



Call for Papers

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Anniversary Issue 2016-2026: Social Policy - What for?

Editors

Socialpolicy Chief Editorial Team, University of Fribourg

Submission of Abstracts: 31 October 2025

Submission of Full Papers: 31 March 2026

Publication of the Issue: Autumn 2026

In 2026, Swiss online journal *Socialpolicy.ch* celebrates its 10th birthday, and on this occasion we will publish a jubilee issue. This issue focusses on a decade of dynamic developments and critical transformations in the field of social policy and highlights urgent topics and questions in this context.

Over the last 10 years, international politics has seen an uncommon variety and extent of challenges and changes. Since 2015, large numbers of refugees have left their home countries, what led to both a mixture of helpfulness and re-nationalization in host countries. War- and post-war societies are looking into an insecure future. Climate change has become an urgent topic in public debate, sparking the rise of social movements demanding action. This, however, has been followed by a growing backlash, particularly from right-wing actors who increasingly oppose climate-friendly policies. Simultaneously, rising social polarization poses significant challenges to education, which functions not only as a tool of social policy aimed at promoting welfare and equality, but also as a foundational institution for democratic society. Digitalization and especially artificial intelligence provide opportunities but also endanger societies' unity and economic and democratic development. Moreover, income and wealth inequality have increased substantially, particularly in countries in the Global North not affected by war, further entrenching social divisions.

Not least, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed — and in many cases intensified — pre-existing social and economic vulnerabilities, many of which had previously remained hidden. This crisis also underscored the essential nature of care work—often undervalued and underpaid—and

brought renewed attention to the gendered dimensions of labour, health, and social protection. The burden of care work—both paid and unpaid—continues to fall disproportionately on women, a reality that has been exacerbated by demographic aging, austerity measures, and the restructuring of welfare systems. The gendered division of labour in care and social reproduction highlights persistent inequalities.

These societal and political issues all come with questions for social policy. Who should pay for rising social policy costs – all citizens equally or should the tax system put a larger burden on the wealthy part of society? Who counts as a member of society and how can migration law react to the rising numbers of arriving refugees? How are working conditions changing in times of digitalization and artificial intelligence and how should social policy react to those developments? How is or how should care work be organized in an aging society? How can societies with highly dissatisfied citizens be kept together by means of social policy? How did the role of professions such as social work change in the light of recent societal challenges?

This call for papers invites empirical (qualitative and quantitative) contributions which thematize topics of social policy, relating to the major challenges and societal pressures of the past decade, and/or offering perspectives on how social policy can serve as a catalyst for societal change. Innovative theoretical and conceptual articles are welcome as well. The research can focus on Switzerland, other countries, or transnational contexts. The submissions can focus on the following or related topics:

- Poverty, income and wealth inequality
- Care Work
- Changing work conditions
- Migration and Asylum
- Education, health and retirement systems
- Democracy and social cohesion
- Digitalization and artificial intelligence

Timeline and Guidelines

31 October 2025: Please submit an abstract of 500 words (German, English and French are accepted) including thematic background, theory, methods, (preliminary) results and conclusion, accompanied by your affiliation and contact information.

15 December 2025: We will notify you if your abstract has been accepted.

31 March 2026: Submission deadline for selected full papers. All contributions will be subject to the standard blind peer review process of socialpolicy.ch. Guidelines on how to submit a paper can be found on: <https://www.sozialpolitik.ch/en/guidelines>

Autumn 2026: Publication on socialpolicy.ch

socialpolicy.ch is an open access, peer-reviewed online-journal, founded in 2016 at the Department of Sociology, Social Policy, and Global Development, University of Fribourg (CH). The journal publishes contributions from various fields of sociology, social policy, and welfare regime research. A special focus of the journal is the interlinkages between theory and practice.

Contact and abstract submission: sozialpolitik-ch@unifr.ch