

# Does theoretical ecology need a political philosophy?

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# Outline

- 1 Problem statement
- 2 A fragment of political philosophy
- 3 What does this imply for theoretical ecology? Some ideas

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And when thinking politically, one is using political philosophy either implicitly or explicitly.



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- It should include many humans and non-humans
- The humans include not only practitioners but also managers, funders, editors, cleaners, journalists, students, and more
- The non-humans include instruments, notebooks, articles, citations, equations, concepts, laboratories, field stations, and more



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- **In other words, our problem is that the external politics of theoretical ecology is largely undeveloped.**





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- I discuss the light this throws the absence of theoretical ecology from thinking ecologically in political contexts
- **I think this shows a way forward: find ways for ecological theory to inspire non-specialists**



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In this view, the public in general exists only in a weak sense. There is no single “informed public of voters”. Instead, the public in general consists of many overlapping and unstable publics.





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For example, the politics of a choir: its issue, its public

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- **Politics-5** The regulation of the issue is institutionalised



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- Its non-humans (“population bomb”, “niche”, “food web”) are old and abstract.
- Hence no issue starts at Politics-1 to entangle the non-humans of theoretical ecology with humans and other non-humans, hence not at higher levels either
- In other words, theoretical ecology is a political matter only for those people who care about its mathematical abstractions. This will always be a small, specialised group.



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- **Create new non-humans that form associations with non-technical people—see below**



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- And then talking about people as ecological objects might be could be done as theory, but (at first, anyway) non-mathematically.
- **Non-specialists could follow this, perhaps even participate—Politics-1!**



# THANKS!