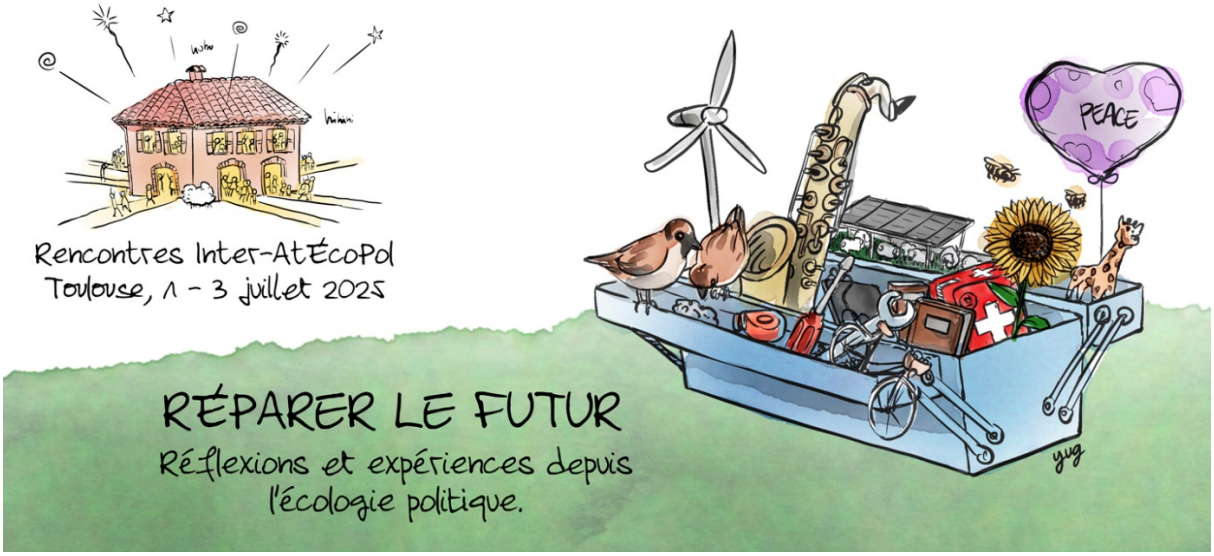
Congress of the Political Ecology Ateliers

1st to 3rd July 2025

Toulouse Institute of Political Studies

Manufacture des Tabacs, 21 allée de Brienne, 31000 Toulouse (France)

“Repairing the future?
Reflections and experiences from political ecology”



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Call for Contributions **(open until Friday, January 31, 2025)**

Faced with the urgency and amplification of the global environmental disaster, the scientific community notes that “sounding the alarm” has not had the expected results. Across the world, biogeophysical, economic, and geopolitical tensions are being strengthened by democratic setbacks. This compromises the collective capacity to address ecological devastation. New forms of interaction between science and societies must be constructed away from the naïve vision that science produces neutral knowledge to inform decision-makers and fuel political action (Oreskes, 2022) which prevent critical analysis and understanding of the current ecological situation and possible trajectories.

In this sense, Higher Education and Research have recently innovated. Among a set of innovative approaches[1], the Atécopol of Toulouse was created in the summer of 2018[2] and has since spread and federated other groups to form a network on the scale of university sites in France[3].. This network is characterized by its own positioning: political ecology is thought within the academy, not outside it.

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[1] Cases include the establishment of “sustainability sciences” and One Health projects, the creation of the GDR Labos 1point5, the opinions of COMETS (CNRS Ethics Committee), and the Ethics in Common Committee (Inrae, Cirad, Ird, Ifremer), as well as training in environmental issues in higher education and civil service.

[2] cf. AtÉcoPol's founding manifesto: https://atecopol.hypotheses.org/manifeste-de-latelier-decologie-politique-toulousain.

[3] Penser les Transitions (Dijon), La Fabrique des Questions Simples (Lyon), Campus d’après (Grenoble), Écopolien (Île-de-France), Atécopol Montpellier, Épolar (Rennes), AtécopolAM (Aix-Marseille), Abécopol (Bordeaux), Cat'Écopol (Perpignan), and Atécopol de Nantes.

Often understood as mere protection of the environment or restricted to the political parties that claim it, political ecology is also a scientific topic that focuses on all major environmental issues and how they are intertwined with social, cultural, technical, and political factors. Too often, environmental issues are theorized within the frames of capitalism, its related political organizing, and the desire to "dominate nature." Political ecology examines the necessary conditions for a society that is respectful of the Earth and all its inhabitants. In the academic field, the English approach to political ecology has sought to deconstruct narratives around human-nature relationships, particularly their effects on the development of aid policies. Latin American political ecology is well-established in the human and social sciences and among activists. It has been a powerful source of collective rights claims and socio-ecosystem protection against environmental and social devastation[4].

The Political Ecology Ateliers offer an original approach in their form: It is a of scientists rather than a field of research, and their scope is transversal to all disciplines, both in matters and life and in human and social sciences[5]. They strive to work with and for society through collective action to understand socio-ecological challenges and (re)act on them[6].

This conference will focus on better understanding the obstacles hindering actions toward global sustainability and further explore the levers and alternatives that can help us move away from unsustainable future trajectories. For that purpose, during three days, we invite participants to come and "repair the future" and create new alliances among academics and beyond.

With a view to interdisciplinary dialogue between science and. society, we encourage submissions from academic researchers, students, but also grassroots representatives, artists, and professionals from public and private sectors, etc. The conference aims to be collaborative and facilitate inclusive and respectful dialogues.

Three areas of reflection will structure the conference.

1. Transforming the economy, production and work

At a time when global public debt has reached the extravagant amount of 100 trillion dollars, how does political ecology contribute to questioning the hold of orthodox economics on our societies as a hegemonic discourse justifying capitalist destruction and domination? Faced with the crushing burden of this doxa, what other approaches can be developed based on sustainability, considering the different extents of human well-being and planetary boundaries? How can the socio-economic system be rebuilt to include the essential dimensions of life and ecosystems?

We invite reflecting on this from different perspectives. For example, we are interested in communications on major biological and geophysical cycles' transformative role on territorial metabolism (Buclet et al., 2019). We also welcome perspectives on this regard from the main production sectors, such as agriculture, industry, mining, health, and education. Finally, how does this contribute to work mutations, new practices, and representations of consumption patterns?

We welcome a diversity of proposals within this theme that may address the following questions (without claiming to be exhaustive):

Heterodox economic models (including degrowth and post-growth); integration of ecology in union struggles; social and solidarity economy; alternatives and experiments related to subsistence; new models of agricultural production and peasantry; social security of food; analyses of flows and stocks

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[4] See: https://ecopol-al.sciencesconf.org/.

[5] For example, half of Atécopol Toulouse's composition is not in the human or social sciences (see Atécopol 2021).

[6] For instance: https://vocabulairedestransitions.fr and Atécopol 2022.

of matter and energy; new modes of consumption (from abundance to sobriety); resources, extractivism, waste, and bio-geo-physical constraints (phosphates, nitrates, synthetic pollutants, uses of water, soils, etc.); low-tech production and consumption; modeling of sustainable socio-economic scenarios and critique of modeling; etc.

2. Reinventing democracy: trajectories, struggles, and alternatives

Ten years after the death of Rémi Fraisse in a fight against an extensive project in Sivens, in the Tarn department (France), and while Donald Trump has just been re-elected in the United States, it is clear that aspirations for "Another Possible" (Escobar, 2024) collide with the worrying progression of reactionary, illiberal, neo-fascist policies. The authoritarian powers that are being established or are trying to establish themselves oppose radical changes in thoughts and practices that could guarantee the continued habitability of the Earth. The rise of the far right, close to (or already in) power in many states, is accompanied by an intensification of an anti-ecological backlash, a pause in environmental public policies, and regressions in regulatory, legislative, and legal frameworks. What role could political ecology play in engaging with these power relations and reorganizing systems of domination? How can we rethink forms of collective participation at different scales and in light of the socio-ecological issues raised by emerging initiatives globally?

We aim to focus on the material, ecological, and climatic lock-ins that "transition" policies must resolve without undermining the democratic framework, as well as the weight of legacies, infrastructure maintenance, and technological risks that weigh on the transformation of industrialized societies.

We welcome a diversity of proposals within this theme that may address the following questions (without claiming to be exhaustive):

New imaginaries and concrete alternatives; contributions of anti-fascist, (eco)feminist, and decolonial visions and struggles to democratic and ecological reflections; ontological politics and new human/non-human articulations; institutions, governance, and ecological planning; organization and citizen mobilization around territorial struggles; participatory approaches for life and material sciences; technical democracy and the political issues of engineering; democratic administration of fossil infrastructures, "negative commons," and dismantling; etc.

3. Rethinking our relationship with science and technology

While all sectors are affected by the rise of artificial intelligence, and many call to manipulate our environment with increasingly uncertain techniques (geoengineering, new genomic techniques), it is worth remembering that political ecology has never stopped questioning the relationship between technology and its impact on the world. Human societies increasingly face problems described as "wicked" (Likhacheva et al. 2023), whose definition raises questions and requires systemic approaches: What is considered "wicked"? How can we reexamine our ways of knowing, constructing, and sharing knowledge? What new roles do scientists hold with other social actors? What are the contributions and limits of science and/with society (Science with and for society, participatory action research, third-party watchdogs, science shops, etc.)? What is the relevance of specific knowledge to the detriment of others? What are the priorities in research, and what can be the responses to scientific obstacles for sustainability? What is the framework and role of technological development, low-tech approaches, and "nature-based solutions"? Ultimately, this will explore political ecology's critical engagement in academia, the arts, civil society, and social movements.

We welcome a diversity of proposals within this theme that may address the following questions (without claiming to be exhaustive):

Research, teaching, and public engagement of scientists in the context of the ecological emergency; desertion and bifurcation approaches (academic and industrial); situated knowledge and North-South epistemic injustices; potential or false promises of technological solutions; post-normal science

devices; epistemology and reflexivity; feedback on Science/Society/Environment projects; transformative potential of artistic creation; etc.

PARTICIPATION TERMS

Deadline: Friday, January 31, 2025. *Contributions can be submitted online on the "new submission" tab of the site by first logging in or creating an account (you don't need to be an academic to do this).*

Three contribution formats are proposed:

1) Participatory workshop

The objective is the active participation of all registered workshop attendees. The format is FREE. The proposal must explain the intention (theme, desired objective), the facilitation methods, the requirements (room, open air, etc.), and the minimum and maximum number of participants, if relevant. Indicate the desired duration: either 1.30 or 3 hours.

2) Presentations: Symposium or round table (1:30)

Unlike the workshop, presentations imply an audience. You can organize the presentations at your discretion: a sequence of oral presentations, a round table with a facilitator, presentations followed by discussants, etc. Remember to include time for audience questions.

3) Individual communication

Individual communications will be oriented toward a symposium, a round table, or a dedicated poster session to foster dialogue.

Evaluation Modalities

Submissions will be evaluated anonymously by two readers from the organizing committee and the scientific committee.

Submission Format:

- An **abstract** (2 pages / 6,000 characters maximum)
- **List of authors**, specifying the names of the authors that will present and the names of co-authors that will attend (names and affiliations). However, this is not mandatory at this stage, and you can confirm when your proposal is accepted. The organizers can, of course, be authors. The conference is intended to generate new interactions and collaborations; do not censor yourself, especially if you are a doctoral student, young researcher within academia or independent, non-academic, etc., or if you do not yet have an established "network" on the theme that interests you.
- For academic proposals: include a **list of the works on which the discussion (or workshop) will be based.** This may include works already published (in this case, it is sufficient to provide the bibliographic reference or the HAL link) or works in progress (this could, for example, involve a thesis; then send a short summary).

Registration terms:

Registrations are made online on the website: https://atecopols2025.sciencesconf.org

Registration fees include lunch buffets and coffee breaks for the 3 days.

Speakers' travel expenses will not be covered.

- Standard rate: €300.00
- Reduced *"early bird"* rate (registration before May 15, 2025): €150.00

- Solidarity rate (students, precarious workers, labs, or structures with a reduced budget): €30.00

For any questions, please contact: atecopols2025@sciencesconf.org

Conference organized by: ATelier d'ÉCOlogie POLitique (Atécopol de Toulouse), expertise platform of the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme et de la Société de Toulouse (MSHS-T / UAR 3414 CNRS, University of Toulouse), **in partnership with:** Abécopol (Bordeaux), AtécopolAM (Aix-Marseille), Atécopol Penser les Transitions (Dijon), Atécopol La Fabrique des Questions Simples (Lyon), Atécopol Montpellier, Atécopol from Nantes, CAMPUS d'Après Grenoble, Cat'Écopol (Perpignan), Écopolien (Île-de-France), Épolar (Rennes).

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Organizing committee

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