

Congress of the Swiss Sociological Association 2024
University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland, Basel (MuttENZ),
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Call for Papers

Workshop Session: (De)gendering vulnerabilities

Organizers:

Stephanie Steinmetz (University of Lausanne, Quartier UNIL-Mouline), Nathalie Pasche (Hochschule für Soziale Arbeit FHNW), Christina Bornatici (FORS - Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences), Irene Kriesi (Swiss Federal University for Vocational Education and Training, SFUVET), Lucia Lanfranconi (Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts); Isabelle Zinn (University of Lausanne), Martina Peitz (Independent researcher)

Gender studies have always been concerned with how vulnerability is intertwined with gender. Looking back at historical developments in sociological research on gender, concepts of vulnerability have changed. While the focus was initially on socio-structural inequalities, which provided an important contribution to making gender differences visible, new concepts emerged focusing more on how vulnerability is linked to a collectively female experience of inequality. Postcolonial feminists criticized the essentialization of the category of 'woman' and called for the consideration of locally specific social and historical contexts. Criticism of the omnirelevance of gender, i.e., that gender differences are always and everywhere socially relevant, has also led to lively debates and new approaches. While approaches, such as hegemonic masculinity address vulnerable masculinities, intersectional perspectives seek to explore how different vulnerability categories (e.g., gender, ethnicity, social class, age) are intertwined. These productive debates resulted in more sophisticated and complex concepts of the relationship between gender and vulnerability. The planned workshop will critically discuss this relationship between gender and vulnerabilities in different research contexts. To what extent is gender (ir)relevant with regard to vulnerable groups and how does the category influence the perception and construction of vulnerabilities in the first place (e.g., single parents, employees in the low-wage sector, sex workers, welfare recipients)? How do organizations or national contexts (re)produce vulnerabilities and how is gender linked to it (e.g., science, school, labor market, social work)? How can we do methodological justice to the current complexity of change and persistence of gender differences? What are the challenges associated with this? This workshop welcome theoretical as well as empirical contributions using quantitative and/or qualitative methods.

Please submit your abstract of maximum 2000 characters by 5 January 2024 to stephanie.steinmetz@unil.ch