



**CCIS** | Center for Comparative  
Immigration Studies

# The governance of 'vulnerable' migrants - who decides?

Thursday, March 10, 2022 | 12:00PM - 1:30PM

This will be a Hybrid In-Person/Zoom Event | ERC Conference Room 115



## **Dagmar Soennecken, PhD**

Dr. Dagmar Soennecken is an Associate Professor at York University (Toronto, Canada) where she is cross-appointed between the School of Public Policy and Administration (SPPA) and the Law and Society Program (Department of Social Science). From 2016 to 2020, she served as the academic director of the Master in Public Policy, Administration and Law (MPPAL) program. In 2019, she became the Editor-in-chief of *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, one of the oldest academic, peer-reviewed journals on forced migration.

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Legal and policy instruments at the global and European level increasingly emphasize the need to address the specific needs of vulnerable migrants. But what does it mean to be *vulnerable*? This talk is part of a larger, three-year, international research project ([VULNER](#)) funded by SSHRC, the FRQSC and the EU's Horizon 2020 program. The aim of the VULNER project is to investigate this question through field research in Europe (Belgium, Germany, Italy, and Norway), Africa (Uganda and South Africa), the Middle East (Lebanon), and North America (Canada). Currently, there is no solid understanding of the concrete meanings, practical consequences, and legal implications of "vulnerability". Meeting this research gap becomes even more crucial when it is recognized that every migrant is vulnerable to some extent, according to the context, their resources, and intersecting social identities, such as ethnicity, gender, age, and nationality. The focus on the specific needs of certain vulnerable migrants (for example, refugees) is also the result of policy choices that value some vulnerabilities over others. Without empirical data and analyses that provide a clear and non-stereotyped understanding and conceptualization of the vulnerabilities that are actually lived and experienced by migrants, such policy choices run the risk of failing to address some vulnerabilities, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities, or even producing new ones.

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