



The Contentious Politics of Higher Education

Struggles and Power Relations within the English and Italian Universities

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Abstract

Movement scholars have generally overlooked the study of mobilizations within institutions. Even less known are the effects that mobilizations within institutions provoke. By combining field theory and social movement approach, my thesis aims to shed light on the variety of institutional impacts that the recent global wave of student mobilizations has produced within some Italian and English universities. More notably, I have looked at the way and to what extent student mobilizations have brought about changes in the university life in terms of student services and facilities, courses and curricula reorganization, and governance structure. To explore it, I have singled out three English (University of Birmingham, Sussex University, and University College of London) and three Italian universities (University of Turin, Sapienza of Rome, and Federico II of Naples), which have witnessed high levels of student mobilization over the past years (2008/2013). Have these mobilizations produced an impact within the university field?

My argument is that the institutional context of universities does matter in explaining the variety and diversity of impacts that such mobilizations have brought about.

**Jury:**

Prof Nicholas Crossley (University of Manchester), Lorenzo Cini (candidate) Prof Donatella della Porta (EUI/SNS, supervisor), Prof Rachel Brooks (University of Surrey)

Bio

Lorenzo Cini is a current research fellow at the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Scuola Normale Superiore of Pisa. He held a PhD degree in Social and Political Sciences at the European University Institute of Florence, conducting his research on the contentious politics of higher education in Italy and England. More notably, he investigated the array of university mobilizations arisen in England and Italy in opposition the recent neoliberal reforms on higher education. On this topic, Lorenzo Cini has published several articles and chapter contributions in edited volumes and journals. Over the past five years, he has also carried out research in the field of political philosophy and theory by working on the concepts of democracy, justice and equality. On these topics, he recently published the book, *Civil Society and Radical Democracy* (2012), and, in collaboration with Professor Brunella Casalini, the volume of political philosophy on *Justice, Equality, and Difference. A Guide to the Reading of Contemporary Political Philosophy* (2012).