

## Call for Papers - SINAPPSI<sup>1</sup>

### Crisis of labour: causes, consequences and policy actions

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The pandemic crisis has been initially considered as a turn for labour markets, with many commentators claiming a new surge in labour power and unprecedented wage growth<sup>2</sup>. Greater worker power has been even put forward as a result of the so called Great Resignation<sup>3</sup>. However, it is progressively becoming clear that labour markets have been only temporarily heated, actually responding to closures and sectoral recomposition of labour demand, which have been the real source of temporal wage growth particularly in some specific sectors largely affected by the pandemic, like healthcare. However, the quit rate has not been higher than its historical trend and together unemployment from supply side is not surging, but rather stabilising<sup>4</sup>. If the pandemic did not play the expected role of fostering a new turn for labour power, the arrival of inflation (Stiglitz and Regmi 2022), largely acting as a regressive distributive channel, is progressively eroding real wages and provoking generalised labour unrest in some countries like in the UK where strikes are surging mainly in essential sectors like healthcare and education<sup>5</sup>.

The Special issue *Crisis of labour: causes, consequences and policy actions* seeks to collect contributions dealing with evidence and mechanisms behind the crisis of labour that capitalist economies are facing. That the labour market is in a deep crisis since its liberalization with the inception of the neo-liberal phase is nowadays largely acknowledged (Howell 2021). The crisis of labour unfolds at least in two directions:

1. What people do, that is their working activities, their functions and operations and the workplace in which they are related via employment regulations more or less structured. However, seemingly similar jobs reveal to be very different in their quality and pay. In fact, jobs and occupations are mainly executed inside workplaces which have been increasingly recognised to be the first level of generation of asymmetries and inequality (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.* 2020). Therefore the structural composition of the production activities, being service or rather manufacturing, plays a major role in the defining what people do at work. Together with industry, the firm/workplace in which the work is operated is another major driver of wage dispersion (Barth *et al.* 2016).

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<sup>1</sup> **SINAPPSI** is the quarterly scientific journal of INAPP. The most recent issues can be accessed online: <https://inapp.org/it/sinappsi>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/bcf3d56c-16b3-4c36-acd8-b08cd0337202>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.businessinsider.com/year-workers-said-no-labor-shortages-unions-great-resignation-quits-2022-5?r=US&IR=T>

<sup>4</sup> <https://rooseveltinstitute.org/2022/10/21/why-unemployment-can-stay-low-while-we-fight-inflation/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-62134314>

2. How much and on the basis of what people are paid. Wages have seen a continuous compression, both over time and across sectors. While the increasing dichotomy between capital and labour income has been largely documented by studies about declining labour share, less attention has been paid to wage asymmetries across occupations and sectors. Indeed, while top-level managerial positions have been recording an increasing remuneration, the opposite occurred in terms of bottom occupations (Bivens and Mishel 2013; Cetrulo *et al.* 2022).

To short-term causes due to pandemic and inflation effects, long terms structural trends add up. In fact, the disempowerment of labour has occurred for intertwining reasons and it is manifested in several empirical instances. Reasons behind the crisis of labour range from i) micro-level determinants such as employers and firm-level wage setting schemes, ii) sectoral and industry level determinants, likewise heterogeneous sectoral wage bargaining systems, productive specialization, deindustrialization and rise of the service sectors, iii) and macro-level and institutional determinants, as generalised weakening of labour market institutions together with a new composition of the labour market, characterised since the eighties by the progressive entry of women in formal labour markets. In many instances such processes tend to stratify and intersect but are generically signs of a deep and long-lasting reorganization of labour markets.

The Cfp, with the scope of understanding causes, consequences and policy solutions to address the crisis of labour, collects contributions on the following research themes:

1. **Thematic line 1:** wage setting schemes, wage-bargaining and negotiation, wage dispersions (firm-level analysis) and role of employers power.
2. **Thematic line 2:** industrial and territorial specialization giving rise to lock-in effects (industry and geographical level analysis) in detrimental and bad occupations
3. **Thematic line 3:** feminilization of labour markets, occupational segregations and gender-wage gaps particularly in light of the pandemic effects
4. **Thematic line 4:** role of labour market institutions to revert the crisis of labour in particular minimum wages, collective bargaining, income support schemes.

**Contributions are expected from a multidisciplinary perspective, from economics to economic sociology, labour history and labour management studies. Within these subjects, we urge the submission of original papers and not submitted to other journals, of length between 5,000 and 8,000 words, for publication in issue 2/2023.**

They should be received **by 30 April 2023** and sent to [sinappsi@inapp.org](mailto:sinappsi@inapp.org). Journal style and formatting rules are available here: [https://www.inapp.org/it/sinappsi/english-version#instruction\\_for\\_authors](https://www.inapp.org/it/sinappsi/english-version#instruction_for_authors).

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