Women's issues for radical right parties with women leaders:
The case of Giorgia Meloni

Appendix

A) Data sources

For the analysis we compiled three datasets containing: bills (N = 640); parliamentary questions (N = 302); tweets (N = 12729). Data about parliamentary questions rests on previous works of the Italian team of the Comparative Agendas Project (CAP) (Borghetto & Carammia, 2010; Russo & Cavalieri, 2016), which collects, codes, and analyses data about policy-making processes of government and parliament in Italy, looking at different policy venues, such as parliamentary questions, bills, investiture speeches, party manifestos, etc. This endeavour is shared with colleagues all over the world and, since scholars of the CAP adopt the same coding scheme, it is possible to develop both diachronic caste study and comparative works (for more details, see the CAP website, available at: https://www.comparativeagendas.net/pages/About). For this work, we used the CAP dataset of parliamentary questions, which covers the period from 1996 to 2020 and updated it to reach the end of 2021, by retrieving data from the Italian Parliament website, section about parliamentary activities (see https://aic.camera.it/aic/search.html). Then, we selected only years of interest, starting from 2013.

All legislative bills presented by Brothers of Italy between 2013 and 2021 were retrieved from the open data website of the Chamber of Deputies through the OpenLink Virtuoso SPARQL endpoint (https://dati.camera.it). Like the question time, we focused only on bills introduced at the Chamber of Deputies. This choice responds to reasons of comparability between the two venues, but was also the consequence of the fact that FdI did not set up an independent parliamentary group in the Senate (Upper House) during the XVII legislative term. In that period, the party lacked the required minimum number of MPs to form one. FdI senators established a sub-group in the Senate so-called Mixed group only in 2017. In contrast, the party counted on a parliamentary group at the Chamber of Deputies throughout all the period under analysis.

Tweets from Giorgia Meloni's timeline were automatically retrieved through the Twitter Track v2 API endpoint, accessed via the R package academictwitteR (Barrie & Ho, 2021). In the period between 01-01-2013 and 31-12-2021, N = 12729 tweets were retrieved. We selected original tweets (excluding retweets and replies to other users) published in Italian (N = 12729). Given the purely qualitative character of our analysis we did not need any pre-processing procedures before moving to the analysis.

During the coding procedure we took into account hashtags and images/video attached to the tweets to contextualise their content, but we did not directly code their visual content. This methodological choice follows existing research in communication studies that identify Twitter as a platform for written news and information exchange, compared to other platforms, such as Instagram or Facebook, which are predominantly employed for visual communication (Manovich, 2017). Visual analysis of radical right parties and leaders are also usually based on other digital platforms (e.g. Bast 2021; Bast et al., 2021; Bernadez-Rodal et al., 2022; Brands et al., 2021; Moroni, 2017; Klein, 2020; Bracciale & Martella, 2022). In the making of the analysis, we could see how images are employed on Twitter in a different way compared to other platforms. They are often "images of text" whose aim is to support the argument in the tweet, with very little bodily representation (for an example, see Figure 1 in the Appendix). This assessment confirmed our choice to focus on textual data.

The choice to use questions and bills presented by the FdI (the party) and tweets by Meloni (the leader)—instead of relying either on FdI or Meloni for the three data sources—has a twofold rationale. On the one hand, using parliamentary questions and bills presented by Meloni would have lost several pieces of information, because of a strategic choice of the party itself. As a matter of fact, FdI in parliament behaves as a single, unitary actor. For instance, starting from the XVIII legislative term, only the parliamentary group leader (who was Francesco Lollobrigida) or the whole parliamentary group asked parliamentary questions. Similarly, bills are signed by many members of the parliamentary group, thus it is extremely difficult to extrapolate reliable information about the behaviour of Giorgia Meloni. On the other hand, we chose to use Meloni's Twitter account rather than FdI's in the light of the progressive personalization of political communication strategies on social media (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013). In Giorgia Meloni account has a higher

number of followers on Twitter (1,6 millions v 237.956 followers for Brothers of Italy official account as of November 2022) and produces more original contents (original tweets) that are then systematically retweeted from the party's official account. In other words, the party's account on Twitter is mostly used to retweet the individual contents produced by the leader and other FdI politicians. We consider Giorgia Meloni account as a more reliable source of information to map the party's official discourse on gender-related issues.

Figure A1. Example of "images of text" in the visual communication of Giorgia Meloni on Twitter

Translation: "Crazy! It's no joke, these are the guidelines drawn up by the left-wing municipal council of Velletri to raise awareness among its employees against gender inequality. More than a fight against sexism, this is a criminalisation of men. And I say this as a woman. Total delirium".

B) Keyword search

To select parliamentary questions, bills, and tweets of potential interest, we first compiled a dictionary, composed by a list of keywords related to gender issues and presented in the table below. The keywords we employed are in Italian, as all observations are in Italian, and we provide a translation in English in brackets. Italian is a gendered language (Prewitt-Freilino et al., 2012), thus the asterisk at the end of the lemma serves as a wild card to consider masculine, feminine, singular and plural forms, as well as the semantic root of words related to women and gendered roles. We purposefully chose these words as they are all related to women and women's issues both on the side of rights (e.g., emancipation, self-determination, protection against abuse and violence, abortion), of gender equality (e.g., quotas, equal payments, thus including also words about men, fatherhood, family arrangement). At a general level, following the example of previous studies (see Akkerman, 2015; de Lange & Mügge, 2015) the list touches family policy, labour market policy, welfare policies and women's health issues.

Table A1. List of keywords about gender-related issues

Keywords	
Mamm* (mom)	Infant* (child)
Babb* (dad)	Infanzia (childhood)
Papà (dad)	Bambin* (child)
Madr* (mother)	Ragazz* (young women, young men)
Padr* (father)	Conged* ((maternity, paternity, parental)-leave)
Matern* (maternal/maternity)	Licenz* (licence)
Patern* (paternal/paternity)	Vita (life)
Donn* (woman)	Pro-life (pro-life)
Uom* (man)	Part-time (part-time)
Femmin* (female/feminine)	Lavoratric* (woman worker/s)
Maschi* (male/masculine)	Salari* (pay)
Genitor* (parent)	Stipendi* (salary)
Famigli* (family)	Parit (equality)
Familiar* (family-)	Femminst* (feminist/s)
Familyday (familyday)	Abort* (abortion)
Quot* / quot* rosa (gender quotas)	Gravidanz* (pregnancy)
Bebè (baby)	Interruzione volontaria di gravidanza (voluntary termination of pregnancy)
Asil* nido (kindergarten)	Stupr* (rape)
Divorzi* (divorce)	Violenz* (violence, harrassment)

C) Analysis

Table A2. Thematic coding scheme

Macro-category	Category	Explanation	N of tweets	N of bills	N of questions
Economic	Economic: women's labour and employment	Mention to women's position in the labour market and related policies	31	3	2
	Economic: women's welfare	Mention to welfare provisions for women and related policies	9	5	2
Family	Family: symbolic references to nuclear/natural family	Reference to the nuclear family model and its relevance for the reproduction of society	38	4	5
	Family: traditional gender roles within the family	Reference to gender roles within the family – motherhood and fatherhood – and women as mothers and carers	63	7	3
Gender equality	Gender equality: reproductive rights	Reference to reproductive rights and related policies	14		1
	Gender equality: violence against women	Reference to violence against women and related policies	120	5	1
	Gender equality: equal rights and opportunities	Reference to gender equality in society and politics and related policies	34		
	Gender equality: anti-feminism	Negative reference to the feminist movement, Contraposition between Meloni & FdI and the feminist movement regarding who is defending "women's interests" (Negative) reference to feminist policies	15		
	Gender equality: sexism and sexual harassment	Reference to sexism and misogyny against women politicians	17		

Table A3. Examples of parliamentary questions, bills and tweets related to the three main dimensions of women's issues proposed by FdI and Giorgia Meloni (2013–2021) and cited in the analysis

Economic Dimension		
Bill_1	"In addition to these factors, there is: the absence of effective policies to support family and motherhood, along with the scarce protection to working women; insufficient and inadequate assistance services, expensive educational and school services (…). Another difficulty concerns the relation between motherhood and female unemployment, that is, the impossibility for women to continue working after having a baby, which is strictly linked to the presence and availability of childhood services".[4]	
PQ_1	"Considering that: (…) anti-Covid measures affected considerably the job market, with severe consequences on women, who paid the highest cost in terms of unemployment; (…) women beared the burden of family duties, faced school's closure and on-line teaching mode for their children, quarantine imposed by schools and, thus, many of them have been penalised at work; even worse, some of them have been forced to resign from work in order to take care of the family, because of the lack of effective welfare instruments to tackle these difficulties (…): which initiative the Minister plans to undertake to allow women, even in period of emergency, to continue working without being forced to face, at their expenses, the inadequacy of the Italian system before Covid".[1]	
Tweet_1		"So many mothers in Italy are unable to work because of the cost of carers, domestic helpers, baby sitters. FDI proposes tax deductions for all expenses related to domestic work. A concrete help to families and women who do not want to give up being mothers and workers!"
Tweet_2		"#BonusBebè to employees who have children: this is the incentive promoted by the Apulian entrepreneur Vitantonio Colucci to support family and births and ensure a generational change in his company. A way of doing business that we like. Congratulations!"

		bit.ly/2I5cIuR
Tweet_3		"Shameful! Mother for the second time, employed by the company for 15 years, denounces pressure received to force her to resign. As a politician and a mother, I find this repugnant and offensive to all working mothers. This is no way to do business" https://t.co/GrIlQN6lCO

Family Dimension

Bill_2	"Data highlight the necessity of a new strategy for the enhancement of parenthood and family. (…) Numbers allow us to objectively consider the choice of having a child as part of a value system. (…) The Republic recognizes the "Nascent life day", with the purpose of supporting the awareness about the social value of the motherhood and of the inter-generational solidarity".[5]
PQ_2	"Some schools have adopted forms for the next school year (…) in which the words father and mother have been substituted with parent 1 and parent 2; the new words mortify profoundly all the parents that live normally and proudly their own parenthood (…); the choice to define father and mother simply as parent 1 and parent 2 means to debase the concept of family, whose rights are recognized by the Constitution: (…) the new wording is damaging of the dignity of those parents who are simply mom and dad".[2]
Tweet_4		"Thank you @Pontifex_it for your beautiful words today: the #family founded on marriage between a man and a woman has an essential and irreplaceable mission. Without family there is no future: @FratellidItalia has always said this and will reiterate it forcefully in Europe too"

Tweet_5	Giorgia Meloni @GiorgiaMeloni ⛚ Italia - Funzionario di Stato Famiglia naturale al centro dello Stato sociale, incentivi alla #natalità, reddito di infanzia e #quozientefamigliare: ecco le proposte principali della mozione di @FratellidItalia in discussione da oggi alla Camera. Vediamo se Lega e M5S stanno davvero dalla parte delle famiglie Translate Tweet 4:50 PM · Apr 9, 2019 · TweetDeck	"Natural family at the centre of the welfare state, incentives for #natality, child income and #familybenefit: these are the main proposals of @FratellidItalia's motion being debated in the House starting today. Let's see if Lega and M5S are really on the side of families"

Gender Equality Dimension

Bill_3	"The Equal Opportunities Department at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers plans the necessary sensibilization, information and education campaigns about gender equality, with the purpose, in particular, to get rid of cultural stereotypes (…) and of any kind of abuse and violence towards women, in order to face discriminations based on gender and to sensibilize women who were victims of gender violence".[6]
Bill_4	"Unfortunately, the news report serious and brutal episodes of rape, showing the fallacy of the Italian system in efficaciously preventing and contrasting such forms of abuse, violence and barbarity. The immigration wave from Islamic countries – marked by a profound disrespect of woman or prey to reactionary cultures – which has characterized Italy in the last years, represents one of the factors that contributes significantly to the problem of rapes".[7]
PQ_3	"Considering that: (…) the disgusting man who robbed and raped a seventy-years old woman in Milan a few days ago has been arrested. A habitual offender. He was sent back to Romania for another violence ten years ago but, once released, he came back to Italy! This man should be immediately returned to his country's prisons (…), I confirm the opportunity of chemical pharmacological castration for those wicked persons. Other countries have been using it for years, why Italy has not?".[3]

Tweet_6	Giorgia Meloni @GiorgiaMeloni ⛚ Italia - Funzionario di Stato A Cosenza arrestato un marocchino per aver violentato e aggredito la convivente (in presenza dei figli piccoli) più volte perché non accettava il suo stile di vita occidentale. Per questo balordo e per chiunque non sia in grado di rispettare la nostra civiltà, qui non c'è posto. Translate Tweet 1:29 PM · Dec 22, 2018 · Twitter for Android	"In Cosenza, a Moroccan man was arrested for raping and assaulting his partner (in the presence of their young children) several times, because he did not accept her western lifestyle. For this scoundrel and for anyone who cannot respect our civilisation, there is no room for you here"

Tweet_7	Giorgia Meloni ✓ @GiorgiaMeloni 🏳 Italia - Funzionario di Stato Chi sono gli stupratori in Italia? Ecco i numeri che i paladini dell'accoglienza non vi faranno mai vedere. Fermiamo questa deriva: #castrazionechimica per gli stupratori di qualsiasi nazionalità e rimpatrio per immigrati che commettono reati in Italia. Il 26 maggio #VotaItaliano Translate Tweet CHI SONO GLI STUPRATORI STRANIERI IN ITALIA 8,7% (AL 1 GENNAIO 2019) STUPRI COMMESSI DA STRANIERI 27.1K views 0:01 / 0:48 10:24 AM · May 14, 2019 · Twitter for Android	"Who are the rapists in Italy? Here are the numbers that who is in favour of welcoming migrants will never show you. Let's stop this drift: #chemicalcastration for rapists of any nationality and repatriation for immigrants who commit crimes in Italy. On 26 May #VotaItaliano" https://t.co/OjUtV2wP6g
Tweet_8	Giorgia Meloni ✓ @GiorgiaMeloni 🏳 Italia - Funzionario di Stato "Una #donna deve fare ogni cosa due volte meglio di un uomo per essere giudicata brava la metà. Per fortuna non è difficile" (C. Whitton) Translate Tweet 11:09 AM · Mar 8, 2013 · Twitter Web Client	"A #woman has to do everything twice as good as a man to be judged half as good. Fortunately, this is not difficult" (C. Whitton)"
Tweet_9	Giorgia Meloni ✓ @GiorgiaMeloni 🏳 Italia - Funzionario di Stato #Partiti: per le #donne italiane sogno rivoluzione del #merito, non futuro di 'quote' goo.gl/miZC67 ST Translate Tweet 4:00 PM · Oct 16, 2013 · Twitter Web Client	"#Politicalparties: for #Italian women I dream of a revolution of #merit, not a future of 'quotas'" http://goo.gl/miZC67 ST

Tweet_10	Giorgia Meloni ✓ @GiorgiaMeloni ⚐ Italia - Funzionario di Stato Oggi come ogni giorno sosteniamo le donne che lottano per qualcosa di più importante di una vocale #8marzo Translate Tweet 1:32 PM - Mar 8, 2015 - Twitter for iPhone	"Today as every day we support women fighting for something more important than a vowel #8March"

[1] *Interrogazione a risposta immediata* at the Chamber of Deputies presented by Lollobrigida (Assemblea 3-02419, 20/07/2021, n. 544).

[2] *Interrogazione a risposta immediata* at the Chamber of Deputies presented by Rampelli (Assemblea 3-00795, 29/04/2014, n. 221).

[3] *Interrogazione a risposta immediata* at the Chamber of Deputies presented by Lollobrigida (Assemblea 3-00282, 31/10/2018, n. 75).

[4] Bill n. 2266 presented at the Chamber of Deputies, 21/11/2019, signed by Meloni and others, title "Disposizioni per la promozione della natalità, il sostegno delle famiglie e del lavoro femminile e la sicurezza in ambito scolastico, nonché delega al Governo per la revisione del trattamento tributario del reddito familiare".

[5] Bill n. 2950 presented at the Chamber of Deputies, 16/03/2021, signed by Varchi and others, title: "Istituzione della Giornata della vita nascente".

[6] Bill n. 1036 presented at the Chamber of Deputies, 31/07/2018, signed by Rizzetto and Zucconi, title: "Disposizioni per il contrasto della violenza di genere".

[7] Bill n. 1331 presented at the Chamber of Deputies, 31/10/2018, signed by Cirielli and others, title: "Modifiche agli articoli 609-bis, 609-ter, 609-quater e 609-octies e abrogazione dell'articolo 609-septies del codice penale, in materia di violenza sessuale".

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