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Gender Violence, discrimination, economic statistics: new challenges in measures based on a gender approach[*]

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1. PROMOTING GENDER STATISTICS

If policies are set and developed without considering gender, men and women will benefit their effects unequally.

Women and men have different roles within the society and unequal access to resources. As a consequence they are differently affected by policies and measures put into effects. If there are problems or lacks in statistics or in the adopted gender approach, the possibility to individuate suitable policies to solve the social and economic problems of the country will decrease, mainly those regarding gender differences. As a consequence the ability to change things will be limited and actual stereotypes will last more and more.

Many policies can look neutral referring to gender, but going more in deep they affect differently women and men. Indeed there are substantial differences in men's lives versus women's ones within the majority of social life contexts. Such differences make policies that look actually neutral, address differently women and men, and be able to reinforce actual disparities, transforming them in real inequalities.

Gender difference exists in our society and it is necessary to measure it on the main social and economic life grounds. Gender statistics not only allow indicators' comparisons by sex, but also they assure that men's and women's involvement in social and economic life and their contribution to society, be correctly measured and evaluated. **Many phenomena that are crucial from a social and an economic point of view, as unemployment, poverty, economic development, are not neutral when considered by gender. If planning and scheduling are developed without considering gender, men and women will benefit of policies' effects unequally.**

Then statistics are a basic tool to address the problem. But gender statistics are particularly important also because people are influenced by stereotypes and old traditions. For example, in Countries where laws assure equality more effectively among people, one can think that equality is a conquered and common goal by now, without be conscious of the many ways discrimination still act. Among people thinking in that way there are also the *decision makers*. If one has a wrong opinion about the actual situation the right actions to change it will not be made, as every problem looks solved. Gender statistics have a great social value, as they can promote changes, help in eliminating stereotypes, allow the right understanding of the actual situation of men and women, and above all they provide a solid base to formulate policies and evaluate the taken actions.

Furthermore gender statistics are a basic tool to build gender budgets. Any administration, be it central or local, needs to evaluate the gender impact of its adopted measures and policies and it should know expected outcomes before adopting them. But I will not focus on this strategic aspect, as there is a specific speech about it after mine. Nevertheless it can be noted that

administration gender budgets will not be available if there are not suitable gender statistics in the Country.

Official statistics for long time were 'gender blind', the Women conference of Beijing, a launching pad for gender statistics

For long time there were "imbalances" in the attention to different thematic areas by the National Institutes of Statistic. (Statistic Institutes were characterised by an "economic-centred" vision for decades.) Elements to know and read society on the whole were not always present so as to affect the completeness of the statistic production (in particular it is not casual that the social statistics production has been penalised). **If Countries consider the economic actions of primary importance and little attention is given to social policies, economic statistics and "economic actors" will become of primary importance. As a consequence at the first place will be subjects belonging to Labour Force, usually adult men and, only late, the need to consider also the others subjects will be evaluated.** Women paid for it, together with children, the older and disabled people, that were not present in official statistics for decades or they were considered only in appendices (children because of births' decreasing, older because they were considered a 'burden' for the population as their growth causes its getting old): **a 'GENDER BLIND POINT OF VIEW' was hegemonic in our Country and in all the other countries for decades.**

  The Women conference of Beijing produced the first great thinking over and systematising of gender statistics at an international level. A great impulse was given to their development, making the various National Statistic Institutes develop a real gender approach. Since then new thematic areas were investigated, particularly important to make gender inequalities visible. The previous World Conference of Women had begun to face the problem, but yet at a primordial level. The first Women World Conference of 1975 in Mexico City focused on women statistics, the Nairobi one in 1985 started to go over the women's statistic view and speaking about gender statistics. **But the real jump in quality for gender statistics was made by the Women conference of Beijing.** For the first time governments agreed on the need to realise a series of actions to develop gender statistics, fundamental to plan policies and evaluations. During the Conference big importance was given to the bringing out of the book 'The world's women' of UN DESA, presenting an analysis of the women situation through the world. The impact on the National Statistic Institute work and on international organizations' one was great. In those years new publications appeared, some institutes developed a gender focal point, UNSD promoted the classification of the time use activities, the care work was measured for the first time through the time use surveys, ILO fixed a strategic point in the work schedule of International Conference of Labour Statisticians, the OMS applied itself on violence against women, the FAO on agricultural statistics. The impact of the Beijing Conference was very strong not only on developed Countries but also on

developing ones. Both more and less traditional areas are involved, social and economic.

Starting again from Beijing: mainstreaming also for statistics

Since then steps on were made, but more and more is to be done. It is important to start again from Beijing, verifying which goals are still not reached. This message passed in many countries, but after an early phase of growth, in many of them, programs about gender statistics were cut off, often because of a growing lack of resources too. From UN-ECE investigation for example, it is evident that gender programs are less visible in more advanced Countries of the region, that is the attention's decrease on the topic was higher in those Countries that had begun such programs firstly. Recently someone says that gender statistics are not a priority for the Statistic Institute. But the problem is faced in a wrong way. **Gender statistics should always be a priority, they should be considered a practice that affects the daily work of a National Statistic Institute permanently. As there is a mainstreaming on policies, it also has to be a mainstreaming of statistics.** Gender statistics have a deep meaning, they are not merely statistics on men and on women, but they imply that data are collected and presented to think about men and women contributions to the society, to their different needs and problems. Producing gender statistics implies not only that data are collected by sex, but also that concepts and methods used consider gender problems that are actually present in the society. The production of gender statistics has to affect the whole official statistic system and not only the single unit addressing gender, if there is one. For example the Labour force data are improperly collected if the different contexts, where male and female works act, are not taken into account. It is not enough to estimate irregular work, it is essential to understand if men and women are differently involved in irregular work; again, it is only partial the use of income measures if they are based on a 'neutral' ground of income distribution, it is very different if the income is analysed using a gender point of view within households. It is still partial the image of the national accounting if a gender approach is not adopted and satellite accounts are not calculated, allowing taking into account, for example, for the quantification of the household care work. **Finally, if when planning surveys, be them social or economic, the gender approach is taken into the right consideration the whole statistics' production is improved, not only gender statistics.** The gender approach is a method to be adopted in the official statistics' production permanently as it allows improving it, it is not to be applied during one phase and rejected during another.

Many goals proposed by the Beijing Conference are still not reached. Among them I will focus on violence against women, discrimination and economic statistics as a whole, as they seem to me dimensions of great relevance of which a great demand from civil society and policy maker is developing. Let's start from Beijing, then, and

let us bring out again gender statistics to provide a suitable answer to the civil society demand.

2. NEW CHALLENGES FOR MEASURING: GENDER VIOLENCE

Invisible violence in the most of Countries as it is not reported to police, it is essential a survey on violence against women to estimate the real burden of it

Violence against women is invisible in the most of Countries. Police statistics record only a very little share of it, as women do not report it. The consequences are strong biases of the people thoughts about what is violence against women today. In Italy for example the stereotype of the foreign immigrate, unknown, that rapes the Italian woman is very common, but that is not the main violence against women living in Italy. Considering rapes happened in Italy, 69% are perpetrated by partners, husbands or fiancés, only 6% by strangers. Also considering stranger authors be immigrant for 50%, it would be that 3% of rapes authors are foreign immigrants, and considering also 50% of known authors as foreign, it would be that 10% of rape authors would be foreign immigrants. Rather the common image is that of rapes made in the town streets by immigrants. Not considering actual statistics of the Country can cause a wrong orientation and evaluation of priorities and types of policies. In the last years the share of immigrant crimes reported to police on the total of crimes reported is increasing in Italy both for murders than for other types of crimes against the property and the person. Crimes by immigrant are often against their countrymen, but there is still little communication about it. Such data are known only by reports to police and the dark figure is not known. The Italian survey about violence against women estimates also the dark figure of it and it shows very clearly the bias it is made if considering only police statistics. **The most of violence suffered by women is domestic, so it is mainly by italian partners, but what is known by mass-media is quite different**. So it is necessary to conduct the violence against women survey with suitable methodologies, as it is the only way to know incidence and prevalence of the various form of violence, to know their dynamics and how they associate each other, risk factors, authors. Data based on reports to police would provide estimates very biased.

Violence mainly domestic, serious, unpunished: results of different surveys, still not harmonised, follow the same direction

In Italy since the beginning of '90ths the number of murders is highly decreased, being a third of what they were before, but the number of domestic murders was doubled. **It means men murdered by other men diminuished, while women murdered by men increased.** So there is being no success in reducing on of the most terrible violence, the domestic one.

Violence against women survey makes us understand the seriousness of events too: 20% of victims of violence by partner say they feared for their life, a very at risk set as domestic murders often happen after an escalation of violence. The survey is important also because it allows us to understand how much severe violent events are considered by victims, independently by events' real seriousness. Only 27.3 % of raped women by partner consider the suffered violence as a crime. This is one of the most serious problem relating to domestic violence, that is when women do not recognise it is a crime. A problem that causes part of the large amount of dark figure of the violence against women, figure that is strategic for communications policies and for fighting violence. The Italian violence against women survey allowed us to understand women relation with the police. Half of the victims declared themselves unsatisfied, but most of all 21.7 % would have liked the police had made something more by keeping away from home the partner and 26 % would have liked more protection. The survey outcomes show that only 28% of partner that were violent and accused were defendant and only l'8 % condemned. Then **there is male violence unpunished.** Until now there are not international standards to conduct such surveys, but it is interesting that regardless methodological diversities there are some common and recurring results. 1. **Violence is everywhere first of all domestic violence**; also when considering rapes a high share is by partners (about 60-70 % in Countries as Australia, UK, Costa Rica, USA, Italy). If the partner is often drunk or if he was a witness of domestic violence against his mother or a victim himself when he was a child, or even if the woman herself was victim of abuses during her childhood (as in Australia or in Italy or in Canada), the risk of violence against the woman by partner is higher. 2. **Violence affects every social class**. 3. **As was noted in the Italian survey, women have difficulties in recognising the violence**. Also in Australia only 26 % of women that suffered violence by partner consider it a 'crime'. Such percentage is higher in UK(51%) where violence is collected by a module within the victimization survey dealing with many different crimes, and consequently the reference context could have affected more answers.

Many of the above statements were underlined by women working in shelters for women since the beginning of their work, but there were not official data collected over the whole female population. Now data are available and when integrated with similar data from reports to the police, from health and other services data, from shelter for women data, they will represent a valuable base for policies.

Violence against women has being existing for ages but it was invisible, it has to become a constant part of official statistics and one of our priorities. The main aim is to individuate a methodology shared at an international level that allows us to have solid and shared reference points to start violence surveys and to make the various situations more comparable. Italy tested a methodology that allowed investigating the phenomena. But the need of standards at an international level is required to provide comparable estimates. It is important to find them now, when the demand is growing in every Countries, to avoid that each Country consolidates its own and specific way of conducting the survey. The next step will be to integrate existing data in each

Country, that sometimes are a real valuable source to understand characteristics and dynamics of violence against women.

3. NEW CHALLENGES FOR MEASURING: DISCRIMINATION

Gender discrimination crosses other types of discrimination?

Gender affects, and often strengthen, diversity and vulnerability due to other differences, such as ethnicity, social class, age, disability, sexual orientation, etc. Several studies highlighted this aspect, but as far as official statistics are concerned, there is still a long way to go towards conceptualisation and concepts' operationalization.

Since the 70s, studies were carried out in the United States to define and measure discrimination, starting from the analysis of the different participation to the labour market of women, migrants and Afro-Americans.

More recently, new types of discrimination grew in interest, in particular in relation to people with disabilities, the elderly people and sexual orientation.

Measuring the systematic disadvantage in society due to personal characteristics considered different from the 'norm' is fundamental. **Some analyses carried out, stressed how, in certain cases, ethnic or age discrimination is accompanied by gender discrimination, which can be pictured as a "discrimination within the discrimination".**

In Italy, for instance, the situation of migrants in the labour market is not very positive: even if migrants have higher employment rates than Italians (67,3% against 57,9% on average in 2006), this happens in spite of a higher prevalence of low specialised and less remunerative jobs, they are more often employed in smaller firms which are more vulnerable. Moreover, these migrants have to maintain, with a lower income, proportionally bigger families (46,8% of migrants' families with 4 or more members have one income only, comparing to 36,0% of Italians' families).

However, there is not only a difference between migrants and Italian population, in fact, the situation worsen among migrant women (employment rates are 84,2% for men and 50,7% for women). The situation is very different between men and women, and also between migrant and Italian women. Migrant women have lower employment rates than men but higher rates comparing to Italian women. However, when analysing the employment rates by specific role within the family, it comes out that migrant women living in a couple with children have a lower employment rate comparing to the Italians (41,5% against 48,3%). **Reconciling work and family commitments is much harder for migrant women, especially in a country such Italy where the net of social services for infancy is very weak, private services to families are very expensive and migrants cannot benefit of the nets of informal help, that are a fundamental source of support for Italian women. Migrant women in Italy, therefore, are victims of a double problem which is often a double discrimination, both direct and indirect within the labour market.**

What happens to the other aspects of social and economic life? How much and how the discrimination within the discrimination comes out? There are not many data sources to answer these questions.

The situation is even more critical for the **sexual orientation** of the population, because there are not many studies on this matter. We talk about discrimination based on sexual orientation making reference to any disadvantage suffered by an individual due to not being heterosexual, even in the case of a self-imposed silence (Bonini, Baraldi 2004). It would be fundamental to be able to reconstruct possible links with discriminatory episodes in the labour experience, in the access to housing or in the social life in general, even when they are not recognised as such by the person.

It would be fundamental to understand when, and for which groups of the population, punitive experiences are perceived as discriminatory acts due to the person's non heterosexual orientation or just as simple results of poor working performances. It would be fundamental to understand if there is or not a gender difference.

Official Statistic is not yet up-to-date even just concerning the measurement of families with same sex partners, and a strategy on this matter has become necessary.

The fact that studies not coming from the official statistic sources highlighted that the number of lesbian women is lower than that of gay men, and that in some countries this difference tends to decrease, could possibly hide a heavier climate of social stigma against women?

Almost inexistent data do not allow to answer adequately to this issue, and not even to understand if there are differentials in the exposure to the risk of being victim of discrimination.

Also discrimination in the workplace due to disability has not been studied enough, comparing to discrimination due to gender, ethnicity and age. The majority of studies focused on discrimination in the access to work, occupational segregation, and prevalence of low status jobs (with obvious implications in terms of salary discrimination). Data coming from Istat show that disability is a factor that increases the exposure to the risk of being poor. Overall, 47% of people with disability refer that the resources available to their family are scarce or insufficient, against the 31% among the non disabled population, the difference persists in every age group.

Moreover, the less educated groups of the population are more likely to have disabilities, in particular among people aged 65 or over 21,3% of people with a low level of education have disabilities, against 10,1% among those with a medium-high level of education (among less educated elderly women the percentage increases to 25% against 15% for men).

Furthermore, people with disability are often discriminated also in terms of occupational segregation, by getting positions of lower qualification or getting jobs reserved by the "compulsory hiring system".

They remain the most vulnerable group, "the last to find new opportunities, the first to be laid off" (Ilo, 2003). Prevalence of disability among women is almost double comparing to men (6,1% vs. 3,3%), but the difference is mainly due to gender differences registered among the disabled population aged 65 or over (22.5% vs.

13.3%). Elderly women combine more frequently than men different types of disabilities: motor disabilities leading to confinement, disabilities in the communication area, disabilities in functions of everyday activities: 13,2% of women have disabilities in at least 2 different areas, while the percentage drops to 7,2% among men. It would be fundamental to understand if, also in this case, female disadvantage is visible also in terms of an emerging new exposure to the risk of being victim of discrimination.

Also at international level, a comparative study carried out by OECD "Trends in Severe Disability Among Elderly People" (2007), highlighted how in the majority of the 12 countries surveyed, women had a higher prevalence of disability comparing to men. A shared international survey tool that allowed the measurement of the level of integration and participation of people with disabilities is lacking. However several projects with the aim of operationalising the ICF classification are underway; within Europe a survey module (Module on "Disability and Social Integration") to study such integration is being tested.

A plan to relaunch gender statistics cannot miss to include a focus on the overlapping of gender discrimination with other types of discrimination

It is fundamental, for a plan to relaunch gender statistics, to give relevance also to the measurement of discrimination, and this with a gender focused approach, as gender discrimination could be a cross-discrimination with other types of discrimination.

We are facing several challenges. **Discrimination could take place in different places: school, workplace, other social environment. It could be explicit and direct, or indirect discrimination, which is more difficult to measure.**

Moreover, only a small part of discrimination acts is reported, therefore administrative data are of no particular help. The measurement of discrimination coming from administrative sources would be distorted, similarly to what happens with measures of violence against women.

It is obviously very hard to identify one objective measure of discrimination, while measuring discrimination through self-perception is very dangerous. Recent attempts towards this direction, as for instance the Eurobarometer European survey, did not give satisfactory results. They do not allow to measure the real extension of the phenomenon.

The Eurobarometer survey is limited not only because it does not allow to identify religion, ethnicity or other characteristics of the person who was discriminated, but also because it is based on an unsuitable methodology, using complex and inaccurate terminology, not of common use among the population. To be able to detect the presence of discrimination and of overlapping types of discrimination, it would be necessary to plan accurately new methodological tools.

A real challenge for the Official Statistic, an emerging border issue, with a high relevance for the planning of adequate policies on which we should start working.

4. NEW CHALLENGES FOR MEASURING: WORK, INCOME, ENTREPRENEURIAL CLASS, EXPLOITATION OF THE CARE WORK

Economic statistics were only marginally touched by the gender approach, while the potential of the use of the gender approach would be great, and this could lead to an improvement in the quality of these data.

"To improve the collection on the contribution of the women to the economy, included their participation to the informal sector" was one of the goals set at the World Conference on Women in Beijin subscribed by all the governments. We are still far from reaching this goal.

In particular, there is an inadequate consideration of gender-sensitive indicators on work, analyses aimed at drawing attention to women contribution to the income of the household are lacking, surveyed information on enterprises do not include the gender of the owner, and these information are not integrated with those on men and women involvement in the care work, the value of the care work is not yet included among the satellite accounts of National Accounts, a systematic map of presence of women in economic decisional roles is missing. There are still several challenges for economic statistics, and the attempts of improvement were not made in a systematic way.

An example of the negative consequences on policies that could come from the choice of an indicator which is not adequate for measuring gender differences: the case of Calabria in Italy

In Italy barriers for female access to the labour market are still strong, the situation is particularly critical in the South. In this area, female employment rates are just above 30%, approximately half of the rate registered among men living in the same area.

Moreover, Italian employment rates are strongly influenced by the role within the family, it goes from 59,7% among all single women (56,9% among Italian single women, 82,2% among foreign single women) to 47,9% among all women living in a couple with children (48,3% among the Italians; 41,5% among foreigners).

Since last year a law provided for incentives to enterprises that employed women. This law applied only to women living in areas defined at European level as disadvantaged. In particular, as stated in the regulation of the European Commission, it is defined as disadvantaged woman every woman living in a region where the average unemployment rate exceeded the 100% of the EU rate for at least the last 2 years, and where female unemployment exceeded the 150% of the male rate in the area in at least two of the last three years (reg. CE 2204/2002).

What happened after the estimate of these two indicators? In a region as Calabria, that is particularly critical in terms of female employment (the female employment rate in 2006 was 31,7%), was not included in this classification of disadvantaged areas.

This is due to the indicator chosen to identify the disadvantaged area and the gender differences.

In fact, in the recent years, in Calabria as in other Italian Southern regions, the unemployment rate decreased reaching its lowest peak, but this happened at the cost of the growth of female inactivity, that is women gave up looking for a job also because discouraged. The unemployment rate does not take into account the discouragement.

The definition of unemployment includes the active search of a job, and the availability to work within two weeks.

Therefore, in spite of the positive effort to adopt a gender approach at European level, because there is a disadvantage due to gender, the choice of the indicator was not very accurate. If the indicator used would have been employment rates the outcomes would be quite different.

In particular, when considering a ratio of 60% between female and male occupation, Calabria would have been included among the regions that could receive the incentives, together with other regions of the South of the country.

It is therefore fundamental, not only to adopt of a gender approach, but also to identify appropriate methodologies to define indicators that really can help measuring the phenomenon.

The female unemployment rate is a weak indicator that could lead to a distorted picture of gender differences in the labour market. It is not the most important indicator and it should be accompanied by others because the borders between female unemployment and the choice not to work is very wide, and therefore there could be periods in which even with decreasing unemployment, there is no parallel increase (or sufficient increase) in occupation because of the increase in inactivity.

Unemployment rate cannot be considered the most important indicator, it is a particularly weak indicator when considering women situation.

Moreover, it is fundamental, when choosing indicators to monitor the situation, that these decisions are shared also with national statistical institutes.

In the last years, the policy makers became more aware of the importance of using indicators, but it is a mistake to think they can be used and included in laws or recommendations without the involvement of data producers, who know well the consequences of the use of one indicator or another.

The definition of an indicator is not a simple matter, especially when we want to select the most appropriate one to measure the phenomenon under study. It is even harder to build a gender specific indicator. The case of Calabria should tell us something!

Measuring income with a gender point of view, not restricting the choice to the distribution of family income

Talking about income means talking about income from employment, income from self-employment and unearned income, considering also the value of what is used because produced within the family.

In countries where agriculture is dominant, income is produced at family level, and the informal sector absorbs a high proportion of work. This means it is particularly difficult to apply a simple and clear definition of income. In these countries it is difficult to quantify the female contribution to the family income. **Adopting a gender perspective in income statistics means not only to analyse the income distribution and the level of the inequalities, but also to understand which proportion of income is produced by women.**

It is very interesting to verify what happens from the European SILC survey. In Italy geographic differences are very sharp between the Centre-North and the South.

When considering couples with both partners aged between 25 and 54, that is those who are less likely to include individuals who chose not to work because students or retired, it can be noted that in the Centre-North, in 74% of the cases both partners contribute with income from employment to the global income of the couple, while this percentage decreases to 47% in the South. What is most interesting is that, when considering only the couples in which both partners produce income from employment, North-South differences in the proportion in which women contribute to the income from employment of the couple decrease strongly.

In particular, when distinguishing between (i) couples in which the woman contributes less than her partner to the income of the couple (producing less than 40% of the income of the couple), (ii) couples in which the woman contributes to the income of the couple in a proportion similar to the partner (producing between 40% and 60% of the income of the couple) and (iii) couples in which the woman contributes more than her partner to the income of the couple (producing more than 60% of the income of the couple), it can be noted that the distribution of these three typologies of couples is very similar in the Centre-North and in the South.

In particular, couples in which women contribute in a smaller proportion than their partner to the income of the couple are the majority, 48% in the Centre-North and 50% in the South; those in which women contribute in a similar proportion represent a considerable 44% in the Centre-North and 38% in the South; finally couples in which women contribute more than their partner to the income of the couple are a minority, 8% in the Centre-North and 12% in the South.

A similar situation can be observed comparing data from the European countries that carried out a EU-SILC survey in 2004. There are important differences between countries in the distribution of women contributing to the income from employment of the couple. In particular, the lowest percentages of women not producing income from employment are registered in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, and they are lower than 10%. In Italy this percentage is 35%, and the only countries with a higher percentage are Spain, Greece and Luxembourg.

However, even in the European comparison, when considering only couples with both partners producing income from employment, differences among countries are much smaller. **This means that differences between areas are mainly due to a different participation of women in the labour market, but the relative economic contribution of women also living in the most developed areas of the country is unchanged.** This, for instance, could be due to the higher spread of part-time among women and to the smaller diffusion of overtime or other forms of additional payment. **The outcome is a subordinate position of women within the family, even when living in a developed area where in the majority of the couples both partners work.** It interesting what happens to couples living in the South of Italy. As already highlighted, in the South there are more couples in which women contribute to the household income in a higher proportion than men (12% against 8%). However the profile of these couples is totally different in the South comparing to the North. While in the Centre-North of the country the majority of these couples have a high total income, in the South couples in which women contribute more then their partner are those that are more disadvantaged economically.

Surveying enterprises from a gender point of view, integration with data from surveys on households and on life times

In 2001, Istat carried out an interesting job about firms in Italy using the mid-term Census of Industries and Services (Abbate C., Sabbadini L.L.) in order to identify firms managed by women; the results were integrated with the ones coming from the multipurpose household survey. This is a very promising example of analysis, which, unfortunately, was never repeated and this approach is not widely used at an international level. 25% of firms were managed by women. Among firms managed by women there were: retail trade, firm services, household services, public commercial concern, wholesale trade; among firms managed by men, instead, firm services, trade, motor services and public commercial concern were more relevant.

Metallurgical industries, food industries, electric industries, wood and mechanical industries were at the top of the list for men, while for women the textile industry was at the first place, followed by shoe factories, food and metallurgical industries.

Firms managed by women were generally smaller than those managed by men, even though the difference was not so marked.

In general, it can be noted that firms run by women were more prevalent among those with one to four employees, that is the smallest firms.

Prevalence of firms managed by women decreased when the size of the firms increased.

All training activities, research, informatics' tools and technologies were more prevalent among men-run firms; the female disadvantage was strong in all sectors, with the exception, for instance, of personal services, where the recourse to the training of their employees was more frequent comparing to firms managed by men, as well as for wood and metallurgical industries.

Women-run firms were less integrated into the market: they made fewer agreements, received and requested fewer orders, with the exception of the textile sector.

8,8% of firms received in 1997 investment incentives, for the labour cost, for functioning or for youth employment. This percentage decreased to 7% among firms run by women.

Turnover by employees for firms managed by women were lower by 32% comparing to that for men-run firms: 197 millions against 291 millions. The situation was particularly severe for textile and food industries, where the percentage was 49% or 51% lower among firms managed by women, with a very high gap in the average revenue by employee.

Production costs by employee were lower among firms run by women, even though the differences on costs were smaller comparing to the differences on proceeds, this meant that men-run firms had proportionally more proceeds and less costs comparing to firms managed by women.

When considering the company income, it could be noted that women-run firms, besides having lower average yields, had also smaller sales-costs ratios comparing to companies managed by men.

Turnover by employees among firms with one to four employees run by women was very similar to that referred to male-run companies: when controlling by size, the situation seemed to improve in small firms managed by women, in spite of the very low proceeds for women in textile and clothes industries.

Proceeds by employees decreased sharply when the firm size increased and the comparison with men-run firms became very unfavourable.

Similarly, when considering production costs, the situation was closer to that for men-run companies for small firms, while the disadvantage grew with increasing firm's size.

The firm's profit by employee, synthesising sales and costs, highlighted again a lower profitability of women-run firms, even the small ones, with just a few exceptions in the personal services.

Data coming from the Multipurpose Survey completed the picture. 53,3% of female entrepreneurs or self-employed worked more than 60 hours a week, when considering work both within and outside the family; the same percentage was 26% among men.

The difference between men and women in the total average number of hours worked was marked; 54 hours for men against 64 for women. However, the majority of female entrepreneurs (51%) worked more than 40 hours a week, just as work outside the family; this percentage reaches 65% among men.

No wonder that the situation of female enterprises was disadvantaged. On the one hand it came out a lower mean age for women, 43,1 years (2-3 years lower than the men mean age), which meant a more recent start in the enterprise's world, and a minor experience. On the other hand, most importantly, it came out the smaller proportion of time devoted to the enterprise by women, in spite of a higher total number of hours worked. Women in this sector are more overwhelmed by the work within the family comparing to men, and therefore have less time to devote to their enterprise: this leads to natural negative consequences in terms of returns of the firm.

Female entrepreneurs add to this double difficulty that linked to the access to credit due to the guarantee system. In Italy the majority of families, about 70%, owned their house at the time of the interview; female entrepreneurs or self employed had their house registered in their name only in 30% of the cases. This could lead to big problems in the access to credit for a woman who want to start an enterprise.