



Institute of Hazard,
Risk and Resilience



VULNERABILITIES

**A Symposium at the 10th Anniversary Conference of the
*Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience, Durham University***

**Supported by the
Matariki Network of Universities
and a *Fragile Futures* event**

**Durham University
19-22 September 2017**

Keynote speaker:

Professor Don Kulick (Uppsala University, *Engaging Vulnerability*)

In recent years *vulnerability* has emerged as a key concept in navigating the complex, uncertain and unstable ecologies that mark the interaction of human and non-human actors. Derived from the Latin word *vulnus* or wound, vulnerability describes a range of situations in which individual subjects, communities, and other material or conceptual configurations are susceptible to threat or harm of one kind or another.

In this sense, vulnerability describes a situation of heightened intensity, an intensity which correlates with the precariousness of the situation itself. In addition, it is important to recognize that vulnerability is relational: it decentres the stability of our self-relation even as it calls us to new types of ethical and political relation to one another; it recasts our ecological relation to the world at large.

Vulnerability manifests in terms of unpredictable interdependencies and radical co-emergences, providing a means of re-examining both historical and contemporary asymmetries of power, the inequalities to which these give rise and through which they are sustained. It generates the impetus for forging new tools of resistance and conceptualizing new routes to resilience, recognizing that to address vulnerability critically does not only involve intervention on behalf of that which is vulnerable, but also a recognition of the value of vulnerability in itself.

Acknowledging these alongside many other complexities, and the interconnectedness of vulnerability with related discourses of risk, threat, fragility and precarity, we warmly invite abstracts for papers which reflect on vulnerability within the broad context of cultural politics and ecological thinking, reflecting on its historical and contemporary manifestations, the ways in which it is represented, and its significance to thinking about the future/futurity.

Abstracts: Please submit **300 word** abstracts for papers of **30 minutes** to fragile.futures@gmail.com by **20 June 2017**

Keynote Speaker for session: Prof. Don Kulick (Uppsala University, *Engaging Vulnerability*)

Organizer: Dr. Marc Botha (English Studies, Durham University)

Conference Details: *Vulnerabilities* is a symposium that will run across all or part of the three-day international *10th Anniversary International Conference of Durham's Institute of Hazard Risk and Resilience*, 19-22 September 2017 at Durham University, Durham, UK.

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/ihr/10th-anniversary/ihr10/dwd-conference2017/>. Registration details to follow submission deadline and formal acceptance of papers for this symposium. *Vulnerabilities* is supported by the Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience, Durham University; Matariki Network of Universities and is part of the *Fragile Futures* research initiative.