

Labour conflict, forms of organization and class

Call for papers

Internationally coordinated themed collection sponsored by

Global Labour Journal

Partecipazione e Conflitto

Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios del Trabajo

The Economic and Labour Relations Review



Editors:

Maurizio Atzeni, Centre for Labour Relations, CEIL/CONICET, Argentina

Jenny Chan, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

Devi Sacchetto, University of Padua, Italia

Given their role in shaping the outcomes of capital-labour relationships inside and outside workplaces, conflict, collective action, and organization have been central themes for the field of industrial relations. Recent research has empirically broadened this field by looking at forms of worker self-organization based on networks of solidarity that have emerged parallel to or beyond formal unions. Such research has looked at changes emerging in the platform economy (Tassinari and Maccarrone, 2020; Chan, 2021a), in precarious contexts in the south of the world (Anner, 2018; Marinaro, 2018; Rizzo, 2017), and among migrants (Alberti and Però, 2018; Perrotta and Sacchetto, 2014; Chan, 2021b). Parallel to these empirical studies, other publications have addressed more theoretical issues, inviting researchers to abandon the eurocentrism of industrial relations (Nowak, 2021); to rethink the forms of organization, going beyond fetishizing of the trade union form (Atzeni, 2021); and to reflect on the need to more explicitly set class domination as the normative dimension, henceforth orienting labour scholars who are aiming to produce knowledge ‘on the side of workers’ (Gallas, 2021).

We aim to broaden a field originally structured around the capital-labour antagonism in the confines of factories to new forms of conflict and organization that could be better understood in the wider framework of class analysis. Various defined as ‘the multitude,’ ‘the precariat,’ ‘the subaltern,’ ‘the urban outcasts,’ or ‘the plebeians’ (who are composed in a variety of ways), class as a theoretical perspective has drawn the attention of critical social scientists.

The COVID-19 emergency has made more evident the deep-seated class, race/ethnic, and gender divides shaping working people's access to work and quality jobs. It has unveiled the conditions of insecurity, inequality, and precariousness suffered by many workers employed in activities essential to the functioning of urban and rural systems of production and distribution. Are the pandemic and the economic crisis creating conditions for the emergence of new forms of collective identification and organisation among 'essential workers'? Or, on the contrary, are we seeing further segmentation in job markets and workplaces as well as fragmentation of collective identities?

Internationally coordinated themed collection

In this proposed collection, we aim to include papers exploring different forms of workers' conflict and organization, and their relation to emerging forms of collective solidarity. We welcome labour scholars of different disciplinary traditions. We are particularly interested in the following areas:

- how the intersections between the spheres of production and reproduction shape or are shaped by labour conflict;
- the labour process in economic circuits providing essential services, such as logistics, food processing, health, and care;
- the role of the state in facilitating migration and proletarianization, labour legislation, and collective rights protections;
- the roles of the social composition of the labour force (by gender, race, nationality, legal status) and working-class culture and politics on the forms of workers' organizations;
- formal/informal work and labour regimes in border areas, special economic zones, economic clusters, global commodity chains, and production circuits;
- welfare and social security policies and their role in supporting or managing labour conflict;
- new technologies and new forms of control and solidarity;
- workers' structural power and working-class composition at choke points in logistic chains;
- intersections between the struggles of social movements and labour movements; and
- intersections between the spatiality of labour processes, accumulation models, and national politics in creating opportunities for workers' mobilization.

The rationale for an internationally coordinated themed collection

Rather than being for a typical special issue, we see this call as a coordinated international collection to be published in four journals representing different regions, languages, and scholarly traditions:

Global Labour Journal (<https://mulpress.mcmaster.ca/globallabour>)

Partecipazione e Conflitto (<http://siba-ese.unisalento.it/index.php/paco>)

Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios del Trabajo (<http://alast.info/relet/index.php/relet/index>)

The Economic and Labour Relations Review (<https://journals.sagepub.com/home/elr>)

In total we plan to include between 12 and 16 articles: Our working assumption is that each journal will publish three or four articles. A single editorial introduction will introduce the collections in all four journals. It will present a summary of the main arguments, key findings and methodological issues from all the accepted articles.

Publication will be conditional on the relevant journal's own peer review process and publication schedule. We envision that, in 2023, all four journals will publish the collection. The articles or pre-print articles should be made openly accessible. The articles will be written in English (three journals), Spanish and/or Portuguese (one journal). To facilitate cross-reading, the four journals are expected to refer to and link up the articles.

In building an international community of scholars, we are going to call for papers in the following two conferences:

- International Labour Process Conference (ILPC, www.ilpc.org.uk) in Padua, Italy, April 2022;
- Asociación Latinoamericana de Estudios del Trabajo (ALAST, <http://alast.info>), in Santiago de Chile, July 2022.

We see these events as the foundation for the creation of an international community of scholars engaged in a class-oriented analysis of labour conflict and organization. We will endeavour to meet with contributors (real or virtual depending on circumstances) to offer constructive feedback on papers submitted to the internationally coordinated themed collection. Contribution to a conference does not automatically guarantee eventual publication in a journal.

Deadlines

Call for papers: 31 **August 2021**

Abstracts (500 words): 30 **November 2021**

Selection of abstracts: 31 **December 2021**

Full papers (8,000 words, including notes and references): 31 **July 2022**

Final submission (to one of the four journals): 30 **September 2022**

Publication: **2023** (in accordance with the schedules of the four journals)

Selection of papers

Papers will be assessed using the peer review mechanisms normally implemented by each journal.

To effectively collaborate with journal editors and an international community of scholars, we set three stages of selection and evaluation preceding the formal evaluation: abstracts, peer discussion, and review of full papers at conferences (people not attending will receive feedback via email). We believe that this selection and evaluation can produce high quality submissions.

For inquires and further information: conflictandclass2021@gmail.com

Guest editors' biographies

Dr Maurizio Atzeni is a researcher at the Centre for Labour Relations, Argentinian National Research Council (CEIL/CONICET) based in Buenos Aires. He previously held positions at Loughborough and De Montfort Universities in the United Kingdom. He has published journal articles and chapters regarding the issue of labour conflict and precarious workers' collective organization. He is the author of *Workplace conflict: mobilization and solidarity in Argentina* and *Workers and labour in a globalised capitalism*. He is the co-editor of a forthcoming handbook on *The Global Political Economy of Labour*. Maurizio serves on the editorial board of *Work, Employment and Society*; the *Journal of Labour and Society*; and *Work in the Global Economy*. He is also a visiting associate professor at the University of Leicester, UK, and a certified associate professor in Italy.

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8791-9033>

Email: Maurizio Atzeni matzeniwork@gmail.com

Dr Jenny Chan is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. She co-wrote *Dying for an iPhone: Apple, Foxconn, and the lives of China's workers*, with Mark Selden and Pun Ngai (Chicago: Haymarket Books & London: Pluto Press, 2020). She also serves as a vice president of the International Sociological Association's Research Committee on Labour Movements (2018–present). Her research has been funded by the Early Career Scheme of the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong (2018-2021), the Junior Research Fellowship of the University of Oxford's Kellogg College (2015-2018), and the John Fell Oxford University Press Research Fund (2015-2016), among others. She is examining the impact of Chinese development strategies on the labor of logistics.

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4980-4048>

Email: Jenny Chan jenny.wl.chan@polyu.edu.hk

Dr Devi Sacchetto is the Associate Professor of Sociology of Labour at the Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Education, and Applied Psychology at the University of Padua. His research interests involve migration and labour processes, with a focus on the consequence of the reconfiguration of time and space for workers' experiences and the organization of production. He has been the coordinator of the PhD program in Social Sciences at the University of Padua since 2015. He has been the scientific director of different national and international research projects and is published in national and international journals. He is the scientific director for the Italian group on the research project, "Shipping Off Labour: Changing Staffing Strategies in Globalized Workplaces," The Research Council of Norway (2020-2024).

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3087-680X>

Email: Devi Sacchetto devi.sacchetto@unipd.it

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