Women's Rights Terminology on the Web: Investigating Official and Unofficial Sources

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Abstract

In the last decades, women's rights issues have gained increasing public attention, both in domestic and public spheres, leading to a renewed interest in the linguistic development of women-related terminology and gender-based language use. This interest has resulted in the setting up of projects, the collection of glossaries and the establishment of new bodies like the European Institution for Gender Equality (EIGE). This essay aims to investigate women-related terminology exploring its nature, development and its actual use in different contexts. To this end, a terminology analysis was conducted on women's rights terminology found on official websites like the EIGE and the UN Women Organization, which include gender-related glossaries. The choice of exploring highly reliable sources like the EIGE glossary was made to identify trends, categories, and connections to other fields, and possibly define women's rights discourse as a full-fledged domain or sub-domain. In the first part of the paper highly reliable sources were compared to other official and non-governmental resources such as Amnesty International website. This comparative approach aimed to highlight the differences and similarities between various resources, examining them in terms of the standardization and popularization of terminology, while also considering women's terminology on social media.

Keywords: Women's rights, Gender, Terminology, Glossaries, Unofficial resources, Instagram

1. Introduction

Terminology is a very productive field which plays an important role in communication, revealing the importance of emerging concepts or fields of knowledge. This is the case of gender issues which have developed in the last decades leading to a raise of awareness and an

increasing interest in the linguistic aspects related to gender debate. The increasing sensibility to gender and politically correct discourse has resulted in dissemination in recent years of terms related to women's rights and gender issues.

Gender issues have acquired more and more importance in the last fifty years having been explored by many scholars who treated issues like gender inequality and women devaluation (Ortner 1974; Lipsitz Bem 1993), the cultural and social construction of gender (Judith P. Butler, 1988), the idea of gendered roles (Hofstede 1998; Ruble et al. 2006) and the problem of gender based beliefs and social expectations (Blackstone 2003; Balirano/Palusci 2018; Venuti 2018). Gender discrimination, gender polarization and gender identities have also been explored in terms of language use and translation: how language is used by men and women and how gender issues are reflected in language (Louise von Flotow, 2016), how gender awareness reflects in language and translation (Kamal and von Flotow, 2020).

On the basis of these studies that also generated from and contributed to the fights against discrimination, a renewed sensibility has developed towards topics like violence against women or LGBTQ+ community, power relations in economic and social spheres, discrimination at work or at home. Such a new awareness is expressed in many spheres of social and domestic life, entering the public debate and always introducing new concepts and terms related to the different subjects. The emerging of these themes in public debate has reflected in public and governmental sphere and has led to an increasement in the terminology activities conducted on the gender-related language. The rapid spread of women's rights discourse over the last decades has encouraged the dissemination of women's rights terminology and its increasing use on the web. The presence of specific terms related to women's rights and gender issues is registered on highly reliable websites as well as less reliable platforms and unofficial sources.

Today several organizations and institutions all over the world are devoted to deal with gender and women issues and discrimination. Among them the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) which is the European Union body founded in 2006 with the purpose of collecting and analyzing data on gender equality. The spread of such data is aimed at promoting the equality between men and women and battling gender-based discrimination in Europe (Note 1). Another influential organization working for gender equality and the empowerment of women is the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) which promotes the rights of women and LGBTIQ+ people (Note 2). UN Women was established in 2010 by the merger of the United Nations Development Fund for Women and other bodies with the aim of dealing with issues such as violence against women and LGBTIQ+ people. The organization includes 41 members (Latin American and Caribbean States, African States, Asian States, Eastern European States, Western European States, to name but a few) in charge of providing global standards, polices, programmes and services for achieving gender equality and benefit women and LGBT+ people worldwide.

As promoted by the UN Women Entity, one of the main focuses of such an organization is to encourage and support globally women's equal participation in all aspects of life including the four following aspects:

- Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems.

- Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy.

- All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence.

- Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action (UN website). (Note 3)

The aim of this paper is to discuss the development of women's rights discourse from a terminology perspective taking into account official and unofficial web resources. To do that, the European Institute for Gender Equality website (Note 4) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women website were selected to conduct a terminology analysis. This choice was made considering the presence of gender-related glossaries in both websites and the reliability of such resources. The terminology analysis was concluded by comparing the results with a non-institutional resource, namely the official website of the NGO (non-governmental organization) Amnesty International, which was investigated to verify the validity of the terms included in the two glossaries. This comparative perspective was intended to have a more comprehensive overview on the use of women's rights terminology identifying differences and commonalities between different types of resources.

2. Theoretical and Methodological Background

The word 'terminology' is usually associated to Languages for Special Purposes (LSP) as "the lexicon of special languages is their most obvious distinguishing characteristic" (Sager et al., 1980: 230) with terminological units which are "conventional symbol that represent the concepts defined with a particular field of knowledge" (Felber 1984 in Cabré 1999, p. 81). As the object of this study was that of investigating women's related terms, terminology theories (Sager 1990; Cabré 1999; Zanola 2018) were applied to conduct the analysis on women's rights terminology considered as the vocabulary of a given field (Sager 1990, p. 3) and on the relationship between terms and concepts in such field. The investigation of the relationship between concepts and terms was conducted considering the ideas of monoreferentiality and standardization which are crucial in terminology research and activities. Indeed, the need for terminological units to achieve precision and monosemy is the reason why the International Organization for Standardization promotes strategies and establishes general principles aimed at clarifying the link "between objects, concepts, definitions and designations" (ISO 704:2022) in an attempt to obtain efficient and effective communication. (Note 5)

Far from discussing the already properly debated terminology concerning the definition of sex, sexuality, identities and gender (see Cranny-Francis et al. 2003), this work is centered on a more extensive terminology related to women's social issues which are based on

macro-concepts like violence, social inequalities, representation of women in contemporary society (Lipsitz Bem 1993, Sunderland 2004, Carter at al. 2014). This is how such field is introduced on the webpage *Terminology Network* (Note 6) which presents an initiative launched by the Terminology Coordination Unit of the European Parliament (TermCoord) aimed at improving terminology databases for the European Commission (e. g. IATE (Note 7)) and supporting EU translators' work. Such initiative includes 10 domains, among them FEM which is the domain dealing with women's rights terminology. The main goal of this project was to identify relevant terminology units in the given domains and improve such terminology by providing for each terminological unit the correct equivalent in all European languages. The domains were selected on the basis of the content of European regulations and the terminological gaps identified in them. Put differently, the domains were selected to meet the communicative needs emerged in the European context and the need to make interlinguistic communication effective. On this basis, it can be suggested that women's terminology was deemed relevant enough to be included in such a list of domains.

The fact that the European Parliament is constantly working on the standardization of women's related terminology, as shown by the project FEM, was the starting point for the comparison between the EIGE website and the UN Women website. These are two of the most important official resources available on the web including two different free-access glossaries which were the object of the comparative analysis in this study. The latter was followed by a second comparison between the results of the first analysis and the material found on another popular website, the aforementioned NGO Amnesty International. The main purpose of this second phase was that of investigating women-related terminology from a standardization perspective possibly considering women discourse as a specialized domains and subdomains on a par with others like the legal one. For this reason the analysis took into account:

- terms and concepts from a semasiological perspective (what are these terms referred to?);

- concept-term relationship and possible synonyms;

- concrete use of terms.

The abovementioned resources were used as a corpus to carry out the terminological analysis. The term 'corpus' is to be meant as a set of text samples chosen to represent, as accurately as possible, a language or language variety (Sinclair, 2005). Corpus linguistics (CL) "provides a means for the empirical analysis of language" (McCarthy and O'Keeffe, 2010: 9) which is the reason for having adopted this methodology to analyse women's related terminology on the web. However, a key issue in corpus linguistics is whether finite samples such as corpora can accurately represent a language or a specific subset of it.

The choice of only two official resources as a corpus for the terminological analysis was made because of the presence of two glossaries. In this sense, the selected corpus is not meant to be representative of the entire women-related terminology but rather aims to provide an overview of the terms considered relevant for the compilation of a glossary.

3. Corpus Description

The analysis was conducted on a corpus consisting of the two abovementioned glossaries taken from the EIGE and UN Women websites. Additionally, Amnesty International website (Note 8) was also used as corpus of investigation to validate the results emerged from the analysis of the two glossaries.

From a first look to the EIGE website home, it can be noticed that the language is contaminated by a considerable amount of terms related to gender equality and women rights included in the sections listed below:

- 'Gender mainstreaming' which includes 'What is gender mainstreaming', 'Institutions and structures', 'Good practices', etc. This subsection also provides the users with a glossary about gender mainstreaming which is defined as follows:

  [i]t does not constitute legal guidance but is intended as a helpful introduction to some of the key terms you will come across when using the Platform. Terms entered in the glossary are from various sources: international and regional women's human rights instruments; European Union and Council of Europe legislative and strategy documents, specifically related to gender equality and mainstreaming; legislative and policy developments in Europe and at international level. (Note 9)

- 'Gender-based violence' including 'What is gender-based violence', 'Forms of violence', 'Cyber violence against women', 'Administrative data collection', 'Femicide', etc.

- 'Gender Equality Index' which includes 'Compare countries, 'Thematic focus', 'Publications', etc.

In the section 'Publications and resources' users can find the subsection 'Glossary & Thesaurus'. The glossary, which currently includes 424 entries in English, is meant to be available in all EU languages, even though many entries still do not have translation in several languages. The glossary can be freely downloaded and links to further glossaries, thesauri and taxonomies are provided to support linguistic research in this emerging field. Among them users find:

- Gender equality glossary by the Council of Europe;

- Gender and science taxonomy by GenPORT;

- The EU's multilingual thesaurus by EuroVoc;

- Collection of gender-related glossaries in EIGE's Resource & Documentation Centre catalogue).

Differently form EIGE website which can be accessed in all EU languages, UN Women website is only available in English, French and Spanish.

As with Eige website, the UN Women website home includes women-related terms in "About UN women" which introduces the status of women and the Sustainable Development Goals for women and girls.

In the section 'What we do', users find areas related to:

- Women's leadership and political participation

- Ending violence against women

- Women and girls with disabilities

The section 'Digital library', instead, includes the glossary 'GenderTerm: UN Women online resources on the use of gender-inclusive language'. The glossary includes 675 entries which are available in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish. As for EIGE website, UN WOMEN website redirects to other gender-related online resources:

- Gender-inclusive language guidelines [ar | es | fr];

- Gender equality glossary [es | fr];

- UN guidelines for gender-inclusive language [ar | es | fr | ru | zh];

- UN terminology database;

- UN editorial manual [fr];

- UN spelling list.

Despite several resources have been mentioned, the EIGE glossary and GenderTerm have been selected because of their similarity in terms of contents, accessibility and connection to governmental bodies.

4. Analysis and Results

For the purpose of this study, a quantitative and a qualitative analysis was conducted taking into account the entries of both glossaries in order to identify consistency, mismatches and gaps between the two sources. However, before delving into the analysis, some preliminary comments must be made in terms of size and focus of the two glossaries. In addition to the different size of the two glossaries, it must be pointed out that the EIGE glossary is not only limited to women-related terminology, but it also contains terms concerning different gender issues (e.g. bisexuality, heterosexuality, homophobia, homosexuality, men's studies, transsexuality). On the other hand, the UN WOMEN glossary is more focused on women-related issues, even though it includes many terms which have been used in the context of gender equality but do not specifically belong to gender and women's related terminology (e.g. activist, Americas and Caribbean, Arab States, climate change, conflict prevention, counter-terrorism, emergency response, food security, globalization, etc.) Disregarding concepts which are related to other gender issues, the analysis only focused on the women's rights terms found in the two glossaries.

The first relevant difference emerged by comparing EIGE Glossary & Thesaurus and GenderTerm glossary was that the first one provides definitions for the given concepts, while the second one only provides the translation (in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish) for each entry. This means that the first glossary is to be understood from an inter- and intralinguistic perspective as it provides definitions in all European languages, while the second one is only aimed at providing translation equivalents.

From a qualitative perspective the two glossaries include women-related terms characterized by a high degree of specialization as well as borrowings from other fields which are used in women-related discourse. Highly specialized terms refer to behavioral, social and legal issues, institutions, directives, as shown in the examples in the table below:

Table 1. EIGE and UN Women websites - highly specialized gender-related terms

EIGE	UN Women
asylum-seeking women and girls	
	Agenda for gender equality
	Beijing Platform for Action
	Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)
	Continuum of violence
	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
custodial violence against women	
domestic division of labour	
domestic violence	domestic violence
	EIGE
feminisation of poverty	feminization of poverty
forced marriage	forced marriage
forced pregnancy	
formal gender equality	
gender balance	gender balance
gender-neutral legislation	
	sex-disaggregated
sex-disaggregated data	
sexual assault on women	sexual assault
vertical segregation	

	Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres
vulnerable groups	
	vulnerable employment
women's triple role	

From the comparison between EIGE and GenderTerm glossaries it emerged that, the UN women glossary includes many references to institutions, councils, summits. Further examples of that are *Africa Partnership Forum, Gender and Economic Empowerment in Africa, CEDAW Shadow report, CEDAW General Recommendation 30, Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women.* On the other hand, EIGE glossary also includes some references to institutions, councils and summits even if they are less frequent if compared to GenderTerm glossary. Examples of that are Gender Development Index (GDI)*, Gender Equality Index* (EIGE), *National Human Rights Institutions* (NHRIs). Terms like *feminization of poverty*, *gender balance*, *vertical segregation* (Table 1), instead, are examples of highly specialized terms with a very specific meaning which are only used in gender and women's rights discourse.

As regards terms borrowed from other fields, it emerged that they mainly belong to the medical, legal and economic fields, as shown in the examples in Table 2.

Table 2. EIGE and UN Women - borrowings from other fields

EIGE	UN Women
abortion	abortion
contraception	(emergency) contraception
sterilization	advocate
	autonomy
capacity building	capacity building
democratic deficit	
	evidence-based policies
family worker	
female genital mutilation	female genital mutilation
female infanticide	
	female migrant worker
femicide	

	formal economy
harrassment	
informal economy	
	macro-economic policies
	paritary democracy
reproductive health	reproductive health
reproductive rights	reproductive rights
sexual division of labour	
sexual health	sexual health
unpaid work	
	women business owners
work–life balance	

Despite the high frequence of medical and economic terms, from the investigation of the two glossaries, it emerged that the highest number of overlaps is found in the legal field as demonstrated by the presence of terms like *assisting spouses* (EIGE), *burden of proof* (EIGE), *civil society* (EIGE), *derived rights* (EIGE), *family responsibilities* (EIGE), *formal employment* (UN), *formal justice* (UN), *harassment* (EIGE), *Human rights* (UN), *inheritance laws* (UN), *irregular and/or precarious employment* (EIGE), *legal pluralism* (UN), *martial status* (EIGE), *protection order* (EIGE), etc.

As regards the overlaps occurring between the two glossaries, out of the 114 terms included in both glossaries, 90 terms can be considered as belonging to women-related terminology, showing a percentage of roughly 78%.

From a quantitative perspective it must be specified that the two glossaries are different in size and that the UN Women glossary contains roughly 200 terms more than the EIGE glossary. Considering the different sizes of the two glossaries (EIGE 424 entries, UN Women 675 entries), the equivalences were calculated using the EIGE glossary as the starting point for the comparison. The reason for this choice was that, even if EIGE glossary deals with gender issues in general, it is more centered on gender and women's terminology; unlikely, GenderTerm glossary is more focused on women's discourse in general including too many entries which cannot be defined as belonging to women's terminology. Calculating the percentage in relation to the EIGE entries made it possible to discard a considerable part of those GenderTerm entries which were deemed irrelevant for the analysis of women's rights terminology.

Bearing in mind the thematic differences between the two investigated glossaries, the percentage of equivalences (78%) also includes those terms which are only partially repeated

in both glossaries. This is the case of those terms which appear in both glossaries but co-occur with different terms (partial equivalence), and those concepts which are designed by using different terminology units (synonymic forms). Some examples of partial equivalence and synonymic forms in the two glossaries are given in the following table.

Table 3. Partial overlaps between EIGE and UN Women

EIGE	UN Women
abortion	abortion, post-abortion care, safe abortion services
equal pay for work of equal value	equal pay for work of equal work
forced prostitution	forced sexual exploitation
gender impact assessment	gender assesment
gender mainstreaming in national policies and programmes	gender mainstreaming strategy
gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation	gender-sensitive analysis
migrant women	migrants, displaced women
sexual assault	sexual assault on women
structural inequality	structural or systemic discrimination

5. Discussion

From the analysis it emerged that, despite a relevant amount of corresponding terms between the two glossaries, some entries still occur as partial equivalent forms or synonymic forms, while others occur in only one of the two glossaries. With respect to the abovementioned concepts of monoreferentiality and standardization, those terms showing formal inconsistency should be further investigated to find a standard form; the latter could be obtained by examining other official and unofficial sources to explore the use of women's rights terminology, outline whether a form is more popular than another, or identify further variants. For this purpose, the website of the non-governmental organization *Amnesty International* was selected to verify the validity of the terms identified in the two glossaries in an attempt to examine the real use of women's rights terminology in contexts other than the institutional one.

The homepage of Amnesty Internation.org is organized in different sections which are accessible in English, Spanish, French and Arabic languages. On a thematic basis, the section 'What we do' and more specifically the subsections 'Discrimination', 'Abortion' and 'Women's rights' (Note 10) were selected to conduct the terminology analysis which was complemented by monitoring the language used on other two reliable, even if

non-governmental, resources, namely *Association for Women's Rights in Development* (AWID) (Note 11) and *National Organization for Women* (NOW) (Note 12).

The analysis, aimed at monitoring the actual use of the terminology included in the two investigated official glossaries, validated the use of terms from both glossaries.

Table 4. Overlaps between non-governmental websites and EIGE and UN Women

Amnesty international, AWID and NOW	EIGE	UN Women
abortion, safe abortions	abortion	abortion, post-abortion care, safe abortion services
domestic violence	domestic violence	domestic violence
empowerment of women	empowerment of women	empowerment
equality	equality	equality
equal pay	equal pay	equal pay
female genital mutilation (FGM)	female genital mutilation	female genital mutilation
gender-based violence	gender-based violence	gender-based violence
gender identity	gender identity	gender identity
gender pay gap	gender pay gap	gender pay gap
inequality	inequality	inequality
sexual assault	sexual assault	sexual assault on women
sexual harassment	sexual harassment	sexual harassment
sexual orientation	sexual orientation	sexual orientation
sexual violence	sexual violence	sexual violence
women's rights	women's human rights	women's rights

While Table 4 provides some examples of terms occurring in both glossaries, the analysis also identified terms that are included in only one of the two glossaries, as shown in the table below:

Table 5. Terms included in only one glossary

Amnesty international, AWID and NOW	EIGE	UN Women
accouuntability		accountability
contraception	contraception	
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)		Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
discrimination	discrimination	
feminism	feminism	
forced abortion	forced abortion	
forced pregnancy	forced pregnancy	
forced sterilization	forced sterilization	
policy		policy
protection		protection
rape	rape	
sexual and reproductive rights	sexual and reproductive rights	
violence against women	violence against women	

From the analysis it also emerged that women's rights terminology used on Amnesty International, AWID and NOW includes synonymic forms and new terms which do not occur in the two investigated glossaries. Examples of that are given in the following table:

Table 6. Terms not occurring in EIGE and GenderTerm glossaries

Amnesty international, AWID and NOW
abortion laws
birth control
corrective rape
discirminatory law
domestic abuse
equal wage

| family law |
| financial disparity for women |
| gender justice |
| honour killing |
| inadequate healthcare |
| intersectional feminism |
| lack of access to education |
| legal abortion |
| pay equity |
| political, economic, and social equality |
| reproductive justice |
| women sex workers |

Given the high number of users of official websites like Amnesty International, the investigation of other reliable non-governmental resources could be an effective strategy to find standard forms in the context of women's rights terminology. Moreover, in addition to monitoring the actual use of officially recognized terminology, non-governmental sources like those mentioned in this study could be a productive starting point for quantitatively improving glossaries in this emerging field.

5.1 Women-related Terminology on Social Media

One further step in the analysis of women-related terminology was the investigation of women's rights discourse conducted on social media. The latter play a relevant role today especially for digital natives who are particularly familiar with digital communication (Smith 2017; Reinikainen *et al.* 2020). Drawing on Van Djick (2013, p. 7), who suggests that social media have modified the nature of private and public communication, it can be argued that digital communication has modified people's needs, expectations and personal attitudes. Such a behavioral change is also due to the possibility for users to access a huge amount of information and select the desired content among thousands. Digital activities are linked to niches of interest which inevitably expose users to specific topics which make them approach new cultural and linguistic knowledge. Women's rights and gender issues have turned out to be one of these niches of interest. In this context, the social network platform Instagram was found to be a considerable resource for exploring to what extent women and gender-related terminology is used in less formal contexts.

In recent years, several Instagram pages counting thousands or millions of followers have been created worldwide to deal with themes like gender equality, body shaming, gender-based violence, etc. In this regard, in addition to well-known Instagram pages like

those of the abovementioned Amnesty International, AWID and NOW, there are many other Instagram accounts like the ones listed below:

- Feminist (6,2 million followers)

- LGBT (2,1 million followers)

- SheThePeopletv (1,7 million followers)

- Womensmarch (1,5 million followers)

- LGBTQ+ (1,2 million followers)

- Myvoicemychoice (867 thousand followers)

- Womensrights_news (410 thousand followers)

- Feminism in India (172 thousand followers)

- AAPI Women Lead (112 thousand followers)

- Black Mamas matter Alliance (105 thousand followers)

- Equality Now (49,3 thousand followers)

- Repro Uncensored (21,6 thousand followers)

In order to investigate women- and gender-related content on Instagram, only verified accounts were selected, which implies that these profiles have a substantial number of followers. The Instagram page *Feminist*, for example, includes women- and gender-related terms like *gender equity*, *equal rights*, *gender inequality*, *gender identity, queer*, *transgender*, *LGBTQ+*, *lesbian*, *violence against women*, *sexual assault*, *domestic violence*, *reproductive health, intersectional feminism.* In addition to those terms occurring in the investigated glossaries, this Instagram page makes use of other emerging terms like *anti-abortion*, *abortion restrictions*, *birth control*, *misogyny*, *bodily autonomy*, *gender- expansive people*, *gender persecution*, *abusive partner*, *same-sex relations*, *mixed-race*, *reproductive freedom.* The Instagram page presents itself as a learning tool for users interested in gender- and women-related topics, as evidenced by story highlights such as "Abortion" and "Black Women's History Week," as well as posts that function as guides to gender- and women-related terminology, news, and initiatives. Such an educational role of social media is also found in other Instagram pages which, in addition to use gender and women-related terms, make reference to the legislation and new practices concerning women's rights (Equality Now) or initiatives (Womensmarch). The shared focus of such pages is evident in their use of similar terminology, ranging from concepts such as *digital violence*, *empowerment*, *child marriage*, *FGM*, *economic equality*, and *Black maternal care* to more widely and commonly used terms like *equality*, *discrimination*, *feminism*, and *justice*.

From a terminology perspective, the exploration of these Instagram pages demonstrated that women-related terminology is widely used on social media like Instagram including terms

from the glossaries investigated in this study as well as terms which do not occur in such resources, as shown by the examples in the following table:

Table 7. Women-related terminology on social media: some examples

Terms occurring in EIGE and UN Women	Terms absent in EIGE and UN Women
abuse	abusive partner
abortion	abortion pills
child marriage	anti-abortion
discrimination	birth control
domestic violence	bodily autonomy
gendered	body positivity
gender equality	Digital violence
gender identity	gender- expansive people
equal rights	mysoginy
intersectional feminism	mixed-race
lesbian	relationship abuse
maternity leave	reproductive freedom
queer	same-sex relation
rape	self-managed abortion
reproductive health	sexualize
sexual assault	SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)
sexuality	two-finger test
transgender	victim blaming
violence	women-led movement

The examples collected in Table 7 highlight the differences between the terminology used in institutional glossaries (EIGE and UN Women) and the language circulating on social media. While the former prioritize established, policy-oriented concepts such as *gender equality*, *reproductive health*, and *sexual violence*, the latter introduce or foreground terms that reflect lived experiences, activist discourse, and emerging socio-political debates. In particular, terms absent from the two institutional glossaries can be grouped into several categories. Some refer to specific tools, procedures, or embodied practices, such as *abortion pills*, *self-managed abortion*, and the *two-finger test*, which point to concrete experiences and

practices often discussed online. Other terms capture mental attitudes, power dynamics, and social behaviours, including *bodily autonomy*, *misogyny*, and *victim blaming*, which are central to feminist critique but may be less codified in official terminology. A further group of terms reflects newer ideas, movements, or identity-related concepts that have gained visibility primarily through digital activism, such as *body positivity*, *pro-choice*, *gender-expansive people*, and *women-led movement*. Finally, some expressions function as synonyms or reformulations of concepts already present in institutional glossaries, for instance *relationship abuse*, *reproductive freedom*, or *sexualize*.

Bearing in mind the differing levels of reliability of different sources, it must be recognized the significant role of informal communication in shaping women's rights discourse. Social media platforms not only contribute to raising awareness but also facilitate the circulation and normalization of terminology that may precede, complement, or challenge official resources, thereby reflecting the evolving nature of feminist language and advocacy.

6. Conclusions

The analysis of the sources examined in this study shows that women's rights terminology mainly revolves around two broad areas:

- legal and social issues,

- organisations and institutions, often referred to through abbreviations and acronyms.

The frequent references to the legal field are a particularly relevant aspect to consider when dealing with women-related terminology as also confirmed by the IATE website (Note 13) where women's rights are associated with the domain of *social questions* and, more specifically, with the legal subdomain *rights and freedoms > rights of the individual*. The subdomain of *rights and freedoms* represents only one of several branches within the legal field, which also encompasses areas such as family law, human rights law, media law, and others. Women's rights are often associated to the broader category of *human rights*, as also shown on Amnesty International website:

[w]omen's rights are human rights. We are all entitled to human rights. These include the right to live free from violence and discrimination; to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; to be educated; to own property; to vote; and to earn an equal wage. But across the globe many women and girls still face discrimination on the basis of sex and gender. Gender inequality underpins many problems which disproportionately affect women and girls, such as domestic and sexual violence, lower pay, lack of access to education, and inadequate healthcare. (Note 14)

However, the high number of terms exclusively related to women's rights could be a plausible reason for considering women's rights as an independent legal sphere. In fact, far from treating women or gender-related terminology as part of a newborn special language, the high number of new conceptual units in women's rights terminology could justify the identification of a new, independent subdomain. The presence of specific laws on gender equality and gender-based discrimination (Senden, Timmer 2019; Vijeyarasa 2021) also

encourages the idea of considering women and gender-related rights as a full-fledged law subdomain, an idea which is also supported by the terminological homogeneity emerged from the analysis of different glossaries. Nonetheless, the analysis also showed a considerable margin of variability to be taken into account due to the novelty of the field, the constant emerging of new concepts and terms, and the use of social media platforms as tools of mass communication. In this regard, a standardization strategy should be applied in order to avoid communicative ineffectiveness and encourage the acknowledgement of women's discourse as a discourse with its own language and terminology.

For terminologists and institutional bodies, there is a clear need to adopt more dynamic and inclusive glossary-building practices. This could involve systematically monitoring activist and social media discourse to identify emerging terms, integrating usage notes that explain context-dependent or non-standard expressions, and regularly updating existing glossaries to reflect conceptual change. Cross-referencing institutional terminology with informal or grassroots variants could also help bridge the gap between official and non-official discourse.

For activists and advocacy groups, greater terminological awareness may enhance the effectiveness of communication and advocacy efforts. Using more consistent terminology, linking informal expressions to established legal or institutional concepts, and engaging with existing glossaries as reference tools could facilitate dialogue in both formal and informal contexts.

Ultimately, closer cooperation between terminologists, institutions, and activists would contribute to greater legitimacy in women's rights discourse. Such collaboration would not only support more effective communication but also reinforce the recognition of women's rights as a specialized field with its own evolving language and conceptual structure.

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