ABSTRACT

RESPONSIBLE RELATIONS.

A THEORETICAL READING OF THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICS OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

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The research is orientated towards a theoretical reading of the evolution of the politics of equal opportunities making possible the use of the category of responsibility as an element of interpretation of the current direction of such politics.

It arose from a research project that had the objective of verifying the impact of the application of the Italian legislation on equal opportunities. From this it emerged that the anti-discriminatory aim of the legislation has not created a jurisprudence with regard to cases of discrimination, while the promotional objective has made possible the realization of projects that have spread the culture of equal opportunities. This tension towards the social promotion takes into consideration the transformations of the job market and of the legislation and can be interpreted through the concept of responsibility. This concept includes and builds on previous concepts present in the feminist literature and it is useful at the operative level because it employs the ideas of care, autonomy, relationships, promotions and choice.

The concept of promotion signifies the provision of the means to participate in the job market in opposition to the idea of sanctioning discriminatory acts; promotion also signifies knowledge of the context and the acquisition of new skills. Autonomy is intended in a relational sense, as the capacity to overcome the traditional differentiation of roles, and is a necessary presupposition for choice. Choice is linked also to the social structure. Finally, care construes non-hierarchical relations. Responsibility is strictly linked to the idea of care, but greatly underlines the issue of the choice to take care of, its promotion and the possibility of an autonomous action. One can thus connect the individual and autonomous action with the relational idea that the law has difficulty in recognizing. By using this conceptual framework, we can speak of responsible acts.