



intimate



# COMING OUT TWICE

*Narratives of bisexuality and consensual  
non-monogamies in Italy*

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CITIZENSHIP, CARE AND CHOICE: *The Micro-politics of Intimacy in Southern Europe*  
CIDADANIA, CUIDADO E ESCOLHA: *A Micropolítica da Intimidade na Europa do Sul*  
CIUDADANÍA, CUIDADOS Y DERECHO A ELEGIR: *Micropolítica de la Intimidad en Europa del Sur*  
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# INTIMATE project



INTIMATE - Citizenship, Care and Choice: The Micropolitics of Intimacy in Southern Europe

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EVENTS

RESEARCH OUTPUTS

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MEDIA

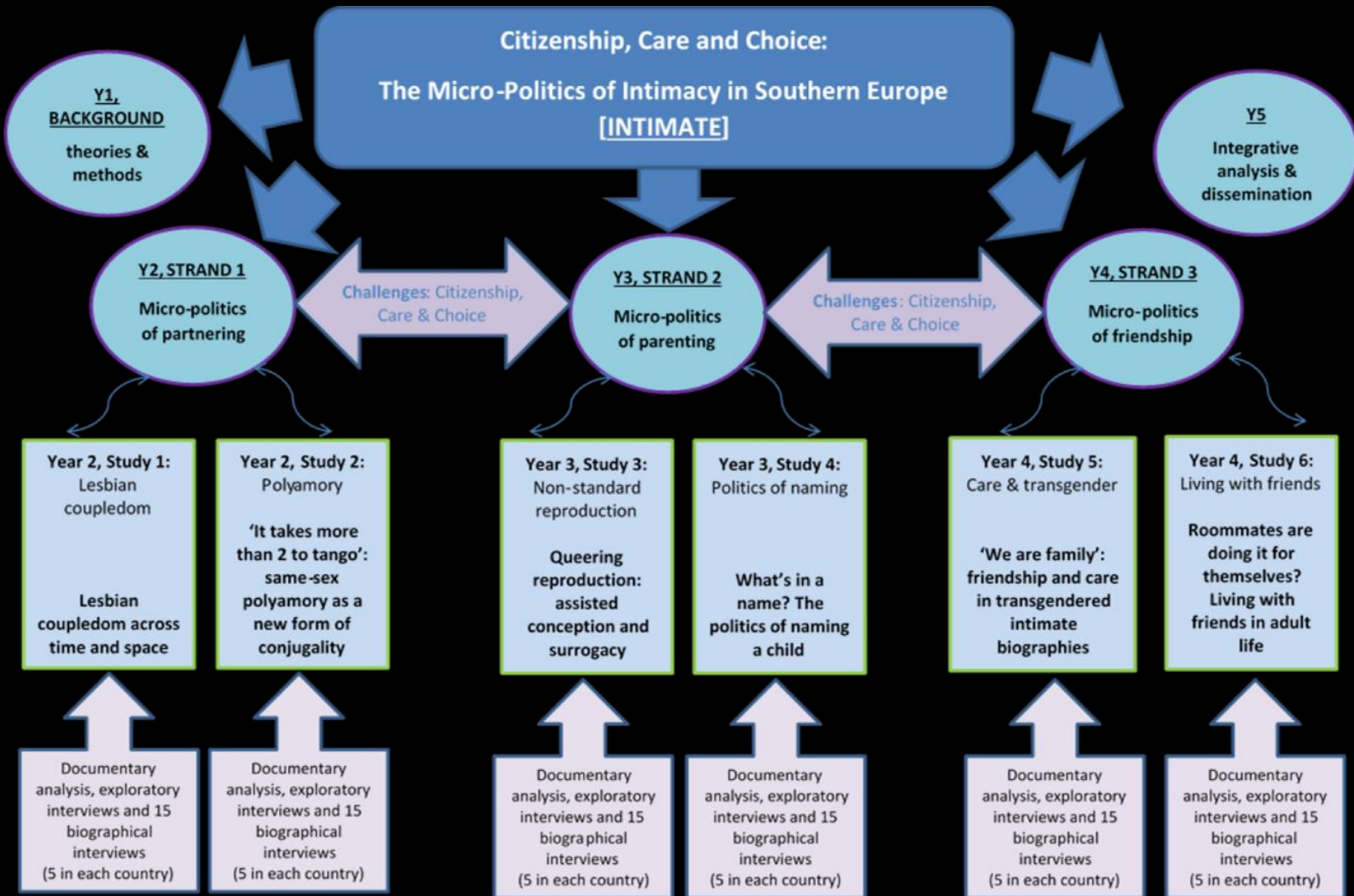
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# INTIMATE overview





# Fieldwork

- **Context:** Rome (Italy), April – July 2015
- **Collective knowledge:**
  - ✓ 3 Websites content analysis
  - ✓ 7 Semi-structured interviews and focus groups with activists (face-to-face, written and virtual)
  - ✓ Participant observations in events and meetings
- **Biographical data:** challenges in the daily practices of 5 non-monogamous, able, economically precarious, white Italian LGBT/Q people (27-35) living in Rome



# Non-normative Communities

*For me, there can't be polyamory without feminism. And bisexuality, as well, that became pansexuality [...]. When there was no poly-community, you'd say "I have another relationship", and you wouldn't find anyone [...]. So, building a poly-community is useful for all of us. [Nadia]*

*And then I met this girl, [she was kissing two bears] and she was not afraid of showing her curves, and I thought: "I wish I were so brave". Now, I am brave, and I'm a naturist, I don't care anymore. I have my frailties, but they are mine: not society's. [Nadia]*

*And it was, I mean, a total revelation because for the first time I met people that had more than one relationship at the same time and... I had already met a lot of bisexual people but never had it happened to me to... to find so many [bisexual men] all together: I felt like I was really at home. [Morgana]*



# Self definition & identities 1/3

*Bisexuality is something that already leads you to wonder more on exclusivity, basically. And so there is not a causal link but rather a drive [...]. For me, yes, it was absolutely the driving force. [Morgana]*

*Even bisexuality then became pansexuality, /this new term/ (smiling), because 'bisexuality' showed somehow a binarism. I do not rule out, even though I never tried, to be in a romantic, emotional or sexual relationship with people who are, let's say, fluid in their definition of being men, women or transgender, or in transition: to me, they are all included. [Nadia]*



## Self definition & identities 2/3

*Cristian has tackled this thing with himself, in fact he self-defines as bisexual, while Mirko did not [...]. It's bad to talk about homophobia, but he could not cope with the fact that he could have been or be with a man [...]. For a guy who has /always/ (emphatically) been heterosexual, it is harder to relate to a transgender guy. [Rudy]*



## Self definition & identities 3/3

*I like male energy, that is, I like being with men, even the differences and the similarities that I have with them, and I like to /find their femininity, since I haven't it/ (smiling) [...]. With a woman, you have everything: you have a friend, a confidant, you make love with her, love with cuddles and everything, that is, you feel closer to her. You really feel that for her you're worth more, that there is a greater commitment. [Nadia]*

*Since I had my first sexual encounter with a woman when I was 22, I've always had open relationships... mainly with men, and during this important relationships I had various female friends with whom I exchanged intimacy, and my partner knew it. [Morgana]*



## Coming out twice 1/2

*Polyamory is a big fight with my parents: I keep bisexuality to myself, until I am forced to talk about it [:] I can not talk about it. I tried, [...], and [my mom asked]: "why? Huh? Now this too?". [She was] scared, bewildered. And there, I had to lie because she was [overcome] by sorrow, fear, anger, all at once, "Oh God!", and concern. [Nadia]*



# Coming out twice 2/2

*When my father realized, many years ago, that I was hanging out with a girl, he reacted very badly and told me /very awful/ (in a suffered tone) things [:] "if your life is taking this road, I do not want to be part of your life". He was screaming and throwing the tablecloth to the ground, as it usually happens in movies.*

*Therefore I... I started screaming that it was not true. [Morgana]*

*It is great because... I feel, yes, to keep crossing the threshold of intimacy with people. [My brother] told me that basically his girlfriend confessed to him that, when she masturbates, she has fantasies about men and women. Then he told her about me and my story, especially about my... my bisexuality. Therefore, she was intrigued and wanted to ask me a lot of questions. [Morgana]*



# Fantasies and Sex 1/2

*The only fantasies of which I remember were precisely on women, even before the porn imaginary, even before falling in love with a male when I was sixteen. They were all about women. [Nadia]*

*There was freedom, you breathe it... it is nevertheless true that the environment, the energy of people and society comes to you... You get it at a passive level, as well; that is, maybe you're not there thinking all the time: "ah, now I can hit on women." However, you feel it: you see groups of women who go out, women traveling alone. I had never seen it before. [Nadia]*

*In three because, anyway, I had a little fear, right? Since my sexual horizon was heterosexual, I used to say, "what should I tell to a woman?" [...]. Bisexuality was much easier in three without affect, that is, without a love affair going on. [Nadia]*



# Fantasies and Sex 2/2

*He made me imagine a lot of things while we were making love, in short, he also involved me a lot in this, and it was nice that this part of me /was included/ (emphatically) in our relationship. And when it happened, he was happy, and he never said... in short, he never said that he wanted to do a threesome, or that he wanted unrespectfully to be part of something that was mine, and I appreciated it. [Morgana]*



# Blurring Boundaries 1/3

*And so it was hard at the time for my partner, which up to that very moment had thought that... that it was so: he was the person I loved, and in the meanwhile I used to have a... let's say a different and complex sexuality. [Morgana]*

*My boyfriend Alberto was very sad when Marta and I broke up [...]. It was amazing, notwithstanding sad, to go back home... torn by tears, desperate because I broke up, and to find him comforting me. [Morgana]*



# Blurring Boundaries 2/3

*I'm a little closer to Marianne, because for her I feel more attraction... something closer to what we call love? While regarding Matias, it was something more... friendship, let's say? [Nadia]*

*It was very nice... when I kissed her, and then she kissed him [...]. And it was a sharing... between me and him through her in some way, but also between me and him cuddling and caressing each other [...]. In fact, it was very nice because she was... she felt in the middle of this thing and it's nice... in short, it is nice to see a satisfied woman, a happy woman, a woman... that is alive. It's beautiful, just to look at her. [Morgana]*



# Blurring Boundaries 3/3

*I like the feeling of... multiple things, multiple feelings that come from many directions, right? And... harmony between more than two people [...]. It is true that duality is very powerful, indeed. And many things are based on duality; however, being in more than two has also... I think it has a charm of complexity and collective emotions... that are very nice: I feel that this arrangement is in my nature. [Morgana]*



# Concluding remarks

- Polyamorous and kinky spaces as welcoming environments
- The existence of a poly community makes it possible for bisexual women to self-identify in the public sphere
- Blurring boundaries between sex, love and friendship
- Non-normative communities help people in expressing their gender identity and their non-normative bodies
- Going beyond duality through the intersections of bisexuality and ethical non-monogamies



# ***Thank you***

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