of age and having 35 years of contribution. Since the calculation of the benefit is made on the basis of actual contributions paid, women who retire earlier will receive a lower amount of money. Moreover, the contribution system will have an impact on workers depending on their working history; workers with a continuous work history will be better off than those with some discontinuity, such as the ones employed on atypical contracts (Lombardo and Sangiuliano forthcoming). The approval of the law has been highly conflictual and two national strikes have been held in 2003 and 2004.

¹¹ See Law n°243, 23rd August, 2004 (Riforma Maroni) <http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/04243l.htm>

The debate on pension reform as well as the Maroni pension reform were essentially de-gendered, the only gender dimension intersecting with age emerged in the polarisation of the debate between the dominant position in favour of a different retirement age for women and men adopted by the government, state feminists and trade unions, and the more liberal defence of an equal retirement age for both sexes coming from the European Union and isolated voices (MP Emma Bonino) in the Italian political context (see Lombardo and Sangiuliano forthcoming).

Accordingly, the tax and benefits sub-issue in non-employment is also— compared with the other QUING issues - the one in which intersectionality occurs the least. The sole document in which we can find intersectionality is the speech of Senator Malabarba (Rifondazione Comunista) during the parliamentary debate on the 2004 Pension Reform. The Communist Senator strongly criticizes the reform stating that the abolishment of the minimum age pension will affect in particular women thus intersecting gender and class. In the tax and benefits policies sub-issue there is no reference to ethnicity and citizenship status as sources of inequality. This lack is probably related to the fact that migration is a relatively recent phenomenon in Italy which has started to enter the debate about work but not the one about pensions.

Care-work: intersections between citizenship status, class and gender

The only sub-issue in non-employment where *citizenship status* is intersected with other axes is that of *care work*. More precisely intersectionality occurs in parliamentary debates and in the civil society document. The texts focus on the numbers of foreign women working “in Italian families” as care givers (*badanti*) which has literally tripled (see Lombardo and Sangiuliano forthcoming) in the last decade in Italy. In the two 2002 parliamentary debate documents discussing art.33 of the bill on migration (which will become law 189/2002 so-called Bossi-Fini) that deal specifically with the regularization process of domestic and care foreign workers, MP Paolo Giaretta of the centre Party La Margherita addresses the issue in terms of a “big social and economic phenomenon” which led foreign women to work in Italian families mainly to take care of the elderly. Deputy Cinzia Dato (La Margherita as well), on her part, intersects only class and gender focusing on the fact that Italian women still have to “choose between production and reproduction” and suggesting that care work services should be improved and their access facilitated especially for medium-lower classes. It is interesting to note how, in both cases, the main frame concerns the nature of the policy action and the need of Italian families, particularly working women, to employ someone who can take care of the house or of relatives whereas no attention is given to foreign women themselves as active subjects. The intersection between *citizenship status, class and gender* is thus mainly addressed in social and economics terms in parliamentary debates. The same intersection is addressed in a more elaborate manner in the civil society document drafted by NGO Punto di Partenza and significantly titled *Global Care*. In this document, the three axes are explicitly framed as mutually constitutive and the phenomenon of the global care chain is analyzed.

Gender and class in reconciliation policies and the gender pay gap

In the sub-issues reconciliation and gender pay gap, the only inequalities that are addressed are those of *gender and class*. With regard to reconciliation, the selected law – Law 53/2000 “Dispositions for the support of maternity and paternity, for the right to care and for the coordination of city times” - is of particular importance since it represents the result of a long and detailed reflection by the women’s movement and by scholars on the intertwined nature of work time, time for care and time for oneself. This is also one of the laws in which intersectionality occurs: in particular between class and gender when the law allows working mothers to share according to their autonomy and needs the 5 months of compulsory maternity leave. The law, as we saw in section 3, has large scope and regulates, within an integrated approach, different domains. The intersection between gender and class, in particular, emerges in all documents in the sub-issue of reconciliation. The ‘content’ of the intersections, however, are rather different. Left-wing MP Elena Maria Cordoni, for instance, underlines the importance of the law within a framework of transformation and stresses how its main goal is that of promoting “a self-governance of own life times as well as new compatibilities and new values”. In contrast, the right-wing MP Alberto Sartori (Forza Italia), while applauding the flexibility in using the 5 months of maternity leave allowed by the law, mainly addresses the problem of making women competitive in the labour market. This economic framework is reinforced when the deputy laments that the cost of maternity leave for employers is too high. In this case, ethnicity, citizenship status and sexual orientation are not considered and the ‘white’, heterosexual family remains the main addressed social unit. The civil society document – the text drafted by feminist, trade-unionist Laura Basso and titled “Life time, work time: conciliation is possible” - is again the only one in which reconciliation is addressed by deepening the question of gender relationships and by considering reconciliation not just as a private issue but a public one.

In the sub-issue of the gender pay gap, the only axes of inequalities which are intersected are again those of class and gender. Law 30/2003 on the Labour Market passed under the right-wing Government led by Berlusconi, for instance, states: “women who want to re-enter the labour market ‘after accomplishing familiar tasks’ can use part time”. Both the 2001 White Book on the Labour Market and law 30 address the question of the low Italian female employment rate mainly in terms of economic development combined with a traditional view of family assets. Of a different form is the intersection between gender and class articulated by Communist MP Sodano who intervenes in the 2002 debate on new contracts and part-time work by stating that women actually choose part-time because of conciliation reasons. Once again, however, the only document in which the gender pay gap and equal treatment in the field of employment is addressed in a more complex way is the civil society text “Over the Hill Generation” drafted by the group Sconvegno. In the document, the young feminist members of the group describe themselves, born in the 70s, as an ‘over the hill’ generation who grew up within a fordist system and now face an atypical labour market and experience an almost entirely precarious life. The analysis, however, focuses on the attempt of overcoming traditional dichotomies in framing the situation, fordism/postfordism; typical/atypical, by discovering through the self inquiry method the “creative and subversive potentialities of a precarious life”.

4.3 Intersectionality in intimate citizenship issues

The main axes of inequalities in the intimate citizenship issue are those of *gender, marital status and class* followed by *sexuality and age*. Regional inequality is also mentioned with regard to Law 40 on assisted reproduction. Ethnicity and citizenship status are again almost absent from the debates. Intersectionality in intimate citizenship is rather low and in most cases it occurs between gender and class or between marital status and sexuality.

Axis of inequality	Total			
	Divorce	Same sex Marriages	Reproduction	Total
a) ethnicity	-	1minor	-	1minor
b) religion	-	-	-	-
c) class	3minor	2major	2minor	2major 5minor
d) sexual orientation	-	1major 3minor	2minor	1major 5minor
e) age	2minor	1major	1minor	1major 3minor
f) disability		1minor	1minor	2minor
g) marital status	4major	4major 2minor	1major 1minor	9major 3minor
h) nationality/ migrant status	-	2minor	-	2minor
i) other inequalities	-	-	-	

Table 3.: Occurrences and relevance of intersecting inequalities in intimate citizenship.

Marital status as main axis in Divorce and Marriage

Unsurprisingly, the major axis of inequality emerging in the sub-issue *divorce and marriage* is that of *marital status*. In this sub-issue all the documents coded refer to the 2006 law on shared custody. The general rationale of the law is to guarantee the child of a separated couple a balanced and continuous relation with both parents. For this reason, according to the law it is up to the judge to decide whether to give parents shared custody of the child/children or sole custody. In this sub-issue, no other axis of inequality is mentioned besides marital status. There are also few references to intersectionality, present in only two documents: the parliamentary debate document by right-wing MP Furio Gobetti (FI) and the civil society document by the Forum Giuriste Democratiche. The two texts express rather opposing visions. Senator Gobetti opens his speech by focusing on the sufferance and troubles children undergo when parents separate and by clarifying that it would be preferable

if separation did not happen. According to Gobetti, the law could be improved but it starts to provide judges with the instruments “to defend minor (child) victims of separation”. Intersectionality occurs when the Senator states that still in 91% of the cases after separation mothers have exclusive custody of the children and this constitutes a major problem. Finally, Gobetti closes his speech by clarifying that the rationale of the bill is not a re-balancing of power relations between parents. The Forum Giuriste Democratiche in its comment on the 2006 law provides a diametrically opposed vision. According to the jurists, the “shared custody is a choice to make with autonomy and self determination since it is based on maturity and capability of solving conflicts. (...) It has to be adopted only on mutual agreement and it cannot be imposed neither by a judge nor by law”. In the diagnosis, moreover, gender and marital status are intersected in considering that after separation the mother remains the daily caregiver and reference person for the children. In the diagnosis, the authors also point out that according to their professional experiences the law is often used by fathers in order to control their former wife. The two documents, as it is often the case in the various sub-issues in Italy, refer to two fundamentally divergent analytical backgrounds. In the first case, the focus is on the traditional family and the attempt to preserve as far as possible, even in the case of separation, its unity. The second vision implicitly questions the traditional distribution of roles within (and outside) the family and employs a gendered approach.

Same sex marriages: intersections without gender

In the *same sex marriage* sub-issue the main inequalities that are mentioned are those of *marital status, sexuality and class*. This is the intimate citizenship sub-issue where intersectionality occurs most frequently. Yet looking closer, it emerges that the axes that are privileged in the intersections are those of marital status, sexuality, class and sometimes regional inequalities. Gender tends to rather disappear. This is also the issue in which “familism” (and heterosexism) as a broad framing emerges most strongly. The selected civil society document is drafted by the Italian Episcopal Conference (Conferenza Episcopale Italiana). In this text, a vision of the heterosexual family as “natural family” is strongly reaffirmed. The same kind of approach is used by Senator Paola Binetti (centre-left coalition – teo-dem) in one of the parliamentary debate documents. It is important to stress that a gendered analysis of the problem is not present and while talking about same sex partnership no distinction is made between male gays and lesbians.

Marital status and class in the reproduction sub-issue

The last sub-issue is *reproduction*, where the main inequality axes mentioned are those of *gender, class and marital status*. The debate around the Law 40/2004 on medically assisted reproduction appears to be rather de-gendered. Regional inequality, instead, is addressed by Health Minister of the Prodi coalition, Livia Turco, in the presentation in front of the Parliament on the implementation of the law. The Minister intersects gender and class by signaling the high percentage of couples from the South migrating to the North where the public health system is more accessible since in the South many centres are private. The

civil society document drafted by the NGO Mothersonline intersects gender and class by denouncing the exclusion of assisted reproduction from the National Health Service. The inequalities of ethnicity and citizenship status disappear here completely, together with that of disability.

The heteronormative character of the Italian socio-political context, again strongly affected by the political weight of the Catholic ecclesiastic hierarchy, appears in the construction of gender in Italian debates about intimate citizenship, reinforcing the dichotomy men/women while largely ignoring issues related with transsexuals, homosexuals, etc. Often gender is constructed in relation to the rights and duties of the partners in the heterosexual family and in relation to maternity and paternity. The strong influence of familism in Italy is visible not only in law and law proposals but also in parliamentary debates where homosexuality still remains a very controversial issue. Exemplary was the fact that one of the first measures of the current Minister for Equal Opportunities, Mara Carfagna from the Berlusconi party, was to withdraw the support of the Ministry to the traditional annual gay pride event. Civil society documents reflect the deep fracture in Italian society between women's and gay rights NGOs able to better articulate intersected discourses and the Catholic, pro-choice, anti gay marriage proponents.

4.4 Intersectionality in gender based violence issues

In gender based violence the inequalities considered are diverse and vary substantially according to the sub-issue in question. Ethnicity and religion are the predominant axes which are addressed in the debate about female genital mutilation. Marital status, age and sexual orientation are considered in the debate about domestic violence whereas age and nationality are mentioned (even if only once) as major axes in sexual assault.

Axis of inequality	Total			
	Domestic violence	Sexual Assault	Trafficking and genital mutilations	Total
a) ethnicity	-	1minor	3major 1minor	3major 2minor
b) religion	-	-	3major 1minor	3major 1minor
c) class	2minor	1minor	2minor	5minor
d) sexual orientation	1major 1minor	-	2major	3major 1minor
e) age	1major 1minor	1major 2minor	-	2major 3minor
f) disability	-	1minor	-	1minor
g) marital status	2major	3minor	-	2major 1minor
h) nationality/ migrant status	-	1major	2major	3major
i) other inequalities	-	-	1minor	1minor

Table 4.: Occurrence and relevance of intersecting inequalities in gender based violence.

Domestic violence: looking at 'new inequalities'

In the domestic violence sub-issue a particularly interesting document is the 2007 bill “Measures for the sensitization about and the prevention of violence in the family, based on gender and against discriminations”. In the presentation in the Parliament of the bill, the Minister for Equal Opportunities Pollastrini raises in the diagnosis the intersection between sexual orientation and gender, detecting and denouncing the reduction of freedom linked to gender and sexual orientation. In talking about the passive actors in the family, moreover, the Minister quotes women, minors and elderly, thus paying attention to the dimension of age. In the prognosis, besides marital status, sexuality is again tackled as the Minister suggests adding discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation into the penal system. In the document therefore three different axes of inequality are separately intersected with gender suggesting attention to diverse domains but still lacking an all-embracing intersectional approach. This lack of clarity in addressing the different issues and in framing them within a broader discourse is criticized in the civil society document commenting the bill drafted by the NGO Giuriste Democratiche. The authors point at the weak and ill-defined reference to gender based violence and at the mix of different subjects which partly de-genders the text. The unclear positioning of LGBTQ persons in the law as well as of the organizations intervening in the issue is also criticized.

In the parliamentary debate document an intersection between gender and class is referred to by the Minister for Equal Opportunities Katia Belillo (Comunisti Italiani) while presenting law 54/2001 on violence in the family. The law, as previously noted, represents a watershed in Italian legislation since it the civil procedure introduced provided for the immediate removal of the perpetrator from the family in cases of violence, thus shifting the attention from the victim to the perpetrator. In the diagnosis, the Minister denounces the fact that domestic violence has long been an underestimated phenomenon which is rooted in the construction of 'masculinity' in the family as connected to patriarchy and the idea of possession of the female body by a man. Indeed, the Minister suggests that changing the male breadwinner model would also modify women's attitude towards reporting violence to the police. The diagnosis is very rich in this case and entails a critique directed to the Italian traditional institutional approach based on the assumption that the familial unity has to be protected under any circumstance.

Sexual assault: few intersections and the entrance of citizenship status in the debate

In the sexual assault sub-issue we can detect very few intersections. This is probably also due to the fact that the institutional selected documents were all drafted in the 90s and new axes of inequalities in Italy have mainly started to be tackled only in very recent years. Nevertheless, the documents – Law 02/1996 and sentence 163/1998 of the Court of Cassation - are very indicative of the way in which the debate on sexual assault has been and continues to be framed in the Italian case. The text of the law entails no accurate diagnosis or prognosis and does not mention the fact that it has been passed as the result of 30 years of debate raised by the feminist movement. It is nevertheless important since it states, for the first time, that violence is not a crime against the morality but against the person. However, the so-called 'jeans-sentence' 163/1998 (arguing that a woman who was victim of sexual violence had accepted sexual violence because she was wearing tight jeans) implicitly seems to reinforce a traditional approach to violence which focuses on the responsibilities of the victim. In the parliamentary debate on the sentence, MP Bianchi Clerici (Lega Nord) refers to an intersection between gender and citizenship status by shifting the attention towards the problem of violence in Italy as being related to the presence of migrants. The deputy refers to the cultural clash which occur when "persons, often desperate and in some cases also delinquents, which come from a completely different culture from the European one, come to a society where all women go out from the houses and lead a completely parity life to that of men". The 'instrumental use' of violence to address the problem of migration in cultural and in some cases xenophobic terms is very common in the Italian debate and has been recurrent over recent years. In contrast, in the same parliamentary debate, a left-wing MP criticizes the sentence of the Court of Cessation, arguing for a framing of violence as a structural and viral problem which has to be tackled in a more comprehensive way and not by just focusing on the behaviour of the victim or, in the manner of Bianchi Clerici, focusing on migrants to frame violence as something coming from and belonging to 'others'.

Again, the most detailed document is the civil society dossier by Democratic Jurists on *femicide*. In this text, class and gender in particular are intersected while assessing that violence is a widespread phenomenon which affects women of all social classes and represents “the major structural problem of society, deriving from the unequal power distribution in women-men relations”. Violence, in this case, is thus framed as a social fact and problem which should not be subjected to “privatization”.

Female genital mutilation: ethnicity, citizenship status and religion as main intersected axes

The sub-issue on female genital mutilation is the one in which intersectionality occurs most frequently, and where more and different axes of inequalities are intersected. Ethnicity, citizenship status and religion together with age and class are mentioned. Female genital mutilation in Italy has received bipartisan condemnation. The 2006 law titled “Dispositions concerning the prevention and the ban of the practice of female genital mutilation” was passed under a centre-left Government, whereas the 2004 Governmental Informative against female genital mutilations was presented by a right-wing Government.

However, the way in which the issue has been framed and the axes of inequalities that have been intersected are remarkably different along the political divides. In the 2007 parliamentary debate on “initiatives to contrast violations of women’s individual freedom in the name of religious rules” two main contrasting visions emerge. On the one hand, right wing deputy Bertolini (Forza Italia) focuses on different cultures, mainly religious ones, arguing that fundamentalism and obscurantism lead to violence and discriminations. The deputy states that foreign women suffer in general from discrimination and non working Muslim women from isolation. While addressing the issue, Bertolini presents statistical data regarding only Muslims and enlarges the focus also to forced marriage and prostitution. This frame of the issue as problematically linked to religion is even reinforced by Lega Nord deputy Lussana who concentrates her intervention on the fact that Islam as a dogma sees women as inferior to men, while the Catholic Church, having an official agreement with the State, has recognized the juridical principles of equality and non discrimination between men and women. The Lega Nord deputy, moreover, claims that Muslim women themselves are asking for help: “they are asking us to take it upon ourselves to solve their problems and to reach that freedom that here in the west is not refused”.

Criticizing the way in which religion, citizenship status and gender are intersected in these two interventions, deputy Cesini (Comunisti Italiani) reframes violence in general as a ‘gendered’ problem and not as specifically involving foreign women. Cesini affirms that “perpetrators, from different cultures and religions, share the same assumption of being the ‘owners’ of their daughters’, wives’ and girlfriends’ lives”. The selected civil society document – an article titled “Behind the veil” by leading feminist Lea Melandri – shares this assumption and goes further in formulating an analysis of the way in which the state tends to build identity around religion while gender, language, class, and language are obscured by this dominant category.

All in all, it is interesting to note how the debate about gender based violence has shifted over time mainly developing around two different dichotomies: one prevailing in the 90s and the second prevailing more recently. In the 90s, the dichotomy underlying the institutional approach towards gender based violence opposed a framing of violence as *structural and rooted in asymmetrical and patriarchal gender relations within and outside the family* to a conceptualization of it as *either an individual problem or as the occasional pathological functioning of the family*. Whereas the first vision was mainly brought into the debate by femocrats and feminists and supported by left-wing Governments, the second one was applied by Catholic political exponents and conservative parties. The existence of this dichotomy had, in the 90s, several repercussions: the second conceptualization tended to address the problem as pertaining to the private sphere thus focusing mainly on the behaviour of the victim rather than of the perpetrator. The first one framed gender based violence as a social and structural problem and tended to intersect it more with class. More recently this dichotomy has slightly shifted with the entrance of new axes of inequality; a framing of violence as a *'gendered and gender problem' which is primarily rooted in men/women relations* is increasingly opposed to a framing in terms of a *cultural vision of violence as the result of religious dogma (Islam in particular) and of a clash of cultures*. In this case, intersectionality between gender, citizenship status ethnicity and religion is utilised to support broader political statements on the problems of immigration.

4.5 Summary and conclusions

All in all, the analysis of the four sub-issues shows that the prevailing inequalities which are intersected are those of *class and age* whereas 'new' dimensions are rapidly entering the debate: in particular those of *citizenship status, ethnicity and sexuality*. Intersections, in the Italian case, mainly occur between two or three axes of inequality with some attempts to broaden the analysis occurring in the most recent documents mainly drafted under the last centre-left Government. In these cases, the intersections are framed in terms of "multiple inequalities".

In general gender equality legislation and machinery intersectionality involves a wide range of inequalities. The largely predominant dimensions that are considered, however, are those of class and age followed by citizenship status and sexual orientation. What is interesting to note is that when these last two inequalities enter the debate the policies tend to become *de-gendered*.

The main inequalities that are intersected with gender in non-employment are class and age. The age intersection with class and gender in tax and benefits policies is mainly related to the Italian demographic problems which, in turn, have caused a heated debate on the pension reform. Yet the discussion on the issue is rather de-gendered. In the care work sub-issues the dimensions of ethnicity and citizenship status enter the debate and are intersected with class and gender (above all in parliamentary debates and in the civil society document). This result is mainly related with the need to regulate the phenomenon of foreign care-workers ('badanti') working for Italian families. In the non-employment sub-issues of

reconciliation and the gender pay gap it is interesting to note how the ethnicity and citizenship status dimensions do not enter the debate as if, for instance, reconciliation was not a problem for migrant women too. The dimension of sexual orientation is not considered either, showing the persistence of a strong familistic or heteronormative perspective.

The major inequalities present in intimate citizenship in general are those of gender, marital status and class followed by sexuality and age. Regional inequality is also mentioned with regard to law n. 40 on reproduction. Again, ethnicity and citizenship status are not considered. Intersectionality is rather low and mainly occurs between gender and class or between marital status and sexuality. When sexuality enters the debate, gender tends to fade away.

In gender based violence different axes of inequality are intersected according to the issue at stake. In domestic violence and sexual assault intersectionality is rather low whereas it increases in the sub-issue of female genital mutilation when the dimensions of ethnicity, religion and citizenship status are often evoked.

5. The institutionalization of intersectionality in Italy

As it emerged in the previous section, intersectionality is not regularly incorporated in the Italian debate on gender+ equality policies. Moreover, intersections tend to be constructed mainly around only two (in a lower number of cases, three) axes of inequality. This trend is confirmed by the low number of cases of 'legislated intersectionality' and by the type of machinery which is developing in Italy.

5.1 The Italian legal framework on gender equality

The Italian legal framework on gender equality has only recently started to include an intersectional approach. The first case of 'legislated intersectionality' in equality policies is the transposition of one of the two European anti-discrimination Directives in the year 2003 with Legislative decree n. 216/2003, which transposes Directive 2000/78/EC on the establishment of a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation that prohibits direct or indirect discrimination on grounds of belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Especially the most progressive trade unions like CGIL and its LGBT section called NIDIL, together with gay and lesbian national NGOs, strongly criticized the Italian legislation for being a restrictive and partial interpretation of the European Directive and for not allocating enough tools and resources to monitor its implementation. Only some regions (e.g. Piemonte and Tuscany) have chosen to legislate at the local level on this matter. Other bills proposed by leftist MPs for legislating against homophobia and for the recognition and non discrimination of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities have not been approved by the Parliament and transformed into Law. During the debates, parties influenced by the Catholic Church often refer to an article by former cardinal (now Pope) Joseph Ratzinger published in the newspaper "Osservatore Romano" in 1992 (Some consideration on law proposals on non discrimination against homosexual people) and more recently in 2003 (Considerations on bill proposals to recognize homosexual partnership, Considerazioni circa i progetti di legge per il riconoscimento delle unioni). The recent debate on civil unions and same sex partnerships' rights (the so called "Dico") has strongly drawn public attention to the issue.

An important document is also the 2007 National Plan for the European Year for Equal Opportunities presented by the Minister for Equal Opportunities of the centre-left Government Barbara Pollastrini. Even if the document mainly tackles the issue of gender based discrimination in the labour market and the question of reconciliation, it also addresses discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, religion, culture and disability and explicitly refers to the intersections of these axes in terms of "multiple discriminations". The document is significant because it attempts to encompass several dimensions. Yet, in terms of legal impact, its scope is more restricted since its very general goals are mainly those of promotion of research, awareness raising campaigns and dissemination of results.

A further recent initiative (2007) undertaken by the centre-left government has been the presentation of a bill against violence that tries to introduce some intersectionality. The diagnosis treats violence against minors, old persons and women - quoting also violence

because of sexual orientation but without developing this issue - perpetrated within familial or emotional relationships. The gender and intergenerational asymmetries, coming from the existing cultural model, are seen as the humus that let violence grow. Nevertheless, there is no clear definition of gender based violence, and LGBTQ persons are not even named. The prognosis covers a different area, aimed at a general cultural change towards violence within family relations, social interventions at different levels for victims of violence, and an effective penal system that can discourage perpetrators.

However, according to the analyzed civil society document, the bill refers only implicitly to gender based violence. The mix among very different subjects (women, children, old persons) partly de-genders the text, and there is no clear inclusion of LGBTQ persons. An attempt to include an intersectional analysis is present, but it is based only on age and gender (but just women). According to the NGO, the state should take responsibility in ensuring equality and a life free from violence for women and LGBTQ persons. The goals of the state should include the promotion of equal social dignity and freedom by removing the social and economic obstacles to equality. More specifically, the rationale of the bill should be modified in order to clearly recognize rights connected to gender identities.

5.2 Intersectionality in Italian gender+ equality machinery

Italian gender+ equality machinery has significantly developed starting from the second half of the 90s and mainly under the influence of the 1995 Beijing Conference and of European Directives. As previously stated, the Ministry for Equal Opportunities was set up in 1996 by the centre-left Prodi Government. This was followed, in 1997, by the creation within it of a Department for Equal Opportunities aimed at supporting the activities of the Ministry. In very recent years, as we will specify in Section 7, new institutions have been created within the Department, each separately dealing with specific issues.

Considering the QUING period, however, UNAR (Italian National Office against Racial Discrimination) is the only institutional structure that has some potential to develop some kind of intersectional approach. It was established in 2003 (Decree n. 215/2003) within the Department for Equal Opportunities to comply with the EU anti-discrimination Directive 43/2000/EC. UNAR created a national register of NGOs committed to the fight against discrimination and set up a free phone line service to denounce discrimination cases. It is also working to sign agreements with Trade Unions and employers' organizations to promote the value of "cultural diversity". Even if it was not promoted by antiracist NGOs and it is clearly a Governmental initiative based on the European directive, UNAR has been welcomed by civil society organizations working to fight against racism¹². According to the same legislative decree, a "Control Bureau to guarantee parity and to remove discriminations based on race or ethnic origins" is created within the Department for Equal Opportunities. This Office is directed by a person nominated by the Prime Minister or a delegated Minister. Even if it is part of the same organizational structure within the Equal Opportunities issue, until now it apparently has not explicitly "mainstreamed" gender within its own activities.

¹² Enar Italia (European Network Against Racism) leaflet: "<http://digilander.libero.it/enarit/>"
__<http://digilander.libero.it/enarit>

6. Italian institutions and civil society organizations

Before considering civil society documents and analyzing the relationship between gender equality institutions and civil society actors, it appears necessary to highlight, on the one hand, some general features of the Italian associational context and structure and, on the other hand, some peculiarities of the Italian feminist movement. With regard to the first, Italy is marked by an embedded and diffused associational tradition especially at the local level. Among the factors that have favoured the development of associative realities are the weakness of the welfare state, the traditional social and economic organization based on the family unit and on personal ties, and the development after World War 2 of two contrasting and highly ideological political subcultures – the ‘red’ communist one and the ‘white’ Catholic one. There are many NGOs in Italy which deal with a variety of different issues often providing services and ‘making up’ for the absence of institutional solutions to emerging societal problems. Given these premises, it is thus not surprising that the role of civil society actors in framing and pushing ‘new’ issues such as those linked to immigration, sexual orientation, precariousness in the labour market, gender based violence and global care chains in the public and institutional debate has proved to be crucial. The dense network of Antiviolence Centres mainly active at the local level since the late 70s on the issue of gender based violence exemplifies this pattern. The Centres, indeed, have not only provided over the years fundamental services to women victims of violence but have also developed programmes, autonomously produced precious statistical data and accumulated a fundamental ‘expertise’ that made them legitimate and established interlocutors during the late 90s when gender based violence finally started to be regulated by the Centre-Left Government.

Another important element that can help in better understanding civil society documents relates to the features and history of the Italian women’s movement. In this regard, whilst sharing many characteristics with other feminist movements emerging during the 70s in Western Democracy, the Italian one is also marked by important specificities. In organizational terms, the movement mainly spreads at the local level through a dense network of rather informal ties. There are a smaller number of nationally coordinated activities. With regard to the issues raised, the Italian movement is influenced by the widespread presence of the so-called “double-militancies” – that is, by women active in the movement and, at the same time, in left-wing trade unions or in the communist party – such that concern about class is particularly present. Most importantly, the Italian movement is marked by a rich and complex theoretical production which during the 70s leads to the development of different approaches each linked with specific ‘practices’ (see theory of difference and practice of difference; the ‘sexuality’ approach and the practice of self-consciousness raising groups).

During the eighties, however, feminist mobilizations in Italy dramatically decline. On the one hand, the ‘battle’ over the abortion law, which had functioned as a catalyst in the 1970s, is won: law 194 is passed in 1978 and in the subsequent opposing referendum proposed by the Pro Life Movement in 1981, 68% of the voters vote for the law not to be changed. On the

other hand, the movement is internally increasingly marked by contrasts and divisions. Those different 'souls' that had previously 'cooperatively argued' start in the 80s to form an 'archipelago' of rather non-communicating groups. In 1987, in particular, the Libreria delle Donne in Milan publishes the book "Non credere di avere dei diritti" (Don't believe you have rights), in which not only the theory of "sexual difference" jointly developed with the group Diotima¹³ is further articulated but which also sets the future political agenda of the most influential strand of Italian radical feminism. In the book the 'Libreria' states: "Having magisterial interlocutors is more important than having recognized rights. An authoritative (*female*) interlocutor is necessary if we want articulate our life within a project of liberty (...) It is neither laws nor rights that grant to a woman the self confidence she lacks" (1987, p.18). Whereas radical feminism thus progressively departs from the realm of institutional politics, another part of the movement devotes its efforts to the institutions. The culture of equal opportunities and women's empowerment consequently spreads, particularly within the Communist Party. Femocrats play an important role especially in the second half of the 90s when gender equality legislation and machinery undergo substantial changes (see section 3).

6.1 Framing intersectionality

Generally speaking, civil society texts are more articulated and complex than other kinds of document. In particular, they usually contain critiques toward implemented laws or governmental plans so that diagnoses are well-developed, rich and documented, and the prognosis is usually implicit in the diagnoses themselves. This is particularly evident in documents drafted by NGOs. Significantly, the inequalities that are more often addressed in civil society documents are those of class, citizenship status, age, sexual orientation, and marital status. Whilst being present across issues, class inequality is more often intersected with gender in non-employment civil society documents. In the 2007 NGO Punto di Partenza document on care work - addressed both in terms of (lack of) co-responsibility between partners and the global care chain – gender and class are also intersected with citizenship status. Punto di Partenza, as a matter of fact, is a "political laboratory" established by native and foreign women involved in action-research aimed at building social inclusion policies and promoting their "political subjectivity". The text provides a well articulated diagnosis on the structural and international origins of the global care chain phenomenon as rooted in North/South inequalities. Care work is understood in terms of social responsibility and a main goal to be reached concerns the social and political recognition of its value as well as a change at the international level concerning its distribution. The NGO Punto di Partenza provides a useful example of a broader phenomenon; starting from 2002, indeed, in the context of the flourishing of the movement for a globalization from below, feminist movements detect intersections between racism and sexism and the connections between impoverishment of the national welfare state and the role and exploitation of migrant workers in the care sector. The setting up of mixed NGOs and networks comprising migrants and native women is one of the most common ways for enhancing migrant women's participation.

¹³ Diotima is a philosophical community based at the University of Verona. It is composed mainly of scholars, teachers and some trade unionists.

In relation to the labour market, the document by the group of young feminists *Sconvegno* differs from both the right-wing and left-wing oriented governmental documents. The text offers an analysis of the recent changes in the labour market and consequently in all realms of life that tries to overcome the dichotomous right-wing and left-wing positions, analyzing the transformative potential of precariousness and not only the bad consequence for workers (from the left-wing side), or the need of flexibility for economic development (from the right-wing side). Also the text by feminist trade unionist Laura Basso on reconciliation intersects gender with class in framing conciliation as a social problem that needs to be addressed and regulated at the collective level through broader interventions and not at the private level. The only civil society document which appears rather de-gendered and does not refer to any intersectionality in non-employment is the critique proposed by the trade union CGIL toward the 2004 Maroni pension reform. In this case, class is the pillar of inequality which is considered and the main frame is that of protecting workers' rights. All in all, as we saw, the pension debate is the one that has been paradoxically less penetrated by a gender perspective even if it revolves around a differentiated pension age for men and women.

Class is also the major intersected inequality in other issues. In the general legislation selected document –Shadow Report 2004 – while criticizing the official Report on the Italian situation drafted by Minister Prestigiacomo for the 2004 General Assembly in New York, the authors denounce the continuing low rate of participation of Italian women in the labour market as well as the persisting pay and career gap. Furthermore, class is also intersected with citizenship status, as the authors address the situation of segregation and discrimination under which many foreign women suffer in Italy.

The 2002 critique of the NGO Mothers Online against the bill on assisted reproduction proposed by the centre-right coalition also refers to class by pointing to the exclusion of this technique from the National Health Service thereby making it an elite practice.

In the civil society documents on shared custody – *Forum Donne Giuriste's* critique toward the law 2006 – and on same sex marriage – 2007 CEI note –gender is instead intersected with the axis of marital status and, in the latter case, also of sexuality. Yet the broader framing of the intersections is of an opposing character. Whereas the CEI text points to the natural family as being composed of a married heterosexual couple, the Forum's document tries to deconstruct traditional gender roles by criticizing the law on shared custody which restricts parents, and especially a mother's, autonomy and self-determination.

Class as an important axis of inequalities is mentioned also in gender based violence documents. The 2006 NGO Democratic Jurists' documents on "femicide" insist on the virulent cross-class diffusion of violence while providing an articulated diagnosis of the phenomenon. Religion together with class and gender is mentioned in the document by Lea Melandri, a leading figure in Italian feminism, called "Behind the Veil". The text exemplifies the influence of a rich theoretical legacy discussed above. Whilst rather short, it provides the reader with a very articulated analysis of the state's construction of women's identities

around fixed categories; in the case of the veil, that of religion which obscures other ones. Melandri's text, while not entailing a precise or clearly stated intersectional approach, is the result of years of reflections on and analysis of gender relations, sexuality and the role of the body. It is thus a very rich text which is difficult to understand and 'code' in terms of intersectionality if its theoretical background is not fully taken into account. A further interesting text in gender based violence is the 2007 Democratic Jurists NGO "Dossier on gender based violence". The document is a critique of the bill 2169/2007 against violence against women and because of sexual orientation and gender identity, proposed by Minister Pollastrini of the Prodi centre-left coalition. The Jurists' document denounces the weak social recognition of women's and LGBT persons' dignity as well as the confusion in the *ratio legis* of the bill and the multiple groups involved (women, minors and elderly people). The text, taken together with the bill, is of interest since both address simultaneously various inequalities based on gender, age, sexual orientation and class. The NGO document is a very recent one and it reflects the contents and the problematic aspects of the debate around sexual orientation and gender identity in Italy.

To sum up, Italian civil society documents are marked by complex and articulated discourses in which different inequalities (according to the issue) are mentioned and often intersected. Yet "multiple discrimination" is not a frame which is regularly employed and intersections occur at most between two or maximum three axes of inequality. To some extent it can be claimed that civil society actors are generally better at providing more complex diagnoses of specific issues and at suggesting more articulated and encompassing prognostic measures. In terms of time span, more recent documents tend to broaden the scope of the analysis by considering, inequalities in addition to class, such as citizenship status and sexual orientation, which seem to have now fully entered, even if separately intersected with gender, the civil society discourse. A broad intersectional approach thus seems in some cases embryonic whereas in others it is implicitly contained in the framing of the issues at stake.

6.2 Civil society organizations in/and Italian equality machinery: a changeable relation

The capacity of civil society actors of actually affecting legislation and/or entering the institutional realm largely depends on the type of actor vis-à-vis the colour of the Government which is ruling. The CEI (Italian Episcopal Conference), for instance, has found a solid ally in the 2001-2006 Berlusconi Government and has managed to deeply affect both the debate and the legislation on assisted reproduction (Law 40/2004), on abortion (see the 2005 Minister Storace proposal of allowing the Pro Choice movement to enter women's health centres – *consultori*) and on same sex marriage. On the other hand, in the same period, the dialogue between feminists, LGBTQ groups, and more progressive NGOs and institutions has turned into open conflict. The 2004 reform of the Commission for Equality and Equal opportunities (existing from 1984 until 2003 and operating within the Presidency of the Council of Minister), in particular, has indirectly or directly moved away all those femocrats that, during the late 90s, had contributed to building up the gender equality machinery and legislation. The 'divorce' between feminists and femocrats and the Government is well testified by the selected document Shadow Report jointly drafted by 42 women's NGOs in which, besides the lack of gender mainstreaming, the authors criticize the new body of the

Commission for Equal Opportunities between men and women for its lack of independence from the executive and for restricting the dialogue with civil society. This type of pattern of a general opening of institutional structures towards civil society actors, femocrats and feminists during left-wing Governments and sudden closures during right-wing Governments has had relevant consequences also with regard to the scope and type of intersectional approach implemented at the institutional level. By favouring dialogue with civil society, left-wing Governments have tended to include more those issues and concerns arising on the ground in legislation (the question of same sex marriages remaining still one of the most delicate in the light of the presence within centre-left coalitions of the Catholic faction, better known as teo-dem). As we will highlight in section 7, new bodies have recently been introduced in the Ministry for Equal Opportunities by former Left Democrat party Minister Pollastrini with the deliberate aim of enhancing the joint work between institutions and associations, in particular in the field of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity and in the area of gender based violence.

7. Main changes and relevance of different forms of intersectionality

This section will be devoted to the analysis of the main changes in Italian legislation on general gender equality, non-employment, intimate citizenship and gender based violence and in the gender equality machinery which represent important landmarks for the introduction of an intersectional approach. The analysis will include consideration of very recent developments in Italian legislation and machinery. The updating of the documents covered by the QUING period will be used in the conclusions of the report to assess the extent to which specific patterns or trajectories are developing regarding the introduction and the implementation of an (or different) intersectional approach(es).

7.1 Changes in general legislation and machinery

Italian institutions have started to pay attention to racial discrimination after the increase of immigration flows during the 90s and their subsequent stabilization as a structural phenomenon, but also because of the pressure of the European Union. Indeed, in June 2007 the European Commission sent formal requests to Italy and other 13 Member states to fully transpose EU Directive 2000/43/CE which aims at banning discrimination based on race or ethnic reasons.

There are three landmarks for intersectionality in Gender Equality Legislation and Institutional Machinery that are connected to such transformation of Italian society:

- 1) The first one is the setting up of UNAR (*Ufficio nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali*, Italian National Office against Racial Discrimination) in 2003. As we already stressed, this anti-racist body, even though it is part of the Equal Opportunities Ministry, until now has not explicitly “mainstreamed” gender within its own activities.
- 2) The second one is Article 18 of the Law on migration (Law n° 286/1998). It refers to the victims of trafficking and it traces strategies for intervention in helping and supporting them to escape their perpetrators, for obtaining a permit to stay and to find a job and accommodation. The decree that implements the Law establishes the creation of a dedicated structure within the Department for Equal Opportunity: an Inter-ministerial Commission on the Implementation of art. 18 (*Commissione interministeriale per l’attuazione dell’articolo 18 del testo unico sull’immigrazione*).
- 3) Finally, after the approval of the law against genital mutilation (Law n. 7/2006, see below), a Commission for preventing and combating female genital mutilations has been set up within the Equal Opportunities Department.

A further ‘turning point’ that possibly influences the treatment of intersectionality in gender equality policies is the transposition of one of the two European anti-discrimination Directives in the year 2003 (Legislative decree n. 216/2003, which transposes Directive 2000/78/EC) on the establishment of a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation that prohibits direct or indirect discrimination on grounds of belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. This was the first case of ‘legislated intersectionality’ in equality policies.

Further developments in the Italian machinery are very recent but are of particular interest for the present analysis on intersectionality. As we saw in the previous sections, the issues linked with sexual orientation and gender identity have gained resonance in institutions and public opinion only in very recent years. The 2007 law proposal on same sex marriages, in particular, has caused heated debates. Whilst the law has not passed in the Parliament, the Minister for Rights and Equal Opportunities of the left-wing coalition, Barbara Pollastrini, has created important new bodies in the Ministry dealing with discriminations on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity:

- The first body is the Commission for the Rights and Equal Opportunities of Lesbians, Gay, Bisexuals and Transgender (*Commissione per i diritti e le pari opportunità di lesbiche, gay, bisessuali e transgender*). The Commission was created in May 2007 and its first components are nominated through a Decree on the 24th of January 2008 (the date in this case is particularly important since the Prodi Government will fall four days after. As in the case of other measures on particularly 'debated issues', such as Law 40 on assisted reproduction, the Ministers rush to complete the projects they had started). The Commission is composed of seven members nominated by the Minister herself among established experts in the field and has mainly consultative tasks besides granting technical and scientific support to the Minister in elaborating and implementing antidiscrimination policies. According to the Decree, the Commission articulates its activities mainly in two general subjects, "sexual orientation" and "gender identity", which are supposed to be treated separately. The entire Decree is explicitly designed to favour dialogue with civil society actors. On the one hand, it states that when the Commission gathers "four representatives of transgender associations will participate as consulted experts". On the other hand, art. 8 creates the "Conference of Italian LGTB associations" (*Consulta delle associazioni LGTB italiane*) as a "body for the participation and the encounter and dialogue between social and institutional actors." The Conference involves representatives of official associations working on the topic and it gathers twice a year, chaired by the Minister herself.
- The second body which is created in January 2008 (five days before the fall of the Government) is the "National Observatory against serious sexual harassments and violence against women and for sexual orientation and gender identity" (*Osservatorio nazionale contro le molestie gravi e la violenza alle donne e per orientamento sessuale e identità di genere*). The body is the first to deal with different types of discrimination at the same time. The main framing, however, is that "of the realm of the more general objective of promotion and protection of human rights". The observatory functions as a technical and scientific support tool for the Minister. It has several tasks such as the development and gathering of statistical data on violence, the creation of a national database, policy analysis of existing measures at both the local and at the international level, and the drafting of plans. The Observatory is composed of the Minister, the Head of the Department for Equal Opportunities, three Representatives of the Presidency of Council, a representative of the national statistics institute (ISTAT) and three experts. Within the Observatory there is a Scientific Committee composed of 13 experts and a Piloting Committee which,

significantly, comprises a representative of every other Ministry, probably in the attempt to better mainstream the activities within other Ministries.

- A further body introduced within the Department for Equal Opportunities by Minister Pollastrini -again in December 2007- is the "Permanent Forum against serious sexual harassments and violence against women and for sexual orientation and gender identity" (*Forum permanente contro le molestie gravi e la violenza alle donne, per orientamento sessuale e identità di genere*). Whereas the Observatory has rather scientific and specific tasks, the forum is explicitly introduced with the aim of fostering "the dialogue and exchange of ideas between institutions and civil society". The Forum has consultative tasks and comprises a wide range of actors, including: representatives of anti-violence centres, of female and male associations, trade unions, female MPs, and members' of other Ministries.
- Finally, the latest institution which is going to be introduced within the Ministry for Equal Opportunity is the National Guarantor for Childhood and Adolescence. The law proposal advanced by the new Minister Mara Carfagna has been approved by the Council of Ministries in August 2008. The new institution tackles a further axis of inequality previously not specifically addressed: age. The Guarantor has protection, informative and consultative tasks and can propose the approval of specific measures to the Parliament.

It is important to note that in all the documents related to the creation of these new bodies, references to European Directives or Initiatives and to International Institutions are very frequent and well developed. In the case of Minister Pollastrini, these are mainly used to justify measures that are highly debated at the domestic level. Furthermore, it is interesting to note how the two Ministers use very different languages, a nuance which might actually suggest a broader difference in approach. Minister Pollastrini's documents are always written in a gendered way and in referring to herself she uses the Italian female version of the word Minister: *Ministra*. In contrast, Minister Carfagna's documents are marked by a more gender neutral style and she refers to herself using the Italian male version of the word Minister: *Ministro*.

These changes in general legislation for gender equality policies seem to suggest the adoption of a new perspective that takes into consideration not only gender inequalities but also other inequalities, namely race, sexual orientation and age. At the same time, however, the way in which the bodies concerning sexual orientation and gender identity have been introduced and the remarkable differences which seem to emerge between the former Minister and the new one do not suggest the establishment of any embedded and stable pattern for the future.

7.2 Changes in non employment

The main changes in non employment concern the emerging intersection of *gender, class and ethnicity/citizenship status* in the debate on domestic and care work and the *marginalisation of gender* concerns in the *age/class/gender* intersection that emerges in the debate on pension reform.

In the debate on domestic and care work, women's and feminist NGOs -often linked with anti-systemic movements and the Social Forum- highlight in the years 2002-2005 the connections between welfare state service gaps and migration policies which give a temporary status for migrant women to enter in the country as domestic and care workers ('badanti') and leave them unprotected in the informal economy. The shift from Italian to foreign caregivers highlights the fact that care work is still gender-segregated; there has not been a restructuring of the organization within the family, or a re-framing of welfare policies, or a major involvement of men in care work (see Lombardo and Sangiuliano forthcoming). The State, regardless the government's political colour, has supported the privatization of the care sector adopting favourable policies to foreign domestic workers who are referred to, even in the public document, using the pejorative word "badanti". For instance, regional and local administrations support the matching of work demand and supply. This means that there is neither the will to redistribute domestic and care duties within the family nor the attempt to adjust public social services to demographic and social changes. Concerning this issue, the turning point is the immigration law n. 198/2002, in which art. 33 distinguish domestic workers from other workers, allowing more favourable conditions to apply to the former. Emergency migration regulations for migrant female domestic workers are also part of the utilitarian Italian approach to care work that enables the entrance of migrant women into the country only for the purpose of caring for dependent elderly people and children.

In spite of these trends, the approval of a new national contract for domestic workers in March 2007 following 2 years of negotiations may open up opportunities for improving the position of domestic workers in the labour market, thus showing greater consideration of the intersection between class, gender, and ethnicity. There seems to be an attempt to afford a higher professional value to care work through the creation of professional categories, while part time and job sharing have also been introduced together with a general reduction of full time working hours. Although some mechanisms to protect pregnant workers and mothers have been introduced, gaps in the national legislation on parental leave for domestic workers continue to leave migrant female workers insufficiently protected (Lombardo and Sangiuliano forthcoming). This shows that consideration of the intersection of gender with ethnicity/citizenship status and class is still at an initial stage in policy-making.

The other important political debate that has highlighted the intersection of age, class, and gender has been the *pension reform* that set a differential retirement age for women and men. In this case, it seems *that age and class* have been played against *gender*. In the public debate, the Trade Union CGIL has expressed the most critical position about the impact of pension reform on women's lives. However, none of the unions criticized the

'inequality' in granting women a lower retirement age, arguing that formal equality would result in substantial disadvantage given the difficulties women face in accumulating an adequate number of working years for entitlement purposes and in the greater discontinuities in their working lives due to the uneven distribution of domestic and care work (see Lombardo and Sangiuliano forthcoming).

The centre-leftist government, in the Budget Law approved in July 2007, maintained a different retirement age for women and men; women's maximum retirement age is set at 60, while men's retirement age is 65. The measure disregards the debate opened by the Radical Party MP Emma Bonino on the need to put women's retirement age on an equal footing with men's after the sentence of the European Justice Court (ECJ 2005/2114) declaring Italian legislation as inconsistent with European Law. Only the smallest of the official trade unions, UIL, has openly approved Bonino's claims while the Minister for Labour has denied any government's projects in line with her proposal. Barbara Pollastrini, former Minister for Equal Opportunities (Democratic Left Party), has also explicitly disagreed with her, stating that this equality measure would represent an increased workload for women who are in charge of most domestic and care work, especially when retired.

In the debate on pensions, it is certainly possible that the trade union CGIL and the centre-leftist party really believe that increasing the retirement age for women, particularly lower-class women, would be a hardship more fundamental than the inequality of retirement age. However, while it might have advantages for lower-class women, the joint position of trade unions and state feminists ends up in defending the status quo; since women are de facto responsible of the work of care, setting a different retirement age will promote the continuation of their role as 'those who care'. The result of this polarised debate between a 'differential' approach that has prevailed over an 'egalitarian' liberal approach has been the construction of 'differentiated' female pensioners whose main role as carers is supported and maintained in spite of the consequences that this has on women's lives and on the definition of their employment status (Lombardo and Sangiuliano forthcoming). In the case of the pension reform, it seems that gender had to concede in the face of the intersection of age-class-gender that was articulated by governmental and trade union actors. This intersectional dynamic could be due to broader priorities related to economic development and demography, which end up marginalising gender concerns.

7.3 Changes in intimate citizenship

In the area of intimate citizenship there are two sub-issues that influence the treatment of intersectionality in Italian gender equality policies. The first one is *migrants' family reunification*. In Italy the right to legal permanence for partner/spouse and children derives from the regular status of the person asking for family reunification. The basic requirement for authorisation is an income sufficient for the maintenance of the reunited person and adequate lodgings, unlike all other Italian citizens who want to build their own family. The law that regulates this issue is again the Immigration Law n. 189/2002 adopted during the centre-right government, which further restricted family reunification possibilities compared to the

previous law. Legislating on this issue urged Italian Parliament and civil society to think about the family institution and the different understandings of it on the basis of culture. The restriction of the definition of the family to the nuclear one and the rigid requirements for family reunification produce inequalities between Italians and immigrants. Thus, it has negative implications on gender equality policies too as it creates gender/ race/ migration/ nationality inequalities.

The second relevant sub-issue as concerns intersectionality is discrimination on grounds of *sexual orientation*. Italy is particularly resistant to adopting protective legislation for homosexual and transsexual citizens. Thus gender equality policies have been negatively affected by this discriminatory political attitude towards non heterosexual sexualities. Indeed, Law n. 216/2003 against discriminations based on sexual orientation in the workplace is interesting because it is only a partial transposition of Directive 2000/78/CE. Some of the aspects contained in the Directive such as the rights of homosexual couples and bisexual persons, social dialogue and the role of trade unions have been excluded by the Italian legislator. In October 2003, MP Titti de Simone (an historical activist of the LGBT movement) makes a Law proposal in order to expand the restrictive transposition of the Directive into Italian legislation. In particular, De Simone criticizes the Italian transposition as a missed opportunity to introduce antidiscrimination measures based on sexual orientation. Moreover, the burden of proof remains the responsibility of the victim, thus violating art. N. 9 and 10 of the Directive.

A new law proposal on discrimination based on sexual orientation is presented in 2006. It aims at extending protection to homosexual and transsexual citizens making explicit reference to anti discrimination principles for sexual orientation. In particular, the proposal, in addition to work, identifies two areas where antidiscrimination measures and rights to sexual privacy have to apply: schools and health insurance. A conceptual shift was made in the substitution of “sex” with “gender identity”, thus emphasising the non-biological dimension of gender and the complexity of the identity issue.

The debates on family reunification and on sexual orientation respectively reveal (implicit or sometimes more explicit) elements of racist and homophobic bias in the political treatment of intersectionality. The racist bias appears in the inequalities between Italians and immigrants established in the legislation on family reunification. The debate on discrimination based on sexual orientation, while very important in order to influence the treatment of intersectionality in gender equality policies, is still at a very early stage in Italy. Only a few MPs with a past rooted in feminist or LGBT movements are promoting an innovative and revolutionary policy on this issue, while the rest of the political forces show conservative and at times even homophobic positions. In this latter case, we could actually talk of ‘covered homophobia’ since the issue tends to be framed along the private/public axis and most conservative actors, while strongly opposed to any form of legal recognition of same-sex relations, at the same time call for tolerance vis-à-vis homosexuality in the private sphere.

7.4 Changes in gender based violence

In gender based violence there are three main shifts - in the field of trafficking, female genital mutilation, and honour crimes - that influence the treatment of intersectionality in gender equality policies. These shifts show that some attention to intersections of *gender with migration and ethnicity* is emerging in Italian policies, although at times, as in the cases of female genital mutilation and honour crimes, the *culturalist and ethnocentric discourse* tends to prevail.

The Beijing Platform for Action is a turning point regarding changes in gender based violence policies, because it is after its adoption that *trafficking* starts to be an issue in Italy. In 2005 Italy ratifies the Convention n. 197 on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings promoted in the same year by European Council. Thus, trafficking became an issue only recently and due to international pressure. The Italian debate on trafficking, and on the instruments to combat it, is focused on trafficking for sexual exploitation, without considering other possible trafficking purposes. The recipients of these policies are mainly female migrants, thus revealing a developing attention to the intersection of gender/migration/ethnicity. Indeed, in the immigration law (Law 40/1998), there is an article (art. 18, see above) providing protection for trafficked women. At the moment this issue is regulated by Law n. 228/2003 that only addresses the victims of trafficking and is titled “Measures against trafficking of people” (*Misure contro la tratta di persone*). The first law proposal was presented in 1999 by Anna Finocchiaro, an MP belonging to the centre-left coalition. In 2007 the “Inter-ministerial Commission to support victims of trafficking, violence and serious exploitation” (*Commissione interministeriale per il sostegno delle vittime di tratta, violenza e grave sfruttamento*) is established. It works within the Department for Rights and Equal Opportunities. In the same year, the regulatory scheme to establish, organize and manage the Anti-trafficking Commission is passed.

Trafficking has completely entered the Italian debate and media, politicians, and civil society actors agree in terms of their opposition to it. Nevertheless, much confusion between prostitution and trafficking emerges in that they tend to be treated as if they were exactly the same phenomenon. Some NGOs defending prostitutes’ rights and others working on transgender rights intervene within the public sphere to clarify distinctions between prostitution and trafficking, trying to reframe the discourses.

The second issue is *genital mutilation*. During the last decade, due to increasing immigration rates, female genital mutilation becomes an issue in Italy. The coalition against genital mutilations in Italy seems very united. The debate on genital mutilations is framed around the concepts of women’s rights (as human rights) and of women’s health. Some NGOs, namely AIDOS (Italian Association for Women in Development, *Associazione Italiana Donne per lo Sviluppo*), NPSG (No peace without justice, *Non c’è pace senza giustizia*) and TAMWA (Tanzanian Media Women Association) play a large role in initiating the debate, even if the public debate involving all media began in 2004. The landmark of the debate is an initiative of the Tuscany region. In 2004, the “Regional Centre against female mutilations” (*Centro*

regionale contro le mutilazioni femminili) based in the Careggi Hospital proposed a reduced and non invasive version of the ritual (some small punctures over the clitoris) to preserve the symbolic sense of the practice and to mediate between defending the rights of young girls to their bodily integrity and the 'cultural rights' of their 'communities'. The national bioethical Committee expressed a negative opinion on this practice in 1998, while the regional bioethical committee wrote a positive statement on the soft excision experimentation in 2004. In Parliament the issue is hotly debated and mainly expresses opinions against the Tuscany initiative. Right-wing MPs expressed hard positions, shifting from the issue of FGM itself to the "clash of civilizations" and the need to protect the human rights of female immigrants. Many leftist MPs were also completely against the symbolic practice because "even if the experimentation tries to reduce the damage, it means accepting it" (Marida Bolognesi, DS MP). The women's migrant association of Tuscany, namely "Nosotras", is against the practice because they were not asked if this could be acceptable to them. The initiative created a public debate and FGM was no longer hidden in the domestic and private sphere. Moreover it highlighted the complex connection between migration, women's rights, cultural/communitarian rights and public policies¹⁴.

The first institutional initiative came in 1999, when the Minister for Equal Opportunities establishes a Commission aimed at outlining a general project against FGM, but this Commission will be suppressed. A law proposal n. 150, the first in Italy, is presented in 2001 by MPs belonging to Lega Nord, a xenophobic party. It is called "Dispositions on the prohibition of sexual mutilations" (*Disposizioni concernenti il divieto delle pratiche di mutilazione sessuale*). Rather than being framed as gender based violence, Law proposal n. 150 has a culturalist paradigm: migrants bring to Italy cultures, religions and habits that are incompatible with Italian culture. Genital mutilations are thus forbidden not only because the state must ensure personal dignity and moral and physical integrity, but also because they are against Italian culture. Finally, in 2006 law n. 7/2006 is passed. It is called "Dispositions on prevention and prohibition of female genital mutilations" (*Disposizioni concernenti la prevenzione e il divieto delle pratiche di mutilazione genitale femminile*).

The third issue concerns *honour crime and forced marriage*. This topic starts emerging as a debate only in the last three years, and the debate is framed around some events that involved foreign women, especially second generation migrants¹⁵. In particular, the debate began to emerge after the homicide of Hina Saleem, a young Pakistani woman killed by her father because of her cohabitation with an Italian man and, generally speaking, because of her allegedly liberal behaviour. The legal process against the father and other family

¹⁴ For a critical approach to public policies from a gender perspective regarding FGM see Facchi A., "Genital modifications and public intervention: some notes in a gender perspective" (*Modificazioni genitali e intervento pubblico: alcuni rilievi nella prospettiva di genere*), <http://www.juragentium.unifi.it/it/forum/mg/facchi.htm> (Italian).

¹⁵ See the newspaper article (unknown author) "Trovato il corpo di una giovane pakistana. Uccisa a coltellate e sepolta in gradito" (Found the corpse of a young Pakistani girl. Killed with stabs and buried in the garden), La Repubblica, 12/08/2006: <http://www.repubblica.it/2006/08/sezioni/cronaca/pakistana-uccisa/pakistana-uccisa/pakistana-uccisa.html>.

members started in June 2007¹⁶ and during the first hearing Italian and Moroccan women belonging to the NGO *Acmid-donna (Associazione della Comunità Marocchina delle Donne in Italia*, Association of the Moroccan Community of women in Italy) demonstrated their solidarity with the murdered woman in front of the tribunal. This issue interests both right-wing and left-wing proponents for different reasons. Centre-right parties use this event to support their culturalist interpretation of migration, namely that migrants' culture is incompatible with the Italian one. On the other side, centre-left parties are more interested in fighting against gender based violence, even if they too are not immune to cultural-based explanations.

7.5 Summary and comparisons

In Italy the policies directed to reducing gender inequalities are not really based on intersectionality. Rather, some legislative innovations, aimed at regulating new social phenomena linked to immigration, have opened a theoretical debate that pushes politicians to think about the intersection of inequalities. These embryonic political debates on intersectionality reveal an ambiguous framing of intersectionality that sometimes shows traces of a culturalist, ethnocentric, or (implicit) homophobic bias. Thus, it is difficult to assess the impact (positive or negative) of intersectionality on the quality of policies because in Italy policy actors are only just beginning to realize that the intersection among differences can actually produce new inequalities.

Many social transformations that have required new social policies are connected to migratory processes that have affected Italy since the 1990s. Thus, intersectionality between gender inequalities and inequalities linked to both immigrant status and race/ethnicity is the most relevant challenge for gender equality policies. Indeed, a few years ago the UNAR was set up within the Equal Opportunities Ministry in order to cope with this issue. The intersection between gender inequalities and sexual orientation inequalities, though very important in the social agenda, is less present in the institutional political agenda.

We have highlighted some turning points in each area that have influenced the treatment of intersectionality where the protagonists of such events were female migrants: the demand for domestic and care work; family reunification; trafficking for sexual exploitation; honour crime and forced marriage; and genital mutilations. Regarding the domestic and care work issue and the family reunification issue, in spite of the evidence of 'structural intersectionality' in Crenshaw's terms (Crenshaw 1989), there are few (as in the case of the 2007 Domestic Work Contract) or no policies aimed at reducing the inequalities produced; existing laws instead seem to produce further inequalities (as in the case of the Family Reunification Law). Sexual orientation is still a contested issue, and although it has appeared in the

¹⁶ See the newspaper article (unknown author) "Ragazza pachistana uccisa a Brescia. Sì a rito abbreviato, rinvio a ottobre" (Pakistani girl killed in Brescia. Yes to the quick procedure, Adjournment in October), *La Repubblica*, (28/06/2007), <http://www.repubblica.it/2007/06/sezioni/cronaca/hina-processo/hina-processo/hina-processo.html>.

political arena, the presence of conservative or (implicit) homophobic bias and the tendency to de-gender the issue reveals its embryonic stage of political articulation in the Italian political context. Broader economic and demographic concerns may risk marginalising gender, as in the case of the pension reform, where the political intersection of age-class-gender was articulated by governmental and trade union actors to the disadvantage of women.

8. Conclusions

The broader question we addressed in this report was to what extent an intersectional approach is emerging in Italian gender+ equality policies. Overall we can state that intersectionality appears to be predominantly *embryonic, inarticulate and volatile* in Italy. In the four QUING sub-issues intersections are mainly operated only between two axes of inequality thereby suggesting the lack of a more encompassing intersectional approach. The axes and the way in which they are intersected depend on the issue at stake and on the voice speaking. Generally speaking, *class* is, in absolute terms, the inequality which is more often intersected with gender. This result mirrors both cultural and structural patterns in Italy. On the one hand, as often stated, the concern with class-related issues strongly permeates a large part of Italian political culture. On the other hand, Italy is also a society marked by a low degree of social mobility. Its dominant family-based structure, the weakness of the Welfare State and the presence of a vast informal economy significantly affect economic development and have deep consequences also on gender relations within and outside the labour market. *Age* is the other inequality which is more often mentioned across the issues and in many cases is intersected with both class and gender. Also in this case, the result mirrors structural developments. On the one hand, the demographic ageing of Italian society has introduced the need for different regulation of pensions, social services etc; on the other hand, and in the other direction, is the increasing problem of precarious work among young Italian workers which has recently entered the political debate and, with regard to minors, the increasing attention to violence against minors.

Age and class are followed by *citizenship status, ethnicity and sexual orientation* as major intersecting sources of inequalities. These intersections are more often operated in the issues of intimate citizenship and gender based violence and can be constructed in very different terms. The intersection between gender and ethnicity is often built instrumentally to stress the problem of the cultural clash between Italians and foreigners. In the documents ethnicity is in many cases automatically equated with religion and, in particular, Muslims (it is worthy to note that very recently while addressing the problem of gender based violence the same pattern has been used toward Romanians). Elements of racist and ethnocentric bias appear in the framing of issues such as honour crimes and female genital mutilation. A broader intersectional approach including numerous axes of inequality has only emerged very recently in institutional documents. The 2007 National Plan for the European Year of Equal Opportunities drafted under the Prodi Government is the most telling and articulated sign of intersectionality among the ones analysed. In this text, intersectionality is explicitly and repeatedly framed in terms of “multiple discriminations”. This recent EU-led focus on inequalities is yet another sign of the Europeanisation of Italian equality policies (see Donà 2006).

We also raised the question of how, first of all, gender equality is framed in the Italian case, what kind of intersectionality is present, and to what extent Italian ideological divides affect the framing of these issues. In this regard, the strong influence of a *familistic* approach can be seen all the four sub-issues, particularly in those of intimate citizenship and gender based

violence. Right wing Governments and political actors tend to frame gender equality mainly in terms of economic development and as a strategy rather than as a vision or goal in itself. Law 40/2004 on assisted reproduction, the debate about same sex-marriages, and several measures implemented by the Berlusconi Government in the field of non-employment, moreover, tend to re-affirm the centrality of the 'normative family' and to reinforce the vision of women as mothers; a norm and vision that is reinforced by the ever-present interference of the Italian Episcopal Conference in Italian politics. Left-wing Governments and voices, even if depending on the deputy who is speaking in the case of parliamentary debate documents, generally frame gender equality as a goal in itself. Also, a questioning of the 'ideal family' and traditional distribution of roles emerges, particularly with regard to domestic violence. Moreover, the way in which ethnicity and citizenship status are framed and intersected varies greatly along the political spectrum and in some cases left-wing deputies have raised the issue of the global work chain and framed the issue of citizenship status in terms of problematic inequality. Major convergence is to be found in the issue of non-employment, especially regarding more general measures and plans, where a gendered perspective seems not to have fully entered Italian debate and legislation. For example, in important debates such as that on pension reform, age and class seem to be de-gendered or played against gender.

In general, Italian legislation on gender equality *barely includes intersectional* approaches. The selected Italian laws and Governmental plans lack articulated diagnoses on the sources of not only intersected but also often single inequalities. In their prognostic parts, moreover, attempts to introduce more comprehensive regulations are very recent. Also, the Italian machinery is only now starting to introduce offices or bodies dealing with different inequalities. As it emerged in part 6 of the report, the introduction of UNAR, of the Commission against female mutilations, of the Commission for Rights and Equal Opportunities for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgender and of the National Guarantor for Childhood and Adolescence within the Ministry for Equal Opportunities are very recent or, in the latter case, still in development. The different agencies tend to address the issues separately thus suggesting the implementation of a rather separate and unitary approach to inequalities in Hancock's terms (Hancock 2007). Moreover, the general strength of the Ministry for Equal Opportunities is changeable, depending on the general political context. The Ministry has no financial autonomy and the extent to which its legislative and research initiatives manage to permeate and affect the activities of the other Ministries as well as the more general political legislation is rather low and mutable.

With regard to legislation, however, a 'bipartisan' trend emerges from the analysis of the documents and of the broader context toward the *de-gendering* of the policies and the debate when new 'strong' inequalities enter the debate and are regulated. This phenomenon seems to occur, in particular, when the issues of sexual orientation and race are tackled. Both issues have only recently been raised in the public political debate and in the institutional realm. The discussion about same sex marriages, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, more specifically, seems to suffer from the tendency to address the issues according to persisting ideological divides. A framing of the issues in

terms of 'threat' toward the ideal heterosexual family with children, and their intersection mainly with the axis of marital status prevails in the civil society document and in the voices belonging to Catholic and conservative actors. Gender, however, fades away in these discussions as well as in attempts to introduce official regulation by more progressive political actors. In this case, it is again class and marital status that intersect with sexual orientation and gender identity. Race, as it emerged, is a term that does not belong to the Italian cultural and legislative tradition. The UNAR has been set up as a separate body only recently and also in the documents and debate concerning this institution when racial discrimination is addressed it appears to 'obscure' gender as the intersecting source of inequality.

Furthermore, we have asked in this report if the regulation of intersecting or multiple inequalities is leading to a "hierarchization" of the latter. In this regard, an important case is represented by the intersection in Italian legislation and political discourse between citizenship-status, gender and class in the case of foreigner caregivers. The phenomenon of the so-called "badanti" working in Italian families, taking care of mainly elderly and dependent people, has rapidly turned into a pillar of the Italian economy. Immigration and non-employment laws thus tend to include special treatments for foreign caregivers which are not provided for other social categories such as general domestic workers, thereby often causing debates and conflicts among these categories.

A further general question we addressed in this report concerns the extent to which intersectionality seems to be progressively establishing, in Italian institutions and political discourse, a lens through which to filter and regulate social phenomena. In short, we ask whether intersectionality is actually becoming a more entrenched approach in Italian policymaking, despite the changes in government. In this regard, particularly the above section concerning the most important legal changes in the different sub-issues, suggest that the use of intersectionality is a rather '*volatile*' phenomenon largely depending on the actors that are drafting and implementing policies. On the one hand, it is true that the Italian machinery seems to progress, independently of the political colour of the Government, toward the incremental creation of separate bodies or agencies dealing with specific inequalities. On the other hand, however, the way in which these bodies work and the type of programmes, policies and activities they favour very much depends on the general political context and on the type of Government in charge. In the QUING period, the relationship between civil society organisations and institutional actors has continuously changed according to the colour of the party in Government. Under the Berlusconi Governments the tendency was and is that of 'closing the doors', particularly those of the Ministry for Equal Opportunities, to femocrats and those civil society organisations which tend to foster a gendered approach toward equality and tend to intersect gender with other issues. The 2004 reform of the Commission for Equality and Equal Opportunities, in particular, has produced a 'divorce' between feminist, femocrats and the Government. In contrast, left-wing Governments tend to favour more dialogue with civil society actors and even formally include representatives in the machinery (Calloni 2006).

Broadly speaking, with regard to *civil society* the analysis suggests that this type of actor is usually better at 'doing intersectionality'. The documents concerning gender based violence, general legislation, immigration and intimate citizenship are often based on more comprehensive and articulated discourses and tend to push institutional actors to adopt more "holistic" and complex approaches towards inequalities. It is also important to stress that, in terms of numbers, Italy is one of the Western democracies with the highest presence of NGOs dealing with all sorts of issues. The weakness of the Italian Welfare State and an embedded associational culture has favoured the diffusion of non-institutional actors addressing concrete problems and often offering services. This trend is particularly evident in the case of immigration and ethnicity-related issues where civil society actors have played an important role in raising debates, problems and suggesting solutions. Again, civil society actors also tend to reproduce the traditional Italian ideological fractures. The Italian Episcopal Conference document summarizes well the typical approach toward gender and gender relations which reaffirms traditional patterns. Major convergence between civil society actors, however, emerges on the question of ethnicity and citizenship status. With regard to the relationship between the feminist universe(-s) and the institutional realm, Italian feminism has traditionally developed by deliberately avoiding any form of institutionalization both in institutions and in the academia. In recent years, however, the attempt of a more open dialogue with left-wing institutional actors has been made explicit in several ways. The dialogue has opened mainly on the topic of domestic violence, rape, and sexuality but also on the necessity of increasing female representation in political institutions which remains the lowest in European Countries.

To sum up, the results concerning the Italian case indicate that while 'new' axes of inequalities are rapidly entering the political debate in recent years and begin to be regulated by Italian legislation and machinery - mainly due to macro phenomena of migration or to European and international pressures - an intersectional approach towards them is often missing or at best embryonic. When it is present it is mainly framed in terms of 'multiple discrimination', it is institutionalised through unitary and separate approaches, it shows traces of culturalist and sometimes ethnocentric attitudes, and it can only be considered timely, contextual and thus reversible.

Annex and methodological notes

The tables below present the occurrences of intersectionality in the Italy coded policy for each of the four QUING issues and disaggregated per type of document. Such occurrences refer to the number of times intersectionality has been coded “yes” in both DIAGDIMENSIONS and PROGDIMENSIONS in the QUING database: that is when some presence of intersectionality has been detected, either as ‘inarticulate’ or ‘additive’, or in any of the other ways it could occur in policy texts. The category “texts” refers to the total number of “supertexts” that were produced through the coding in each issue. This means that, if, for instance, 3 supertexts, each corresponding to one voice, were produced coding one parliamentary debate, the three of them are added as supertexts in the table.

The results support the analysis of intersectionality presented in the paper showing that occurrences of intersectionality in the Italian case are in general rather low. As previously stated, intersectionality is mainly detected in general gender equality legislation where the high number of intersections in comparison to other issues and sub-issues refers mainly to the coding of more recent documents produced under the 2006/2008 left-wing Prodi Government. In non-employment, intimate citizenship and gender based violence, consistently with the analysis, occurrences of intersectionality are few with some small ‘peaks’ in sub-issues such as reconciliation and the gender pay gap in non-employment, reproductive rights in intimate citizenship and trafficking in gender based violence. Moreover, the tables show how occurrences of intersectionality are, cross-issue, higher in the diagnoses than in the prognoses. This result confirms what has already been suggested; whereas some embryonic mentions of intersectionality are emerging in the political discourse, the Italian machinery is developing following a rather unitary and separate approach to intersectionality and most Italian legislation has not integrated an intersectional framework.

The tables, however, also suggest the existence of some inconsistencies with the analysis provided in the report. Considering the occurrences of intersectionality in relation with the type of document, intersections are mostly present in governmental plans and in parliamentary debate texts and less in civil society documents. Yet, this inconsistency can be explained by looking closer at the contents of the documents that have been coded. On the one hand, first of all, occurrences in the tables refer just to number of times intersectionality has been found without taking into account the degree of articulation of the intersections or the way in which they are operated. In this regard, often in governmental plans and parliamentary debates intersections are present but are rather inarticulate. On the other hand, the low number of occurrences in civil society documents is explicable considering the nature of the database. Italian civil society documents, indeed, have proved to mostly provide very articulated and complex analyses of the phenomena addressed in the texts. In many cases, moreover, the documents represented the result of long reflections and, implicitly or explicitly, placed the specific issues within broader theoretical frameworks and ‘visions of the world’. Being very specific and accurate in disentangling different dimensions and aspects of

the framing process, the database, however, did not allow the richness of the texts to be fully captured, a richness that emerges in considering 'the larger picture' they provide. In drafting the report, especially with regard to civil society documents, we mainly relied on a more discursive and in depth analysis of the texts. This methodological choice thus explains the difference between the results presented in the report and those emerging from the tables.

Tab. 1: Occurrences of intersectionality code in general gender+ equality legislation and machinery disaggregated *per document*

	Texts	Diagnosis			Prognosis			TOTAL		
		Type of Doc.	Occ.	Nº of docs	Type of Doc.	Occ.	Nº of docs	Type of Doc.	Occ.	Nº of docs
General gender+ equality legislation	1	<i>Law</i>	1	1	<i>Law</i>	1	1	<i>Law</i>	2	2
	1	<i>Policy Plan</i>	6	1	<i>Policy Plan</i>	5	1	<i>Policy Plan</i>	11	2
	2	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	5	2	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	3	2	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	8	4
	1	<i>Civil Society</i>	2	1	<i>Civil Society</i>	1	1	<i>Civil Society</i>	3	2
General gender+ equality machinery	1	<i>Law</i>	-	-	<i>Law</i>	-	-	<i>Law</i>		
	1	<i>Policy Plan</i>	1	1	<i>Policy Plan</i>	1	1	<i>Policy Plan</i>	2	2
	3	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	-	-	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	-	-	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>		
	1	<i>Civil Society</i>	1	1	<i>Civil Society</i>	-	-	<i>Civil Society</i>	1	1
TOTAL	11		16	7		11	6		27	13

Tab. 2: Occurrences of intersectionality code in non-employment disaggregated *per document*

	Texts	Diagnosis			Prognosis			TOTAL		
		Type of Doc.	Occ.	Nº of docs	Type of Doc.	Occ.	Nº of docs	Type of Doc.	Occ.	Nº of docs
Tax- benefit policies		<i>Law</i>	-	-	<i>Law</i>	-	-	<i>Law</i>	-	-
		<i>Policy Plan</i>	-	-	<i>Policy Plan</i>	-	-	<i>Policy Plan</i>	-	-
		<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	2	1	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	-	-	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	2	1
		<i>Civil Society</i>	-	-	<i>Civil Society</i>	-	-	<i>Civil Society</i>	-	-
Care work		<i>Law</i>	-	-	<i>Law</i>	-	-	<i>Law</i>	-	-
		<i>Policy Plan</i>	-	-	<i>Policy Plan</i>	-	-	<i>Policy Plan</i>	-	-
		<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	3	2	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	1	1	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	4	3
		<i>Civil Society</i>	1	1	<i>Civil Society</i>	-	-	<i>Civil Society</i>	1	1
Reconciliation		<i>Law</i>	-	-	<i>Law</i>	1	1	<i>Law</i>	1	1
		<i>Policy Plan</i>	1	1	<i>Policy Plan</i>	-	-	<i>Policy Plan</i>	1	1
		<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	2	2	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	1	1	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	3	3
		<i>Civil Society</i>	-	-	<i>Civil Society</i>	-	-	<i>Civil Society</i>	1	1
Pay gap / equal treatment		<i>Law</i>	-	-	<i>Law</i>	1	1	<i>Law</i>	1	1
		<i>Policy Plan</i>	1	1	<i>Policy Plan</i>	-	-	<i>Policy Plan</i>	1	1
		<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	2	2	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	1	1	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	3	3
		<i>Civil Society</i>	1	1	<i>Civil Society</i>	-	-	<i>Civil Society</i>	1	1
TOTAL			13	11		6	6		19	17

Tab. 3: Occurrences of intersectionality code in intimate citizenship disaggregated *per* document

	Texts	Diagnosis			Prognosis			TOTAL		
		Type of Doc.	Occ.	Nº of docs	Type of Doc.	Occ.	Nº of docs	Type of Doc.	Occ.	Nº of docs
Divorce, marriage and separation		<i>Law</i>	-	-	<i>Law</i>	-	-	<i>Law</i>	-	-
		<i>Policy Plan</i>	-	-	<i>Policy Plan</i>	-	-	<i>Policy Plan</i>	-	-
		<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	1	1	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	-	-	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	1	1
		<i>Civil Society</i>	1	1	<i>Civil Society</i>	-	-	<i>Civil Society</i>	1	1
Sexual orientation discrimination		<i>Law</i>	-	-	<i>Law</i>	-	-	<i>Law</i>	-	-
		<i>Policy Plan</i>	2	1	<i>Policy Plan</i>	1	1	<i>Policy Plan</i>	3	2
		<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	-	-	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	1	1	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	1	1
		<i>Civil Society</i>	1	1	<i>Civil Society</i>	-	-	<i>Civil Society</i>	1	1
Reproductive rights		<i>Law</i>	-	-	<i>Law</i>	1	1	<i>Law</i>	1	1
		<i>Policy Plan</i>	1	1	<i>Policy Plan</i>	1	1	<i>Policy Plan</i>	2	2
		<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	1	1	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	-	-	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	1	1
		<i>Civil Society</i>	1	1	<i>Civil Society</i>	-	-	<i>Civil Society</i>	1	1
TOTAL			8	7		4	4		12	11

Tab. 4: Occurrences of intersectionality code in gender based violence disaggregated *per document*

	Texts	Diagnosis			Prognosis			TOTAL		
		Type of Doc.	Occ.	Nº of docs	Type of Doc.	Occ.	Nº of docs	Type of Doc.	Occ.	Nº of docs
Domestic violence		<i>Law</i>	-	-	<i>Law</i>	-	-	<i>Law</i>	-	-
		<i>Policy Plan</i>	-	-	<i>Policy Plan</i>	2	1	<i>Policy Plan</i>	2	1
		<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	1	1	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	-	-	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	1	1
		<i>Civil Society</i>	-	-	<i>Civil Society</i>	-	-	<i>Civil Society</i>	-	-
Sexual assault		<i>Law</i>	-	-	<i>Law</i>	-	-	<i>Law</i>	-	-
		<i>Policy Plan</i>	-	-	<i>Policy Plan</i>	-	-	<i>Policy Plan</i>	-	-
		<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	1	1	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	-	-	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	1	1
		<i>Civil Society</i>	1	1	<i>Civil Society</i>	-	-	<i>Civil Society</i>	1	1
Trafficking		<i>Law</i>	1	1	<i>Law</i>	1	1	<i>Law</i>	2	2
		<i>Policy Plan</i>	-	-	<i>Policy Plan</i>	1	1	<i>Policy Plan</i>	1	1
		<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	3	2	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	2	2	<i>Parliamentary Debate</i>	5	4
		<i>Civil Society</i>	-	-	<i>Civil Society</i>	-	-	<i>Civil Society</i>	-	-
TOTAL			7	6		6	5		13	11

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