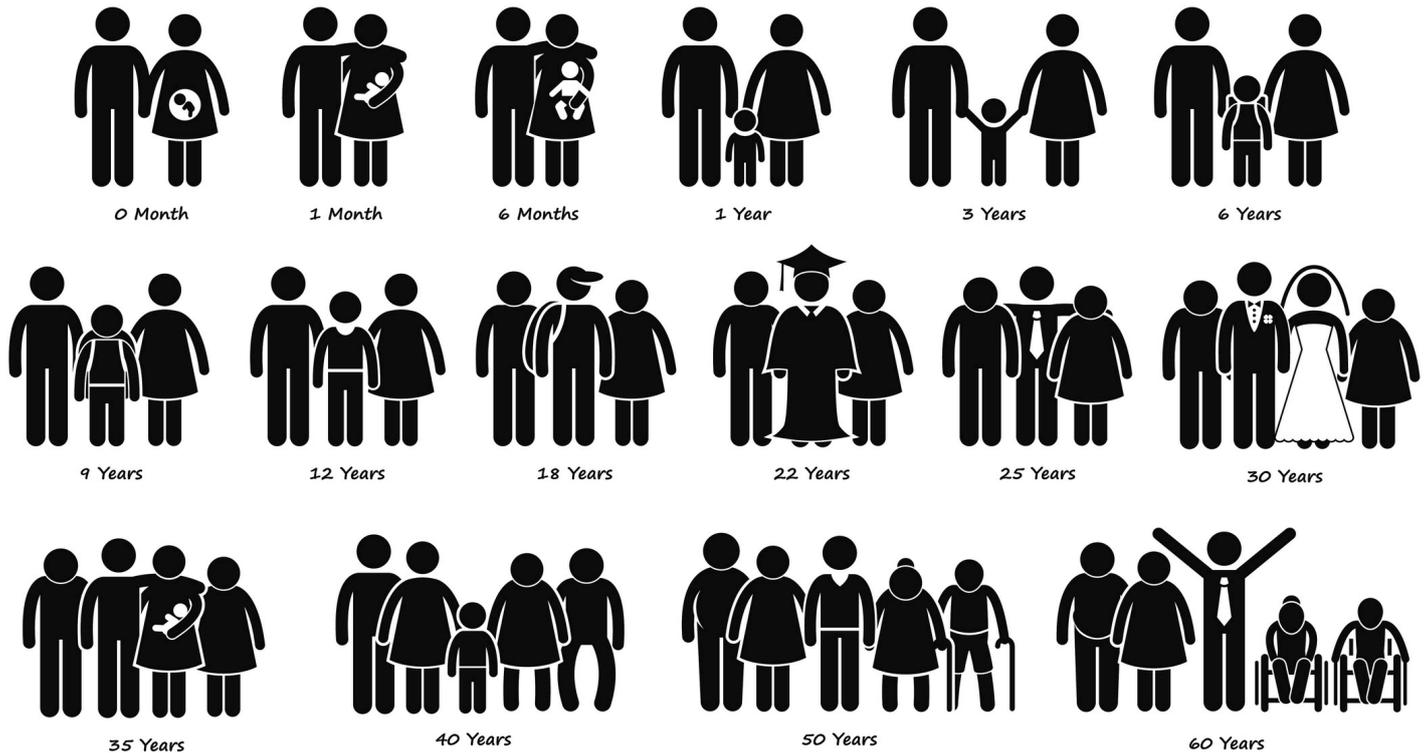


Call for abstract submissions - International workshop on November 2-3, 2017

AMBIVALENCES, VULNERABILITY AND LIFE COURSE: POTENTIALS, GAPS AND CHALLENGES



The aim of this workshop is to discuss the heuristic potential of the concept of ambivalence to study the accumulation of vulnerability over the life course.

As individuals move over the life course they experience multiple roles, they move over different contexts of socialization, and they accumulate resources and stresses across several life domains (family, intimacy, work, leisure, health, citizenship, migration, etc.). Individuals are thus likely to experience contradictory demands between these several spheres, which can generate the experience of ambivalences. Thus, if on the one hand, ambivalence can produce vulnerability; on the other hand, it can also represent a coping strategy to deal with vulnerability over the life course. For instance, individuals may experience psychological distress by trying to conciliate work and private life, but

the experience of ambivalence may also incentivize individuals to find more suitable and innovative strategies of family-work balance, and to become socially creative.

The experience of certain critical events and normative and non-normative life transitions can potentiate ambivalence in relationships, feelings, cognitions, attitudes, practices, and rituals which can reconfigure spaces of vulnerability. Actually, the life course has an inherently multilevel nature since human lives are built in the interplay between historical, normative, political, structural and subjective levels. However, these levels can often be in conflict with each other, triggering ambivalences in individuals, families and groups. For instance, how do couples cope with inconsistency between their perception of prevailing gender norms and their own strategies of family-work conciliation?

The current debates on life course studies often describe human lives in contemporary societies as characterized by uncertainty, complexity and contradiction, thus forced to deal with contingencies. Individuals oscillate and vacillate between agency and structure, resources and constraints, stability and instability, individualization and pluralization, reproduction and innovation, tradition and modernization, standardization and de-standardization, linearity and turbulence and claims of authority and influence. These dynamics are embedded in vulnerability structures, but it can also generate vulnerabilities in short or long-term. Therefore, we believe that ambivalence can be used as a framework to give sense to these complex dynamics. This requires theoretical and methodological elaborations of the concept.

How can the idea of ambivalence be useful for the study of vulnerability over the life course? What are the theoretical bridges between ambivalence, vulnerability and life course? How can we bring quantitative and qualitative methods together to approach these issues? In which way can we measure and operationalize ambivalence, and how can we use it as an interpretative concept? What is the current knowledge of an elaborated understanding of ambivalence? What are the gaps and potentials in the theoretical, methodological, and empirical developments of ambivalence to better tackle vulnerability over the life course? In which topics can we expect to give new insights by using the ambivalence framework? These are some of the key questions that we aim to address in our workshop.

USEFUL INFORMATION

>> Format

The workshop will be divided in two parts. First, we will have a round table with key-note speakers who will address the topics of ambivalence, vulnerability and life course both theoretically and empirically, followed by a joint discussion on the potentials, gaps and challenges for future research on the articulation of these three research topics. The second part consists of a discussion of the submitted manuscripts, previously distributed among the participants.

>> Types of manuscripts

We welcome both empirical and theoretical papers discussing themes on the intersection of ambivalence, vulnerability and life course, to be distributed in advance among the participants. In the workshop we intend to stimulate interdisciplinary discussions on these topics and to potentiate research networks.

>> Organizers

Kurt Lüscher, Eric Widmer, Rita Gouveia

>> Dates

November 2 (14:00-18:00) and 3 (09:00-13:00), 2017

>> Venue

University of Geneva

>> Registration

The registration is free and includes the social dinner on Thursday and the lunch on Friday. The participants are responsible for all other expenses.

>> Abstracts

Abstracts of the manuscripts should be submitted in English via e-mail to Rita.Gouveia@unige.ch. Abstracts should have at least 800 words and a maximum of 1000 words (excluding the title, the authors' name, e-mail, and institutional affiliation).

>> Deadline for abstract submissions

July 3, 2017

RECOMMENDED READING

>> Kurt Lüscher & Andreas Hoff A. (2013). **Intergenerational Ambivalence: Beyond Solidarity and Conflict**. In Isabelle Albert and Dieter Ferring (ed.) *Intergenerational relations in society and family: European perspectives*. London: Polity Press, (pp. 39-63).

>> Dario Spini, Laura Bernardi, and Michel Oris (2017). **Vulnerability across the Life Course**. *Research in Human Development*, Vol. 14, issue 1. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15427609.2016.1268891>

>> Eric D. Widmer & Kurt Lüscher (2011). **Les relations intergénérationnelles au prisme de l'ambivalence et des configurations familiales**. *Recherches familiales*, 8,(1), 49-60. doi:10.3917/rf.008.0049