

Call for papers

Vulnerability: Possible uses of a philosophical, legal, political and social concept

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Nowadays, in the discourse of the social, legal, political and philosophical sciences, the term "vulnerability" is used more and more frequently with different, and sometimes even contradictory, meanings. This is even truer when political consequences are drawn from the definition of certain individuals or social groups as "vulnerable". In particular, one cannot forget that the term "vulnerability" assumes a stigmatizing and disciplining character when used in risk management studies in contemporary social policy, where the objective is the identification of the "most vulnerable" social groups, in order to adopt standardized assessment strategies and to implement measures aimed at limiting social costs through the creation of resilient individuals able to find first of all in themselves, thanks to the techniques of behaviorist psychology, the resources to reduce their "vulnerability".

In the legal field, the category of "vulnerable subjects" or "weak subjects" appears in various sectors - criminal procedure, labor law, administrative law, etc. It is used to identify groups of people that supposedly require particular rules, procedures, and practices, because of their alleged "weakness".

Many are the groups qualified by law as "weak" or "vulnerable". Within them there are people with very different characteristics, such as women, children, the disabled, and victims of violence. From the legal point of view these categorizations raise acute concern, because they involve directly fundamental legal concepts such as autonomy, equality, and self-determination.

Given the extensive use of the "vulnerability" rhetoric in a wide range of disciplinary fields, it is important to understand and compare the most common conceptions of "vulnerability" in philosophical, legal, political and social language. This analysis will lead to a re-signification of the term, in order to separate the notion of "vulnerability" from stereotypes that tend to paint the so-called "vulnerable groups" or "vulnerable subjects" as victims. Framed in these terms, the term "vulnerability" opens up the possibility of a fruitful dialogue between theory and activism of historically marginalized and disadvantaged social groups, who are among the first to bear the costs of the austerity and welfare cuts of contemporary neoliberal policies, but who are also often the first to challenge their own qualification as "vulnerable".

This call for papers is interested in contributions that analyze the following issues:

- the contribution of specific authors on the subject of vulnerability;
- analysis of the legal category of "vulnerable";
- the investigation of different legal uses of the term "vulnerability";
- attempts to positively resignify concepts such as dependency, vulnerability, debility, insecurity, unfitness and failure;
- the relationship between vulnerability, insecurity, welfare and neoliberalism;
- vulnerability as a new foundational concept in moral and political theory;
- the use of the intersectional approach to analyze insecurity and vulnerability;
- the state's role in the creation of precarious situations (think of the plight of migrants, asylum seekers, and the expansion of the prison phenomenon in contemporary societies);
- vulnerability and contested bodies
- vulnerability and resilience
- love as an affection that makes people vulnerable but that can also be a source of collective political force.

This is an international call for papers, and it is open to scholars within different disciplinary fields, with a preference for theoretical, social, legal and political philosophy approaches. The manuscripts submitted must be previously unpublished and not submitted simultaneously to other journals. They should be submitted online no later than January 31, 2016 to the Revista Gênero & Direito (<http://periodicos.ufpb.br/ojs/index.php/ged/about/submissions#onlineSubmissions>), in file format docx, doc, or rtf, and should respect the criteria of the journal's editorial submission guidelines (<http://periodicos.ufpb.br/ojs/index.php/ged/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>).

Decision-making authority in regard to publication rests solely with the journal's Editors, who will send the paper to two peer-reviewers to assess its strengths and weaknesses, according to the double-blind peer-review formula. The Editors will notify the authors of the outcome of the peer review process and their decision within three months of submission.

The submitted manuscripts must be between 30,000 and 50,000 characters (spaces and references included). They must also be accompanied by: a) name, address, position, email address of the author; b) a short biographical note; b) an abstract in English containing clear and concise highlights of the article; c) a few key words.