



13th ANATOMY OF ISLANDS SYMPOSIUM

FRAGILE ISLANDS AND/OR ISLANDS OF FRAGILITY: ISLAND LIVES, CONTEMPORARY TRANSFORMATIONS AND UNCERTAIN FUTURES

Jelsa, island of Hvar, Croatia
25 – 27 September 2025

The topic of this year's 13th Anatomy of Islands Symposium aims to open a discussion on the fragility of island worlds and the relationships through which this fragility is shaped, manifested, and understood in diverse contexts.

However, we do not approach fragility as an inherent feature of islands, nor do we wish to equate it with interpretatively close yet critically debated concepts such as sustainability, resilience, or vulnerability. Furthermore, in reflecting on fragility, we do not intend to perpetuate the existing representations of islands as isolated spaces, or island communities as passive, victimised microcosms determined by the mainland. On the contrary, we seek to understand fragility as a feature that forewarns of breakage, damage, or destruction. Inspired by F. D. Rubio's interpretation of fragility, we approach it as a possibility and an emancipatory potential for new and different ways of thinking about islands. Fragility is not a weakness but an inherent condition; therefore, reflecting on fragility requires caution and calls for a reexamination of our current knowledge. In the context of Anthropocene, where the logic of endless progress and the rhetoric of resource exploitation can no longer be maintained, fragility reminds us to reconsider what makes islands susceptible to harm. Should we "handle islands with care" if the processes that generate their fragility continue unhindered in the background? Thinking about island fragility thus opens up a series of research-relevant questions pointing to a range of interconnected phenomena.

Issues such as illegal construction, loss of biodiversity, depopulation, overreliance on tourism, and inadequate connectivity

to the mainland and neighboring islands are becoming increasingly interconnected. Additionally, administrative fragmentation, the commodification of space and heritage, and the broader effects of global processes on local contexts further complicate this situation. These factors cannot be understood in isolation; they are part of a larger social reality.

Due to their interdependence, these phenomena should not be regarded as solely "island-specific," but rather as reflections of wider processes experienced more intensely on islands. Thus, we prefer not to address the topic of fragility in a manner that creates separate, disconnected "islands of fragility." Instead, we encourage reflections on the various connections that form "fragile islands" through their interrelations. In the context of the many crises of our time – climate, economic, health, ecological – we strive to better understand the fractures and ruptures increasingly visible in the lives of islands and islanders.

By discussing fragile islands and the fragile lives of their inhabitants – both human and more-than-human – we aim to draw attention to fragility itself and what it does. How is fragility formed and manifested? How are its many facets demonstrated in lives tied to islands?

We see the phenomenon of fragility as an opportunity to develop new ethical and political vocabularies about islands and with islands. With this call, we hope to encourage a discussion on fragility that obliges us to face "the costs" of our past engagements with islands, as well as the fragility of our own ideas about them.

Presentation Topics:

Fragility of island spaces – between marginality and connectedness

- Limited access to basic services and infrastructure
- Karst periphery and spatial marginality
- Impact of real estate development on spatial organisation, demographics, and socio-economic processes

Ecologies of fragility

- Loss of biodiversity, extinction of plant and animal species
- Impact of new species on existing ecosystems
- Water as a resource, responsibility and challenge
- Entanglements of social and ecological transformations in island communities

Uncertainty and climate change

- Impact of climate change and extreme events (sea-level rise, temperature extremes, storms, droughts) on island community safety
- Disasters (fires, floods, earthquakes) and local responses
- Trauma, loss, and island solidarity
- Resilience and vulnerability as strategies for coping with uncertainty

Practices of care

- Role of civil society in environmental and community protection
- Volunteering and civic activism as drivers of change
- Educational initiatives and their role in developing environmental awareness
- Strategies of protection and conservation

Fragility of island production: agriculture, industry, and self-sustainability

- Neglect and degradation of agricultural land
- Ecological production vs. large-scale production
- Food self-sufficiency and energy self-sustainability
- Shifts in industrial and construction activities
- Island economy between market constraints and the need for sustainability

Fragile communities and island identities

- Ageing populations, care challenges, social infrastructure and intergenerational relations
- Depopulation and demographic voids between statistics and everyday life
- Labour migration and its impact on demographics and loss of human capital
- Fictional belonging and real absence (secondary housing)

- Fragmented and temporary forms of togetherness (virtual and seasonal communities)

Fragility of island studies – interdisciplinary unity or disciplinary fragmentation

- Limitations of disciplinary approaches in island research
- Terminological gaps as barriers to interdisciplinary collaboration
- Unreliable or fragmented databases and poor exchange of research results
- The need for building an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary paradigm

The island as a model of the fragility of contemporary world

- A model for reflecting on global challenges (climate change, depopulation, identity tensions, sustainability)
- A condensed insight into the fragility of contemporary societies and social resilience
- Lessons from islands – sustainable development and limited resources

PLACE AND TIME

Jelsa, island of Hvar, Municipal Hall, 25 - 27 September, 2025.

PARTICIPATION FEE

Registration fee per person is 60 euros (students 40 euros). All symposium events (including the excursion, the summary booklet, and final dinner) are included in the registration price. The costs of transportation and accommodation are covered by the participants themselves. Members of the association "Anatomy of Islands – Centre for Research and Development" will receive a 20% discount on the registration fee. The entrance to the symposium is free for the interested population of the island of Hvar. Admission to the symposium is free for interested residents of the island of Hvar. The people of Jelsa, all Hvar residents and islanders from other islands are more than welcome to the symposium. Your participation is valuable to us.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applications should be sent by e-mail to:

info@anatomija-otoka.com

Submission deadline is July 15, 2025.

LANGUAGES

Working languages of the symposium will be Croatian and English. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided.

PRESENTATION SUBMISSION

- Full name of the presenter
- Name of the institution
- Website (personal or institutional)
- Phone/mobile number
- E-mail
- Type of presentation (individual, panel)
- Title
- Technical requirements (PC or Mac, projector, audio)
- Language of the presentation
- Presentation abstract (up to 300 words)
- Short biography (up to 100 words)

INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS

The presentations will be organised in thematic sessions of 90 minutes. Each presentation will take 20 minutes followed by a 10-minute discussion.

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

We encourage submissions thematically grouped into panel presentations. An individual panel presentation should take up to 90 minutes, with 3 to 5 speakers presenting, followed by a discussion. All panel speaker applications (up to 300 words per presentation) should be sent together, along with the title and short description of the panel (also up to 300 words).

ORGANISERS

NGO "Anatomy of Islands – Centre for Research and Development"
www.anatomija-otoka.hr

CO-ORGANISERS

Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb, www.ief.hr

Department of Ethnology and Anthropology, University of Zadar, www.unizd.hr/etnologijaianthropologija

Institute for Migration Research, Zagreb, www.imin.hr

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Fishery Local Action Group, FLAG Škoji, Hvar, www.flag-skoji.hr

Municipality of Jelsa, www.jelsa.hr

Tourist Board of Jelsa,

www.visitjelsa.hr

Jelsa Municipal Museum,

www.muzejopcinejelsa.hr

Jelsa Municipal Library,

www.library.foi.hr/lib/38

Agency for the Management

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www.starogradsko-polje.com

High School Hvar,

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