Last updated: October 2026

Prof Dr Karin Schwiter – Curriculum Vitae

Education

2018 Univ. of Zurich	Habilitation in Geography: "Mobilising difference in today's labour markets: How gender, culture and mobility are used to legitimise inequalities"
2010 Univ. of Basel	PhD in Sociology *(with summa cum laude)* Dissertation: "Lebensentwürfe. Junge Erwachsene im Spannungsfeld zwischen Individualisierung und Geschlechternormen" (Life plans. Young adults caught between individualisation and gender norms), published with Campus Publishers
2001–2002 Univ. of Sheffield	Erasmus exchange year at the University of Sheffield, UK
2004 Univ. of Zurich	MSc in Geography *(with an award for outstanding grades)*

Positions

since 2021 Univ. of Zurich	Assistant professor in labour geography
2013-2021 Univ. of Zurich	Leader of the research group "Labour, Migration & Gender" at the Department of Geography
2018 Univ. of Toronto	Visiting professor at the University of Toronto in Canada *(3 months)*
2014–2015 Univ. of Zurich	Acting professor (Lehrstuhlvertretung) at the Department of Geography during the sabbatical of Prof. Dr. Christian Berndt *(6 months)*
2014 UBC, Vancouver	Visiting assistant professor at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada *(7 months)*
2012 UW, Seattle	Visiting scholar at the University of Washington in Seattle, US *(6 months)*
2010–2013 Univ. of Basel	Postdoctoral research fellow at the Centre of Gender Studies, in the project "Gender segregation in educational and occupational pathways" of Swiss National Research Programme 60 on "Gender Equality"
2004–2013 Univ. of Zurich	Research and teaching assistant and from 2010 onwards senior research and teaching assistant (Oberassistentin) at the Department of Geography, with teaching assignments at ETH Zurich and the University of Basel

Rankings, awards and excellence scholarships

2024	Ranked first for the Full Professorship in Social and Cultural Geography at the University of Neuchâtel (declined)
2023	Wiley Top Downloaded Article Award, for the article "Male Privilege Revisited: How men in female-dominated occupations notice and actively reframe privilege"
2022	Ranked second for the full professorship in Gender Studies at the University of Basel
2022	Wiley Top Cited Article 2020-2021 Award, for the article "Geographies of care work: The commodification of care, digital care futures and alternative caring visions"
2018	Ranked second for the full professorship in Social and Cultural Geography at the University of Bern
2016	Swiss Prize for Research on Education, awarded by Johann Schneider-Ammann, President of the Swiss Confederation, for the article "Why are female electricians and male nurses still rare?" (CHF 25,000)
2012	Area Prize, awarded by the Royal Geographical Society for the best article by a young researcher (£500)
2001–2010	Various excellence scholarships awarded by the Swiss Study Foundation
2004	Award of the University of Zurich for outstanding grades in the masters' degree
1997	Award of the Christ-König Kollegium for the best A-levels (Matura) of the year (CHF 200)

Continuing education

since 2021	Continuing education modules offered for professors by the University of Zurich on professional academic leadership; reducing blind spots for less biased decision making; stress management; burnout prevention and first aid for mental health
2005–2021	Various continuing education modules offered by the University of Zurich on teaching large classes; supervising master and PhD students; peer teaching evaluation; leading research projects; scientific writing; teaching portfolios; time management; presentation techniques; visualising research; etc.
2005–2008	Various continuing education modules offered by the Graduate School at the University of Basel on doing interdisciplinary research; scientific writing; moderation techniques; qualitative research methodologies; discourse analysis; gender theories; etc.
2001–2010	Various continuing education modules offered by the Swiss Study Foundation on leadership; team building; negotiation techniques; communication; law and politics; life sciences and philosophy; etc.

Languages

German	mother tongue
English	proficient (Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency C2, grade A)
French	good knowledge
Italian	basic knowledge

Funding history

2026 8 months	**Global Champions Fund of the University of Zurich** Project: Summer school "Labour in and beyond Europe" Contribution: Lead-author of grant application & lead organiser	CHF 20'000
2026 12 months	**Digital Society Initiative of the University of Zurich** Granted budget for the community "work" Contribution: Co-author of grant application	CHF 22'500
2025 60 months	**SERI-funded ERC Advanced Grant** Project: Underemployed Contribution: Single applicant	€ 2'500'000
2025 12 months	**Digital Society Initiative of the University of Zurich** Granted budget for the community "work" Contribution: Lead-author of grant application & co-lead of the community	CHF 22'900
2024 60 months	**Digitalisation Initiative of Zurich's Higher Education Institutions (DIZH)** Public Data Lab: Measuring Wellbeing Under Changing Circumstances Contribution: Co-author of grant applicaton; in collaboration with Prof. Ross Purves et al., supervision of 1 PhD student	ca. CHF 300'000 as PI (CHF 1'531'425 tot.)
2024 12 months	**Digital Society Initiative of the University of Zurich** Granted budget for the community "work" Contribution: Lead-author of grant application & co-lead of the community	CHF 39'730
2023 3 months	**State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)** Project: Impact of the high-court decision of 22.12.2021 on the live-in care market in German-speaking Switzerland Contribution: Project lead; Co-author of grant application	CHF 17'884
2023 6 months	**Digital Society Initiative of the University of Zurich** Project: Assessing the scale of place-based platform labour in Switzerland Contribution: Project lead; Co-author of grant application	CHF 9'700
2022 36 months	**German Research Foundation** (Weave/Lead Agency project) Project: Urban Platform Economies Contribution: Co-author of grant application and PI of the Swiss project team; in collaboration with Prof. Sybille Bauriedl (Flensburg) and Prof. Anke Strüver (Graz), supervision of 1 PhD student	CHF 259'993 as PI (€ 792'000 tot.)
2022 10 days	**Federal Commission on Women's Issues** Project: Report on gender impact of Covid-19 measures	CHF 2'880
2022 4 days	**City of Zurich** Project: Expertise on home care agencies	CHF 750
2020 3 months	**Digital Society Initiative of the University of Zurich** Project: Postdoc-Fellowship of Dr. Sarah Hartmann on digital platform labour Contribution: Co-author of grant application	CHF 15'000

2018 3 months	**Graduate Campus of the University of Zurich** Project: Travel grant for research visit at the University of Toronto	CHF 3,400
2018 5 days	**Swiss Academy of Sciences & Graduate Campus** Project: Organisation of the human geography summer school "Gender and Space" for 100 participants & workshop leaders Contribution: Main applicant	CHF 30,000
2017 48 months	**German Research Foundation** (trinational project) Project: Decent care work? Transnational home care arrangements Contribution: Co-author of grant application and PI of the Swiss project team; in collaboration with Prof. Helma Lutz (Frankfurt am Main) and Prof. Brigitte Aulenbacher (Linz); supervision of 1 PhD student	CHF 316'375 as PI (€ 876,900 tot.)
2016 7 months	**Zurich Metropolitan Conference** Project: Doing family: imaginations of family in Switzerland Contribution: Co-author of grant application and member of project steering group	CHF 25,000
2014 30 months	**Swiss National Science Foundation** Project: Anticipated parenthood and employment Contribution: Co-author of grant application and co-project leader with Prof. Andrea Maihofer (Basel) and Dr. Sandra Hupka (Bern)	CHF 271,300
2013 42 months	**Swiss National Science Foundation** Project: Care agencies in the commodification of elderly care Contribution: Co-author of grant application and co-project leader with Prof. Christian Berndt (Zurich); supervision of 2 PhD students	CHF 470,500
2012 6 months	**Voluntary Academic Society of Basel** (extension grant) Project: Gender segregation in educational and occupational pathways Contribution: Author of grant application, member of research team	CHF 20,000
2011 6 months	**City of Zurich** Project: Market analysis – care in Zurich's private households Contribution: Co-project leader with Prof. Christian Berndt (Zurich)	CHF 31,000
2010 24 months	**National Research Programme 60** (SNSF) Project: Gender segregation in educational and occupational pathways Contribution: Co-author of grant application, member of research team	CHF 314,000

Other academic activities

Committee work (current only, * at the University of Zurich)

since 2022	Group Leader Assessment Committee at the Department of Geography*
since 2022	Co-Lead of the "Better Science Taskforce" at the Department of Geography*
since 2020	Member of the Swiss Federal Commission for Women's Issues (vice-president from 2024 to 2025)

since 2015 Gender studies commission of the University of Zurich*

Co-organisation of conferences and workshops (previous 5 years only)

2026	5-day summer school “Labour in and beyond Europe” in Morschach
2025	3-day international conference “Feminist perspectives on the platformisation of care work in European cities” in Flensburg (D)
2024	1-day annual conference of the research network “Laboris” in Zürich
2024	3-day meeting of the research network “AK Labour Geography” in Erkner (D)
2023	4-day meeting of the DFG network “Labour Geography” in Frankfurt (D)

Reviews for academic journals

Member of the advisory board of: Geographica Helvetica

Served as reviewer for: Annals of the American Association of Geographers; Antipode; Children’s Geographies; Community, Work and Family; Competition and Change; Critical Policy Studies; Die Erde; Digital Geography and Society; Emotion, Space and Society; Environment and Planning A; Equality, Diversity, Inclusion; Erdkunde; Family Relations; Gender, Place and Culture; Gender, Work and Organization; Geoforum; Geographische Zeitschrift; Geography Compass; Global Networks; Journal of Economic Geography; Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies; Organisation Studies; Political Geography; Population, Space and Place; Progress in Human Geography; Review of International Political Economy; Social and Cultural Geography; Sozialpolitik; Swiss Journal of Sociology; Suburban; Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers; Urban Planning; Urban Studies; Zeitschrift für Wirtschaftsgeographie
(19 reviews within the last two years)

Scientific Advisory Boards (current only)

Project “Domestic workers and Covid-19”, SNSF National Research Programme 80, 2023-2026
Project “Futures and futurelessness among youth watchmakers in Switzerland” by Mirela Ivanova, University of Basel, funded by a SNSF Postdoc.Mobility grant, 2025-2027

Research Network “CAREnet”, funded by the German Research Community (DFG), 2026-2030

Memberships in academic societies

Digital Society Initiative DSI of the University of Zurich, community “Work”

Research Network “LABORIS” of the Swiss Researchers in Labour Studies

Royal Geographic Society, RGS

Swiss Society of Gender Studies, SGGF, active member in the working group “Low-wage work”

Swiss Society of Sociology, SGS

Society of Geographers at German Universities, VGDH, active member in the working groups “Labour Geographies”, and “Feminist Geographies”

Think tank „Denknetz“, co-lead of the working group “Precarity”

Teaching

Overview of courses taught***	Language	Level	Participants	Years
Lectures				
Geography of Switzerland * / **	Ger	BSc	120	since 2022
Methods in human geography*	Ger	BSc	120	since 2016
Human geography II* (focussing on processes of globalisation)	Ger	BSc	120	2014, 2015
Introduction to spatial planning (with ETH Zurich)	Ger	BSc	220	2009, 2010
Seminars				
Research colloquium for master and PhD students*	En	PhD/MSc	15	since 2014
Gender, work and space* /**	En	MSc	25	since 2012
Human geography III* / ** (focussing on alternative economies)	Ger	BSc	60	2011–2015
Gender and space*	Ger	MSc	20	2006–2009
Qualitative research methods (University of Basel)**	Ger	BSc	40	2010
Project seminars				
Human geography IV* (focussing on in-/exclusions in low wage labour)	Ger	BSc	60	2010, 2011
Geographies of Gender*	Ger	MSc	40	2005
Exercises				
Discourse analysis	Ger	MSc	20	2009
Methods in human geography	Ger	BSc	25	since 2016
Block courses				
Discourse analysis (University of Bern)	Ger	PhD	15	2012
Tutorials				
Small group teaching: Introducing geography	En	BSc	6	2015-2018
Field courses				
Hamburg: Door to who's world? * /**	Ger	BSc/MSc	24	2017
Zurich: Inequalities in the neoliberal city* /**	En	MSc	20	since 2014
Feminist Geographies*	Ger	MSc	25	2015

* team teaching with various colleagues from human geography at the University of Zurich
** as course coordinator
*** Unless otherwise indicated, the courses were taught at the Department of Geography, University of Zurich

Advising

Current PhD / postdoc advising

as main advisor

Reta Barfuss, PhD start in 2024

Harry Parfitt, PhD start in 2025

Merlin Hebecker, PhD start in 2025

Christina Bosbach, postdoc start in 2026

as committee member

Xiaohui Jiang, PhD start in 2022

Nouri Abdelgadir, PhD start in 2024

Dominique Kauer, start as PhD advisor in 2024, University of Jena

Louis Moser, PhD start in 2025

Kevin Guerreiro Paulino, PhD start in 2026

Dilan Karatas, start as PhD advisor in 2026, HU Berlin

Past PhD / postdoc advising

as main advisor

Dr. Katharina Pelzelmayer, PhD received in 2017

Dr. Huey Shy Chau, PhD received in 2018

Dr. Isabella Stingl, PhD received in 2021

Dr. Jennifer Steiner, PhD received in 2021

Dr. Marisol Keller, PhD received in 2023

Dr. Sarah Hartmann, UFO postdoc grant 2021-2023

Dr. Khaoula Ettarfi, PhD received in 2025

Dr. Maaret Jokela-Pansini, 2024-2026, SNSF postdoc mobility return grant

Dr. Christiane Meyer-Habighorst, PhD received in 2026

Dr. Jason Schneck, PhD received in 2026

as committee member

Dr. Xavier Balaguer Rasillo, PhD received in 2022

Dr. Barbara Orth, PhD received in 2024 at the Free University of Berlin

Dr. Lara Landolt, PhD received in 2025

Dr. Jan Kordes, PhD received in 2025 at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main

Dr. Yannick Eckert, PhD received in 2026 at University of Halle

Master and bachelor student advising

Advisor of more than 30 master and more than 30 bachelor theses

Mentoring

As part of the mentoring scheme for research group leaders at GIUZ:

Dr. Isabelle Gärtner-Röer, since 2021

Dr. Ilia van Meerveld, since 2022

Dr. Sierra Deutsch, since 2023

Dr. Ifigeneia Dimitrakou, since 2024

Public lectures, workshops and panels (previous five years only)

Presentations at scientific conferences

14 May 2026 Workshop "Forschen in intimen Räumen der Fürsorge" at the University of Bonn: "Wie Arbeitsvermittlungsplattformen die Preisgabe von intimen Details incentivieren"

12 May 2026 International Conference "Beyond hours: patchwork jobs, hidden underutilisation and the mismeasurement of employment" at the University of Birmingham (online): "Time-related underemployment in the Swiss cleaning sector"

25 Oct. 2025 New Cultural Geography Conference, Augsburg: "Reconceptualising part-time labour: Underemployment in the commercial cleaning industry"

08 Sep. 2025 Annual Conference of the Swiss Association of Gender Studies SAGS, Basel: "Tackling underemployment in cleaning companies: avenues for collaborative research and producing positive social change"

04 Sep. 2025 International Conference "Matching Workers and Jobs Online" of the Institute of Labour Economics with KOF Swiss Economic Institute at ETH, Zurich: "The real invisible hands of the market: Uncovering the scale of platform work in Switzerland's care sector" (poster presentation)

11 Jul. 2025 International Conference of the Bavarian American Academy, Munich: "The Future of Home Care Work: Feminist Perspectives on Global Chains and the Platformization of Care"

02 Jul. 2025 International Conference "Feminist perspectives on the platformisation of care work", Flensburg: "Urban Platform Economies: Transformations of labour and intersectional inequalities in care services"

23 Jun. 2025 International Conference "Migration and Intergenerational Care", Fribourg: "Transnational live-in careworkers in Switzerland: persisting challenges and potential ways forward"

13 Feb. 2025 Annual Conference of the Research Network Labour Geography, Graz: "Invisible platform subsidies: the role of social networks in conceiling (too) low wages on care work platforms"

13 Dec. 2024 Annual Conference of the Swiss Labour Network LABORIS, Zurich: "'This big shadow that we need to turn into light' – How labour intermediaries moralise commodified domestic care work"

24 May 2024 New Cultural Geography Conference, Münster: "Zur Normalisierung von Plattformarbeit: Wie die Narrative von Plattformunternehmen prekäre Arbeit und kommodifizierte Sorgedienstleistungen legitimieren"

08 Feb. 2024 Conference "Doing Labour Geogaphy", Berlin: "From exceptionalism to normalisation: How narratives of platform companies legitimise precarious work and commodified care"

07 Sep. 2023 Keynote at the conference "New Work – New Problems? ", Lucerne: "Debating transformations of care work from a gender perspective "

24 Mar. 2023 Annual Conference of the Association of American Geographers, Denver (online): "Gig Work Futures"

16 Nov. 2022 Annual Conference of the network Digitale Geographie of the German Research Association, Halle (Saale), Germany: "Urbane Plattformökonomien: Transformationen von Arbeit und intersektionalen Ungleichheiten im Bereich der Sorgedienstleistungen"

22 Jul. 2022 Centennial Conference of the International Geographical Union, Paris: "How the platformization of care services transforms care relations"

Invited lectures

16 Apr. 2026 Interdisciplinary Center for Gender Studies at the University of Bern: "Care-Arbeit in der Plattformökonomie"

16 Dec. 2025 Colloquium "Social Change" at the University of Basel: "Die Unterbeschäftigten: Zur wachsenden Verbreitung unfreiwilliger Teilzeitarbeit"

23 Jan. 2025 Minerva Lab Lecture Series at the Sapienza University of Rome (online): "Home Care for Sale"

29 Nov. 2023 University of Applied Sciences Lucerne: "Geschlechtersensible Perspektiven auf die gesellschaftliche Organisation der Sorgearbeit"

07 Feb. 2023 Human Geography Colloquium at the Free University of Berlin: "Plattformarbeiter:innen im Privathaushalt: Wie Batmaid, Care.com und co. die soziale Reproduktion in Städten verändern"

11 Jan. 2023 Lecture series "Global Societies" of the LMU in Munich (online): "Global Care Chains"

30 Nov. 2022 Lecture series "Hinter den Kulissen von Forschung und Lehre" at the University of St. Gall: "Die Slow-Scholarship Bewegung: Durch Entschleunigung zu einer besseren Wissenschaftskultur?"

31 Oct. 2022 UZH Innovathon on "Building a Human-Centered Future of Work", Zurich: "Gender in the Future of Work"

02 May 2022 Brown Bag Seminar Series, Scuola Universitaria Professionale della Svizzera Italiana (SUPSI), Lugano: "Invisible workers in the spotlight: Covid-19 policy measures for circular migrant care workers in Germany, Austria and Switzerland"

19. Jan. 2022 Department of Geography, University of Linz (online): "Sorgekrise trifft auf Coronakrise"

Continuing education workshops

21 July 2026 Summer Retreat for Labour Geography, Morschach: "Mentoring Workshop"

05 Dec. 2025 Swiss Geoscience Meeting, Bern: "Collective action for better science"

27 Nov. 2024 PhD School of Geography and Earth System Science, UZH: "Communicating our research to policy makers"

14 Jun. 2023 Network meeting Labour Geography, Steinbach: "Social Reproduction Theory"

29 Nov. 2022 Retreat of the Zurich Graduate School of Geography and Earth System Science, Herzberg: "Urban Platform Economies and the Commodification of Care"

Outreach presentations (invited)

27 Aug. 2026 Office for Diversity, Integration and Antiracism of the city of Zurich: "Care-Arbeit im Spannungsfeld von Geschlecht, Migration und Prekarität"

21 May 2026 Open doors event of the Department of Geography at the University of Zurich: "Unfreiwillige Teilzeitarbeit"

06 May 2026 Expert in the SRF1 debate on "Life-Style Teilzeit"

17 Jun. 2025 Mentoring Programm, Schwyz: "Denkfallen in der Zukunftsplanung"

04. Feb. 2025 Swiss Federal Commission of Women's Issues: "Änderung der Verordnung 2 zum Arbeitsgesetz: Sonderbestimmungen für hauswirtschaftliche Leistungen sowie Betreuung und Unterstützung in der Alltagsbewältigung"

31 Mar. 2023 Unia Conference, Münchenwiler: "Care Krise und Care Fixes"

02 Nov. 2022 Paulus Akademie, Zurich: "Senior:innenbetreuung zu Tiefstpreisen? Faire Arbeitsverhältnisse in der häuslichen Betreuung – (wie) geht das?"

26 Oct. 2022 Caritas Armutsforum 2022, Zurich: "Plattformarbeiter:innen: Die neuen Arbeitsrealitäten in Kürzest-Jobs, die über digitale Plattformen vermittelt werden"

23 May 2022 Media conference of the Federal Commission for Women's Issues, Bern: "Gender-Analyse der staatlichen Massnahmen während der Covid-19-Krise: Empfehlungen der EKF"

Public panel discussions (invited)

15 Sept. 2026 Eco-Talk of Swiss Radio and Television SRF1, Zurich: "Die Rechnung des Älterwerdens – Wer bezahlt die Pflege von morgen?"

05 Jun. 2026 10-year jubilee of the association "Penser la Suisse", Bern: "Dialogue entre Science et Politique"

26 Feb. 2026 Participation in the podium discussion on the film "Humans in the Loop", organised by Zurich University of Applied Sciences ZHAW, Zürich

23 Oct. 2025 Launch of the Public Data Lab of the Digitalization Initiative of the Zurich Higher Education Institutions (DIZH), Zurich

17 Jun. 2025 Annual Meeting of the Feminist Geographies Network of the Swiss Association of Geographers, Bern "Feminist geographies as socially engaged research"

09 Nov.2024 Global Science Film Festival, Zürich: Panel moderator for the film: "The miraculous transformation of the working class into foreigners"

24 May 2024 New Cultural Geography Conference, Münster: Book presentation "Home Care for Sale"

22 Aug. 2023 Polit Forum, Bern: “Viertagewoche? Zeit im Teilzeitland Schweiz”

19 Apr. 2023 Mentoring Programm, Schwyz: “Denkfallen in der Zukunftsplanung”

16 Oct. 2022 Video-postcast series of the think tank Denknetz: “Pflege grenzenlos”

24 Jan. 2022 Video-podcast series hosted at the University of Lancaster (online): “Transforming Economies of Care”