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Measuring sex and gender

Gender Identity Representation in Data Collection: New Approaches from Italy

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Abstract

Istat (National Statistical Institute of Italy), in collaboration with Unar (National Antidiscrimination Office), is carrying out a project on "Labour discrimination against LGBT+ people and diversity policies implemented in enterprises" which started in 2018. It is characterized by a mixed method (quantitative-qualitative) and includes the direct collection of information from different target groups of LGBT+ people.

The project includes three CAWI surveys based on respondents' self-identification as LGBT+ people, and carried out by a web self-completed questionnaire:

a) in 2020-2021 a total survey of resident individuals (over 21,000) who, as of 1 January 2020, were or had been in Civil Union. The main results were published in 2022 (Istat, 2022). In Italy the union between persons of the same sex is regulated by a legal institution named Civil Union (since July 2016) which is different from marriage which is for different-sex couples alone;

b) in 2022 a survey on LGB people who have never been in Civil Union (completed in May 2022). Istat tested for the first time the snowball technique RDS (Respondent Driving Sample), which afterwards opened to a convenience sample;

c) a survey on trans and non-binary persons which is currently in progress.

Specific questions on SOGIESC (sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics) indicators were discussed, tested and analysed.

The aim of this article is to illustrate the Italian experience in surveying gender identity and gradually introducing other

SOGIESC indicators in official statistics. It in depth illustrates indicators of sex and gender identity and tested with reference to the different target groups.

Finally, it identifies the main challenges and offers some suggestions for improving- gender representation in data collection, and developing indicators of gender identity to be introduced in official surveys targeted to the whole population

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I. Introduction

1. In recent years, a broad debate and comparison has developed in the field of official statistics, both at international and European level, on the so-called SOGIESC indicators (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics Indicators). The common intent of the National Statistical Institutes, international and research agencies (e.g., United Nations Economic Commission for Europe-UNECE, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights- FRA, Praia Group on Governance Statistics-Praia Group) and equality bodies is to produce more inclusive statistics and comparable data to monitor inequalities and discrimination based on SOGIESC characteristics and those based on the intersection with other relevant aspects/characteristics to define the identity and position of individuals and groups in society (e.g., citizenship, age, social class...).
2. Academic and grey literature about LGBT+ issues, especially about trans and non-conforming gender identities, is very rich and developed in some contexts, and represents a useful point of reference.
3. In 2011, the National Statistical Institute of Italy (Istat) addressed for the first time issues related to diversity in terms of sexual orientation and gender identity when, in “Survey on Discriminations by Gender, Sexual Orientation and Ethnic Origin” collected information on opinions and attitudes toward gender roles, homosexuality and immigration; also estimating the number of discriminations’ victims at school and/or at work (Istat, 2013). The survey included questions on sexual orientation which allowed to provide a first estimate of the homosexual and bisexual population in Italy.
4. In 2018, Istat dealt with these issues again in the framework of a collaboration agreement signed with Unar (National Antidiscrimination Office) to fill an information gap on LGBT+ populations. This agreement gave rise to the project, currently underway, on "Labour discrimination against LGBT+ people and the diversity policies implemented in enterprises". Making use of the available resources in terms of budget and timing, the Istat-Unar project combined surveys both with standard and non-standard sampling techniques.
5. As part of this project, which involved carrying out surveys aimed at LGBT+ population groups, questions on gender identity were tested and introduced for the first time, as well as on sexual orientation, gender expression and the sexual characteristics. Definitions and indicators provided in the questionnaires were discussed and shared with experts, academics, associations and LGBT+ people.
6. The Istat-Unar project on labour discrimination constitutes therefore an important step towards inclusive statistics that give a plural representation of gender and sexual identities. At the same time they provide a basis from which testing various SOGIESC indicators also in surveys addressed to the whole population.
7. This paper particularly focuses on indicators relating to sex and gender identity and is structured as follows - Section II describes the methodological framework of the Istat-Unar project and the ways in which SOGIESC questions were introduced in the various surveys within the project; section III illustrates the ways in which indicators of sex and gender, were developed and discussed; section IV focuses on SOGIESC indicators used in the Survey on Labour Discrimination addressed to LGB people not in a Civil Union (2022); while section V focuses on indicators designed for the survey aimed at trans and non-binary people. The concluding section outlines considerations derived from the current experience together with some and more general recommendations.

II. Istat-Unar project on “Labour Discrimination against LGBT+ people and diversity policies in enterprises” and SOGIESC indicators

8. The Istat-Unar project is characterized by a mixed quantitative-qualitative and multiple perspective approach (LGBT+ people, employers, stakeholders) as well as the interaction of experts, academics and LGBT+ associations (De Rosa, Inglese, 2018; Istat, 2020; De Rosa et. al 2023). It includes the direct collection of information from LGBT+ people (first macro-area) and from employers, particularly enterprises, and the main stakeholders (second macro-area).
9. The project adopts a participatory approach. It includes the creation of various Working Groups composed by associations and bodies of the «Permanent Consultation Table for the promotion of LGBT rights and the protection of LGBT persons» established in 2018 to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. Also non-members of LGBT+ associations, experts and academics have been involved in the design of the questionnaire and indicators.
10. The project was funded by EU funds.
11. This paper focuses on the first macro area of the project and in particular on gender identity representation in data collection, on surveying sex and gender identity.
12. The first macro-area of the project aimed at providing an insight on the condition of labour discrimination against LGBT+ people in Italy by means of different surveys collecting information from various target groups of LGBT+ people.
13. Statistical representative surveys on the LGBT+ population is strongly biased by the lack of knowledge of these populations such as to have theoretical frames for the construction of probabilistic samples. Theoretical and statistical representativeness of the various groups included in the acronym is difficult to achieve due to their relatively low incidence in the population.
14. Three CAWI surveys based on a web self-completed questionnaire were planned. The main investigated phenomena are: coming out, experience of discrimination while looking for a job or while working and discrimination in other areas of social life (e.g., at school), microaggressions, aggressions, hate speech. The first two surveys mainly focused on aspects related to sexual orientation; the third focuses on gender identity issues.
15. Self-identification of respondent’s as LGBT+ was a key principle adopted. SOGIESC indicators were gradually tested and introduced into the three surveys.
16. The first survey on labour discrimination was carried out in 2020-2021. It was a total survey of the resident individuals (over 21,000) who, as of 1 January 2020, were or had been in Civil Union (same-sex couples). Since July 2016 in Italy the union of same-sex persons over 18 has been regulated by a special institution named Civil Union. It differs from marriage which is only for different-sex couples.
17. The main results of the “Survey on Labour Discrimination against LGBT+ people (in Civil Union or formerly in union)” were published in 2022 (Istat, 2022). Same-sex couples in civil union represent a specific group of LGBT+ population living in Italy. They indeed evidenced some specific features for being in their majority homosexuals and bisexuals, men, older people (43.6% of homosexuals and bisexuals are >50), opened and well integrated in the labour market.

18. The survey included questions about sex and sexual orientation. Gender identity was not disclosed. 95.2% people in Civil Union or formerly in union who live in Italy declared a homosexual or bisexual orientation. Main results were analysed by the following profiles: gay, lesbians, bisexual males and bisexual females.
19. A second survey, complementary to the first one, was addressed to LGB people who have never been in Civil Union. The “Survey on Labour Discrimination against LGBT+ people (not in Civil Union)” was carried out in 2022 (January-May) and included questions to detect sex, sexual orientation and gender identity. The target population was limited to homosexual and bisexual cisgender and non-binary persons.
20. With this survey Istat implemented for the first time the snowball technique Respondent Driving Sample (RDS) in its web version (WebRDS). This technique is based on social relationships in order to reach out the so-called hidden and hard-to-reach population (De Rosa et. al 2020).
21. RDS consists of combining the snowball technique, in which the sample is constructed using the names provided by initial recruiters, with a mathematical model that formalizes, under certain conditions, the recruitment process as a Markov chain, or as a probabilistic process. The data collected during the sampling process are used to make inferences about the structure of the social network and obtain from this unbiased estimate on the population of interest. It requires respondents to play an active role in recruiting new respondents who belong to their network of relationships.
22. About fifty LGBT+ association agreed in facilitating the survey and, after signing an agreement with Istat on privacy protection, were formed to identify the “seeds” of the network chain. After an established time passed from the beginning of the survey, even though some questionnaires were filled-in, however there was evidence that the RDS snowball technique was not working properly due to different reasons. In order to go on with the work, the option of a convenience sample was considered since it could anyway provide interesting and qualitative information on the target population of homosexual and bisexual persons.
23. The final results of the “Survey on Labour Discrimination against LGBT+ people (not in Civil Union)” are representative of the people who decided to participate in the survey alone.
24. As a whole more than a thousand LGB people were interviewed; differently from the first survey more young people and women were reached out. The main results of this survey have been published in May 2023 (Istat).
25. Respondents were asked to provide information on their sexual orientation, sex (currently registered in the civil registry and at birth). For the first time a question on gender identity was introduced. In line with the UNECE review on measuring gender identity (2019), a two-step approach (a question that measures the sex assigned at birth and a question to assess the current gender identity) was adopted.
26. Main results were analysed by the following profiles already used in the previous survey: gay, lesbians, bisexual males and bisexual females. At the same time the introduction of questions about gender identity allows to give a more inclusive gender representation beyond the information that a question on legal sex can provide. Though the target population was very specific, when cross-tabulated, the two-step measures provide counts of cisgender women and men, and non-binary people.

27. A survey on “Labour Discrimination against Trans and Non-binary people”, based on a convenience sampling, is currently in progress. This survey mainly focuses on gender identity and gender expression issues with particular reference to the work experience.
28. Various SOGIESC indicators have been developed and included in the questionnaire addressed to trans and non-binary people (e.g., sex, gender identity, gender expression, intersexuality, gender affirming process) following a more updated theoretical and methodological debate. Two-step measures of gender (sex assigned at birth and current gender identity) are adopted to count trans and non-binary persons. The main results of this survey are expected by the end of 2023.

III. Developing indicators on sex and gender identity

29. For the questionnaire design and for developing indicators relating to sex and gender (and other SOGIESC) in all the surveys, a review of the international and national literature in the field of official statistics and social research was carried out.
30. In order to take into account the specificity of the Italian context and get shared indicators, various workshops, auditions and informal meetings were carried out with academics, experts and LGBT+ organizations of the «Permanent Consultation Table for the promotion of LGBT rights and the protection of LGBT persons» managed by Unar.
31. LGBT+ organizations were involved at different steps of the project; various working groups were set up on a voluntary basis and considering the specific expertise.
32. Starting from some good practices implemented in other countries, an initial exploratory workshop with associations was held in 2019 to discuss the main information needs regarding the LGBT+ population in Italy and the conceptualization and definition of SOGIESC characteristics.
33. After that, several meetings were held to discuss SOGIESC indicators, to keep up with terminology changing and developing. Ad hoc documents were used to collect the LGBT+ associations’ feedback.
34. Among the main aspects that emerged during these meetings are the plurality of terms that can be used to describe own sexual and gender identity and can change over a person's lifetime and depending on the context; the importance of giving representation to all subjects that fall within the acronym LGBT+ (e.g., bisexuals, intersexual) including non-binary identities and overcoming of a medicalized vision.
35. On the other hand, the implementation time of surveys for official statistics are on average longer because of quality control operations and compliance with certain official procedures; moreover, the objective of statistics is to simplify and reduce complexity, but at the same time to provide an accurate picture of the observed phenomenon and monitor it over time.
36. Definitions and indicators were also discussed with academics.
37. At the same time 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. The Group published in 2022 the Handbook on Governance Statistics for National Statistical Offices (2022) and non-discrimination and equality is one of the key dimensions of governance.

38. The Istat-Unar project on “Labour Discrimination against LGBT+ people and diversity policies in enterprises” has been included in the “Compendium of promising practices for equality data collection” (FRA, 2019). Istat also participates in the “Task Team on Non-discrimination and Equality” of the Praia Group which has the mandate to support the development of international statistical guidance, standards and instruments for measuring Non-Discrimination & Equality.

IV. Istat-Unar “Survey on Labour Discrimination against LGB people (not in Civil Union)”

39. As already mentioned, a first survey of the project addressed to people who chose Civil Union as an official recognition of their relationship was carried out by Istat in 2021. It studied a segment of the LGBT+ population that could be reached out by the municipal lists of civilly united persons. The survey included questions about sex and sexual orientation. Gender identity was not disclosed.
40. On the other hand the survey on Labour Discrimination against LGB people not in Civil Union, carried out in 2022, had the original goal of detecting comparable and complementary features to the previous survey.
41. The target population was made of LGB cisgender and non-binary people who have never been in Civil Union. The “T” population, of any sexual orientation, was not included having a third survey specifically focused on the topic of gender identity. This second survey was also an experiment to test Web Respondent Driven Sampling (WebRDS) technique. This technique did not work properly; therefore, the investigation was then opened to anyone of the target population.
42. The beginning of the questionnaire was aimed at selecting the eligible respondents. A part from being aged 18 and over, and living in Italy, they had to answer a question on their current sexual orientation as “Homosexual; Bisexual; Other; Prefer not to say” in the last two cases the respondent was directed out of the questionnaire. This because the target population was limited to homosexual and bisexual persons.
43. In the questionnaire the terms homosexual and bisexual persons were defined as follows - the former as attracted by same-sex persons and the latter by both-sex persons. This kind of definition, which may not match with the contemporary approach and theoretical understandings, was suitable for this kind of survey that wanted to be very specific and clear in its target. The definition was based on sex and not on gender, in order to keep in line with the first survey on individuals currently or formerly in Civil Union, which followed the approach used by the Italian law ruling the Civil Unions.
44. In the first part of the survey respondents were asked to provide information on their sex currently registered in the civil registry “Female; Male”. This question, combined with the response to the question on sexual orientation, enabled to depict and study various profiles, and the data analysis was based on them: lesbians; gays; bisexual females; bisexual males. These profiles allowed to analyse discriminations and inequalities based on gender and sexual orientation in the Italian labour market.
45. Though the target population was very specific for the first time a question on gender identity was introduced by means of a two-step approach (Fig.1). This kind of approach is suggested by international guidelines, and this was a way of testing it in the Italian context. In addition to the above-mentioned question on the sex currently registered in the civil registry, and in a different section a second question was asked on the sex assigned at birth,

and the possible items were “female/male/prefer not to say”. The answers on sex were also combined with a question on their gender identity.

46. The question on gender identity was “How do you currently identify yourself?” The answer items – “Woman/girl; Man/boy; Trans woman/girl; Trans man/boy; Non-binary or other; Prefer not to say” adopted an inclusive approach albeit “Trans woman/girl” and “Trans man/boy” were not a possible option to enter the target population. The answers were agreed, also for this question with the associations and the other actors involved. The items were purposely only a few in the aim of limiting the very many possible options and expressions. Differently we would run the risk of having very little and not readable numbers.
47. This was a way to test this question and to begin including such a topic in a survey. It made it possible to have data on binary and non-binary identities and various profiles also on the basis of the target population and gender identity declared by the respondents - cisgender homosexual men, cisgender homosexual women, cisgender bisexual women, cisgender bisexual men; homosexual non-binary people and bisexual non-binary people. Very few respondents preferred not to answer. It is worth noticing that the term “cisgender” was not used in the questionnaire in agreement with the LGBT+ associations. It is indeed considered a term for scholars and not well known by the possible respondents. In this survey gender was inferred by combining their answers.

V. Istat-Unar “Survey on Discrimination against Trans a Non-Binary People”

48. A further step in the introduction of SOGIESC indicators was carried out with the design of the third survey of the Istat-Unar project. The experience of previous surveys, the most recent academic and terminological debate and new consultations with associations and experts represented a starting point. This survey that should be on the field in June 2023 is addressed to 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.
49. The survey, conducted with a self-completed web questionnaire, is based on the voluntary participation of people belonging to the target population. The initial dissemination of the survey participation link goes through multiple channels, both by associations and by individual respondents. The questionnaire investigates thematic areas and phenomena already included in previous surveys but declined in such a way as to explore issues related to gender identity and expression (e.g., coming out and visibility of one's gender identity, discrimination) as well as some ad hoc phenomena (e.g., microaggressions against trans and non-binary people, the process of gender affirmation).
50. Regardless of the number of people we will be able to reach out with this third survey, the very design of questions on the topics of gender identity and expression, together with the reflection undertaken not to give for granted a binary representation, are themselves meaningful results of the project.
51. As with the previous one, this survey is based on the principle of self-identification whereby the first questions of the questionnaire regarding gender identity are functional in identifying people as belonging or not to the target population (binary and non-binary identities). An inclusive and non-binary language was adopted through the use of the asterisk.
52. Gender identity is investigated by means of a two-step approach (Fig.1). A first question asks the sex at birth (registered in the birth certificate) and the possible items were female/male. Sex is an assignment process and in Italy there are only two legal categories.

The second question is about gender identity: “Thinking about your gender identity, how do you currently identify yourself?” The answer items are: “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”.

53. Although it is always preferable to include the item “other: specify” in this survey it was not possible as questions on gender identity are functional to identify the target population.
54. By combining the answers to the questions on sex at birth and gender identity, the target population can be identified. Those who declare a gender identity opposite to their sex at birth and those who prefer not to answer the question on gender identity are not included in the target population, the same happens for those who identify themselves as a man or woman and afterwards declare themselves trans man and trans woman. If sex at birth is different from gender identity, then respondents are labelled as “trans people” in the questionnaire (e.g., sex at birth female and man as gender identity); those who declare a non-binary gender identity are labelled as “non-binary people” in the questionnaire.
55. All the target population was labelled as “trans and non-binary persons” as not all the people with a non-binary identity identify themselves in the umbrella label trans or transgender.
56. Compared to the question tested in the previous survey, the non-binary term is used without adding the item “other”. Non-binary is used as an umbrella term, which includes all people whose gender experience lies outside the female/male binary gender, thus referring to: a presence of more than one gender (e.g., bigender, pangender), a fluctuation between different genders (e.g., genderfluid), identification with a neutral gender within the male/female spectrum or outside of it (e.g. genderqueer, neutral gender, third gender) or to a partial identification with being a man or a woman (e.g., demiboy or demigirl), not to have a gender identity (e.g., agender). Tooltips inside the questionnaire specify this.
57. The following open question was then included to capture the complexity of issues related to identity: “How would you currently define your gender identity?” The aim of this question was to give the interviewed people the opportunity to express their feelings and story, being able to account for progressive coming out, for example as trans and then as non-binary, and the coexistence of terms that according to some categorical approaches may apparently seem contradictory (e.g., non-binary woman where woman is used as a political subjectivity).
58. Other questions have been included to capture gender as a process, more specifically the following indicators of coming out milestones have been developed: “At what age did you become aware of your current gender identity (trans and non-binary)?”; “At what age did you begin using the terms trans, non-binary, or other to define your identity?” and “At what age did you first come out as a trans or non-binary person?”. For all the three questions, the item “I prefer not to answer” was inserted possible answer.
59. Gender is also investigated by means of indicators of gender expression. In detail two questions have been included: “How would you currently describe yourself on the basis of your appearance, your clothing, the way you move, the way you speak?” and “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?”. For both the answers items are: “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”.
60. For the first time, questions were developed to get to know intersex people, people which are born with variations in 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 phenomena is not well known in Italy. Two different dimensions, medicalization and perception, are investigated with the following two questions: “Have you ever been diagnosed with an "intersex condition," either at birth or later? and “Would you describe yourself as an intersex person?”. The answer items are: “1. Yes; 2. No; 3. I prefer not to say”.

61. Another important aspect is the gender affirming process. According to the most recent approach against medicalization, we do not refer to transition rather to gender affirming process. So we ask: “To date, have you taken/performed any of the following actions? The answer items are: “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.
62. In order to collect data about timing and difficulties in the procedure for change master data and sex reassignment, these items have been included in the question about the gender affirmation process.
63. The language aspect is also very relevant; so a question asks: “What pronouns do you want others to refer to you with?” with the following options: 1. Masculine; 2. Feminine; 3. With a u or schwa; 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.
64. Not limiting gender to a binary representation also implies a rethinking and reflection on other definitions and methods of classification, such as, for example, the definition of sexual orientation.

VI. Lessons learned and future prospects

65. The ongoing project that Istat launched in 2018 in collaboration with Unar on the topic of labour discrimination against LGBT+ people and diversity policies offered the opportunity to reflect as official statistics on the so-called SOGIESC indicators, to select and test theoretical and operational definitions of these characteristics.
66. The introduction of these indicators gradually took place and was functional to the project's research design, which provided for several surveys addressed to different LGBT+ population targets, also having the general objective of getting as close as possible to probabilistic survey approaches.
67. An initial difficulty was 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 classify and categorize, often according to a dichotomous perspective.
68. The discussion and collaboration by LGBT+ associations and stakeholders were crucial in order to understand the meanings people give to certain terms. However, in order to avoid a squashed vision of this reality, the involvement of LGBT+ people who do not belong to the world of activism/associations is a key issue. The same happens for the share with academic research, which has been studying these issues for a longer time, knows the specificities of the Italian context and can observe the fast evolution of the terminological debate and changes in society, such as those related to gender representations.

69. In addition to the indicators on sexual orientation, already included in the 2011 Istat survey, for the first time in Italian official statistics indicators were introduced to detect the respondents' gender identity, not taking for granted the equivalence between biological sex and gender, and giving visibility to a plurality of gender representations, not only the binary one. This is an exploratory operation in a context such as the Italian one in which the public debate on gender identity is rather new, as well as the systematic development of the academic studies on Gender, Intersex, Feminist, Transfeminist and Sexuality.
70. The internationally recommended two-step approach to surveying gender identity was implemented. The design of the survey on labour discrimination against trans and non-binary people allowed the issue of gender to be addressed in its complexity and multi-facets going beyond legislative and medical definitions and classifications. It emphasises the importance of providing a range of indicators that are not limited to the registered sex and self-identification by gender identity, but covers, for example, gender expression, intersexuality, actions to affirm one's own gender and the interaction between gender and other characteristics.
71. Finding the right trade-off between number of indicators and the questionnaire burden is necessary, especially when shifting from data collection on a specific topic or population (e.g. LGBT+ people) to general surveys on the whole population.
72. 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, 2022-2023).
73. Although the surveys were carried out on LGBT+ population groups, this experience enabled the exploration and field-test of terminology choices, indicators and questions, and their improvement also with a view to their inclusion in surveys addressed to the whole population. Furthermore, the introduction of the SOGIESC indicators occurred following an intersectional approach. An attempt was made on the one hand to detect as many characteristics as possible through self-identification, in order to facilitate an intersectional analysis of the data, and on the other hand to develop indicators to capture the specific intersectional condition of certain groups/subjects (De Rosa, 2022).
74. Since the start of the project to date, the theoretical and methodological debate on the SOGIESC indicators (and on the issue of discrimination) has developed and enriched. The same has happened for the exchange of experiences at an institutional, European and international level (UNECE, 2009; FRA, 2019; EC, 2021). The agreement on certain defining aspects (sexual orientation defined with reference to gender and not sex, the inappropriateness of using the term transsexual, the shift from the concept of gender transition to that of gender affirmation) and the growing attention to the comparability of data are a starting point and an important input for more inclusive institutional research.
75. In operational terms, the greatest effort consists in drawing on subjective experience and get to a synthesis and a choice of terms in order to conceive definitions and indicators to achieve reliable, valid and comparable SOGIESC data.
76. Thematic surveys or surveys on specific population groups are suitable for exploring issues or aspects of society that are still little known such as trans and non-binary experiences. However the long-term objective should be the introduction of SOGIESC self-identification indicators in surveys targeted to the whole population in order to investigate and monitor multiple and intersectional discrimination and inequalities through a combination of "objective or outcome indicators", "subjective indicators about experiences of discrimination" and "group-specific indicators of discrimination" (De Rosa, 2022).

77. The focus on representing the different ways of performing gender in data collection leads to understand statistics beyond an exclusively binary key. Non-binarism certainly represents a great challenge but also gives a critical perspective to the processes of reasoning, valuing, measuring, and comparing through definitions, classifications and numbers.

Figure 1

Questions on gender identity adopted in the Istat-Unar project on "Labour discrimination against LGBT+ people and diversity policies implemented in enterprises" (2018-2023)

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

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

b. How would 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

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

a. Sex (registered in the birth certificate)

1. Female
2. Male

b. Thinking about your gender identity, how would 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

c. How would you currently define your gender identity? Free text

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