



**8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

**University of Turin**

Campus Luigi Einaudi

Lungo Dora Siena 100, Torino

## **15th Conference of Environmental Sociologists**

### ***Deep Transition?* Wars, conflicts and socio-ecological transformations**

#### **Call for Abstract**

In recent years, ecological transition has gradually established itself as a privileged perspective for tackling the climate crisis. From the United States to Europe, via China, governments and international organisations have described, promoted and financed transition scenarios largely oriented by the logic of green growth, based on the myth of decoupling economic development, resource consumption and climate-changing gas emissions. This is an ambitious attempt to address the current crisis of capitalism: to save the dominant mode of production by decoupling it from the fossil engine that has accompanied its growth and spread on a global scale since the early industrial era.

Technological solutionism, techno-optimist impulses and equally widespread irenic imaginaries seem to characterise the dominant representations, which present a green future of capitalism always - and inevitably - capable of overcoming all conflict dynamics. However, in this context, the ecological transition does not take the form of a simple superficial adjustment, it calls into question profound transformations of social, technical, political and cultural systems, their rules of evolution, power structures and related imaginaries. A process that Schot and Kanger (2018) call *Deep Transition*, or the alignment of all subsystems in a single direction.

Despite optimistic narratives, the reality of transition clashes with already highly compromised metabolic dynamics between society and nature, as well as increasingly

intense territorial and international tensions. Sociological research shows how the paths of transition are marked by contestations and contradictions that amplify the effects of the ecological crisis. Floods, droughts, desertification and loss of biodiversity are not the only events generating new forms of tension and conflict, from the local urban scale to the global geopolitical one. Increasingly, it is the same measures indicated as solving the ecological crisis that are creating conflicts, such as the acceleration of the extraction of critical raw materials necessary for the indiscriminate spread of more or less renewable energy plants (electric mobility, wind power plants, agrivoltaics, green hydrogen, new hydroelectricity), as well as CCS (carbon capture and storage) or LNG regasification plants.

The energy sector is central to these conflict dynamics. The dependence on fossil fuels that accelerated after World War II has not only historically shaped economic and social structures but has also constantly fuelled geopolitical conflicts. The same model is now being applied to the control and management of renewable energy resources, such as critical raw materials for green technologies like lithium, cobalt, rare earths, which are generating new forms of exploitation, extraction, and inequality. Just as happened with coal, oil and gas, renewable resources risk exacerbating local, national and planetary conflicts. It is therefore essential to understand how to prevent the energy transition from reproducing the extractive logics of the fossil era, pushing towards new wars and the spread of a 'green militarism' on top of the fossil one.

This also opens the question of the problematic relationship between conflict and war. War is not simply the highest degree of violence expressed in a conflictual relationship. Where conflict presupposes agreements that are often temporary between the warring factions, but which serve to keep society alive, wars are based on the principle of the destruction and total defeat of the enemy, subsequently requiring enormous effort, sacrifice and, above all, capital investment for reconstruction on the basis of non-negotiable principles dictated by the victor(s). Moreover, wars as we have known them are now subject to far-reaching changes generated by three major global dynamics: the reconfiguration of geopolitical power structures which, in the twilight of the current systemic cycle of accumulation, is bringing new actors onto the scene alongside states such as militias, agencies, adventurers, gangs, and so on; the growth of pressure on natural resources used by parties to the conflict as weapons against both armies and civilians, resulting in the radicalisation of the socio-ecological crisis; an increasingly rapid process of technological transformation that disproportionately amplifies the destructive capacity of warfare systems used by armies, generating combined genocide/ecocide effects.

Even at the local level, the ecological transition brings with it a transformation of spaces, both urban and rural, often generating significant conflicts. It is cities, increasingly committed to reducing emissions and translating transition imaginaries to a territorial scale, that become potential sites of tension, contested for their management of limited resources and common goods such as water, soil, energy, and public green spaces. The urban transformation projects, starting with the false processes of urban reforestation that are taking the form of indiscriminate land consumption and accelerated (de)forestation, while appearing central to sustainability,

are creating new forms of exclusion, harming the most vulnerable communities and arousing resistance to the impact of the new interventions, particularly in contexts already affected by dynamics of abandonment and marginalisation. Even in democracies, the transition, justified by the imperative of urgency, seems dangerously to be taking the form of a permanent state of exception, which accompanies the ideological postures and techno-managerial beliefs of green growth with new repressive and securitarian orientations that criminalise opposition and dissent.

The conference therefore offers itself as a moment of confrontation and debate to explore the complex link between transition, conflict, war and ecological crisis, in its various spatial, temporal and scale articulations, with a preference for broad perspectives. Contributions of a theoretical and empirical nature will be welcomed that explore in particular - but not exclusively - the following themes:

- Energy transition and new competition for critical resources
- Extractivism and colonialism
- Ecological crisis and post-capitalist horizons
- Unequal and racialized ecological exchange
- Metabolic fractures, capitalism and theories of transition
- Socio-ecological collapse and socio-natural disasters
- Greenwashing, technological solutionism and the limits of green innovation
- The impact of conflicts on adaptation and mitigation processes
- The Weaponization of Nature
- Urban policies and ecological conflicts
- Geopolitics of transition and new wars
- Genocide, biocide, ecocide

## **Abstracts**

Abstracts must contain 1) the title; 2) the name(s) of the proposer(s) with their affiliation (if any); 3) five keywords; 4) a text of at least 250 max. 500 words. They should be sent by 15 April 2025 to [sociologiambiente2025@gmail.com](mailto:sociologiambiente2025@gmail.com). The selection and notification of acceptance/rejection of abstracts will take place by 14 May 2025

## **Registration fees**

- Full or Associate Professors € 120
- Researchers (RTD-A, RTD-B, RTT and research centre affiliates) € 60
- PhD students, research fellows, scholars etc. € 30

## **Organising Committee**

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- PhD in Sustainable Development and Climate Change – IUSS di Pavia;
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