# Gender Identity Representation in Data Collection: New Approaches from Italy

National Statistical Institute Italy (ISTAT)
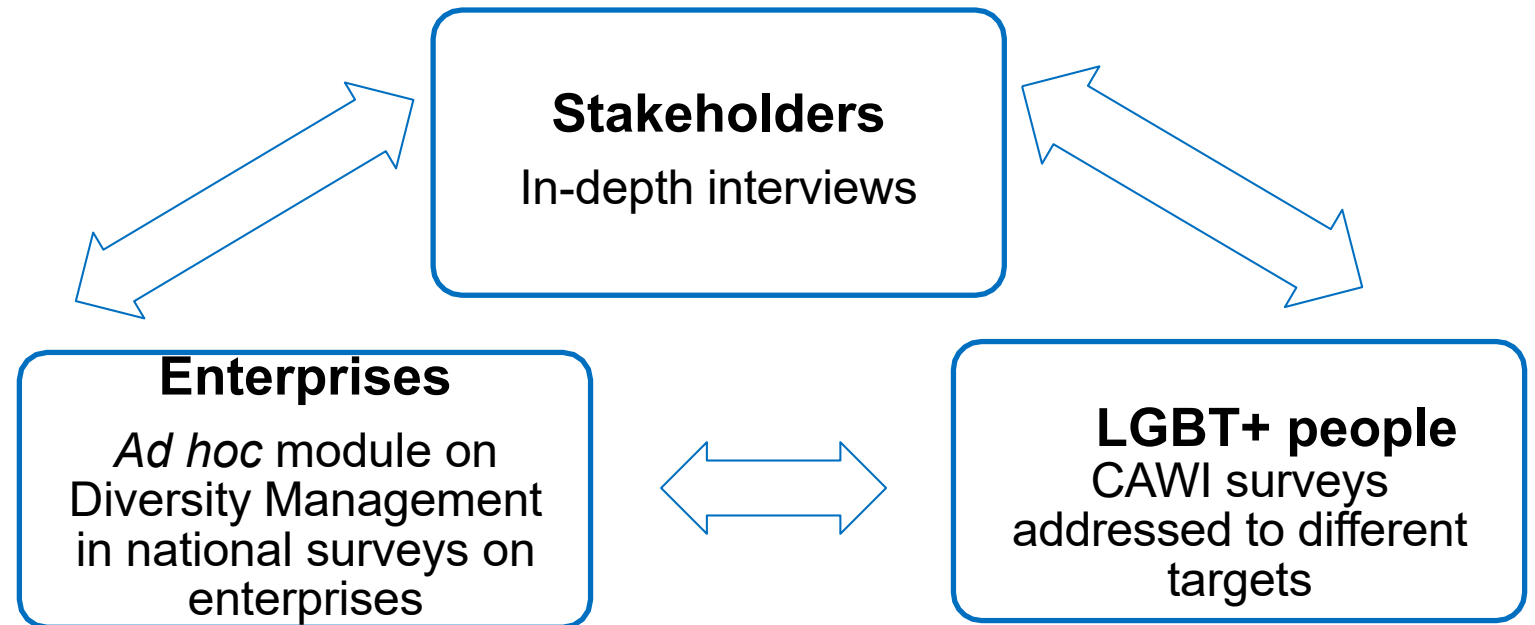EUGENIA DE ROSA , VALERIA de MARTINO, FRANCESCA SCAMBIA

# Outline

- **ISTAT-UNAR project "Labour discrimination against LGBT+ people and diversity policies in enterprises"**

  - Mixed method (quantitative-qualitative, probabilistic and non-probabilistic samples)

  - Different surveys and different target groups of LGBT+ people based on respondents' self-identification

- **Development and collection of SOGIESC indicators and gender representation beyond the binary**

  - **Participatory approach**

# Labour discrimination against LGBT+ people and diversity policies in enterprises: a multiperspective approach

## Inter-institutional cooperation

- ✓ A collaboration **agreement** between the Italian National Statistical Institute (ISTAT) and the National Anti-Discrimination Office (UNAR)
- ✓ **EU Funds**
- ✓ **Working Groups** and "Permanent consultation Board for the promotion of the rights and protection of LGBT+ people"
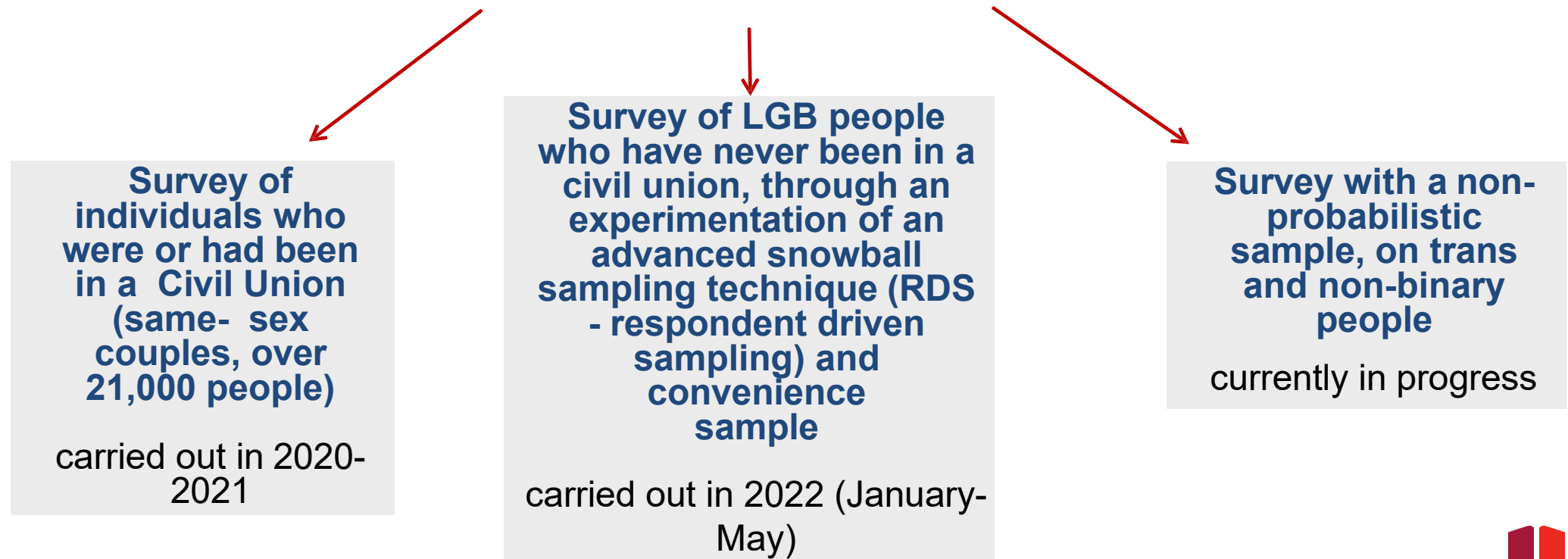
## A multiperspective approach

**Stakeholders**
In-depth interviews

**Enterprises**
*Ad hoc* module on Diversity Management in national surveys on enterprises

Main results available to date:
https://www.istat.it/en/archivio/252737

**LGBT+ people**
CAWI surveys addressed to different targets

Main results available to date:
https://www.istat.it/en/archivio/270626

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# Surveys targeted at LGBT+ people

- Provide insights on **labour discrimination against LGBT+ people**

- 3 CAWI surveys based on a **self-amministrative web questionnaire – respondents' self-identification as LGBT+ people**

- Stepwise **introduction of SOGIESC indicators**

**Different surveys for different targets within the LGBT+ population**

**Survey of individuals who were or had been in a Civil Union (same- sex couples, over 21,000 people)**

carried out in 2020-2021

**Survey of LGB people who have never been in a civil union, through an experimentation of an advanced snowball sampling technique (RDS - respondent driven sampling) and convenience sample**

carried out in 2022 (January-May)

**Survey with a non-probabilistic sample, on trans and non-binary people**

currently in progress

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# SOGIESC indicators

❑ **Developing and testing SOGIESC (sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics) indicators in official statistics**

- ❑ Meetings with LGBT+ associations of the "Permanent consultation table for the promotion of the rights and protection of LGBT+ people"

- ❑ Different "Working Groups" of the project set up by some LGBT+ associations of the Permanent Table

- ❑ Involvement of experts, academics and other stakeholders

- ❑ Respondents' remarks in open questions

- ❑ Istat discussed and shared this experience within the "Equality Data Subgroup" of the EC "High-Level Group on Non-Discrimination, Equality and Diversity" and within the "Task Team on Non-discrimination and Equality" of the Praia Group

…. conceptions and terminological debate rapidly evolve

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# 1st - SURVEY ON LABOUR DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LGBT+ PEOPLE (currently or formerly in Civil Union) – 2020/2021

**Target population:** all resident individuals (over 21,000) who, as of 1 January 2020, were or had been in Civil Union (same-sex couples - Law 76/20 May 2016)

> ### Question to identify the "core" population:

**What is your current sexual orientation?**

*Single response*

- Homosexual
- Bisexual
- Asexual
- Heterosexual
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Being a CAWI a tooltip was made available to specify the meaning of the response' items

In order to be consistent with the Italian law on Civil Unions the definition provided for sexual orientation was based on sex and not on gender.

A question on gender identity was not included

**Sex (currently in the civil registry):** *Single response*

1. Female
2. Male

✓ **95.2%** people in civil union or formerly in union who live in Italy **declare a homosexual or bisexual orientation**. As for the remaining 4.8%: 0.2% asexual orientation, 1.3% another orientation and the remaining prefer not to answer

✓ Among those who declare a homosexual or bisexual orientation - 65.2% gay, 28.9% lesbians, 4.2% bisexual women and 1.7% bisexual men

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# 1st- SURVEY ON LABOUR DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LGBT+ PEOPLE (currently or formerly in Civil Union) – 2020/2021

✓ The target population has **specific features**: over 50 (43.6%), majority men, outed, a stable working life
✓ Data are not representative of the entire LGBT+ population
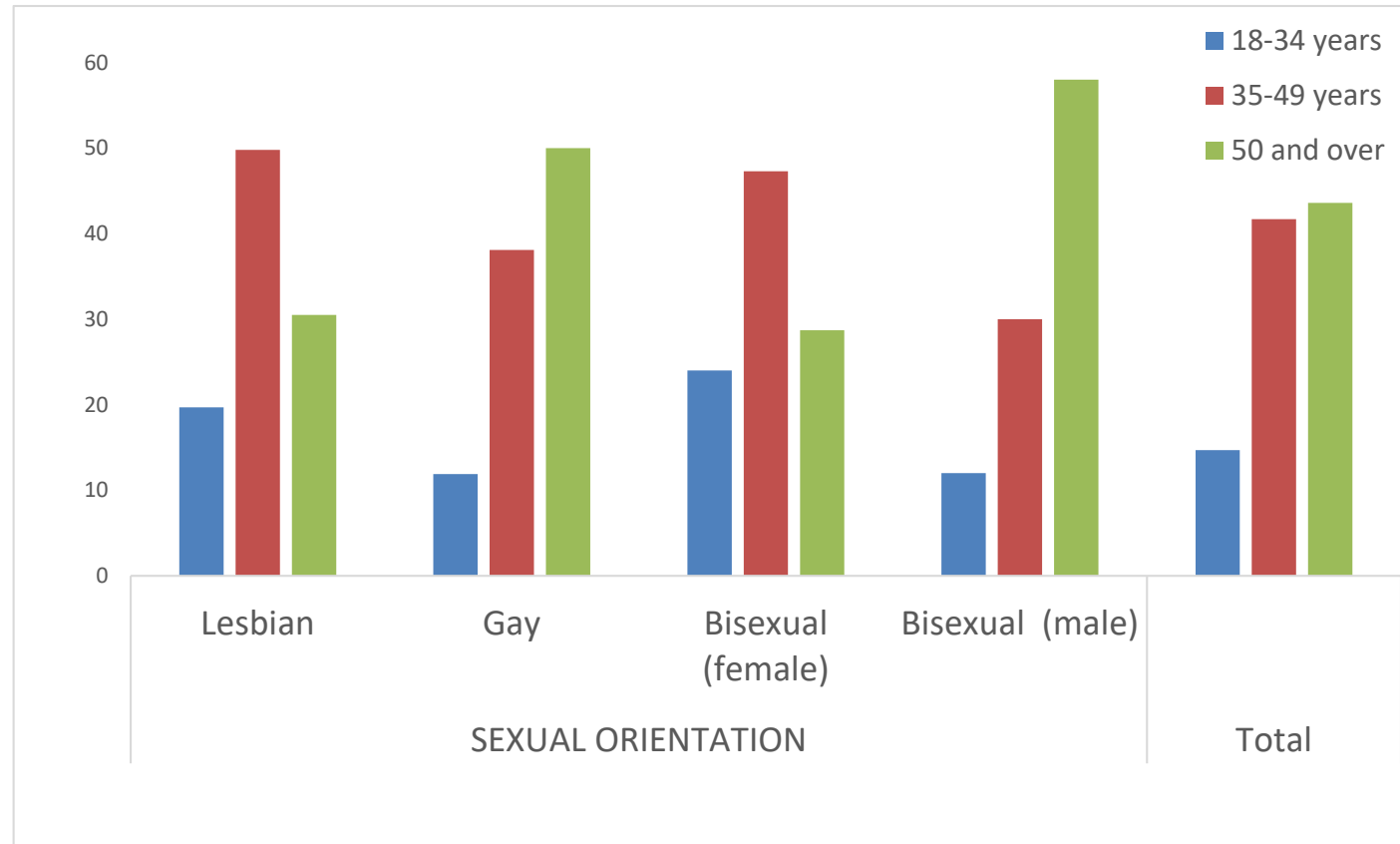


✓ **Gender segregation** in employment
✓ **Multiple discrimination**, more often against lesbian, bisexual women and young people

# 2nd - SURVEY ON LABOUR DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LGB PEOPLE (NOT in Civil Union) - 2022

- **Target population:** LGB people who have never been in Civil Union

> **Question to identify the target population:**

**What is your current sexual orientation?**

*Single response*

- Homosexual
- Bisexual
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Response items are reduced because survey intended to:

- capture a complementary segment to the previous survey on homosexual and bisexual persons in Civil Union

- facilitate the implementation of the snowball technique

✓ The RDS snowball technique was not working properly and we shifted to a **convenience sample**

✓ **Results** cannot be taken as complementary to the survey on people in Civil Union, and they exclusively **refer to LGB people who decided to take part in this second survey**

✓ More than a thousand of LGB people were interviewed. Main results will be published on 15 May 2023

## Gender identity – two step approach (a+b)

**a. What sex were you assigned at birth?:**

Single response

1. Female
2. Male
3. Prefer not to say

**Sex (currently in the civil registry):**

Single response

1. Female
2. Male

**b. How do you currently identify yourself?**

Single response

1. Woman/girl
2. Man/boy
3. Trans woman/girl
4. Trans man/boy
5. Non-binary or other
6. Prefer not to say

✓ Data could be analyzed, not only for **gay, lesbian and bisexual people**, but also for **cisgender men/women and non-binary people** (question's test albeit on a very specific target)

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# 3rd - SURVEY ON LABOUR DISCRIMINATION AGAINST TRANS AND NON-BINARY PEOPLE (in progress)

**Target population**: individuals aged 18 and over, who usually live in Italy, and whose gender identity does not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth

- ✓ All the target population was labelled as "**trans and non-binary persons**": as not all the non-binary people identity themselves in the umbrella label trans or transgender

- ✓ Not only indicators to survey sex and gender identity, also complementary **open questions** to better understand

- ✓ **Gender expression, coming out/visibility milestones, gender affirmation, use of pronouns**

- ✓ Going **beyond a binary logic** means to include open questions, to set sexual orientation indicators not only sticking to a definition based on gender.

- ✓ **Definitions cannot be given for granted**

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# 3rd - SURVEY ON LABOUR DISCRIMINATION AGAINST TRANS AND NON-BINARY PEOPLE (in progress)

➢ **Question to identify the target population:**

GENDER IDENTITY

**Sex (registered in the birth certificate)**

1. Female
2. Male

**Thinking about your gender identity, how do you currently identify yourself?**

1. Woman/girl
2. Man/boy
3. Trans woman/Trans girl
4. Trans man/Trans boy
5. Non-binary gender identity
6. Prefer not to say (*out of questionnaire*)

Sex at birth ≠ gender identity then labelled trans people
Sex at birth= gender identity then out of questionnaire
Sex at birth ≠ gender identity then labelled trans people

Labelled non-binary people: according to the questionnaire tooltip
A question with fixed items necessary to define the target population is followed by an open question to give a chance of freely describing co-existing/fluctuant dimentions and progressive coming out (e.g. Non-binary woman)

**How would you currently define your gender identity?** _____

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# GENDER EXPRESSION

**A - How would you currently describe yourself on the basis of your appearance, your clothing, the way you move, the way you speak?**

**B- A person's appearance, clothing, mannerism or the way of speaking can influence how others describe them. How do you think others would currently describe you?**

1. Very feminine
2. Feminine
3. Rather feminine
4. Neither feminine nor masculine
5. Rather masculine
6. Masculine
7. Very masculine
8. I don't know
9. I prefer not to say

Important indicator because discrimination is often based on gender expression. Associations agreed on its relevance

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# GENDER AFFIRMING PROCESS

**To date, have you taken/performed any of the following actions?** *Mark all that apply*
1. Dressing according to your gender identity
2. Using a name that is consistent with your gender identity (without registry adjustment)
3. Using a pronoun consistent with your gender identity
4. Using neutral nouns/neutral pronouns
5. Taking a psychological course aimed at the diagnosis of gender dysphoria
6. Taking hormone therapies
7. Changing your master data
8. Sex reassignment
9. Gender affirmation surgery
10. Other (*Specify_____*)
11. I prefer not to say

According to the most recent approach against medicalization, we do not refer to transition rather to gender affirming process

**What pronouns do you want others to refer you with?** Mark all that apply
1. Masculine
2. Feminine
3. With a u or schwa (ə)
4. No pronouns in particular
5. Other (Specify…………)

Item 3 is specific for the italian language which marks with the final letter masculine and feminine

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# SEXUAL ORIENTATION

**How would you currently define yourself with reference to your sexual orientation?**

1. Heterosexual
2. Gay
3. Lesbian
4. Bisexual
5. Pansexual
6. Queer
7. Asexual
8. Other (Specify _____)
9. I don't know
10. I prefer not to say

Identity dimension is followed by a question on attraction
They are aimed at exploring different profiles
Sexual orientation is referred to gender and not to sex

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# SEX CARACTHERISTICS

*Some people are born with variations in sex characteristics, sexual characteristics (such as sexual anatomy, reproductive organs and/or chromosomal arrangements) that do not strictly belong to male or female categories or belong simultaneously to both. This condition is known as "intersexuality"*

**Have you ever been diagnosed with an "intersex condition," either at birth or later?**

1. Yes
2. No
3. I prefer not to say

Two different dimensions, medicalization and perception; this phenomena is not well known in Italy

**Would you describe yourself as an intersex person?**

1. Yes
2. No
3. I prefer not to say

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# Lessons learned and future prospects

➢ The **Istat-Unar project - an opportunity to include SOGIESC indicators** in the official statistics

➢ Initial challenge - the **need to combine the multiplicity and mutability of terms used by people** to define complex aspects such as their (gender) identity, and **the need for official statistics to synthesize and classify**

➢ **Exchange with LGBT+ associations, LGBT+ people, and with academics**

➢ **For the first time in Italian official statistics indicators of gender identity** (**two-step approach) -** not taking the equivalence between biological sex and gender for granted. This gives visibility to a plurality of gender representations beyond the binary one

➢ In the **survey on trans and non-binary people** the **issue of gender** has been addressed in its complexity, trying to overcome mere **legislative and medical definitions**

➢ Providing a range of indicators: sex at birth, gender identity and also other aspects **(e.g. gender expression, intersexuality, actions to affirm gender)** and other identity characteristics (e.g. citizenship, religious belief)

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# Lessons learned and future prospects

➢ Finding **the right trade-off** between **number of indicators** and the **questionnaire burden** is necessary, especially when shifting from the collection of data on a specific topic or population (e.g. LGBT+ people) to general surveys on the **whole population**

➢ **Further experimentation** should be carried out **using survey techniques other than the self-administered web-based questionnaire** and in **surveys targeting the whole population** (e.g. the Istat Pilot Survey on Discrimination, 2023)

➢ The focus on representing **different ways of acting, signifying and expressing gender in data collection practices** implies going **beyond exclusively binary statistics**. Non-binarism is a **challenge** but also gives a **critical perspective** to the processes of reasoning, valuing, measuring, and comparing through numbers

➢ The inclusion of **self-indentification questions on multiple characteristics in general surveys** on population enables to investigate **social position**, **direct and indirect discrimination**, **multiple and intersectional discrimination and inequalities,** and their development in time

➢ **Comparable and harmonized data** at an international level is a **goal to be achieved**

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# Thank you!

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