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Università, 550.000 giovani partiti dall'Italia in 13 anni: “Nuova ondata, tocca ai laureati” di Corrado Zunino

Convegno alla Normale di Pisa: il 40 per cento di chi si laurea va a lavorare all'estero. Crescono gli iscritti alle telematiche, scendono alle pubbliche. Montanari: “Libertà accademica sotto attacco”

ROMA – L'illustrazione del futuro dell'università italiana è passato, questa mattina, per la Scuola Normale di Pisa attraverso un convegno che, tra i molti dati offerti, ha spiegato che solo il 29,2 per cento dei laureati italiani resta in Italia, il 43,1 per cento va a lavorare all'estero.

Metà di chi lascia il Nord ha la laurea

Per la dimensione quantitativa la nuova emigrazione è analoga ad alcune stagioni del passato, ma è completamente diversa la sua qualità. “Il contesto demografico è senza precedenti, la natalità è ai minimi storici: 370.000 nascite nel 2024. E le partenze verso la Spagna e la Germania ora avvengono dalle regioni più ricche. I migranti laureati del Nord Italia, nel 2022, sono stati il 48 per cento del totale, saliti di sette punti rispetto all'anno prima e di dodici rispetto al 2019. In due regioni, Friuli Venezia Giulia e Lombardia, gli “expat” con laurea sono più della metà: 51,5 per cento e 50,7 per cento.

Quasi triplicati in dieci anni

Gli espatriati del Paese con il titolo più alto in tasca, sempre considerando il 2022, sono stati il 43,1 per cento: sono aumentati di 25,7 punti percentuali in dieci anni, quasi triplicati. “Come migrazione, in quanto a volumi, siamo ai livelli immediatamente successivi alla Seconda guerra mondiale”, sostiene Paolazzi.

“Le colpe delle imprese”

Il 96,1 per cento di chi è migrato per scelta dice che la responsabilità prima per la migrazione individuale è la disattenzione degli imprenditori alle condizioni dei loro collaboratori. Il 95,7 per cento attribuisce i motivi del proprio addio alla mancanza di una visione internazionale persistente in Italia e alle scarse politiche attivate per i giovani. Gli “expat”, peraltro, sono più ottimisti di chi è rimasto. E sono, ovviamente, più occupati.

Tra coloro che partono per “necessità”, tre su quattro – sono 186.000 in valore assoluto – hanno un'occupazione stabile, quasi tutti sono dipendenti. Un po' meno della metà svolge mansioni per cui le imprese italiane denunciano “vacancy”, ovvero mancanze. Sono tecnici, lavoratori qualificati nei servizi, operai specializzati e semi-specializzati, lavoratori non qualificati.

Crescono solo digitali e private

Se il totale degli studenti universitari, e qui ci riferiamo alla stagione 2023-'24, è arrivato a quota 1.960.821, in crescita di 193.813 rispetto al 2011-'12, gli iscritti agli atenei pubblici sono in diminuzione di 59.809. Questo, a fronte di una crescita di chi prova il percorso con le università telematiche: sono 273.762, quasi sette volte in più in dodici anni. Si nota, infine, un tenue aumento di chi si rivolge alle private (125.164 universitari, + 23.690 dal 2012).

L'Italia spende meno di un terzo della Danimarca nel sistema universitario. E se nel 2006 i professori stabilizzati erano 62.000 e i precari 10.000, oggi i docenti a tempo indeterminato sono 48.000 mentre il blocco insegnante senza contratto definitivo è raddoppiato: 20.000.

Lo stesso finanziamento Ffo del 2010

Infine, la questione - dibattutissima – sull'entità e il "potere reale" del Fondo di finanziamento ordinario delle università italiane, che nel 2025 è pari a 9,3 miliardi di euro. Per la ministra dell'Università e della Ricerca, Anna Maria Bernini, "la cifra è record". Il valore attualizzato della stessa, e qui ci si affida a uno studio di centoventidue società scientifiche, ci restituisce tuttavia un Fondo di finanziamento ordinario invariato rispetto al 2000, quando era di 5 miliardi 564 milioni di euro. La Legge di bilancio prevede, peraltro, tagli di 239 milioni nel 2026 e di 216 milioni nel 2027.

"Libertà accademica sotto attacco"

Tomaso Montanari, rettore dell'Università per stranieri di Siena, ha detto: "Oggi un corso di laurea su due è tenuto da un precario, con tratti schiavili. Il costo della didattica non deve più essere mascherato da finanziamenti alla ricerca". Quindi, Montanari ha virato il discorso sulle evidenze di restrizioni della libertà accademica in Italia e nel mondo. Ha detto "Un politico locale del centrodestra ha detto, a proposito di un corso sulla questione queer tenuto nel mio ateneo, che il Paese non può permettersi di lasciare il sistema accademico nazionale nelle mani di chi antepone l'ideologia alla conoscenza. Il potere politico, questa è la verità, vuole prendere in mano l'università. Da Donald Trump a James David Vance, da Viktor Orban alla Forza Italia senese, tutti dicono che dobbiamo tornare alla normalità. Smettere di insegnare il pensiero critico attraverso la ricerca e la partecipazione al discorso pubblico. Siamo sotto attacco del potere esecutivo, che è uscito dal suo alveo per invadere i poteri altrui".

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/15/opinion/trump-research-cuts.html>

THE NEW YORK TIMES OPINION

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The Authoritarian Endgame on Higher Education

March 15, 2025

By [The Editorial Board](#)

The editorial board is a group of opinion journalists whose views are informed by expertise, research, debate and certain longstanding [values](#). It is separate from the newsroom.

When a political leader wants to move a democracy toward a more authoritarian form of government, he often sets out to undermine independent sources of information and accountability. The leader tries to delegitimize judges, sideline autonomous government agencies and muzzle the media. President Vladimir Putin of Russia has done so over the past quarter-century. To lesser degrees, Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary, Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey recently have as well.

The weakening of higher education tends to be an important part of this strategy. Academic researchers are supposed to pursue the truth, and budding autocrats recognize that empirical truth can present a threat to their authority. “Wars are won by teachers,” Mr. Putin has said. He and Mr. Erdogan have closed universities. Mr. Modi’s government has arrested dissident scholars, and Mr. Orban has appointed loyal foundations to run universities.

President Trump has not yet gone as far to impede democracy as these other leaders, but it would be naïve to ignore his early moves to mimic their approach. He has fired government watchdogs, military leaders, prosecutors and national security experts. He has sued media organizations, and his administration has [threatened to regulate others](#). He has suggested that judges are powerless to check his authority, writing on social media, “He who saves his Country does not violate any Law.”

Mr. Trump’s multifaceted campaign against higher education is core to this effort to weaken institutions that do not parrot his version of reality. Above all, he is enacting or considering major cuts to universities’ resources. The Trump administration [has announced](#) sharp reductions in the federal payments that cover the overhead costs of scientific research, such as laboratory rent, electricity and hazardous waste disposal. (A federal judge has issued a temporary restraining order against those cuts.) Vice President JD Vance and other Republicans have urged a steep increase of a university endowment tax that Mr. Trump signed during his first term. Together, these two policies could reduce the annual budgets at some research universities by more than 10 percent.

Mr. Trump is squeezing higher education in other ways too. The Education Department [let go of about half its work force](#), potentially making it harder for students to receive financial aid. The virtual elimination of the U.S. Agency for International Development [led to the cancellation](#) of \$800 million in grants to Johns Hopkins alone. On March 7, the administration targeted a single university, announcing that it would [end \\$400 million in grants](#) to Columbia as punishment for its insufficient response to campus antisemitism.

We understand why many Americans don't trust higher education and feel they have little stake in it. Elite universities can come off as privileged playgrounds for young people seeking advantages only for themselves. Less elite schools, including community colleges, often have [high dropout rates](#), leaving their students with the onerous combination of debt and no degree. Throughout higher education, faculty members can seem out of touch, with political views that skew far to the left.

Mr. Trump and his advisers are tapping into public dissatisfaction with real problems at universities. But as is the case with their approach to trade, government waste, immigration policy and European military spending, many of their would-be solutions will not solve the underlying problems or will create new ones. The American higher education system, for all its flaws, is the envy of the world, and it now faces a financial squeeze that threatens its many strengths — strengths that benefit all Americans.

Chief among them is its global leadership in medical care and scientific research. American professors still [dominate the Nobel Prizes](#). When wealthy and powerful people in other countries face a medical crisis, they often use their connections to get an appointment at an American academic hospital. For that matter, some of the same Republicans targeting universities with budget cuts seek out its top medical specialists when they or their relatives are ill.

American leadership in medical and scientific research depends on federal money. Private companies, even large ones, typically do not conduct much of the basic research that leads to breakthroughs because it is too uncertain; even successful experiments may not lead to profitable products for decades. Mr. Trump's planned funding cuts are large enough to force universities to [do less of this research](#). The list of potential forgone progress is long, including against cancer, heart disease, viruses, obesity, dementia and drug overdoses. And there will be costs beyond the medical sector. There is a reason that Silicon Valley sprang up next to a research university.

The nonfinancial parts of the administration's campaign against higher education are also alarming. Last weekend, immigration officers [arrested Mahmoud Khalil](#), a leader of pro-Palestinian demonstrations at Columbia who holds a green card and is married to an American citizen. The government has offered no evidence that he broke the law. Even many legal scholars who reject his views on Israel and Hamas consider his arrest to be a dangerous violation of free speech principles, and we share this concern. Mr. Trump described Mr. Khalil's detention as "the first arrest of many to come," a sign that the president wants to chill speech among the many immigrants on university campuses.

What is the most effective response to Mr. Trump's campaign against universities? For people outside higher education, this is a moment to speak publicly about why universities matter. They promote public health, economic growth and national security. They are the largest employers in some regions. They are an unmatched, if imperfect, engine of upward mobility that can [alter the trajectory](#) of entire families.

For people in higher education, this is a moment both to be bolder about trumpeting its strengths and to be more reflective about addressing its weaknesses. About those shortcomings: Too many professors and university administrators acted in recent years as liberal ideologues rather than seekers of empirical truth. Academics have tried to silence debate on legitimate questions, including about [Covid lockdowns](#), [gender transition treatments](#) and [diversity, equity and inclusion](#). A Harvard University survey last year found that only 33 percent of graduating seniors felt comfortable expressing their opinions about controversial topics, with moderate and conservative students being the most worried about ostracization.

“The insularity of American academia is appalling,” said Michael Roth, the president of Wesleyan University. “It has led to massive resentment against intellectual elites.” This insularity does not justify Mr. Trump’s policies, but it does help explain the dearth of conservatives defending universities today. Universities will be in a stronger long-term position if they recommit themselves to open debate.

As for trumpeting the sector’s strengths, the leaders of American higher education have been [largely timid and quiet](#) in the face of the Trump onslaught. “The people who are attacking higher education are talking nonstop,” said Holden Thorp, a chemist and former university administrator who runs the Science family of journals. “And the people leading higher education are not saying very much.” (Mr. Roth, a frequent critic of the administration, is an exception.) University presidents seem to be hoping that if they keep their heads down, the threat will pass — or at least pass by their campus. They are unlikely to be so fortunate.

In Mr. Trump’s first term, administrators and professors sometimes made the opposite mistake and commented on political issues about which they had little expertise. College presidents [do not need](#) to become pundits. But they do need to defend the core mission of their institutions when it is under attack. University leaders would help themselves, and the country, by emerging from their defensive crouches and making a forthright case for inquiry, research, science and knowledge.

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