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NEW GENERATION
AT A CROSSROADS: DECLINE OR CHANGE?

Young people in Italy and their transformation since the nineties

Gianluca Argentin

Introduction

The aim of this chapter¹ is to investigate the state of young people in Italy and how it has changed since the 1990s. Our interpretation is based on transition from childhood to adulthood (Cavalli and Galland, 1993). In this approach, the term young people describes individuals at a particular time when they are facing major changes: concluding their studies, finding a job, and leaving their family (and, eventually, creating a new family and having children). In keeping with this theoretical framework, we reviewed not only previous research explicitly focused on young people but also research on the social institutions that play a crucial role in the transition processes (in particular, labour market, family and welfare state). Therefore, we focused on literature on the Italian family, educational system and labour market. In the sections that follow we describe the peculiar characteristics of these institutions in the Italian case and we analyse how they have changed in recent decades. In particular, we show how the policy reforms and cultural changes in these social domains have strongly affected the new generation’s living conditions. We also focus on an issue which has arisen from these changes and is now emerging in youth literature, namely intergenerational equity.

The chapter is structured as follows. In the first part, in an attempt to identify the cultural climate guiding researchers and shaping their questions on young people, we review Italian research on the state of young people since the 1950s. In the second, we present the results described in previous literature and try to identify the peculiarity of Italian young people within the European perspective. The third briefly describes the major changes that have occurred in Italian social institutions in recent years and how these changes have affected the characteristics of young people. Finally, we conclude by trying to identify the key tensions of the new generation in Italy.
A long story: previous research on young people in Italy

As Cavalli and Leccardi (2013) recently observed, it is possible to identify four periods characterising research on Italian young people: the emergence of this topic during the 1950s; the second period of the unexpected youth movements of the 1960s; a long period lasting almost thirty years, which established the key findings about Italian young people and focused on the slow transition into adulthood; and finally, the new issue of youth penalisation and inter-generational inequity.

Whereas research during the 1950s focused on the apathy of young people towards politics, the unexpected youth movements of the 1960s caused researchers to examine completely new issues. Indeed, in those years, the autonomy of young people emerged in many different ways. Researchers detected elements of youth emancipation from families and investigated the role of young people as innovators in respect of collective values and attitudes.

For our purposes, the third and fourth periods of research are the most relevant. The third, the 1980s and 1990s, shaped the main characteristics of young people in the Italian context and researchers have been able to bring into focus a large set of key findings. Moreover, it was during the 1980s and 1990s that IARD (Istituto Assistenza Ragazzi Dotati), a private research institute focused on young people, developed national large-scale surveys on the younger generation (Cavalli, 1984; Cavalli and de Lillo, 1988, 1993; Buzzi et al., 1997, 2002, 2007). This data collection, running for many decades on the same topic with a stable questionnaire, is quite unique in Italian social research and, thanks to these verified data scholars have obtained many crucial findings about Italian young people. It was during those years that researchers identified the crucial issues of young people’s slow transition into adulthood and its dramatic lengthening over a number of years. Indeed it is interesting to observe how the definition of young people changed by comparing the different waves of IARD surveys: in 1983 the age range for being considered young was 15–24 years old; it became 15–29 in 1990 and it ended up 15–34 in 2000. During the 1980s and 1990s, it was necessary to stretch the definition to be able to describe the transition processes to adulthood. Part of this research period focused more on values, underlining the increasing relevance of family ties and the enclosure of young people in micro-networks as they abandoned the political scene. During the 1980s and 1990s, young people ceased to identify themselves as a category promoting specific needs and issues and shifted more in the direction of a consumer cluster. The young generation, during that period, enjoyed hitherto unknown opportunities: more education, but also more free time and an increasing amount of resources to spend in the leisure market. Yet, shadows characterised this period as well and the issue of youth penalisation started to emerge, predictably in the labour market, where youth unemployment rose and became a social concern, but also in leisure because of an increase in addictive behaviours. We describe the main findings of this research period in greater depth later: what is relevant here is that a wide spectrum of themes was investigated and the conceptual framework of ‘youth condition’ was explicitly adopted.

The fourth period of research on young people emerged at the beginning of the new century and exploded in recent years. Those of the young generation are considered a penalised category and, as we show below, this strand of research adopts the frame of intergenerational equity (Schizzerotto et al., 2011; Fasano and Mignolli, 2012). Many recent studies have centred on concerns about the state of young people and show a strong orientation towards policy recommendations. A crucial topic in this research period is labour market flexibility and its consequences for young people’s occupational stability. Changes in labour market regulation (adopted in the late 1990s) and the economic crisis led to a worsening of Italian young people’s situation, exacerbating unresolved long-term problems. Many studies investigate how labour
market precariousness affects family formation and fertility choices and also young people’s attitudes and feelings about the future. An increasing social concern about the young generation is that it could be lost, trapped in a sequence of unstable jobs impoverishing its human capital and not allowed to plan for the future. Media, policymakers and social science researchers underline this risk (Dell’Aringa and Treu, 2011; Schizzerotto et al., 2011; Samek Lodovici and Semenza, 2012; Buzzi, 2013; Cavalli and Leccardi, 2013). As we will see, the general picture is mixed, but the forecasts are not good. What happens to the young generation of Italians will probably happen to the entire country. Indeed, in general, but especially regarding young people, Italy is at a turning point and must choose between trying to maintain the fragile equilibrium and introducing structural changes to establish a new one.

**State of young people: long-standing but unsustainable equilibrium**

The aim of this section is to describe the state of young people in Italy at the beginning of the twenty-first century to provide an overall picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-crisis equilibrium. This general view should support the next section, in which we focus on the changes introduced by new economic and social conditions. As we have stated above, our review considers key findings regarding young people in three crucial domains/institutions: education, labour and family. Moreover, we enrich the structural description by extending it to cover young people’s values, focusing especially on the role played by the new generation in the political arena.

In terms of the educational system, young Italians have, for some time, shown lower levels of education compared with their European peers (OECD, 2012). The main gap appears at the tertiary level, primarily as a consequence of the Italian university system. Almost all university courses require four or five years for completion and lack vocational skills training. Also, at the upper secondary level, participation and completion rates are lower than in other countries. Moreover, the only academic track strongly orientated to the university, the licei, is not very popular and recruits its students mainly from the upper classes. On the other hand, the formal vocational upper secondary schools (‘istituti tecnici’ and ‘istituti professionali’) are not so integrated into the labour market and do not strongly hone their students’ skills (Buzzi, 2013). Not surprisingly, research has detected persistent social inequalities in education (Pisati, 2002a) and, with a few exceptions, recent analyses confirm this general picture (Ballarino and Schadee, 2006; Barone et al., 2010). If we look at wage returns in relation to educational credentials in the labour market, university graduates have little (if any) advantage over high school graduates (Reyneri, 2002, 2010), but the economic crises hit young people with a lower level of education harder (Reyneri and Pintaldi, 2013). What emerged during the 1990s was that participation in education in Italy was not only lower and less rewarding than elsewhere but also that Italian students developed lower skills than their colleagues in both maths and reading. More precisely, Italy showed sharply different local performances in international standardised tests: the Northern regions had good results whereas the South performed at the lowest level (Bratti et al., 2007). These gaps were (and still are) huge and are largely due to the sparse economic resources available to schools in the South (Bratti et al., 2007), and the consequent higher dropout rates in that region (Caretta and Mengoli, 2007). These results are not surprising considering that the economy of Southern Italy depends largely on public expenditure and the labour market relies heavily on the public sector.

These considerations introduce another crucial dimension into our analyses of the state of youth: Italy is (like Spain) a country characterised by incredibly high occupational penalisation of young people. The entry phase into the labour market is characterised by long-term
unemployment and the risk of job loss is higher among the young generation than among adults (Reyneri, 2002). Moreover, passive policies to protect the earnings of people who become unemployed were not readily available to young workers and there is no minimum wage or any other form of earning protection for young people who have not had a job for a while; at the same time, active policies to support the transition into the labour market are extremely weak (Gualmini, 1998; Reyneri, 2009). This situation is clearly worse in the South, where long-term unemployment rates are extremely high, especially for young people trying to get a public sector position and, in the interim, taking irregular and underpaid jobs. The situation is possibly worse for females, considering the conciliation issue (Reyneri, 2002), which forces them to get a job in the protected labour segment and therefore defer motherhood (Mencarini and Solera, 2011; Migliavacca, 2013), despite their increasing investment in education and labour market participation (Scherer and Reyneri, 2008). To sum up, Italy is an emblematic case of the Mediterranean welfare system (Esping-Andersen, 1998; Ferrera, 1998) where labour market regulation and workfare are designed to support the male breadwinner; not surprisingly, this system disadvantages young people and females and affects birth rates and new family formation processes. Indeed, Italian young people have shown a very slow transition into adulthood, leaving their parental home very late (Buzzi et al., 1997, 2002, 2007). IARD surveys have shown very clearly the sharp increase in the rate of young people living with their parents across cohorts throughout the 1980s and 1990s. All the cohorts born after the 1960s have been affected in this context (Mencarini and Solera, 2011) and the process lasted until the beginning of the new millennium, stabilising before the economic crisis (Buzzi, 2007, 2013). It must be said that this long-term residence at home was not entirely due to the longer duration of studies or to occupational difficulties: indeed it was higher in the South, but widespread also in the Northern regions among young workers who had the economic opportunity to leave home. A crucial role in regulating the transition seems to be played by social norms. Living for a long time with parents and leaving to form a new family are considered normal in the Mediterranean model (Rosina, 2013; Cicchelli and Galland, 2009). Not surprisingly, during the 1980s and 1990s, the step order in the transition to adulthood (finishing studies, getting a job, leaving home to create a new family, having children) remained mainly the same (Pisati, 2002a). Only two minor changes occurred in the transition process: more often, new generations started work before finishing university (Argentin and Triventi, 2010) and new couples more often cohabited than got married. The consequence of this secularised choice is that marriage is postponed even more than in the past (Micheli, 2006), because young partners prefer to test their relationship’s stability (Cicchelli and Galland, 2009). This is coherent with young people’s preference for reversible choices (Buzzi, 2007). Another reason behind the late transition to adulthood is that the family of origin is a comfortable place to stay: most parents are not demanding about housework or contributions to the family budget and allow a high degree of autonomy, especially in the case of sons (Sartori, 2007). Moreover, the family helps sons and daughters get jobs through social networks (Reyneri, 2002; Vinante, 2007) and also provides money transfers for young people, especially in the South. Evidently, the family of origin is a sort of refuge (Scabini and Donati, 1988), a place where everything can be negotiated (Buzzi et al., 2007), and where young people find strong and wide support. Youth can also rely on familial alliances to face the difficulties caused by labour markets and welfare state failures. This affective protection is expanding its domain and parents are more frequently defending children from their educational failures, even coming into conflict with teachers at school (de Lillo, 2013).

Not surprisingly, the surveys of values carried out since the mid-1980s show that young people attribute increasing relevance to family, partnership and friendship and decreasing relevance to politics, social effort and political and civic participation. This general trend in
youth values has been labelled the ‘rise of narrow sociality’ (de Lillo, 2007). It is notable that during the 1990s research also detected an increase in the rate of young people manifesting repugnance towards politics and a sharp decline in trust in political institutions (de Luca, 2007). Therefore, the public sphere was not only losing relevance in the daily life of new generations, but also being perceived more and more as dominated by forces far removed from young people and not representing their interests. Furthermore, this perception seems quite realistic, considering that policymakers decided to hit the new generation with a large number of the budget cuts and reforms required by the European Union and, afterwards, the spending reductions necessitated by the economic crisis. Later, we will come back to the relevance of those policies for young people. What seems clear is that the configuration of values and social norms, which emerged during the 1990s, seemed a perfect fit with the parallel equilibrium between the new generation, family and other social institutions. Despite its internal coherence, this equilibrium clearly showed tensions and unresolved issues, such as high youth unemployment, a decline in fertility, persistent inequality and increasing disparity in living conditions between North and South. All these well-known problems made the old equilibrium clearly unsustainable. As a consequence of the economic constraints imposed at first by the European Union and, later, by the economic crisis, the situation worsened at the beginning of the new millennium. As we will argue, it seems that Italy is facing a time of change regarding the state of its youth: the equilibrium of the 1990s seems to be collapsing under the weight of its contradictions and is not easily adaptable to the new macro-economic context.

Recent changes and their implications for Italian young people

At the end of the 1990s, two crucial reforms changed the institutional context framing young people’s transition to adulthood: in 1997 the government approved a labour market reform (the so-called ‘Legge Treu’), making it possible for firms to use temporary workers more easily and giving employees fewer rights than those provided in the usual standard contracts. The idea was that temporary jobs should substitute unemployment and moonlighting, especially among young people. In 2003, a second reform took place, the so-called ‘Riforma Biagi’, which simply reinforced the previous flexibility process. This ‘partial and targeted deregulation’ (Esping-Andersen and Regini, 2000) was primarily directed at young cohorts entering the labour market. In 1999, Italy joined the so-called ‘Bologna process’ and in 2001, universities changed to a three-tier structure. The new academic certification structure is constituted by three steps: a first-level degree (‘Laurea triennale’ based on a course lasting three years), a second-level degree (‘Laurea magistrale’, based on two additional years) and doctoral studies (three years in addition to the ‘Laurea magistrale’). The reform produced a considerable increase in the number of courses and programmes offered by university colleges around the country, including those in small and peripheral cities.

The mix of these two reforms generated a significant shift in the institutional settings in which new generations transition into adulthood (Argentin and Triventi, 2010). More precisely, research detected an increase in university enrolment up to a level exceeding labour market demand for highly skilled workers (Reyneri, 2010; Barone, 2012). This judgement is strongly debated at the moment and scholars do not agree about the labour market equilibrium regarding degree holders (see Scuola Democratica. Learning for democracy, vol. I (2013), which collects the opinions of various authors on this topic). The parallel increase in temporary contracts concentrated mainly on people entering the labour market raised worries about its precariousness for new generations (Barbieri and Scherer, 2009). Labour market flexibility meant young workers were less frequently unemployed than in the past but generated precarious working
conditions because of the absence of active labour market policies (Anastasia et al., 2011; Sestito, 2011).

Educational expansion, which led to a minor decline in the effects of social origins on university enrolment, but probably also to an increase in dropping out, must also be taken into account (Argentin and Triventi, 2010; Ballarino and Schizzerotto, 2011; Barone, 2012). University growth led to more educational inflation than equalisation: indeed, enrolment on post-tertiary courses increased at the beginning of the new millennium and research has shown persistent inequality at the top of educational distribution (Argentin, 2011; Argentin et al., 2012). At the same time, a new factor increased inequality at the bottom of the educational system: young immigrants or children born in Italy of foreign parents show lower educational achievement (Azzolini and Barone, 2012) and higher risks of dropping out (Checchi, 2011). The traditional gender gap switched from female to male disadvantage during the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century (Del Boca and Giraldo, 2011). Moreover, many tertiary degrees do not meet firms’ occupational demands (Cappellari and Leonardi, 2011), which leads to declining returns for education. This is particularly true of an economic phase characterised by saturation of skilled occupational positions. This structural contingency is even affecting social mobility opportunities for middle-class children (Marzadro and Schizzerotto, 2011). This situation undermines the perception of benefits associated with education (Giorgi et al., 2011) and, not surprisingly, university expansion has stopped in recent years. The risk of a return to a decline in educational investment is especially relevant in an Italian context, in which young people do not consider skills to be the crucial factor determining labour market success (Vinante, 2007) and in which family networks play a crucial role in employment allocation (Reyneri, 2002). It should be understood that the reduction in public expenditure affected education directly, for example, by increasing university tuition fees or reducing teacher turnover (through restrictions on retirement and increased school/class sizes). This meant that within 20 years Italy had the oldest teaching labour force among the industrialised countries (Argentin, 2013): this is a factor which probably affects innovation in schools (i.e., information and communication technologies use and the development of digital skills) and plausibly underlies the widespread student feeling that school is a meaningless experience (Argentin, 2007; Fondazione Gianni Agnelli, 2011).

The economic constraints due to EU agreements and economic crisis affected labour market opportunities for young people in many ways (Sestito, 2011). In the last decade the new generation has been facing a reduction in recruitment by the public sector, increasing unemployment (non-renewable temporary contracts) and small firms’ closure on a massive scale. The worsening labour market conditions have led to a situation where unemployment is accompanied by permanent employment in unstable jobs (Buzzi, 2013; Migliavacca, 2013) and lower wages for young cohorts entering the labour market (http://www.lavoce.info/chi-paga-la-crisi-30–40-anni/). This problem has affected young people in particular because of the existence of many fake self-employed workers (the so-called parasubordinati; Reyneri, 2009) and because many temporary contracts do not guarantee workers protection (Anastasia, 2011; Cappellari and Leonardi, 2011). This occupational instability translates into high levels of perceived uncertainty for young people and their parents (Simonazzi and Villa, 2007), generating worries for the future at the individual level (Fellini, 2006; Bertolini, 2012) and probably threatening pre-existing solidarity networks among temporary workers (Fullin, 2004).

Moreover, the financial crisis restricted bank rules on mortgages, another factor reactivating delay mechanisms in the transition to adulthood (Buzzi, 2013). A powerful reinforcement of social concerns about uncertain youth employment lies in the fact that this problem is affecting
highly skilled young workers, a group not traditionally targeted by labour market policies but now facing serious difficulties (Samek Lodovici and Semenza, 2012). Furthermore, it must be recognised that labour market disadvantages are greater for young females, because of their persistent segregation in less rewarding fields of study (Barone, 2011) but probably also because of labour market discrimination (Argentin and Triventi, 2010). Moreover, childcare is an activity managed mainly by the family, namely grandmothers and grandfathers (Saraceno, 2011). Occupational and welfare state politics do not properly support young women’s labour market participation (Del Boca and Giraldo, 2011) and, not surprisingly, conciliation is one of the problems raised most frequently by young workers (Migliavacca, 2013).

This is the general picture, but the situation is very much worse in the Southern regions, which are economically weaker than the North and strongly reliant on the public sector. The concentration of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) in Southern Italy is extraordinary from a comparative perspective (Delzio, 2011). A clear sign of this divide is the re-emergence of South–North migration, a phenomenon that characterised Italian society of the 1960s (Pannichella, 2009; Moccetti and Porello, 2011) and the parallel appearance of long-distance commuters (Delzio, 2011). Migration is particularly worrying nowadays, because the young people who move are highly skilled. Indeed, low-skilled jobs are assigned to foreign immigrants in the Northern regions and this labour market sector does not attract young workers from the South. Conversely, sons and daughters from high social classes have the opportunity to improve the returns on their investment in education by migrating from the South to the North (Moccetti and Porello, 2011). This process has a clear side effect: a brain drain and impoverishment of human capital in Southern Italy. The problem is even more severe: indeed it affects the entire country; the available data show that there is an increase in the number of skilled young Italians living abroad and that Italy is not able to attract skilled foreign researchers (Balduzzi and Rosina, 2012; Moccetti and Porello, 2011).

Consequently, because of longer study duration, labour market difficulties and home market rigidities, the new generations are delaying family formation once again. The positive signals which emerged at the beginning of the new millennium have faded (Buzzi, 2013) and research findings have detected a decrease in the number of young people living with parents through choice and an increase in the number who say that it is a consequence of external constraints (Facchini, 2013). The crucial difference, compared with the 1990s, is that the Mediterranean family is not as strong as it was in the past (Micheli, 2006). Currently, the bad economic situation is affecting parents as well, and they are older than the previous cohort of mothers and fathers (Migliavacca, 2012). Moreover, the investment required by new generations is higher than in the past: longer studies in more distant regions, more expensive lifestyles, and daughters more frequently active in the labour market and requiring childcare. Sociologists and demographers suggest that, within families, intergenerational exchanges are facing increasing pressure (Saraceno, 2012; Facchini, 2013). Mothers and fathers are now taking charge of their children’s uncertainty and, at the same time, facing their own. This shift is clearly a powerful lever of change in the Italian welfare equilibrium, based mainly on traditional roles within families. The increasing (and hitherto non-researched) relevance of grandparents in their families’ life (Saraceno, 2011) is one of the more visible restructurings of family boundaries and ties (Donati and Naldini, 2012). The risk is twofold: on the one hand, Italian welfare, strongly based on family and intergenerational exchanges, would collapse if the households’ solidarity networks weaken; on the other hand, the new Italian generations could experience different citizenship on the basis of their family background and economic resources, living with social inequalities that are greater than in the past (Saraceno, 2012; Brandolini and D’Alessio, 2011).
A slow decline or an (un)expected sea change?

The general picture drawn in previous pages shows that, in Italy, young generations have been facing increasing difficulties since the 1990s. More precisely, the structural constraints on their transition to adulthood have become stronger in recent years because of the economic crisis and cuts in public expenditure. The Italian government has not been investing in young people for a long time (Livi Bacci, 2011), instead, relying on the key role played by families to support their well-being. This lack of investment is odd, considering that Italian young people are a group numerically smaller across cohorts. Moreover the condition of Italian young people is becoming highly problematic. Indeed, as we have seen in the previous paragraph, there are many signs of deterioration in the state of Italian young people and concerns about their future are increasing. Especially in the Southern regions, young people’s economic and social situation seem unsustainable in the long run: we are losing entire new generations unable to build their pathway to adulthood. It must be remembered that the new Italian generations are experiencing better living conditions than their parents did (i.e., more education); at the same time, there is converging evidence that the last cohorts (born after the 1960s) are losing ground and that the constant intergenerational improvement of the past is no longer so obvious (Schizzerotto et al., 2011). Income distribution is typical of the general trend of many other living conditions: it has been growing for people born in the first half of the twentieth century, but declining for recent cohorts (Brandolini and D’Alessio, 2011). A crucial role in this worsening of intergenerational equity has been played by the policies introduced since the 1990s (Pertile et al., 2011). Are younger Italian generations destined to experience declining opportunities and worse living conditions?

Until now, in contrast to many other Mediterranean countries, Italian young people have not started collective movements or at least demonstrations against the status quo; resignation has prevailed (Delzio, 2011; Meloni, 2011), although new parties and political actors are emerging. The new generations, unlike those of the past, are not fighting to impose their rights. This absence of collective action is probably due to an orientation towards narrow sociality; however, the anaesthetic of family resources (Livi Bacci, 2011) and intergenerational economic transfers (Brandolini and D’Alessio, 2011) have played a crucial role. But, as we have seen, the familiar welfare state is facing increasing tensions and seems less and less able to maintain the previous equilibrium. Moreover, it is possible to identify at least three other engines of change, which could potentially lead to policy interventions and significant changes in the state of Italian young people.

The first engine of change is that the intellectual and political system is (finally!) focusing on the intergenerational inequality of policy interventions (Schizzerotto et al., 2011; Dell’Aringa and Treu, 2011). The inter-temporal balance in policymaking is a perspective gaining relevance (Fasano and Mignolli, 2012) and the idea that young people are a penalised category is widespread in Italy. The idea of considering the effects on young people of each policy intervention is emerging (Livi Bacci, 2011), such as the proposal to design an extraordinary plan to support young people, especially in the Southern regions (Rosina and Voltolini, 2011; Delzio, 2011) and with regard to labour market policies (Sestito, 2011).

A second engine of change is a (so far) underestimated transformation of the young population living in Italy. The decline in the Italian birth rate is mainly due to the increase in the number of children born to foreign families; these are not Italian citizens, despite their permanent residence in Italy and their participation in the Italian educational system. These young people are living a double life (Ricucci, 2012), belonging at the same time to their culture of origin and to Italian culture and actively helping to reshape it. It should be noted that Italian young people are
ambivalent towards immigrants, showing openness but also the persistence of stereotypes (Peri, 2007). The young ‘foreign Italians’ are the group mainly affected by the general crises of the Italian model, because they have fewer family resources on which to rely (Livi Bacci, 2011; Saraceno, 2012) and, at the same time, they are not fully recognised by the State. Hence, a new (large) generation of young people is growing up in our country: it would not be surprising if, in the future, they asked for the recognition of their rights, expecting full citizenship.

The third engine of change lies in the political system. Older people govern the entire Italian representation system (parties, firms, trade unions, professions) and the system was not open to youth participation and innovation (Cavalli and Leccardi, 2013). This lack of representation is probably one of the reasons for the poor attention to young people in the policies implemented in the last 20 years. Nonetheless, something is quickly changing at this level: in the last elections, a striking result was the consensus gained by ‘Cinque stelle’, a political movement born on the Web with a conspicuous number of young members and supported by young voters (Biorcio and Natale, 2013). More recently something even remarkable occurred: the current prime minister is the youngest in Italian history. He is a 40-year-old who started his political career as mayor of Florence and gained electoral consensus promoting the idea of renewing the political class through a decisive change in people in leading positions. Hence, it seems that, finally, the political system is invested in the need for change, driven by young people’s worries about the country’s decline. The political answers to these requests for transformation will decide not only the future of Italy but also the story of Italian young people and their movements.

Note

1 Antonio de Lillo asked me to help him with this chapter, because his illness was causing him sight problems and did not allow him to write properly. Despite his situation, he was willing to reflect upon Italian research on young people, one of his favourite topics. We were supposed to work together on this text, but we did not in the event have enough time. I want to dedicate this chapter to his memory and to his passion for social research. I thank Mauro Migliavacca for his useful bibliographical suggestions.

Bibliography


New generation at a crossroads


