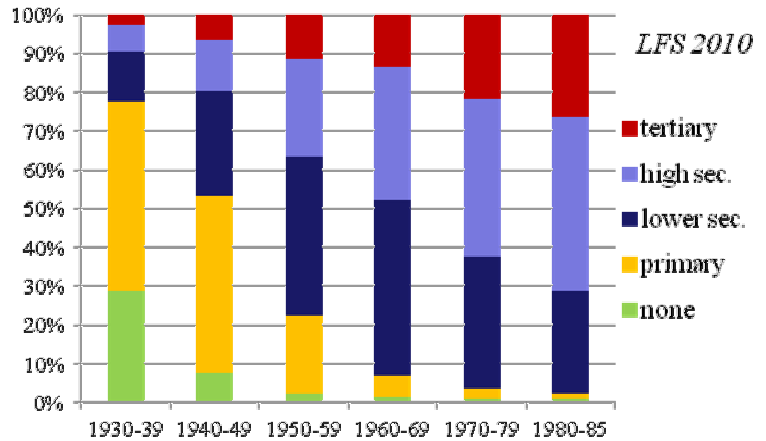


Inequality of Educational Attainment. Vertical and Horizontal Stratification in 20th Century Italy

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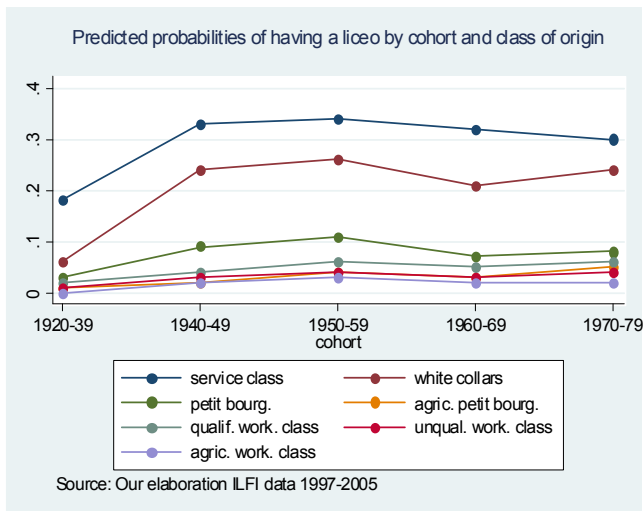
The inequality of educational opportunities (or better: outcomes), IEO – thus the extent social class of origin determines the educational attainment, has received substantive interest over recent decades. Especially the expansion of the educational nurtured expectations of a declining inequality. Empirical findings are mixed (and partly contradictory) and range from some authors claiming generalizable declining inequalities to those detecting only selective decline for specific groups and others again arguing for a persistence of inequality. Recently, the hypothesis of “effectively maintained inequality”, EMI, has been proposed (Lucas 2010), claiming that notwithstanding possibly declining inequalities superior classes will always find a way to effectively secure their relative advantages. One way to do so is a segregation in fields of education and thus increasing horizontal inequality.



In this paper we investigate trends in **vertical** and **horizontal stratification** in Italy analyzing cohorts born from the 1920ies onwards.

We show that educational expansion so far regards mainly the (upper) secondary level. This increase is largely due to an expansion of vocational tracks rather than the traditional academic ones (licei). Vocational tracks have been an important channel to increase the level of education for the off-springs of some lower classes. Thus, on the secondary level we find some partial support for declining vertical inequalities, coming, however, with strong and persistent horizontal inequalities: the Salariat secured its advantage in accessing licei, supporting thus the EMI hypothesis.

On the tertiary level vertical stratification persists and still prevails, which may be partly due to the very limited expansion of university education (esp. until 2005). These developments are rather similar for men and women, but women seems to lead possible future developments, with much higher levels of educational attainment on the tertiary level and increased (relative) chances also outside the Salariat.



Empirical analysis use ILFI (a longitudinal survey on Italian households ending in 2005) and LFS data 2010. Predicted probabilities (based on ologit) employ “possession of a degree” rather than the “highest degree”.



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