

Call for papers

Beyond the energy crisis. The politics and political economy of inflation in uncertain times

Introduction

The energy crisis caused by the Ukraine war led to a generalised increase in inflation rates across EU countries. After two decades of low-price increases, governments and social partners had to respond to a new scenario relying on a policy toolbox which required significant fine-tuning to make it functional for the new economic and institutional context. The policies implemented and their outcomes have exhibited significant cross-country variation. Different degrees of exposure to the gas imported from Ukraine as well as the partisan orientations from governments have translated into different impacts and policies responses by governments. Even though inflation has moderated significantly since the second half of 2023, recent developments, including the increase in trade tariffs have created new uncertainties surrounding the consolidation of a low inflation path.

Several studies have already analysed the distributional impact of the inflation crisis (Caisl et al. 2023, Pallotti et al. 2023, Causa et al 2023, Aprea and Raitano 2025), the policy responses by governments to mitigate its impact (Amores et al. 2024, Bardazzi et al. 2024, Moreira et al. 2024, Tassinari et al. 2025) or the role of social dialogue and the adaptation of collective bargaining to the new environment (Janssen and Lübker 2023, Eurofound 2023, Molina 2023, Cova 2025). However, there is still limited evidence about the broader social and political implications of the inflation crisis. For instance, will some of the policies implemented to deal with the increase in inflation stay? Has the return of inflation prompted a lasting re-think or reconfiguration of policy tools at the disposal of governments and social partners? This may include a stronger indexation of wages and social benefits, or a more systemic approach to price controls for certain goods and services across the economy. Moreover, little is known about how the impact of the inflation crisis and the related policy responses on political actors, including governments and social partners. How has the handling of the inflation crisis impacted on governments and social partners legitimacy and on public opinion more broadly? How have social partners power resources and strategies mutated in the inflationary context? And how does the inflation crisis intersect with longer term dynamics and structures governing economic and social policies at the national and international level: Has the inflation crisis amplified or else freezed pre-existing trends, e.g. towards more state interventionism in wage setting and industrial policy?



Scope and Themes

The objective of this Special Issue is to broaden the scope of analyses about the impact and management of the inflation crisis. Inflation has historically played a crucial role in critical junctures, leading to a reconfiguration of economic, social and political attitudes and landscapes. On the one hand, periods of high inflation, their economic and distributional impacts and the policies implemented to deal with them, may trigger shifts in voter sentiment, hence influencing party competition and shaping citizens perceptions. As inflationary pressures continue to be a threat due to an uncertain economic and political global landscape, exploring the broader and medium-term implications of inflationary episodes becomes key to understand policy choices and their outcomes. Inflation may also change perceptions among the public about the capacity of social partners and political actors to effectively protect society from the increase in prices, hence causing disaffection from social groups. Getting a better understanding of the sectors and groups in the population that are more exposed and vulnerable to price increases will help to understand changing support to these actors.

We invite scholars from political science, economics, sociology, and related disciplines to submit original research that contributes to a deeper understanding of the interplay between inflation and social, economic and political developments and impacts. This special issue welcomes both theoretical and empirical contributions that address, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- Cases of worker mobilization in the context of the inflation crisis and their implications
- The role of social movements and public protests during the inflation crisis
- The impact of inflation on voter preferences and political participation.
- The role of social dialogue, collective bargaining and policy concertation in managing the inflation crisis
- Analysis of policy responses to the inflation crisis and their political and institutional determinants (partisan politics, producer group politics, business lobbying...)
- Ideational dynamics and conflicts over the interpretation of and the responses to inflation in the 21st century
- The role of the EU and the European Central Bank in shaping policy responses to inflation in EU Member States
- Media framing of inflation and its influence on (changing) public opinion
- The impact of inflation on trust in government and democratic institutions, including industrial relations
- Electoral consequences of inflation





- Case studies on inflation-induced political crises and voter mobilization
- Comparative and historical perspectives analysing the recent inflationary crisis with previous episodes
- Long-term consequences of inflation for democratic stability and governance

Those papers selected will be presented and discussed in a workshop taking place at the University of Bologna, Italy on the 9th-10th October in the context of the [MAINSOC \(Managing the Inflation Crisis through Social Dialogue\)](#) project, funded by the DG Employment.

The MAINSOC project will cover travel and accommodation costs for one author of each of the papers selected.

Those papers selected and presented at the MAINSOC Workshop in Bologna will be included in a special issue to be submitted to a top field journal (specific target to be confirmed) in early 2026.

Submission Guidelines

We welcome original research articles (6,000–8,000 words) addressing any of the above topics.

We encourage submissions that employ a variety of methodological approaches, including quantitative analysis of electoral data, qualitative case studies, experimental research, and mixed-method designs. Contributions engaging with industrial relations, comparative political economy, and social movement theory are particularly welcome.

Key Dates

- Abstract submission deadline: **June 15, 2025**
- Submission of first draft: **1 October 2025**
- Presentation and discussion of first draft at the MAINSOC Workshop in Bologna: **9-10 October 2025**
- Full paper submission deadline: **January 30, 2026**

Submission Process

1000 words abstracts should be sent to Oscar.molina@uab.es. Abstract proposals will be assessed by the editors of the SI. The abstracts must include a detailed description of the methodology used.



For inquiries regarding this special issue, please contact the Guest Editors at Oscar.molina@uab.es

We look forward to receiving your contributions!

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