

# **Il concetto di vulnerabilità nella bioetica contemporanea: significati, interpretazioni e domande aperte**

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## *The Concept of Vulnerability in Bioethics: Meanings, Interpretations and Open Issues*

*Abstract:* Vulnerability is a key concept in traditional and contemporary philosophy. Etymologically, vulnerability mostly refers to the susceptibility of being physically or emotionally wounded. Yet, besides this prima facie characterization, the notion of vulnerability has eschewed a univocal definition, both within and across distinct threads of literature. In particular, the literature does not make clear how vulnerability should be construed, interpreted, and applied. Considering older adults as a case study, the present contribution aims to investigate the concept of vulnerability in contemporary bioethical reflection, arguing in favor of a dual notion of vulnerability, characterized by multi-dimensionality and graduality, considered both as a fundamental moral principle, stemming from the recognition of it as an intrinsic trait of human nature exposed to finitude, and as a contingent and situational phenomenon, arising from unfair social, political, and economic conditions.

*Keywords:* Vulnerability, Bioethics, Aging, Older adults.

*notizie di POLITEIA*, XXXIX, 152, 2023. ISSN 1128-2401 pp. 11-32.