



Precarious Workers' Unions in Greece and Italy:

A comparative study of their organizational characteristics and their movement repertoire

Markos Vogiatzoglou

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Abstract

This thesis is the outcome of a six-year-long research, aiming to understand how the flexibility-era South European workers unionize and engage in collective action. I define as Precarious Workers' Unions (PWUs) labor collectives the members of which (a) are subjected to atypical labor relations; (b) lack adequate access to the welfare state structures; (c) have developed a collective conscience of belonging to a post-Fordist labor force. The PWUs' main characteristics put under scrutiny are: member recruitment, decision-making procedures, services offered, industrial and movement action undertaken. A dual comparison is employed. On the one hand, similarities and differences are sought between the Italian PWUs and their Greek counterparts. On the other hand, an internal comparison is conducted between each country's organizations, in order to locate and explain potential divergences from the national model.

Despite the fact that the first unionizing initiatives in Greece and Italy were facing similar socio-economic structural conditions, their mobilization developed in a diversified way. Lately, a re-convergence between the two countries' PWUs is to be noted: Mixed inside-outside the workplace interventions, a resurgence of mutualist practices and the inability to integrate in the formal trade union structure, combined with a relevant role in the broader social movement activities, are its main characteristics. This –partly eclectic, partly innovative- character of the PWUs is leading to the assumption that they are not only challenging the notion of precarity as perceived up to date, but also the very idea of what a union is and how it is supposed to operate.

Jury:



Prof Donatella della Porta (EUI, supervisor), Prof Nick Fantasia (Smith College) Markos Vogiatzoglou (candidate), Prof Hanspeter Kriesi (EUI), Prof Maria Kousis (University of Crete)

Bio

Born in 1978, Athens, Greece. I studied Sociology at the Panteion University, Athens. Then, some more Sociology at the University of Crete, Rethymnon. I wrote my PhD at the European University Institute, under the supervision of Donatella della Porta. I am currently working as a Research Associate at the *COSMOS*, Scuola Normale Superiore, for the ERC-funded project Mobilizing for Democracy. In the past, I've worked as a II-center operator, internet technician, junior accountant, video-store clerk - and as a manager at an advertising company (that was a total failure).