Social Mobility in an Era of Growing Education: Territorial Perspectives

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Aim

- We analyze the consequences of increased educational levels by adopting a gender perspective.

- We try to answer the question: "gender equality in educational attainments leads to better employment perspectives for women?"

- We have measured those perspectives by gender gap in:

- **educational attainment** (in primary, secondary and tertiary education);

- **employment rate**

during the period 1994-2014 in 3 countries (Sweden, Italy, United Kingdom) corresponding 3 different welfare regimes.

- We adopt a **multidisciplinary approach (**economic and sociological)
- We assume **labour market insertion** as a former requirement for social mobility and protection from adverse events in the life course (Barbier, 2004)
- We assume **gender gap** influenced by welfare regime educational level, work experience and **occupational choice** (European Commission 2005, Blau and Khan 2006)
- We use the concept of "**Welfare regime**" (social system: education, labour, health, social security) to understand the different national approaches to education and women work

Three different basic welfare regimes
[Esping-Andersen 1990]

a) **Social-democratic** (Scandinavian countries), with universalistic approach based on citizenship;

- EDUCATION: the State provides care, education, income support and job opportunities. Even individual characteristics (basically in levels of educational attainment) are less relevant. Equal access to education

- WOMEN WORK: high rate of female labor force participation (especially in public sector);

- TERRITORY: environment - place-based effects doesn't matter

b) **Liberal Anglo-Saxon** (United Kingdom, Ireland), with targeted assistance and modest universal transfers or social insurance schemes. The most market-oriented regime;

- EDUCATION: depends strictly on the family (class status, sibship structure) and parental investment

- WOMEN WORK: high rate of women participation to labor force

- TERRITORY: environment - place-based effects are quite relevant

c) **Corporatist** or **Conservative** (Continental Europe, i.e., Italy, France, Germany), with occupational approach, inspired by subsidiarity principle and traditional family values (male breadwinner model).

- EDUCATION: family, as a key provider of care, income support and even job information and opportunities. Individual characteristics become a substitute system of insurance
- WOMEN WORK: low rate of participation in the labour market (women are marginal to the economy)
- TERRITORY: environment - place-based effects matter the most

The Global Gender Gap Index
for a comparison of gender inequalities across countries

- The **global gender gap index** - introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2006 - is a framework for capturing gender-based disparities and tracking their progress. EDUCATION is one of the features analysed (health, economy, politics)

- **SWEDEN**: 4th, for the 6th consecutive year. 15th on the economic participation and opportunity (e.g. labour force participation, gender wage equality for similar work)

- **UNITED KINGDOM**: 26th , the 3rd highest-ranking country in terms of length of maternity leave and one of the 5 countries – along with Italy - with the highest mean age of women at the birth of the first child (30 years old)

- **ITALY**: 69th , women are penalized by lower wages compared to men, lower employment stability, career interruptions, higher family duties.

SWEDEN [Source: OECD - Eurostat 2015]

- Gender gaps in **educational attainment** (1994-2014) differ between the educational levels.

  Primary education: 2.9% => 2.1%

  Secondary education: -0.1% => 8.7%

  Tertiary education: -2.8% => -10.8%.

- Gender gap in **employment rate** (15-64 years old) remained stable at **3,5%.**

  Female: 68.5% => 73.1%

  Male: 72% => 76.5%

- **Sectorial segregation**: high female employment rate in public sector

UNITED KINGDOM

- Gender gap in **educational attainment**. Primary education: -10.8% => -1.5%

  Secondary education: 8.2% => 4.4%.

  Tertiary education: 2.6% => -3%

- The gender gap in **employment rates** *decreased from 13.3% to 9.7%*

  Female: 61.2% => 67.1%.

  Male: 74.5% => 76.8%

- **Sectorial segregation**: high level women employment in health, education, social services sector

ITALY

1994-2014: falling gender gaps both in levels of education and employment rates.

- **Gender gap in educational attainment decrease** *from 1,2% to -4.3%*

  Women with at least a post secondary education
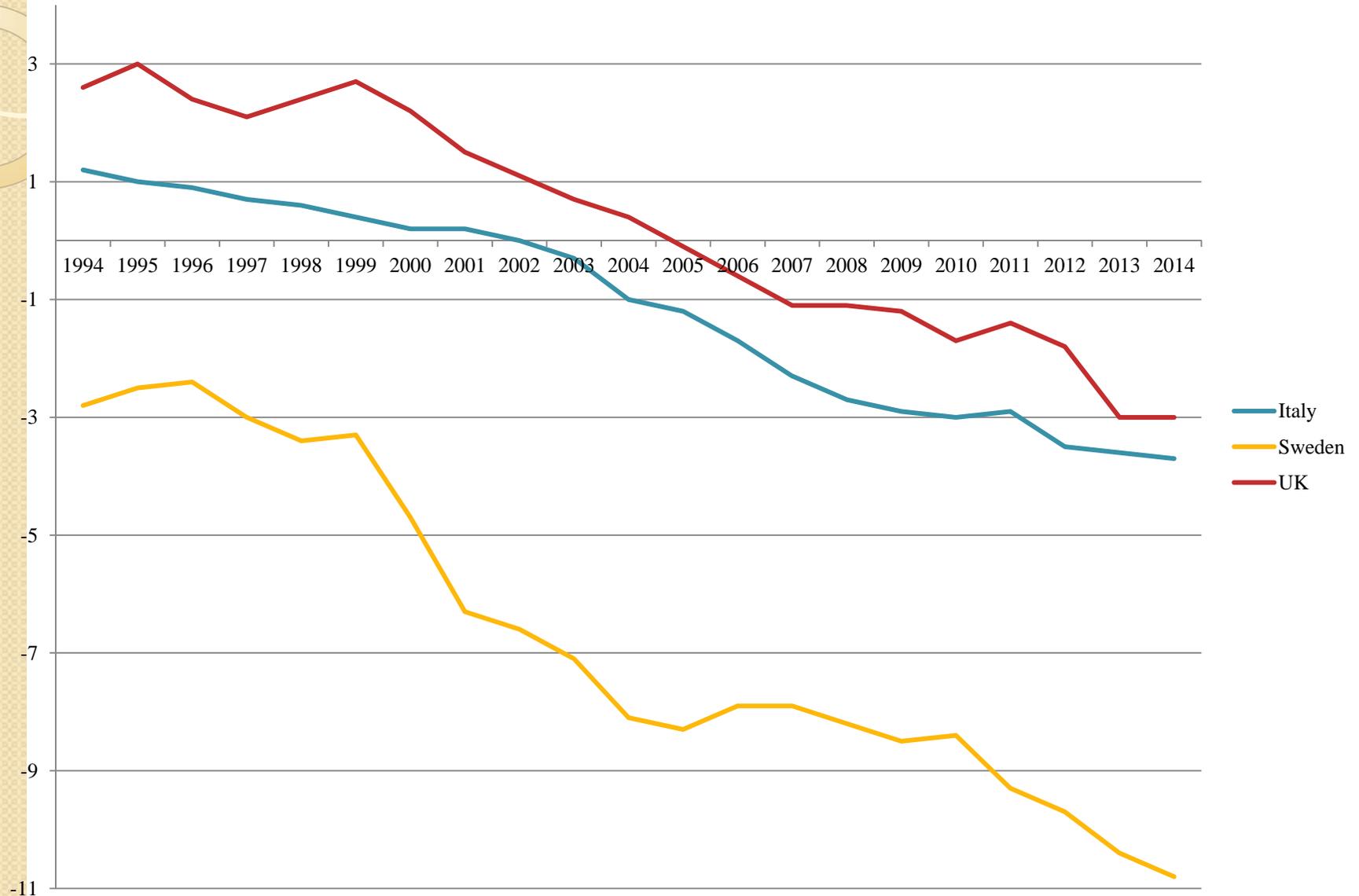 5.1% => 16.6% (59% of tertiary education)
  Men: 6.3% => 12.9%

- **Gender gap in employment rate** **decreased** *from 32.3% to 17.9%*

  Female: 35.4% => 46.8%

  Male: 67.7% => 64.7%.

- **Sectorial segregation**: high female employment rate in public and third sector

Gender Gap in Educational Attainment, *Tertiary Education*

Source: Our elaborations on Eurostat data

RESULTS

- **The results clearly indicate that welfare regimes in Europe make a substantial difference for women employment**, despite a general increase in educational attainment:

  - gender gap in employment rate over time: 0 in SW; 3,6% in UK; 14% in IT;

  - women employment rate in 2014 was about 70% in SW; 64% in UK; 40% in IT;

  - sectorial segregation: increase of women in managerial position, **but** women employment concentrated in public sector (social, health, education services).

- Significant differencies exist across countries => national policies are rilevant for women employment

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- **Work-life balance** policies for women and men (firm flexible organisation, parental leave also for men, part-time, childcare services provision,…)

- **Activation labour policies**: education and lifelong learning

- **Flexicurity** measures

- **Social investment approach** in welfare regimes reforms (to reinforce education policies, training and vocational guidance)