

Reorienting the politics of climate change vulnerability

Monday, 21 June 2021 09:00 (1h 30m)

The concept of vulnerability within global climate change politics has come to assume considerable importance, as demonstrated by its prominence within IPCC assessment reports, and its connection within the UNFCCC to climate finance mechanisms and debates about 'loss and damage', as well as its more radical use by climate change activists.

Using insights from feminist, intersectional, and postcolonial theory, this panel takes climate change vulnerability seriously without accepting the economic and technocratic terms along which the concept has been institutionalised. With these different critical theoretical approaches, the panel reimagines vulnerability in ways that seek to repoliticise the concept and disentangle it from the positivist methodologies that dominate its institutional expression.

Papers will focus on asking who is discursively framed as vulnerable and why, and explore these questions empirically and theoretically. They will thereby connect climate change issues with broader questions of how physical and social vulnerability is constructed. They do this to suggest new ways to understand and research climate change vulnerability that draws focus instead on how vulnerability is politically produced, and resources of safety are differentially distributed along gendered and racialised lines as well as across the human/more than human divide.

Track Classification: Environment Working Group