

Women's Economic Participation in Italy and Spain: Structural Barriers and Emerging Trends

Cinzia Leone

Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia, Italy – email: cinzia.leone@iit.it

Doi: 10.2478/gssfj-2025-0008

Abstract

This article examines the persistent gender gap in labour market participation in Italy, focusing on the structural and policy factors that continue to limit women's employment and economic independence. Despite regulatory efforts and increasing attention to gender equality at the European level, Italy remains among the lowest-ranking countries in Europe for female employment rates, wage equality, and the availability of services supporting work-life balance. Data highlight a long-term structural disadvantage affecting women throughout their working lives, with consequences extending to financial autonomy, independence, pension access, and long-term wellbeing. The situation is further aggravated by labour market dynamics that lead many women to reduce working hours or leave employment entirely after motherhood or other care obligations. These trends have significant implications not only for individual women but also for the sustainability of the Italian workforce and national economic growth.

To better understand these dynamics, the article adopts a comparative perspective and briefly analyses the Italian case alongside developments in Spain, a country historically considered socio-economically comparable to Italy but which has recently implemented significant legislative reforms to promote gender equality in the workplace. The comparison highlights how policy interventions, including equal pay legislation and more balanced parental leave systems, may influence women's labour market participation.

In conclusion, the paper offers insights for future research avenues investigating the topic from different perspectives and suggestions for future policy development in Italy, with an interpretation of situated knowledge that can be extended to various European countries.

Keywords: Gender gap, labour market, Italy-Spain comparison

1. Introduction

In Italy, a central issue is the differing participation of women in the labour market. This remains a highly topical matter, yet few concrete solutions have been proposed (Brancati & Carboni, 2024). Figures and statistics show that Italy continues to rank at the bottom of the European league table for female employment levels, wage gaps, and the availability of local services that could help change a situation with repercussions not only for the national economy, but also for society and public health (Corsi et al., 2016).

The latest report from the National Social Security Institute (INPS) (2026) – the Italian body responsible for social security – on the gender gap highlights a disadvantage for women that persists throughout their lives, impeding economic advancement and social transformation towards a labour market with greater female participation. It also describes the Italian situation as stagnant, with no incentives to promote increased participation by women in the labour market and the production system.

Although gender equality has been emphasised at the regulatory level, partly to meet obligations from the European Union – for example, the requirements for accessing

Recovery Fund resources (known in Italy as PNRR), which necessitated official certification of gender equality, either through a Gender Equality Plan or other ISO certifications – little progress has been made in recent years towards achieving more equitable participation of working-age men and women in the production system (ISTAT, 2023).

As is well known, the absence of a salary and, consequently, exclusion from a pension system has consequences that affect both society as a whole and individual women, who will lack financial independence, a bank account in their own name, and resources for their own autonomy, care, and health. This exposes women to greater vulnerability and poorer health in the long term (Corsi et al., 2016).

Italy is a country where women predominantly use maternity leave and part-time work and are more likely to leave employment when they have their first child, often exiting the labour market permanently, even if they entered it only a few years earlier, perhaps after completing a university degree (ISTAT, 2023).

Several reports issued by national governmental bodies in Italy (see, for example, the report from the Italian Central Bank: de Philippis, 2022) describe a catastrophic outlook for the near future of Italy's workforce. By 2040, there are expected to be 6 million fewer active workers in Italy than in 2022. In this context, about a decade ago, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2017) stated that greater participation by women in the labour market would help address the labour shortage that would otherwise arise (Maceira, 2017). EIGE affirmed that an increase in the female workforce would result in a significant rise in Italy's gross domestic product of around 12%.

In this largely static landscape, a comparison between the Italian situation and that of Spain – a country long considered very similar – reveals a more marked shift in recent years, as shown by statistics. These indicate that Spain has risen in the rankings of countries with the highest female participation in the labour market, reflecting the effectiveness of legal measures introduced over the past five years. Chief among these is the legislation on equal pay, specifically Royal Decree 902/2020 (Equal Pay), which complements Royal Decree 901/2020 (Equality Plans), both enacted in 2020. The data show that, in Spain, employment increases by 8% among couples with similar salaries. Furthermore, from 2024, equal parental leave of up to 14 months has been introduced, paid at 100% of salary. In contrast, in Italy, compulsory leave applies only to women and lasts five months. After this period, salary is reduced, with 80% paid, falling to 30% depending on the length of the extension.

The following sections will briefly analyse the Italian case and compare it with the Spanish experience to highlight similarities and differences in labour market participation, policy approaches, and the effectiveness of recent regulatory interventions aimed at promoting gender equality. This comparative perspective enables a better understanding of the structural factors that continue to hinder female employment in Italy and other European countries and prevent greater

economic and social growth and may provide useful insights into potential policy pathways for improving women's participation in the labour market.

2. Structural barriers in Italy

The Italian legal framework on gender equality and inclusion in the job market is a comprehensive system based on the Constitution and further developed through specific codes, incentive laws, and the recent implementation of the PNRR.

In Italy, the regulatory framework promoting gender equality in the labour market is rooted in the constitutional structure and further developed through a comprehensive body of legislation. The Constitution provides a dual basis for equality: Article 3 affirms both formal equality before the law and the State's responsibility to remove economic and social barriers that impede the full exercise of individual freedoms, while Article 37 guarantees that women workers have the same rights and pay as men for work of equal value. In addition, Article 51 ensures equal access for women and men to public offices and elected positions, explicitly requiring the Republic to promote equal opportunities, and Article 117 extends this obligation to the regional level by requiring local authorities to remove obstacles to equality in social, cultural, and economic life. Building on these constitutional commitments, the *Codice delle Pari Opportunità* (Legislative Decree 198/2006) - substantially amended by Law 162/2021 - serves as the main legislative instrument governing gender equality. It seeks to eliminate all forms of sex-based discrimination across political, economic, and social spheres, introduces gender mainstreaming as a principle in the formulation of public measures, and requires firms with more than 50 employees to submit a biennial report on the situation of male and female staff, including pay gaps.

A series of labour market policies further support women's employment through targeted incentives. Law 92/2012 introduced significant reductions in social security contributions for hiring women in disadvantaged conditions, while more recent measures – such as the Bonus Donne (DL 60/2024) - provide full contribution exemptions for employers hiring disadvantaged women during 2024-2025. Additional provisions under the 2024 Budget Law (Law 213/2023) extend contribution exemptions to working mothers with multiple children. At the same time, Italy has strengthened its work-life balance regime: Legislative Decrees 151/2001 and 105/2022 regulate maternity, paternity, and parental leave, with recent changes increasing compensation levels for parental leave; Law 81/2017 on smart working also grants priority access to flexible work arrangements for parents of young children, caregivers, and workers with serious health conditions, who are also given precedence in converting full-time to part-time contracts.

More recently, the introduction of the *Gender Equality Certification* (UNI/PdR 125:2022), promoted under the Recovery Fund known as the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), has encouraged companies to adopt structured policies to reduce gender disparities, offering benefits such as reduced social security contributions and preferential scoring in public procurement procedures. Within

public administration, Legislative Decree 165/2001 establishes equal opportunity principles in recruitment and career management, requires gender-balanced commissions, and mandates the adoption of three-year Positive Action Plans, supported by the establishment of *Comitati Unici di Garanzia* (Guarantee Committees) to oversee wellbeing and anti-discrimination policies. Targeted instruments also support women's entrepreneurship, including the Fondo Impresa Donna, financed through the national budget and the PNRR to provide grants and subsidised loans for female-led enterprises, as well as specific credit measures for women in the agricultural sector.

Nevertheless, the latest INPS Report on 2025 presents a picture of the Italian labour market marked by profound structural disparities, while proposing a vision for overcoming these obstacles through systematic rather than occasional interventions. The following are the key points of the current situation and the programme prospects for the future.

- *Employment and contract gap*: the female employment rate is 53.3%, significantly lower than the 71.1% for men. Furthermore, access to quality employment is uneven: in 2024, women hired on permanent contracts made up only 36.7% of the total.
- *Vertical segregation (Glass Ceiling)*: the presence of women in top positions is described as “striking” due to its scarcity, with only 21.8% of executives in the private sector and 33.1% of managers being women.
- *Gender pay gap*: women earn over 20 percentage points less than men, with critical peaks in the real estate, financial, and scientific-technical sectors. These differences persist even when job classification and contract type are the same.
- *Impact of motherhood*: the report identifies motherhood as the decisive factor that has a permanent impact on women's career paths and incomes.
- *Involuntary part-time work*: the imbalance in the use of part-time work, often due to caregiving needs, confirms a socio-cultural dynamic that assigns almost exclusive responsibility for family work to women.

3. Emerging trends in Spain

In Spain, the legal and institutional framework promoting gender equality in the labour market is grounded in constitutional principles and a comprehensive set of organic laws and regulatory instruments. Article 1(1) of the Spanish Constitution establishes equality as a fundamental value, while Article 14 explicitly prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, providing the constitutional foundation for subsequent equality legislation comparable to Italy's constitutional commitments. Since the late 1990s, Spain has progressively expanded its gender equality framework, culminating in Organic Law 3/2007 on the effective equality of women and men, which institutionalises gender mainstreaming across public administration and the private sector. This law mandates equality plans for all public bodies and for

companies with more than 50 employees, the creation of equality units in ministries, and the establishment of an Interministerial Commission for Equality that meets at least twice a year to coordinate and monitor implementation. Complementing these provisions, Royal Decrees 901/2020 and 902/2020 regulate the content and registration of equality plans and impose detailed obligations regarding pay transparency and equal remuneration, reinforcing a legal framework broadly aligned with EU directives on pay equity, as discussed further below.

From a general perspective, Spain's approach to labour-market inclusion combines comprehensive equality legislation with regional and sectoral regulatory measures (Blanco-Ruiz & Franco, 2025). A recent longitudinal analysis of Spanish equality regulations (1996–2022) demonstrates extensive legislative activity in areas such as non-discrimination, work-life balance, and harassment prevention, with significant regional variation and a positive correlation between regulatory intensity and women's labour-market participation and employment indicators (Velasco-Balmaseda et al., 2024). Spain's Third Strategic Plan for Effective Equality of Women and Men (2022–2025) further consolidates this framework by defining four priority action areas: inclusive governance, an economy centred on life and equitable wealth distribution, measures ensuring freedom from male violence, and the reduction of gender inequalities across social spheres, thus providing a multi-level policy roadmap for advancing gender parity.

Work-life balance reforms also play a key role in Spain's gender-equality strategy (Lamane-Harim et al., 2021; Brega et al., 2023). Recent jurisprudence has expanded entitlements related to childcare leave, including decisions granting remuneration for certain childcare-related absences and extending birth-related paid leave to single-parent families, thereby strengthening protections for working parents, particularly women, who bear a disproportionate share of unpaid care work. At the same time, Spain maintains long-standing public administration initiatives - initiated through ministerial agreements in 2005 and further developed in subsequent equality plans – (Safiullah et al. 2022) that aim to eliminate gender-based barriers in recruitment, career progression, and working conditions within the state administration, supported by equality units established across ministries in accordance with Organic Law 3/2007.

Overall, Spain's institutional framework is distinguished by the breadth and depth of its gender-mainstreaming mechanisms, the systematic integration of equality obligations into both public and private governance structures, and sustained legislative activity at national and regional levels, creating a comprehensive policy environment aimed at advancing women's participation in the labour market and the productive system¹.

In June 2026, European Directive 2023/970 on pay transparency will come into force. Spain has anticipated this requirement by establishing national regulations on the subject, which have been in place for several years.

¹ Source: EIGE https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/countries/spain?language_content_entity=en (last access 27/2/2026).

In Spain, recent legislative reforms have established a comprehensive framework to strengthen gender equality in the workplace (Herencia, 2024), particularly through the adoption of Royal Decree 901/2020 on Equality Plans and Royal Decree 902/2020 on Equal Pay. These two legal instruments are closely linked and designed to function in a complementary manner. The equal pay regulation, in particular, reinforces the implementation of equality plans by introducing mechanisms for salary transparency and pay audits, which are essential components of the diagnostic phase required for developing equality plans. Beyond addressing discrimination, both regulations explicitly recognise that promoting equality within organisations can improve organisational climate, productivity, and overall working conditions.

Royal Decree 901/2020 establishes the obligation for companies to design, negotiate, implement, and register equality plans. While the principle of equality applies to all companies, adopting a formal equality plan is mandatory for organisations with fifty or more employees. Before drafting such a plan, companies must carry out a technical diagnosis to identify potential inequalities in key areas such as recruitment and selection procedures, professional classification, training opportunities, career progression, and working conditions. The preparation of equality plans must be conducted through negotiation with the legal representatives of employees within a parity-based negotiating commission. Once finalised, equality plans must be registered in a public registry – the Registry of Collective Agreements and Equality Plans – ensuring transparency and public access to their content.

Complementing this framework, Royal Decree 902/2020 focuses specifically on reducing the gender pay gap by introducing a series of transparency mechanisms. At the core of the decree is the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, under which two jobs must be considered equivalent when they require comparable functions, levels of qualification, professional responsibilities, and working conditions. To implement this principle, the decree requires all companies, regardless of size, to maintain a pay registry containing information on average and median salaries, as well as salary supplements and bonuses, disaggregated by gender across all occupational categories, including senior management. Workers have the right to access this registry; where employee representation is absent, access is limited to information on the percentage differences in pay between men and women. For companies required to adopt an equality plan, the regulation also introduces the obligation to conduct a pay audit, involving a more detailed analysis of salary structures and the development of corrective measures to address identified inequalities.

Both decrees share several operational principles designed to ensure effective implementation. In particular, job evaluation systems and remuneration policies must be based on objective and transparent criteria to prevent the influence of gender stereotypes. The Spanish government has also committed to supporting companies through technical guidance, including methodological tools for conducting pay audits and standardised procedures for job evaluation. Compliance with these obligations is subject to oversight, and failure to comply may result in

administrative or judicial sanctions under the legislation governing labour infractions. Finally, equality plans are not permanent instruments; they have a maximum duration of four years and must be periodically reviewed, especially when significant changes occur in a company's organisational structure or workforce composition.

4. Discussion

Over the past decade, women's participation in the labour market has increased across the European Union, Spain, and Italy, although significant differences persist. At the EU-27 level, the female employment rate rose steadily from 63.0% in 2015 to 70.8% in 2024, indicating a gradual strengthening of women's integration into the labour market despite the temporary slowdown in 2020 during the pandemic. Spain shows a similar upward trend, rising from 56.4% in 2015 to 66.5% in 2024, thus narrowing part of the gap with the European average over time. Italy, however, continues to show significantly lower levels of female employment: although participation increased from 50.5% in 2015 to 57.4% in 2024, the country remains consistently well below both the EU and Spanish levels throughout the period. These figures reported in the table below highlight a persistent structural gap in women's labour market participation in Italy, confirming a long-standing divergence within Southern Europe and suggesting the presence of deeper institutional, cultural, and labour market constraints that continue to limit women's employment opportunities.

TIME	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
European Union - 27 countries (from 2020)	63,0	64,1	65,3	66,3	67,1	66,2	67,6	69,3	70,2	70,8
Spain	56,4	58,1	59,6	61,0	62,1	60,0	62,1	63,7	65,4	66,5
Italy	50,5	51,6	52,5	53,2	53,9	52,1	53,2	55,0	56,5	57,4

Table 1 – Comparison of women's employment rates - Source: EUROSTAT² - Own elaboration

In this brief discussion, I will outline key points that could serve as focal areas for improving women's job participation in Italy, based on the issues described here and linked to the analysed Spanish regulations. The first is the concept of “work of equal value”, expressly mentioned in the Spanish regulations, which introduces an important topic into the broader debate on the value of work, particularly the value of women's work and how it is measured. Specifically, the definition is based on four fundamental dimensions: 1) the nature of functions or tasks, referring to the essential content of the employment relationship, considering both what is established by law or collective agreements and the activity actually performed; 2) educational conditions, concerning the formal qualifications (regulated educational qualifications) required to perform the activity; 3) professional and training

² https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsi_emp_a/default/table?lang=en

conditions, which include experience or non-regulated training that serves to accredit the worker's qualification, provided it is related to the activity; 4) working conditions and performance-related factors, representing all elements relevant to the performance of the activity that do not fall within the previous categories.

In addition, there are factors relevant to assessing the value of the work itself. To determine equivalence, various factors may be considered, including: a) effort and discomfort, such as strenuousness, difficulty, forced postures, repetitive movements, and isolation; b) technical skills, including dexterity and meticulousness; c) responsibility, both financial and related to people's well-being; d) transversal skills, such as versatility, social skills, care and attention to people, conflict resolution skills, and organisational skills.

Moreover, criteria for correct and accurate evaluation are established for job evaluation to be valid and to ensure equal pay: i) Adequacy: the selected factors must be directly related to the activity performed; ii) Comprehensiveness: all conditions characterising the job must be considered, avoiding the invisibility or underestimation of certain tasks, often those historically associated with a particular gender; iii) Objectivity: there must be clear mechanisms for identifying pay factors, ensuring they do not depend on gender stereotypes or distorted social assessments. In summary, the purpose of this definition is to ensure that pay transparency enables the identification of any direct or indirect discrimination resulting from an incorrect assessment of the value of work performed by men and women.

The above is only an introductory example of what could be considered when encouraging women's participation in the workforce in Italy. The discussion remains open regarding the reasons why women avoid entering the labour market, leave it, or choose part-time work, thereby perpetuating segregation, isolation, or poverty (Corsi et al., 2016), which benefits neither individual women nor the social or economic system. In the following paragraph, I will present some conclusions that indicate a research activity which, to my knowledge, has not yet been implemented in any European country and which could provide not only new avenues for research but also lasting solutions to an age-old problem.

5. Conclusions

The analysis highlights significant differences in female labour market participation across Europe and reveals persistent structural challenges. Italy remains among the countries with the lowest levels of female employment in Europe, with a wide gender gap and marked regional disparities, particularly between the north and south. Spain has higher levels of female participation than Italy, although it still faces significant challenges, including relatively high female unemployment. At the European level, average indicators often conceal substantial internal variation: Northern European countries tend to show stronger female labour market integration, while Southern European countries continue to lag behind. Overall, the data indicate enduring structural and cultural barriers affecting women's

participation in the labour market across Southern Europe, underscoring the need for more effective and coordinated policy interventions.

It is clear that addressing the situation in Italy requires a programmatic vision and the establishment of future objectives, as outlined below.

- Mainstream and structural approach: the results obtained so far call for abandoning ad hoc measures or uncoordinated bonuses in favour of a methodological approach that is pervasive and transversal across all public policies, addressing barriers and obstacles arising from specific geographic or cultural factors (Carvalho Silva, 2024).
- The spread of business models capable of offering flexible hours and organisation is considered essential, as they respond to the personal and family needs of workers without penalising merit (Murgia & Poggio, 2014; Coughlin, 2017; Ravazzani et al., 2021).
- To promote work-life balance, it is necessary to increase the availability of daycare centres and services provided by public institutions to reach the European standards that remain unmet, despite the Recovery Fund, which should have helped in this domain (Pasqui, 2025; Jessoula, 2015).
- The introduction of social security compensation measures that recognise the value of care work carried out within the family, mitigating the pension disadvantage resulting from discontinuous employment (Perera et al., 2022; Masariè, 2025).
- Social and cultural transformation should occur through the education system, to spread a culture of equality and enhance women's participation in the productive system (Fernandez, 2007; Allen, 2020).

In order to advance beyond the current understanding of the Italian landscape, the subject requires thorough investigation beyond what has been undertaken so far. If the regulations and rules established at the central level have not produced positive results (Ferrera & Gualmini, 2004; Leone, 2020), or at least results that meet expectations, research in the sector may help inform policies and strategies. From the above, albeit briefly, it is clear that regulatory efforts have been continuous, but the results have been mixed. Considerable effort has gone into establishing indicators and key performance indicators to provide objective measurement of gender balance, particularly within public organisations and private companies (Gattulli et al., 2025). However, if we look at Italy from north to south, we see that, despite the same regulatory framework, the response is completely divergent (Brown, Popli, 2022). The question therefore arises as to whether, more than a decade later, it might be appropriate to adapt the rules to local conditions rather than continuing to tailor and measure only what has been objectively established by the regulatory provisions (Rogge & Self, 2019). For example, this could be achieved through situational and localised indicators that measure parameters not previously considered. This would help to identify where to act, which indicators need improvement, where to intervene, and how (Di Bella et al., 2021).

This would therefore constitute situated knowledge that cannot disregard factors such as where the woman lives (Corazza, 2025), her cultural background, level of education, age at the birth of her first child, availability of nurseries or other public services, and educational, residential, and social dispersion (Pasqui, 2025). We must ask ourselves, given that living in a rural or urban area affects travel, quality of life, and the availability of services, what exactly are we measuring if the indicators are set only at the level of the individual organisation – perhaps a small company certified using the ISO method – but not in relation to its context?

If, for example, care and family obligations always fall on women, we must also consider whether the presence of mandatory paternity leave can influence women's decisions to leave the workplace, as well as the impact of available assistance in the area in cases of disability, illness, or care obligations towards the elderly. This should be done together with the analysis of situated indicators that respond to the specific situation of each individual, each area, and their particular features, which may not be analysed in the existing indicators or may not be included there.

The Spanish case can help identify corrective measures and, through public policies, influence the economic and social outcomes associated with greater and improved participation of women in the labour market.

References

- Allen, D. (2020). *Education and equality*. University of Chicago Press.
- Blanco-Ruiz, M. & Franco, Y.G. (2025). Transformación del ámbito rural a través de las TIC Perspectiva de género sobre la nueva ruralidad. *Investigaciones feministas*, 16(1), 49-60. doi: 10.5209/INFE.96971
- Brancati, R., & Carboni, C. (2024). *Verso la piena sottoccupazione: come cambia il lavoro in Italia*. Donzelli Editore.
- Brega, C., Briones, S., Javornik, J., León, M., & Yerkes, M. (2023). Flexible work arrangements for work-life balance: a cross-national policy evaluation from a capabilities perspective. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 43(13-14), 278-294. doi: 10.1108/IJSSP-03-2023-0077
- Brown, S., Popli, G., & Sasso, A. (2022). Decomposing the gender reservation wage gap in Italy: A regional perspective. *Journal of Regional Science*, 62, 499–540. doi: 10.1111/jors.12574
- Carvalho Silva R, Vezzoli M, Menesello V, Meattini M, Sartori R, Minelli A. (2024). Everything changes but nothing changes: gender stereotypes in the Italian population. *Arch Womens Ment Health*. 27(4), 537-545. doi: 10.1007/s00737-024-01437-1
- Corazza, L. (2025). Il futuro delle aree interne. Lavoro e cittadinanza per un nuovo equilibrio dei luoghi. *Rivista giuridica del Mezzogiorno, Trimestrale della Svimex*, 1, 9-53, doi: 10.1444/116814
- Corsi, M., Botti, F., & D'Ippoliti, C. (2016). The gendered nature of poverty in the EU: Individualized versus collective poverty measures. *Feminist Economics*, 22(4), 82-100. doi: 10.1080/13545701.2016.1146408
- Coughlin, J.F. (2017). *The longevity economy: Unlocking the world's fastest-growing, most misunderstood market*. Hachette.
- De Philippis, M., Locatelli, A., Papini, G., Torrini, R. (2022). La crescita dell'economia italiana e il divario Nord-Sud: trend storici e prospettive alla luce dei recenti scenari demografici [Italian economic growth and the North-South gap: Historical trends and future projections in light of the recent demographic scenarios]. *Bank of Italy Occasional Paper No. 683*. doi: 10.2139/ssrn.4109462
- Di Bella, E., Leporatti, L., Gandullia, L., & Maggino, F. (2021). Proposing a regional gender equality index (R-GEI) with an application to Italy. *Regional Studies*, 55(5), 962-973. doi: 10.1080/00343404.2020.1836341

- European Institute for Gender Equality (2017). *Economic Benefits of Gender Equality in the European Union. Overall economic impacts of gender equality*. doi:10.2839/96823
- Fernandez, R. (2007). *Culture as learning. The evolution of female Labor Force Participation over a Century*. National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, Massachusetts (US). doi: 10.3386/w13373.
- Ferrera, M. & Gualmini, E. (2004). *Rescued by Europe? Social and Labour Market Reforms in Italy from Maastricht to Berlusconi*. Amsterdam University Press. ISBN 90 5356 651 1.
- Gattulli, A., Antonicelli, M., De Turi, I., & Posa, M. (2025). Gender inequality in the workplace: a comparative analysis of Italian companies through the definition of composite indicators. In *Innovation & Society-Statistics and Data Science for Evaluation and Quality, Proceedings of IES 2025 - Statistical Methods for Evaluation and Quality*, Bressanone (IT), 25-27 giugno 2025.
- Herencia, M. J. G. M. (2024). The Spanish legal framework for ensuring compliance with gender pay gap transparency. In Benedí Lahuerta, S., Miller, K. and Laura Carlson (Eds), *Bridging the Gender Pay Gap through Transparency* (pp. 167-188). Edward Elgar Publishing. doi: 10.4337/9781803920429.00018
- INPS - Istituto Nazionale di Previdenza Sociale / CIV - Consiglio di Indirizzo e Vigilanza (2026). *Rendiconto di genere 2025*. Retrieved from [https://www.inps.it/it/it/1-istituto/organizzazioni-consiglio-di-indirizzo-e-vigilanza-civ/eventi-e-pubblicazioni-del-civ/dettaglio-eventi-e-pubblicazioni-del-civ-page.eventi-e-pubblicazioni-del-civ-presentazione-del-rendiconto-di-genere-2025-\(24-febbraio-2026\).html](https://www.inps.it/it/it/1-istituto/organizzazioni-consiglio-di-indirizzo-e-vigilanza-civ/eventi-e-pubblicazioni-del-civ/dettaglio-eventi-e-pubblicazioni-del-civ-page.eventi-e-pubblicazioni-del-civ-presentazione-del-rendiconto-di-genere-2025-(24-febbraio-2026).html) (Last access 27/2/2026).
- ISTAT - Istituto Italiano di Statistica (2023). *Settembre 2023. Occupati e disoccupati*. 3/11/2023, Retrieved from: <https://www.istat.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Occupati-e-disoccupati-SETTEMBRE-2023.pdf>. Last accessed 5/2/2026.
- Jessoula, M. (2015). *Gender-friendly recalibration, a myth? The crises and social policy responses in Italy*. Final report prepared for the “OpCit Research” study on ‘Gender Aspects of the Financial Crisis and Economic Downturn on Welfare Systems’ commissioned by the European Parliament’s Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs. doi: 10.13140/RG.2.1.2723.9121
- Lamane-Harim, J., Cegarra-Leiva, D., & Sánchez-Vidal, M. E. (2023). Work–life balance supportive culture: a way to retain employees in Spanish SMEs. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 34(10), 2074-2106. doi: 10.1080/09585192.2021.1878255
- Leone, C. (2020). *Disability, work and welfare in Italy. An historical overview*. Wydawnictwo Società Dante Alighieri Wrocław. doi: 10.53248/SDA521318
- Maceira, H.M. (2017). Economic Benefits of Gender Equality in the EU. *Intereconomics*, 52(3), 178-183. doi: 10.1007/s10272-017-0669-4
- Masarié, D. A. (2025). Filling the Gaps: Social Security Rights for Italy's Caregivers and Domestic Workers. *Max Planck Institute for Social Law and Social Policy Research Paper*, (2025-2).
- Murgia A., Poggio B. (2014). Moving societies and immobile organizational practices. The winding road of diversity management in Italy. In: Klarsfeld A., (ed), *International Handbook on Diversity Management at Work: Country and Thematic Perspectives on Diversity and Equal Treatment* (2nd ed.) (pp. 123-136). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Pasqui, L. (2025). La dimensione territoriale della disuguaglianza di genere: profili istituzionali e criticità attuative del PNRR. *Italian Papers On Federalism*, 3, 139-155. ISSN: 2281-9339.
- Perera, C., Bakrania, S., Ipince, A., Nesbitt-Ahmed, Z., Obasola, O., Richardson, D., ... & Yu, R. (2022). Impact of social protection on gender equality in low-and middle-income countries: A systematic review of reviews. *Campbell systematic reviews*, 18(2), e1240. doi: 10.1002/cl2.1240
- Ravazzani, S., Mazzei, A., Fisichella C., Butera, A. (2021). Diversity and inclusion management: an analysis of practice developments in Italy. *Sinergie. Italian journal of management*, 39(3). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7433/s116.2021>
- Rogge, N., & Self, R. (2019). Measuring regional social inclusion performances in the EU: Looking for unity in diversity. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 29(3), 325-344.
- Safiullah, M., Akhter, T., Saona, P., & Azad, M. A. K. (2022). Gender diversity on corporate boards, firm performance, and risk-taking: New evidence from Spain. *Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Finance*, 35, 100721. doi: 10.1016/j.jbef.2022.100721

Velasco-Balmaseda, E., de Celis, I. L. R., & Izaguirre, N. E. (2024). Corporate social responsibility as a framework for gender equality: Mapping of gender equality standards for sustainable development. *Corporate social responsibility and environmental management*, 31(3), 1905-1920. doi: 10.1002/csr.2673