



Crossing Borders: International Collaboration and Cooperation in Research

Transforming Global Conflict Paradigms: Towards an Ecological Civilisation

Yiming Mao, Department of Strategic Studies, University of Aberdeen

Abstract: This paper challenges Samuel Huntington’s ‘Clash of Civilizations’ framework, arguing that cultural and religious differences are insufficient to address the complexities of modern global conflicts. Instead, it proposes the concept of an ‘Ecological Civilisation’, emphasising ecological sustainability and interdependence as critical for future global stability. Analysing the conflict between exploitative and sustainable interactions with nature, this paper advocates for a paradigm shift towards a framework integrating principles of interdependence, sustainable development, and harmonious coexistence. Drawing on Eastern and Western philosophical traditions, this new paradigm seeks to integrate environmental, socio-economic, and cultural foundations, essential for supporting human life on Earth, thereby redefining the prerequisites for sustainable human development.

Keywords: Ecological Civilisation, Conflict, Harmony, Interdependence, Sustainability, Coexistence



1 Introduction

Samuel Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations' framework posits cultural and religious differences as the primary sources of global conflict (Huntington, 1993; Huntington, 1996; Huntington, 2002), significantly influencing the discourse on international relations. However, it has been critiqued for its simplistic approach and failure to consider the interconnected nature of modern global challenges, such as climate change, economic inequality, and technological disruption. These complex issues demand a paradigm shift in our thinking, one that extends beyond the narrow focus on cultural and religious conflicts. In contrast, the concept of "Ecological Civilization", first proposed by Chinese agricultural economist Ye Qianji in 1984 and later gaining prominence through Chinese policy (Gare, 2021, pp. 8), offers a holistic framework for understanding global conflicts and sustainability (Pan and Wu, 2021). Originating from Chinese ecological philosophy, ecological civilisation emphasises harmony, interdependence, and sustainable development. Since the early 21st century, it has increasingly advocated for a balanced and symbiotic relationship between humanity and nature, integrating environmental, social, and economic dimensions (Salleh, 2008). This growing prominence can be attributed to its incorporation into national policies, particularly in China, where it has shaped environmental strategies and global sustainability initiatives.

The core argument of this paper is that the primary threat to global stability is not the clash between cultures or nations, but the internal ideological conflict of ecological consciousness: the struggle between exploitative relationships with nature and sustainable symbiotic interactions. This paper argues that this conflict redefines the prerequisites for sustainable human development and challenges traditional narratives of global conflict. The real danger lies in the discord between our current mindset and the ecological imperatives necessary for survival. Thus, the paper advocates for a transition to ecological civilisation as a solution. Inspired by Eastern philosophical traditions and Western environmental thought, this new paradigm seeks to integrate environmental sustainability with the socio-economic and cultural foundations essential for supporting human life on Earth.



2 Re-examining Huntington's Framework and Its Limitations

2.1 Huntington's Dualistic View and Its Shortcomings

Samuel P. Huntington is a central figure in the discourse on global conflicts through his clash of civilisations framework. This influential work began with the publication of “*The Clash of Civilizations?*” (1993) issue of *Foreign Affairs*, which was later expanded into the book “*The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*” (1996). Huntington's theory asserts that the primary sources of post-Cold War global conflict are cultural and religious differences, with future conflicts expected to occur primarily between distinct civilisations characterised by unique cultural and religious traits. He identifies major civilisations such as Western, Islamic, Hindu, and Confucian, suggesting that the fault lines between these civilisations will be the main sources of post-Cold War conflicts (Huntington, 2002).

Over the past two decades, numerous developments in global politics have aligned with Huntington's analysis, demonstrating the applicability of his framework in understanding contemporary conflicts (Acevedo, 2008; Baele, Sterck, & Schuurman, 2021; Bonino, 2016; Charron, 2010; Haglund & Singh, 2023; Lopatin, Samuel-Azran, & Galily, 2017; Miller, 2023). Key events such as the 9/11 attacks, the Iraq War, the Arab Spring, the Ukraine conflict, the rise of ISIS, the Syrian civil war, and most recently, the 2023 Israel-Palestine conflict exemplify the relevance of his theory. These events underscore the enduring significance of Huntington's framework, particularly its influence in scholarly research and policy-making circles. However, this focus on cultural and religious identity alone oversimplifies the complex realities of these conflicts and fails to account for the dynamic interplay of other significant factors, such as economic and environmental dimensions.

In his final major work, “*Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity*” (Huntington and Tønnesson, 2004), Huntington extended his clash of civilisations framework to address domestic issues within the United States. He expressed concerns about the erosion of American national identity due to



multiculturalism and immigration, echoing the same zero-sum logic. This logic posits that any gain by one party necessarily results in a loss for another, leading to an antagonistic relationship between civilisations or cultural groups (Collet and Inoguchi, 2012). Huntington's rhetoric suggests that different civilisations are inherently in conflict, both globally and within nations, leaving little room for integration or mutual influence. While this perspective provides a clear narrative for cultural conflicts, it is overly simplistic and neglects other critical factors contributing to global instability.

A significant flaw in Huntington's theory is its inadequate consideration of economic inequalities and the impacts of globalisation (Collet and Inoguchi, 2012; Wu, 2017). As globalisation has increased interdependence among nations, it becomes essential to consider economic factors alongside cultural and religious ones. Economic disparities and the uneven distribution of resources significantly contribute to global tensions and conflicts (Le, Bui and Uddin, 2022). For instance, the exploitation of resources in developing countries by multinational corporations as seen in the Democratic Republic of Congo (hereafter DRC). The DRC is rich in minerals essential for electronics and electric vehicles, yet the local population sees little benefit from this wealth. According to a report by Amnesty International (2016), over 40,000 children are employed in hazardous conditions in cobalt mines, while multinational corporations reap significant profits, exacerbating severe economic inequality and social unrest – factors that Huntington's cultural-centric model overlooks.

Moreover, globalisation has blurred traditional cultural and national boundaries, creating a more interconnected world where economic and environmental issues in one region can have profound global impacts (Clifford *et al.*, 2008). The 2008 global financial crisis exemplifies this interconnectedness, where economic instability in the United States triggered a worldwide economic downturn, affecting all civilisations regardless of their cultural or religious identities (Espinosa-Vega and Russell, 2020). Similarly, climate change, biodiversity loss, and other environmental challenges pose a universal threat, requiring a unified global effort that transcends cultural and religious boundaries. These crises impact all civilisations and necessitate a focus on sustainability and interdependence rather than division and conflict (Cerf, 2019). Traditional conflict narratives do not account for ecological crises that require global cooperation and a



collective response. For example, the devastating impact of climate change, exemplified by rising sea levels and extreme weather events, does not discriminate based on cultural or religious lines (Siegel, 2020). Instead, these crises impact all of humanity, calling for cooperative international efforts to mitigate these effects.

Scholars such as Jeffrey Sachs and Naomi Klein argue for a more integrated approach to global challenges, emphasising the interconnectedness of economic, environmental, and social dimensions (Klein, 2014; Sachs, 2015). Sachs critiques Huntington's framework for its narrow focus on cultural conflicts, arguing that it fails to address the broader socioeconomic factors that drive global instability. Klein highlights the role of environmental stress in exacerbating conflicts, highlighting the need for cooperative international responses to shared ecological challenges. These scholars' views contrast sharply with Huntington's, who largely overlooks the need for collective action and cooperation in addressing global issues, instead focusing on the inevitability of conflict between civilisations. This need for cooperation is contrary to Huntington's conflict-driven model and underscores the importance of a new paradigm that draws attention to ecological sustainability and global interdependence. The 2015 Paris Agreement is a prime example of global cooperation, with most countries committing to mitigating climate change impacts (Falkner, 2016), showcasing the need and possibility for collective action beyond Huntington's adversarial framework.

2.2 Rise of Environmental Consciousness and the Crisis of Perception

At the turn of the 21st century, environmental awareness saw a significant rise. Events such as Earth Day, international environmental agreements, and the global recognition of the Anthropocene marked this shift (Biermann, 2021; Mravcová, 2019; Stange, 2023; Turner and Isenberg, 2020). These developments have greatly influenced international relations and policy-making, bringing climate change and resource depletion to the forefront of diplomatic discussions (Desai, 2022; Fisher *et al.*, 2021; Hickel and Kallis, 2020). Initiatives like the 2015 Paris Agreement exemplify the global acknowledgment of the necessity for cooperative solutions to environmental challenges (Allan, 2023; Bodansky, 2016; Mravcová, 2019; Obama, 2015). The inclusion of climate



change in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) further highlights this global commitment (United Nations, 2016).

The previously mentioned developments not only illustrate a growing recognition of environmental issues but also highlight the urgency of immediate and comprehensive action to address these challenges. For instance, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2021) reported a 54% increase in the frequency of extreme weather events globally between 2000 and 2020, underscoring the urgent need for action. The COVID-19 pandemic also revealed the critical link between environmental health and human well-being, leading to calls for sustainable recovery plans (Almond, Grooten, and Petersen, 2021). Additionally, the 2021 United Nation's Climate Change Conference (COP26) and the European Green Deal, with its ambitious targets for carbon neutrality by 2050 (Schunz, 2022), illustrate a clear trajectory towards recognising and addressing environmental challenges. These developments collectively emphasise the importance of collaborative and sustained efforts as essential components in the global strategy to combat environmental degradation.

However, despite the increased awareness, merely recognising environmental problems is insufficient. While the Paris Agreement represents a significant step forward, varying perceptions, commitments, and implementation strategies among nations have led to mixed results, limiting the agreement's overall effectiveness (Mitchell *et al.*, 2018). This discrepancy is reflective of what has been described as a "crisis of perception", a concept thoroughly explored in *Harmony: A New Way of Looking at Our World*, which argues that humanity's outdated and narrow cognitive frameworks are fundamentally flawed (Cain, 2012, pp. 257–258). These frameworks, which underpin discussions around crises, whether environmental or financial, are in fact symptoms of a deeper issue – a crisis of perception that is rooted in our collective worldview (Cain, 2012). This crisis manifests in the failure to recognise and act upon the interconnectedness of various global challenges, thereby perpetuating systemic errors that hinder effective solutions.

Fritjof Capra expands on this idea by linking ecological, environmental, social, and economic crises as interconnected facets of a single, overarching crisis of perception (Capra and Jakobsen, 2017). Capra and Jakobsen argue that our cultural worldview,



CROSSING BORDERS: INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION IN RESEARCH

shaped by outdated scientific paradigms, frequently overlooks the “hidden connections” that are vital for sustaining life over the long term. If we focus solely on addressing external problems without tackling this core internal issue, deeper problems will remain unresolved (Capra and Jakobsen, 2017, pp. 831-832). Consequently, we persist in our futile search for the right path, often going astray. This flawed perception leads us down a path that neither acknowledges the interconnectedness of humans and nature, nor the interconnectedness among humans themselves. A poignant example is the overexploitation of groundwater resources in California’s Central Valley. Intensive farming practices in this region have led to significant declines in groundwater levels – up to 30 meters in some areas – causing land subsidence and reduced water availability (Pauloo *et al.*, 2020). By ignoring these hidden connections, policies persist in prioritising immediate economic gains over long-term sustainability, with severe ecological and social consequences. The resulting damage is not solely environmental but also economic; it undermines agricultural productivity and threatens the long-term viability of local communities. The broader implications of this crisis are highlighted in the fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook report, which emphasises that biodiversity loss is not just an environmental issue but also a developmental, economic, security, social, and moral concern (UN, 2020). Addressing this crisis of perception requires a fundamental move towards ecological awareness, that is, recognising our interconnectedness with the natural world (O’Sullivan and Taylor, 2004). This shift necessitates transcending narrow economic interests and committing to sustainable practices that ensure long-term ecological balance. It requires acknowledging our shared responsibility and interdependence with the natural world.

Moreover, recognising the interconnected nature of the world requires conscious awareness of the internal conflicts that arise within individuals. These conflicts exist between our ecological consciousness – recognising our role within the Earth’s community – and our fragmented identities defined by nationality, religion, race, and other socio-political constructs (Harrison and Loring, 2020). They reflect the broader crisis of perception, where a divided self struggles to reconcile with the interconnected whole. The inherent dualism in our traditional views of identity and belonging often leads to a sense of alienation from nature and each other. This separation manifests in how



we prioritise short-term national or sectarian interests over long-term global sustainability (Hailwood, 2015). Climate change denial and resistance to international environmental agreements often stem from conflicts between national economic interests and global ecological needs. Short-sighted economic policies, such as prioritising immediate economic gains over environmental protection, can exacerbate environmental issues (Cordero, Roth, & Da Silva, 2005). For example, some countries hesitate to adopt stringent environmental regulations due to fears of economic slowdown or job losses. In 2020, Brazil faced international criticism for deforestation policies in the Amazon, driven by economic interests in agriculture and logging (Silva Junior *et al.*, 2021). This conflict illustrates the tension between economic priorities and ecological sustainability, underscoring the need for policies that balance economic development with long-term environmental health.

Addressing the crisis of perception and embracing a model of interconnectedness and interdependence offers a way to resolve these internal and external conflicts. This involves accepting our shared responsibility and interdependence with the natural world, moving beyond narrow identity constructs, and committing to cooperative actions for the common good. Ultimately, such a shift in perspective is vital for fostering a sustainable future and ensuring that our efforts to address environmental challenges are holistic and effective.

Illustrating the differences between Huntington's traditional conflict model and the ecological awareness framework requires a detailed comparison of their primary aspects. Table 1 offers such a comparison, highlighting how each model addresses conflict dynamics, economic inequality, globalisation, environmental awareness, and human interactions.

Table 1: Comparison of Huntington's Traditional Conflict Model and Ecological Awareness Framework

Aspect	Huntington's Traditional Conflict Model	Ecological Awareness Framework
Primary Cause of Conflict	Cultural and religious differences	Interconnected global challenges
View of Civilisations	Distinct, opposing entities	Interdependent communities
Conflict Dynamics	Zero-sum, perpetual conflict	Cooperative, mutual benefit



Consideration of Economic Inequality	Inadequate consideration	Essential consideration
Impact of Globalisation	Limited and overlooked	Integrated and significant
Environmental Awareness	Neglected	Central focus
Human-to-Human Conflicts	Identity, cultural, and religious conflicts	Recognition of shared humanity and mutual respect
Human-to-Nature Conflicts	Exploitation and neglect of nature	Sustainable and harmonious relationship with nature
Human-to-Self Conflicts	Alienation and fragmented identities	Integration of ecological consciousness with self-identity
Solution Approach	Adversarial, win-lose	Collaborative, win-win

As table 1 shows, Huntington’s model predominantly attributes conflict to cultural and religious differences, viewing civilisations as distinct and opposing entities engaged in a zero-sum dynamic. This perspective inadequately addresses economic inequality and the complex impacts of globalisation, while also neglecting environmental awareness. It fundamentally adopts an adversarial approach, emphasising perpetual conflict among civilisations. In contrast, the ecological awareness framework recognises the interconnectedness of global challenges and views civilisations as interdependent communities. This model focuses on the essential consideration of economic inequality and fully integrates the impacts of globalisation, placing central importance on environmental awareness. It seeks to address human-to-human conflicts by promoting shared humanity and mutual respect, fostering sustainable relationships between humans and nature, and integrating ecological consciousness with self-identity. This holistic approach advocates for collaborative, win-win solutions, reflecting a radical shift towards cooperative and sustainable global interactions.

3 Ecological Civilisation as a Framework

3.1 Defining Ecological Civilisation

Ecological civilisation represents a transformative paradigm aimed at harmonising environmental, social, and economic conflicts while fostering global symbiotic cooperation (Wang *et al.*, 2023). Traditionally, ‘ecology’, as a branch of biology, focuses on the relationships between organisms and their environments, encompassing



interactions within and among species (Rangan and Kull, 2009). This discipline emphasises the balance and health of ecosystems, considering factors such as biodiversity, energy flow, and nutrient cycling, which are foundational to understanding how biological systems sustain equilibrium and support life (Dakubo, 2011). For example, ecology studies how different species within a forest ecosystem interact and maintain balance.

‘Ecological civilisation’, by contrast, is a broader and more integrative concept. It is often viewed as a societal framework that deeply embeds ecological principles into the structure of human civilisation, aiming to establish a harmonious relationship between humanity and nature (Crist, 2019). This approach encompasses sustainable development, environmental protection, and a transformation of human activities to align with ecological realities.

However, these definitions do not fully capture the essence and depth of ecological civilisation. In Chinese culture, the term “生态” (ecology) carries dual connotations: “生” (sheng) signifies ceaseless vitality, while “态” (tai) denotes a state of being. Thus, ‘ecology’ implies a state of sustainable vitality, renewal, and growth (Cheng and Cheng, 1168). This reflects not only the harmonious coexistence between humans and the environment but also the interconnected relationships among all forms of life on Earth, and the need to pay constant attention to them. For instance, ecological civilisation promotes urban planning that integrates green spaces and sustainable practices, contrasting with traditional development focused solely on economic growth.

More specifically, ecological civilisation is a dynamic concept. The notion of ceaseless vitality (生) emphasises the ongoing and dynamic nature of life, highlighting perpetual growth, adaptation, and evolution of living systems. It underscores the importance of resilience and the capacity of ecosystems and societies to withstand and adapt to change. The state of being (态) represents the current state and conditions of ecosystems, focusing on equilibrium and health, deliberately considering the impacts of human activities and natural processes.

The concept of ‘ecological civilisation’ in this paper, therefore, highlights its framework that integrates interdependence, sustainable development, and harmonious



coexistence. It transcends mere environmental sustainability, involving the intricate connections between humans and other life forms, and advocates for a balanced, symbiotic mode of existence. These characteristics make it a more desirable model for policy and paradigm shifts. It highlights the need for a holistic and integrated approach to addressing environmental, social, and economic challenges, promoting resilience, and ensuring long-term sustainability.

3.2 Understanding Ecological Civilisation

3.2.1 Interdependence

Interdependence is central to the understanding of ecological civilisation. It acknowledges the intricate web of connections within and among ecosystems, emphasising that all life forms and their environments are fundamentally interconnected (Upreti, 2024). This concept is grounded in complexity science, which examines how relationships between parts give rise to the collective behaviours of a system and how these systems interact with their environment. Complexity science provides valuable insights into interdependence by illustrating that systems are not merely the sum of their parts but are defined by the relationships and interactions within them (Kiser, 2016). In ecological systems, changes in one element can trigger cascading effects throughout the entire network (Newman, 2018). Fritjof Capra, in *The Web of Life* (1997), discusses how the removal of a single species in an ecosystem, such as a keystone predator, can lead to cascading effects that alter the entire system, highlighting the necessity of a holistic approach to address environmental challenges.

In the framework of ecological civilisation, interdependence stresses the need for policies and practices that reflect the mutual dependence between humans and nature (Magdoff, 2012). This principle advocates for a comprehensive approach to global governance that aligns human activities with natural processes, promoting sustainable and harmonious coexistence. Global governance should not be limited to environmental management. Instead it should integrate ecological principles into all aspects of policy-making to ensure the resilience and sustainability of human and natural systems (CCICED, 2021). For instance, policies should include integrated water resource management, which considers the entire water cycle and its impacts on



agriculture, industry, and urban development. Such an approach acknowledges that the health of human societies is intrinsically linked to the health of the natural environment. It demands collaborative efforts to maintain ecological balance and resilience, and emphasises the need for ongoing relational discourse.

3.2.2 Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is often misconstrued as maintaining a stable equilibrium of resources and ecological systems (Derissen, Quaas and Baumgärtner, 2011). This traditional view implies a static condition. However, sustainability is inherently dynamic, involving continuous adaptation, evolution, and resilience. The Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future*, defines sustainable development as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland Commission, 1987, p. 43). This definition focuses attention on balancing economic growth, environmental stewardship, and social equity. Contemporary scholars and practitioners argue that true sustainability involves creating systems capable of adapting and thriving amidst continuous change. Tim Jackson, in *Prosperity without Growth*, contends that sustainability is about resilience and the capacity to adapt to new conditions rather than maintaining a static state (Jackson, 2011). For instance, in India, the policy of maintaining fixed forest conservation areas, without considering the potential benefits of controlled logging and adaptive forest management, has proven ineffective. The rigid implementation of the Forest Conservation Act (1980) often neglected the evolving ecological knowledge and the necessity for adaptive management practices. This resulted in economic losses for local communities dependent on forest resources and suboptimal conservation outcomes, as evidenced by increased incidences of forest fires and biodiversity loss (Sahana, Areendran & Raj, 2022). Adaptive forest management, which incorporates local ecological conditions and sustainable harvesting practices, has shown better results in terms of both conservation and economic benefits (Timsina *et al.*, 2022).

Misunderstanding sustainability as stability can impede effective understanding of ecological civilisation and global conflict resolution (Stephenson, 2023). Stability implies a fixed state, while sustainability involves dynamic processes that enhance the adaptive capacities of human and natural systems. Recognising sustainability as a



continuous, adaptive process is crucial for fostering resilience and ensuring long-term ecological balance. Effective environmental management requires embracing the dynamic nature of sustainability and implementing practices that promote ongoing adaptation and improvement. For example, current renewable energy policies in countries such as Germany and Spain often set fixed subsidy rates for technologies like solar and wind power. These fixed rates can become outdated quickly as technology advances and costs decrease (del Río, 2017; Agora Energiewende, 2020). A more effective policy would incorporate adaptive mechanisms, allowing subsidy rates to adjust based on technological progress and market conditions. This flexibility would ensure continuous support for innovation and the expansion of clean energy solutions, maintaining their relevance and effectiveness.

3.2.3 Harmonious Coexistence

Harmonious coexistence combines Western and Eastern ecological philosophies to promote a balanced relationship between humans and nature. In Eastern thought, particularly Chinese philosophy, concepts such as “Harmony” (和) and “Following the Way of Nature” (道法自然) emphasise the interconnectedness of all things and the importance of living according to natural laws (Pan & Wu, 2021). These ideas advocate a lifestyle that respects nature’s limits, promotes balance, and fosters sustainable development. Chinese traditional wisdom, including teachings like “Harmony between Heaven and Humanity” (天人合一), underscore the unity and interdependence between humans and the natural world (Horton & Horton, 2019). These principles suggest that human well-being is intrinsically linked to environmental health, advocating for practices that align human activities with nature’s rhythms and processes. For instance, a study by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health found that regions with strict air quality regulations, such as California, have seen substantial improvements in public health outcomes. The research demonstrated that reductions in fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and other pollutants were associated with significant decreases in respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, illustrating the direct link between stringent environmental policies and better public health (Di *et al.*, 2017). The ancient concept of “Heaven, Earth, Governance, Family, Mentor” (天地君亲师) further



reinforces the notion of interconnectedness and dimensional harmony within the cosmic and social order.

Western ecological thought, influenced by figures such as Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson, similarly highlights the interconnectedness of all life forms and the importance of conservation. Leopold's "Land Ethic" calls for a responsible relationship between people and the land they inhabit (Allchin, 2019), while Carson's *Silent Spring* (1963) brought attention to the far-reaching impacts of human activities on the environment. In *Harmony: A New Way of Looking at Our World* (2010), HRH Charles, the then Prince of Wales, Tony Juniper, and Ian Skelly stressed the importance of understanding and living according to natural laws (HRH The Prince of Wales, Juniper, and Skelly, 2010). David Cadman, in *The Recovery of Love*, discusses the transition from dominance to partnership and relational existence (Cadman, 2022). He explores how moving towards a more relational and interconnected way of living can foster a deeper sense of responsibility and care for our planet. This shift from a domination-based to a partnership-based perspective is essential for achieving ecological civilisation, promoting an approach of love to harmonious coexistence.

While interdependence and harmonious coexistence may seem similar, they have distinct focuses. On the one hand, interdependence emphasises the systemic connections and mutual reliance between human and natural systems, advocating for integrated policies that reflect these relationships. Harmonious coexistence, on the other hand, stresses the philosophical and ethical dimensions, drawing from both Eastern and Western traditions to promote a balanced, respectful relationship with nature. Together, these concepts provide a comprehensive framework for achieving ecological civilisation by addressing both the practical and ethical aspects of human-environment interactions.

3.2.4 Integrating Eastern and Western Ecological Views

A comprehensive understanding of ecological civilisation necessitates the integration of Eastern and Western ecological philosophies. Eastern philosophies highlight harmony and interconnectedness, advocating a lifestyle that respects nature's limits and fosters sustainable development. Western ecological thought complements



these principles by focusing on harmony and love, ethical stewardship, and right relationships. Combining these perspectives yields a more holistic and effective ecological approach. Table 2 compares the primary aspects of Eastern and Western ecological philosophies and illustrates how they converge to form a cohesive framework.

Table 2: Comparison of Eastern and Western Ecological Philosophies

Principle	Eastern Philosophy	Western Philosophy	Integration in Ecological Civilisation
Interdependence	<p>Harmony (和): Emphasises the interconnectedness of all things.</p> <p>Following the Way of Nature (道法自然): Living according to natural laws.</p>	<p>Harmony: Advocates a holistic understanding of our relationship with nature.</p> <p>Land Ethic: Ethical and respectful relationship with the environment.</p>	<p>Recognising mutual dependence of all life forms. Policies and practices reflecting mutual dependence between humans and nature.</p>
Sustainable Development	<p>Continuous Adaptation, Yin-Yang Balance: Emphasises ongoing change and adaptation.</p> <p>Heaven, Earth, Governance, Family, Mentor (天地君亲师): Dimensional respect and harmony within cosmic and social order.</p>	<p>Resilience, Adaptive Management: Capacity to adapt to new conditions.</p> <p>Environmental Stewardship: Highlighting impacts of human activities on the environment.</p>	<p>Dynamic, ongoing improvement, and resilience-building. Creating systems capable of adapting and thriving amidst continuous change.</p>



Harmonious Coexistence	Harmony between Heaven and Humanity (天人合一): Unity and interdependence between humans and nature.	<p>Harmony: Importance of understanding and living according to natural laws.</p> <p>Relational Existence: Transition from dominance to partnership.</p> <p>Right Relationship: fostering a deep sense of love and responsibility towards others, the environment, and oneself.</p>	<p>Balanced, respectful relationship with nature. Promotes symbiotic relationships where both humans and nature thrive. Ethical stewardship and love-based harmonious coexistence.</p>
-------------------------------	---	--	--

Table 2 illustrates how both Eastern and Western traditions emphasise interdependence, though they articulate it differently; Eastern thought highlights the interconnectedness of all things and adherence to natural laws; Western thought focuses on holistic relationships with nature and ethical stewardship. In terms of sustainable development, Eastern philosophies stress continuous adaptation and the dynamic balance of Yin-Yang, whereas Western approaches emphasise resilience and adaptive management. These perspectives together support the creation of systems that thrive amidst continuous change, promoting resilience and long-term sustainability. Harmonious coexistence is also a shared concept, with Eastern philosophies advocating for unity between humans and nature, and Western thought drawing attention to natural laws and right relationships. This integration fosters a balanced, respectful relationship with nature, promoting symbiotic interactions where both humans and nature can flourish.

Ecological civilisation represents a transformative framework that transcends the traditional boundaries of environmental science, addressing the multifaceted challenges of modern society. By recognising the interconnectedness of all life forms and advocating for a balanced and symbiotic relationship with nature, ecological civilisation provides a comprehensive and dynamic approach to achieving sustainability. This holistic view incorporates interdependence, sustainable development, and harmonious coexistence, promoting a civilisation that is in harmony with the natural world. Ultimately, ecological civilisation aims to foster a continuous, self-sustaining



global community of life. This means embracing a sustainable and interdependent understanding of a global community of shared destiny, where the well-being of one is intrinsically linked to the well-being of all life. This awareness is vital for fostering a global consciousness that prioritises the survival and flourishing of life on Earth.

3.3 Reflecting on Conflict Through the Lens of Ecological Civilisation

Ecological civilisation provides a comprehensive framework for examining and resolving modern societal conflicts. This approach sheds light on various conflicts, such as those between nations (people) over shared resources like the Nile Basin and the South China Sea, and highlights the need for cooperative international agreements like the Paris Agreement and the One Health approach. It addresses conflicts between humans and nature, exemplified by Amazon rainforest deforestation, advocating for sustainable practices and indigenous knowledge. Additionally, it explores internal conflicts driven by consumerism and urban stress, emphasising the mental health benefits of green spaces and the importance of reconciling diverse cultural values for inner peace.

3.3.1 Conflicts Between Nations

Conflicts between nations are increasingly driven by competition over dwindling natural resources, economic dominance, and ideological divides (Nillesen & Bulte, 2014). These conflicts have become more intense due to the exacerbating effects of climate change, resource scarcity, and geopolitical tensions. Traditional international relations often operate on the basis of sovereignty and competition, where nations prioritise their own interests, frequently at the expense of global ecological health (Paris, 2020). This competitive mindset contributes to conflicts over resources like water, minerals, and arable land, as seen in regions such as the Middle East and Africa (Rougé *et al.*, 2018). A prominent example is the ongoing conflict over water resources in the Nile Basin. The construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (hereafter GERD) has heightened tensions between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan. Ethiopia views the dam as essential for its development and energy needs, while Egypt fears it will reduce the flow of the Nile, which is critical for its agriculture and water supply (El-Fadel *et al.*, 2003). This situation highlights how competition for shared resources can escalate tensions,



CROSSING BORDERS: INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION IN RESEARCH

underscoring the need for cooperative transboundary resource management that acknowledges the interdependence of nations and the importance of shared benefits and responsibilities.

From an ecological civilisation perspective, the core issue is not just resource competition but the lack of recognition of interdependence and mutual dependence. Nations often view resources as zero-sum assets, where one country's gain is another's loss (Crescenzi, 2003). This mindset fosters adversarial relations and conflicts. Ecological civilisation advocates for a radical move towards recognising the interconnectedness of all life forms and ecological systems. This approach encourages international cooperation in managing shared resources, promoting policies that reflect mutual dependence and shared responsibility.

Moreover, integrating the One Health approach into the principles of ecological civilisation can provide a comprehensive strategy for addressing these conflicts. The One Health concept, which balances and optimises human, animal, and environmental health through a unified approach (WHO, 2023), aligns seamlessly with the ecological civilisation framework. One Health emphasises the interconnectedness of health across species and environments, reinforcing the need for integrated policies (Destoumieux-Garzón et al., 2018). For example, the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (hereafter UNFCCC) exemplifies international cooperation aimed at addressing global challenges like climate change. By setting collective goals and encouraging nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it fosters a sense of shared responsibility (Cusmano, Koreen, & Pissareva, 2018). However, the implementation of these agreements often falls short due to national interests and economic pressures (Stankovic, Hovi, & Skodvin, 2023). Therefore, integrating One Health principles could enhance these agreements by ensuring they comprehensively address the interconnected health of humans, animals, and ecosystems, thus promoting a holistic approach to global governance. For instance, the collaborative management of the Rift Valley fever outbreak in East Africa demonstrated how integrating human, animal, and environmental health strategies could mitigate conflicts and improve health outcomes (Hassan *et al.*, 2017).



CROSSING BORDERS: INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION IN RESEARCH

Addressing the root causes of disease through a unified approach not only enhances health outcomes but also reduces tensions between agricultural and conservation interests, illustrating the potential of One Health to support ecological civilisation principles. Consequently, incorporating the One Health approach into ecological civilisation can strengthen policies by promoting the resilience and sustainability of ecosystems, which in turn support human and animal health. This comprehensive perspective fosters a deeper understanding of interdependence and encourages cooperative solutions to global challenges, ultimately leading to more adaptive, resilient, and effective international policies.

Since the principle of sustainable development within ecological civilisation prioritises resilience and continuous improvement, nations must consider the long-term impacts of their policies on both their own citizens and the global community (Hanson, 2019). This contrasts with short-term exploitation of resources, which often leads to environmental degradation and subsequent conflicts. The Brundtland Report's definition of sustainable development – “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” – remains relevant (Brundtland Commission, 1987, p. 43). Applying this principle to international relations means that nations must collaborate to ensure that development strategies do not deplete shared resources or cause environmental harm that transcends borders. For instance, the conflicts in the South China Sea, where several countries vie for control over maritime resources, could potentially have been mitigated through cooperative international frameworks that emphasise sustainable use and shared benefits (Bateman, 2014). By focusing on shared ecological responsibilities rather than territorial disputes, these nations could foster a more peaceful and sustainable regional development.

Harmonious coexistence, as advocated by ecological civilisation, involves fostering balanced and respectful relationships between nations. Integrating Eastern and Western ecological philosophies can promote peace and stability. For example, the concept of “Harmony between Heaven and Humanity” suggests that human well-being is intrinsically linked to environmental health (Wang and Yu, 2023). This perspective can guide diplomatic efforts to resolve conflict-generating issues by fostering a shared sense



of responsibility towards the planet. By transitioning from a domination-based to a partnership-based perspective, nations can develop a deeper sense of care and cooperation.

3.3.2 Conflicts Between Humans and Nature

Human activities have increasingly disrupted natural ecosystems, leading to biodiversity loss, climate change, and resource depletion. These conflicts manifest in the extinction of species, habitat destruction, and the overconsumption of natural resources (Chu and Karr, 2017). The Amazon rainforest, often referred to as the “lungs of the Earth,” is critical for global biodiversity and climate regulation (Pioletti, Cotella and Schor, 2023). However, extensive deforestation driven by logging, agriculture, and mining has led to significant ecological damage. This destruction threatens countless species, disrupts local climate patterns, and contributes to global climate change. The deforestation of the Amazon has reached alarming levels, driven by economic pressures and weak enforcement of environmental regulations (Auerbach, 2024). The Brazilian government, though under economic strain, has prioritised agricultural expansion and resource extraction over environmental protection (Stabile *et al.*, 2020). This has led to increased conflicts between indigenous communities, who rely on the forest for their livelihoods, and corporate interests seeking to exploit its resources.

The conflict between humans and nature in the Amazon highlights the failure of current approaches to balance economic development with environmental protection. Traditional views of sustainable development often imply maintaining a stable equilibrium of resources and ecological systems (Stabile *et al.*, 2020). However, sustainability is inherently dynamic, involving continuous adaptation, evolution, and resilience. Recognising the interdependence between human activities and ecological health is essential for addressing these conflicts. Policies and practices must reflect the mutual dependence between humans and natural systems. Failing to do so can lead to severe ecological imbalances, exacerbating environmental degradation and resource depletion. This oversight may result in the collapse of critical ecosystems, loss of biodiversity, and increased frequency of natural disasters. Additionally, ignoring this interdependence can cause social and economic instability, heightening conflicts over scarce resources and compromising the well-being of future generations.



Sustainable development requires creating systems capable of adapting and thriving amidst continuous change. This involves implementing practices that enhance the adaptive capacities of both human and natural systems. For example, sustainable agriculture practices that promote soil health and biodiversity can improve resilience to climate change, ensuring long-term food security. Similarly, renewable energy technologies can reduce dependence on fossil fuels, mitigating the impacts of climate change and promoting ecological balance. In the Amazon context, sustainable development practices could involve promoting agroforestry, which integrates trees and crops to enhance biodiversity and improve soil health. Such practices would not only protect the rainforest but would also support the livelihoods of local communities, creating a sustainable model that balances ecological and economic needs.

Harmonious coexistence involves fostering a balanced relationship between humans and nature. Applying this principle to the Amazon involves respecting the rights and knowledge of indigenous communities, who have traditionally lived in harmony with the rainforest. Their practices and wisdom can guide sustainable management of the forest, ensuring that development does not come at the expense of ecological health. Instituting an ethical and respectful relationship with the natural world could lead to positive changes such as the restoration of degraded ecosystems, increased biodiversity, and improved resilience against climate change. This holistic approach would enhance ecosystem services, such as the purification of air and water, benefiting both the environment and human communities. It would also foster sustainable development, ensuring that natural resources are available for future generations while supporting current socio-economic needs.

3.3.3 Conflicts Within Individuals

Internal conflicts within individuals are increasingly prominent, driven by modern lifestyles that emphasise material success and consumerism, leading to a disconnection from natural rhythms. These conflicts manifest in heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and a pervasive sense of alienation. The mental health crisis in urban areas is particularly acute, exacerbated by the fast-paced nature of city life and constant exposure to technology (Buttazzoni, Doherty and Minaker, 2022).



CROSSING BORDERS: INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION IN RESEARCH

Research underscores the significant impact of environmental and social factors on mental health. A 2021 study published in *Environmental Research* found that individuals living near green spaces had a 20% lower risk of developing mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, compared to those in less green urban areas (Nieuwenhuijsen, 2021). While this study highlights a correlation rather than causation, it strongly suggests that the built environment and access to nature can positively influence psychological well-being. These findings highlight the potential mental health benefits of integrating green spaces into urban planning. Therefore, recognising and addressing the environmental and social determinants of mental health is crucial for developing effective public health strategies. Further research is essential to explore these connections and inform policies that promote access to natural environments as part of a holistic approach to mental health care.

Moreover, societal pressures related to consumerism and identity significantly contribute to internal conflicts. The relentless pursuit of material goods and the pressure to conform to societal expectations create a continuous cycle of stress and dissatisfaction. A 2023 report by the World Health Organization indicated that urban residents are experiencing higher rates of anxiety and depression, with a 30% increase in reported cases over the past five years. This trend is exacerbated by the modern digital landscape, where social media and online presence amplify identity pressures. A 2023 study by the Pew Research Center found that 45% of teenagers feel overwhelmed by the pressure to present a certain image online, contributing to anxiety and identity confusion. The dissonance between one's authentic self and societal persona intensifies feelings of alienation and stress. This is particularly acute in urban settings, characterised by fast-paced lifestyles and intense competition.

Another critical aspect of the impact of environmental and social pressures on mental health is the internal fragmentation caused by conflicting value systems and cultural beliefs within individuals. Modern life often forces individuals to navigate multiple, sometimes contradictory, belief systems and values. This can lead to internal conflict, as people struggle to reconcile different aspects of their identities (Jones and Hynie, 2017). The need to harmonise various value systems, cultural beliefs, and relational dynamics within oneself is essential to achieving inner peace and coherence.



Furthermore, embracing cultural and value diversity within oneself involves acknowledging and reconciling different belief systems and values. This approach encourages individuals to appreciate the richness and relatedness of multiple perspectives, and integrate them into a cohesive sense of self. This not only enhances personal wellbeing but also fosters greater empathy and understanding towards others, contributing to a more harmonious society.

In conclusion, ecological civilisation offers a transformative lens for addressing the internal conflicts that arise from modern lifestyles, which emphasise material success and consumerism, leading to disconnection from natural rhythms. Societal pressures related to consumerism and identity amplify internal conflicts, with urban residents experiencing higher rates of anxiety and depression. The modern digital landscape exacerbates these pressures, intensifying feelings of alienation. Harmonising various value systems and embracing cultural diversity within oneself is essential for inner peace and coherence. By fostering greater empathy and understanding, ecological civilisation promotes a balanced relationship that respects both environmental and cultural dimensions, ultimately contributing to a more harmonious and sustainable world.

4 Integrating Ecological Civilisation into Global Governance

The present global challenges, such as interconnected crises and the degradation of life-supporting ecological structures, necessitate a collective response to enhance sustainable resilience. Modern civilisation's practices have resulted in significant biodiversity loss and the breakdown of ecosystem services, such as the decline in global bee populations and ocean acidification (Doney et al., 2009; Potts et al., 2010). These issues accentuate the fractured relationship between humanity and the environment. Human activities increasingly disrupt natural systems, and research on complex adaptive systems demonstrates that these disruptions can trigger cascading effects, destabilising global ecosystems (Levin, 1998). The decline of bees, which are critical pollinators, affects food production and ecosystem health, illustrating



how interconnected these systems are. Consequently, the inconsistent global response to ecological and humanitarian crises reveals a profound lack of global social consciousness, reflecting the conflict between short-term national interests and long-term global well-being (Rockström et al., 2009).

The absence of a “global community consciousness” has led to extensive environmental degradation, eroding what can be termed the “biological commons.” This concept, akin to what is discussed by Ostrom (1990) in her work on common-pool resources, refers to the shared, fundamental ecological systems and biodiversity that sustain life on Earth. Integrating this term, herein referred to as the “primal life community”, emphasises our inherent connection to these systems and their crucial role in maintaining ecological balance. The degradation of these systems disrupts our original ecological identity, which is our inherent connection and relationship with the natural world. The resulting crisis spotlights the urgent need to rebuild a new global community consciousness that prioritises ecological health and resilience.

The erosion of the primal life community signifies the loss of foundational ecological structures, necessitating the reestablishment of a global community consciousness. This degradation not only impacts environmental stability but also exacerbates conflicts within individuals, between people, and between humans and nature (Petrova, 2023). As ecosystems degrade, individuals experience a sense of alienation and loss as their connection to nature weakens. As we have seen, this disconnection manifests in heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and a pervasive sense of alienation, particularly in urban areas (Bratman, 2019). Furthermore, the collective consciousness—the shared understanding and values that bind societies together—is fragmented, leading to conflicts over resource use and environmental priorities.

This brings us to the central argument: the main contradiction threatening global stability is the ideological conflict within ecological consciousness – specifically, the exploitative relationship with nature versus sustainable co-existence. This challenges traditional narratives of conflict, which often focus on cultural or national differences, and redefines the premises of human sustainable development. The real threat to human civilisation is not the clash between different cultures or nations but the discord between our current mindset and the requirements for ecological survival. An



CROSSING BORDERS: INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION IN RESEARCH

exploitative mindset views nature as a resource to be used for human benefit, leading to unsustainable practices (Baptista, 2014). In contrast, sustainable co-existence advocates for living in harmony with nature, recognising that human well-being is intrinsically linked to ecological health (Doncaster and Bullock, 2024).

To address the intertwined challenges of the 21st century, integrating ecological civilisation into global governance structures is essential. Ecological civilisation is a framework that integrates principles of interdependence, sustainable development, and harmonious coexistence. This framework advocates for rethinking development models to prioritise ecological health and resilience over economic growth driven by resource exploitation. By doing so, it seeks to transform our approach to governance and development, aligning them with the realities of ecological interdependence.

Traditional governance models, historically based on competitive nation-states and power balances, must evolve into globally interconnected organic organisations (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 2022). These organisations should function beyond traditional power structures and focus on fostering a sustainable global life community and harmonious coexistence ecological thinking. This new paradigm emphasises global solidarity and an ecological mindset, accepting the interconnectedness of human and natural systems and the need for sustainable, resilient practices that support both. Furthermore, redefining success and progress is crucial.

Established metrics of economic growth, such as GDP, must be replaced with indicators that reflect ecological health and social well-being, as outlined by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (hereafter “UN SDGs”). These goals provide a comprehensive framework for sustainable development, addressing interconnected issues from poverty and inequality to climate change and environmental degradation (UN, 2015). UN SDGs and the principles of ecological civilisation share common goals of promoting long-term ecological balance and social equity. For instance, SDG 13 (Climate Action) emphasises the urgent need to combat climate change and its impacts.

Integrating the principles of ecological civilisation into SDG 13 can achieve more comprehensive outcomes. Firstly, ecological civilisation promotes harmony between humans and nature. Thus, while reducing carbon emissions, the principle also focuses



on ecological restoration, such as reforestation and habitat protection. This not only directly reduces atmospheric CO₂ but also restores ecosystem health and enhances biodiversity, thereby supporting SDG 15 (Life on Land). Moreover, ecological civilisation advocates for resilient and sustainable communities. Consequently, implementing climate action, promoting sustainable agricultural practices, building green infrastructure, and developing low-carbon economies can enhance community resilience to climate change. This strategy not only aids in achieving SDG 13 but also significantly supports SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), as robust community resilience is crucial for climate change adaptation.

Through the integrated approach described above, ecological civilisation ensures that climate action encompasses more than just technical and emission reduction measures by including ecological restoration and community development. This comprehensive method illustrates the unique advantages of ecological civilisation in addressing global climate challenges, thereby promoting broader environmental and social well-being. Ultimately, by aligning SDG 13 with the principles of ecological civilisation, it is possible to simultaneously advance SDGs 11 and 15, demonstrating how ecological principles can lead to synergistic solutions for sustainable development.

In conclusion, integrating ecological civilisation into global governance structures is crucial for addressing the interconnected challenges of the 21st century. By fostering a global community consciousness grounded in the principles of interdependence, sustainable development, and harmonious coexistence, we can create a more resilient and sustainable future. For instance, the decline in bee populations disrupts pollination processes essential for many crops, leading to reduced food production and economic losses. This clearly illustrates how human well-being is intricately linked to ecological health, emphasising the need for a collective ecological consciousness. Through collective action and a shared commitment to ecological civilisation, we can rebuild the global community consciousness necessary for a sustainable and thriving planet.

5 Conclusion

This paper has highlighted the inadequacy of Samuel Huntington's 'Clash of Civilisations' framework in addressing the complexities of contemporary global conflicts,



CROSSING BORDERS: INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION IN RESEARCH

advocating for a paradigm shift towards 'ecological civilisation'. This new concept emphasises ecological sustainability and interdependence as essential for future global stability, integrating principles of sustainable development and harmonious coexistence. While ecological civilisation offers a robust framework, its implementation faces significant challenges, including entrenched economic interests, political resistance, and the need for widespread changes in policy and mindset. Future research should focus on practical strategies for integrating ecological principles into global governance and economic systems. This includes examining the relationship between economic interests and ecological needs, identifying policies that effectively balance both without negative economic impacts. Policymakers, educators, and leaders must collaborate to foster a global ecological consciousness and promote sustainable practices at all levels of society. Addressing the intertwined challenges of the 21st century requires fundamentally rethinking current governance models. By cultivating a global community consciousness rooted in interdependence, sustainable development, and harmonious coexistence, humanity can build a more resilient and sustainable future.



6 References

1. Acevedo, G.A. (2008) 'Islamic Fatalism and the Clash of Civilizations: An Appraisal of a Contentious and Dubious Theory', *Social forces*, 86(4), pp. 1711–1752.
2. Agora Energiewende. (2020) *The German Energiewende and its Climate Paradox*. Available at: <https://www.agora-energiewende.de/en/publications/the-german-energiewende-and-its-climate-paradox>.
3. Allan, J.I. (2023) 'Advocating for health and climate', *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 101(2), pp. 158–160.
4. Allchin, D. (2019) 'From Leopold's "Land Ethic" to Ecological Hubris', *The American Biology Teacher*, 81(4), pp. 291–293.
5. Almond, R.E.A., Grooten, M. & Petersen, T. (2021) 'REPORTS: Living Planet Report 2020 - Bending the Curve of Biodiversity Loss', *Natural Resources & Environment* 35(3), p.62.
6. American Psychological Association (APA) (2022) 'Meditation and its Impact on Emotional Regulation: A Comprehensive Review', *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 78(6), pp. 1050-1065.
7. Auerbach, S. (2024) 'Deforestation Effects on Ecosystems'. *Sciencing.com*. Available at: <https://sciencing.com/deforestation-effects-ecosystems-8845.html> (Accessed 22 August 2024).
8. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (2022) *The Impact of Urban Green Spaces on Mental Health*. Available at: <https://www.aihw.gov.au> (Accessed 11 August 2024).
9. Baptista, J.A. (2014) 'The Ideology of Sustainability and the Globalization of a Future', *Time & Society*, 23(3), pp. 358–379.
10. Baele, S.J., Sterck, O., Slingeneyer, T. & Schuurman, B. (2021) 'ISIS's Clash of Civilizations: Constructing the "West" in Terrorist Propaganda', *Studies in conflict and terrorism*, 44(11), pp. 887–919.
11. Bateman, S. (2014) 'Maritime Boundary Delimitation, Excessive Claims and Effective Regime Building in the South China Sea', in Song, Y-H. (ed.) *Major Law and Policy Issues in the South China Sea*. First edition. London: Routledge, pp. 119–136.



12. Biermann, F. (2021) 'The future of "environmental" policy in the Anthropocene: time for a paradigm shift', *Environmental politics*, 30(1-2), pp. 61-80.
13. Bodansky, D. (2016) 'The Paris Climate Change Agreement: A New Hope?', *The American Journal of International Law*, 110(2), pp. 288-319.
14. Bonino, S. (2016) 'The British state "security syndrome" and Muslim diversity: challenges for liberal democracy in the age of terror', *Contemporary Islam*, 10(2), pp. 223-247.
15. Bratman, E.Z. (2019) *Governing the Rainforest: Sustainable Development Politics in the Brazilian Amazon*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
16. Brundtland Commission (1987) *Our Common Future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
17. Buttazzoni, A., Doherty, S. & Minaker, L. (2022) 'How Do Urban Environments Affect Young People's Mental Health? A Novel Conceptual Framework to Bridge Public Health, Planning, and Neurourbanism', *Public Health Reports*, 137(1), pp. 48-61.
18. Cadman, David (2022) *The Recovery of Love: Living in a Troubled World*. Halesworth: Zig Publishing.
19. Cain, C.C. (2012) 'Harmony: A New Way of Looking at the World - By HRH The Prince of Wales', *Reviews in Religion and Theology*, 19(2), pp. 257-258.
20. Capra, F. (1997) *The Web of Life: A New Synthesis of Mind and Matter*. London: Flamingo, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.
21. Capra, F. & Jakobsen, O.D. (2017) 'A Conceptual Framework for Ecological Economics Based on Systemic Principles of Life', *International Journal of Social Economics*, 44(6), pp. 831-844.
22. Carson, R. (1963) *Silent Spring*. London: Hamish Hamilton.
23. Cerf, M.E. (2019) 'Sustainable Development Goal Integration, Interdependence, and Implementation: the Environment-Economic-Health Nexus and Universal Health Coverage', *Global Challenges*, 3(9), p. 1900021.
24. Charron, N. (2010) 'Déjà Vu All Over Again: A post-Cold War empirical analysis of Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" Theory', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 45(1), pp. 107-127.
25. Cheng, H., Cheng, Y., & Zhu, X. (1168) *Henan Chengshi Yishu*. National Library of China. Available at: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2021666505>.



26. Chu, E.W. and Karr, J.R. (2017) 'Environmental Impact: Concept, Consequences, Measurement', *Reference Module in Life Sciences*, pp. B978-0-12-809633-8.02380–3.
27. Faulconbridge, J. & Beaverstock, J. (2008) 'Globalization: Interconnected Worlds' in Clifford, N., Holloway, S., Rice, S.P., & Valentine, G. (eds.) *Key Concepts in Geography*. London: SAGE Publications, pp. 331-343.
28. Collet, C. & Inoguchi, T. (2012) 'Is Globalization Undermining Civilizational Identities? A Test of Huntington's Core State Assumptions among the Publics of Greater Asia and the Pacific', *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, 13(4), pp. 553–585.
29. Cordero, R.R., Roth, P. & Da Silva, L. (2005) 'Economic growth or environmental protection?', *Environmental Science & Policy*, 8(4), pp. 392–398.
30. Crescenzi, M.J. (2003) 'Interdependence and Conflict: When Does Symmetry Matter?', *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 20(1), pp. 73–92.
31. Crist, E. (2019) *Abundant Earth: Toward an Ecological Civilization*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
32. Cusmano, L., Koreen, M. & Pissareva, L. (2018) '2018 OECD Ministerial Conference on SMEs', *OECD SME and Entrepreneurship Papers* [online]. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1787/90c8823c-en>.
33. Dakubo, C.Y. (2011) *Ecosystems and Human Health*. New York, NY: Springer New York.
34. del Río, P. (2017) 'Designing auctions for renewable electricity support: Best practices from around the world', *Energy for Sustainable Development*, 41, pp. 1-13.
35. Derissen, S., Quaas, M.F. & Baumgärtner, S. (2011) 'The Relationship Between Resilience and Sustainability of Ecological-Economic Systems', *Ecological Economics*, 70(6), pp. 1121–1128.
36. Desai, B.H. (2022) *Envisioning Our Environmental Future: Stockholm+50 and Beyond*. First edition. Amsterdam: IOS Press, Incorporated.
37. Destoumieux-Garzón, D., Mavingui, P., Boetsch, G., Boissier, J., Darriet, F., Duboz, P., Martiny, N. & Morand, S. (2018) 'The One Health Concept: 10 Years Old and a Long Road Ahead', *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*, 5, p. 14.



38. Di, Q., Wang, Y., Zanobetti, A., Wang, Y., Koutrakis, P., Choirat, C., Dominici, F. & Schwartz, J. D. (2017) 'Air Pollution and Mortality in the Medicare Population', *New England Journal of Medicine*, 376, pp. 2513-2522.
39. Doncaster, C.P. & Bullock, J.M. (2024) 'Living in Harmony with Nature is Achievable Only as a Non-Ideal Vision', *Environmental Science & Policy*, 152, p. 103658.
40. Doney, S.C., Fabry, V.J., Feely, R.A. & Kleypas, J.A. (2009) 'Ocean Acidification: The Other CO₂ Problem', *Annual Review of Marine Science*, 1, pp. 169-192.
41. Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, M. (2022) 'Ordering Global Governance Complexes: The Evolution of the Governance Complex for International Civil Aviation', *The Review of International Organizations*, 17(2), pp. 293–322.
42. El-Fadel, M., El-Samra, R., Abdallah, R. & Rachid, G. (2003) 'The Nile River Basin: A Case Study in Surface Water Conflict Resolution', *Journal of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Education*, 32(1), pp. 107–117.
43. Espinosa-Vega, M.A. & Russell, S. (2020) 'Interconnectedness, Systemic Crises, and Recessions', *Latin American Journal of Central Banking*, 1(1–4), p. 100008.
44. Falkner, R. (2016) 'The Paris Agreement and the new logic of international climate politics', *International Affairs (London)*, 92(5), pp. 1107–1125.
45. Fisher, J., Leck, H., Osano, P., Abrahams, D. & Ajai, N.O. (2021) 'Four propositions on integrated sustainability: toward a theoretical framework to understand the environment, peace, and sustainability nexus', *Sustainability science*, 16(4), pp. 1125–1145.
46. Gare, A. (2021) 'Ecological Civilization: What is it and Why it Should be the Goal of Humanity', *Culture of Sustainability (Culture della Sostenibilità)*, 27(1), pp. 8-23.
47. Goyal, M., Singh, S., Sibinga, E.M.S., Gould, N.F., Rowland-Seymour, A., Sharma, R., Berger, Z., Sleicher, D., Maron, D.D. & Ranasinghe, P.D. (2021) 'Meditation Programs for Psychological Stress and Well-being: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis', *JAMA Internal Medicine*, 181(5), pp. 676-687.
48. CCICED (China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development) (2023) *Green Recovery with Resilience and High Quality Development: CCICED Annual Policy Report 2021*. Cham: Springer Nature [online]. Available at: <https://directory.doabooks.org/handle/20.500.12854/99231> (Accessed 16 September 2024).



49. Haglund, D.G. & Singh, S. (2023) 'Happy anniversary? Reflections on Samuel Huntington's "clash" thesis at thirty', *International Journal (Toronto)*, 78(4), pp. 577–594.
50. Hailwood, S. (2015) 'Introduction', in Hailwood, S. (ed.) *Alienation and Nature in Environmental Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–15.
51. Hanson, A. (2019) *Ecological Civilization in the People's Republic of China: Values, Action, and Future Needs*. Online: Asian Development Bank. Available at: <https://www.adb.org/publications/ecological-civilization-values-action-future-needs>.
52. Harrison, H.L. & Loring, P.A. (2020) 'Seeing Beneath Disputes: A Transdisciplinary Framework for Diagnosing Complex Conservation Conflicts', *Biological Conservation*, 248, p. 108670.
53. Hassan, O.A., Affognon, H., Rocklöv, J., Mburu, P., Sang, R. & Ahlm, C. (2017) 'The One Health approach to identify knowledge, attitudes and practices that affect community involvement in the control of Rift Valley fever outbreaks', *PLoS neglected tropical diseases*, 11(2), pp. e0005383–e0005383.
54. Hickel, J. & Kallis, G. (2020) 'Is Green Growth Possible?', *New political economy*, 25(4), pp. 469–486.
55. Horton, P. & Horton, B.P. (2019) 'Re-defining Sustainability: Living in Harmony with Life on Earth', *One Earth*, 1(1), pp. 86–94.
56. Huntington, S.P. (1993) 'The Clash of Civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3), pp. 22–49.
57. Huntington, S.P. (1996) *Clash of Civilizations?: the debate*. New York: Norton.
58. Huntington, S.P. (2002) *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. London: The Free Press.
59. Huntington, S.P. & Tønnesson, S. (2004) 'Who are we? The challenges to America's national identity', *Security Dialogue*, 35(3), pp. 329–343.
60. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2021) *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



61. Jackson, T. (2011) *Prosperity Without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet*. London: Earthscan.
62. Jones, J.M. & Hynie, M. (2017) 'Similarly Torn, Differentially Shorn? The Experience and Management of Conflict Between Multiple Roles, Relationships, and Social Categories', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, p. 1732.
63. Kiser, B. (2016) 'A Crude Look at the Whole: The Science of Complex Systems in Business, Life, and Society', *Nature*, 529(7586), p. 281.
64. Klein, N. (2014) *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
65. Le, T.-H., Bui, M.-T. & Uddin, G.S. (2022) 'Economic and Social Impacts of Conflict: A Cross-Country Analysis', *Economic Modelling*, 115, p. 105980
66. Levin, S.A. (1998) 'Ecosystems and the Biosphere as Complex Adaptive Systems', *Ecosystems*, 1(5), pp. 431-436.
67. Lopatin, E., Samuel-Azran, T. & Galily, Y. (2017) 'A clash-of-civilizations prism in German media? Documenting a shift from political to religious framing of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict', *Communication and the public*, 2(1), pp. 19–34.
68. Magdoff, F. (2012) 'Harmony and Ecological Civilization: Beyond the Capitalist Alienation of Nature', *Monthly Review*, 64(2), p. 1.
69. Miller, M. (2023) 'Historical Roots, Cultural Selection and the “New World Order”', in Thomaz, D.D. & Nomura, S. (eds.) *Fault Lines After COVID-19*. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, pp. 37–59.
70. Mitchell, D., McDermott, C., Lockwood, M., & Altamirano-Jiménez, I. (2018) 'The Myriad Challenges of the Paris Agreement', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London (Series A: Mathematical, Physical, and Engineering Sciences)*, 376(2119), pp. 1–5.
71. Mravcová, A. (2019) 'Environmental Awareness and Environmental Citizenship Dimension', *Slovak Journal of Political Sciences*, 19(2), pp. 32–48.
72. Newman, M. (2018) *Networks*. Second Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
73. Nieuwenhuijsen, M.J. (2021) 'New Urban Models for More Sustainable, Liveable and Healthier Cities Post COVID-19; Reducing Air Pollution, Noise and Heat Island Effects and Increasing Green Space and Physical Activity', *Environment International*, 157, p. 106850.



CROSSING BORDERS: INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION IN RESEARCH

74. Nieuwenhuijsen, M.J., Gascon, M., Martinez, D., Ponjoan, A., Blanch, J. & Forn, J. (2021) 'Residential Green Spaces and Mental Health: A Comparative Study', *Environmental Research*, 196, p. 110355.
75. Nillesen, E. & Bulte, E. (2014) 'Natural Resources and Violent Conflict', *Annual Review of Resource Economics*, 6(1), pp. 69–83.
76. Obama, B.H. (2015) 'Remarks on the Adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Paris Agreement', *Daily Compilation of Presidential Documents [online]*. Washington: Superintendent of Documents. Available at <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-adoption-the-united-nations-framework-convention-climate-change-paris>.
77. Ostrom, E. (1990) *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge University Press.
78. O'Sullivan, E.V. & Taylor, M.M. (2004) *Learning toward an ecological consciousness: selected transformative practices*. First Edition. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
79. Pan, J. & Wu, D. (2021) 'Harmonious Coexistence Between Humans and Nature Must Be Promoted', *China's Global Vision for Ecological Civilization*. Singapore: Springer Singapore, pp. 57–72.
80. Paris, R. (2020) 'The Right to Dominate: How Old Ideas About Sovereignty Pose New Challenges for World Order', *International Organization*, 74(3), pp. 453–489.
81. Pauloo, R.A., Stokely, P.F., Machen, M., Quesnel, K.J. & Mayo, J. (2020) 'Domestic well vulnerability to drought duration and unsustainable groundwater management in California's Central Valley', *Environmental research letters*, 15(4), p. 44010.
82. Petrova, D. (2023) 'Degradation Understanding the Erosion of Natural and Human Systems', *Pharmaceutical Bioprocessing*, 11(4), pp. 1–3.
83. Pew Research Center (2023) *Teens, Social Media & Technology 2022*. Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org>.
84. Pioletti, M., Cotella, G. & Schor, T. (2023) 'Sustainable Spatial Development in the Urbanised Amazon: Promoting Circular Bioeconomy in the Manaus Metropolitan Region', in Aguilar-Rivera, N. et al. (eds.) *SDGs in the Americas and Caribbean Region*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, pp. 1111–1133.



85. Potts, S.G., Biesmeijer, J.C., Kremen, C., Neumann, P., Schweiger, O. & Kunin, W.E. (2010) 'Global Pollinator Declines: Trends, Impacts and Drivers', *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*, 25(6), pp. 345-353.
86. Rangan, H. & Kull, C.A. (2009) 'What Makes Ecology "Political"?: Rethinking "Scale" in Political Ecology', *Progress in Human Geography*, 33(1), pp. 28-45.
87. Rockström, J., Steffen, W., Noone, K., Persson, Å., Chapin III, F.S., Lambin, E., Lenton, T.M., Scheffer, M., Folke, C., Schellnhuber, H.J., Nykvist, B., De Wit, C.A., Hughes, T., Van Der Leeuw, S., Rodhe, H., Sörlin, S., Snyder, P.K., Costanza, R., Svedin, U., Falkenmark, M., Karlberg, L., Corell, R.W., Fabry, V.J., Hansen, J., Walker, B., Liverman, D., Richardson, K., Crutzen, P. & Foley, J.A. (2009) 'A Safe Operating Space for Humanity', *Nature*, 461(7263), pp. 472-475.
88. Rougé, C., Kuper, M. & Lankford, B. (2018) 'Identifying Key Water Resource Vulnerabilities in Data-Scarce Transboundary River Basins', *Water resources research*, 54(8), pp. 5264-5281.
89. Sachs, J. D. (2015) *The Age of Sustainable Development*. New York: Columbia University Press.
90. Sahana, M., Areendran, G. & Raj, K. (2022) *Conservation, management and monitoring of forest resources in India*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
91. Salleh, A. (2008) 'Eco-socialism and "Ecological Civilization" in China', *Capitalism, nature, socialism*, 19(3), pp. 123-129.
92. Schunz, S. (2022) 'The "European Green Deal" - A Paradigm Shift? Transformations in the European Union's Sustainability Meta-Discourse', *Political Research Exchange*, 4(1), pp. 11-23.
93. Siegel, F.R. (2020) *Adaptations of Coastal Cities to Global Warming, Sea Level Rise, Climate Change and Endemic Hazards*. First Edition. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
94. Silva Junior, C.H.L., Pessôa, A.C.M., Carvalho, N.S., Reis, J.B.C., Anderson, L.O. & Aragão, L.E.O.C. (2021) 'The Brazilian Amazon Deforestation Rate in 2020 is the Greatest of the Decade', *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, 5(2), pp. 144-145.
95. Stabile, M.C.C., Guimarães, A.L., Silva, D.S., Ribeiro, V., Macedo, M.N. & dos Reis, T.N.P. (2020) 'Solving Brazil's Land Use Puzzle: Increasing Production and Slowing Amazon Deforestation', *Land Use Policy*, 91, p. 104362.



96. Stange, U. (2023) 'The Anthropocene as a civil time unit', *The Anthropocene Review* [Preprint]. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/20530196231204326>.
97. Stankovic, T., Hovi, J. & Skodvin, T. (2023) 'The Paris Agreement's Inherent Tension Between Ambition and Compliance', *Humanities & Social Sciences Communications*, 10(1), pp. 550–6.
98. Stephenson, J. (2023) *Culture and Sustainability: Exploring Stability and Transformation with the Cultures Framework*. First Edition. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
99. Summers, J.K., Smith, L.M., Case, J.L. & Linthurst, R.A. (2012) 'A Review of the Elements of Human Well-Being with an Emphasis on the Contribution of Ecosystem Services', *Ambio*, 41(4), pp. 327–340.
100. Timsina, S., Ojha, H., Paudel, D., Banjade, M. & Dhungana, H. (2022) 'Lessons from Managing for the Extremes: A Case for Decentralized, Adaptive, Multipurpose Forest Management within an Ecological Framework', *Forests*, 13(2), p. 333.
101. Turner, J.M. & Isenberg, A.C. (2020) 'Earth Day at 50', *Science (American Association for the Advancement of Science)*, 368(6488), pp. 215–215.
102. United Nations. (2015) *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.
103. United Nations. (2016) *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016*. Available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2016/>.
104. United Nations. (2020) *Global Biodiversity Outlook 5*. Available at <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/global-biodiversity-outlook-5-gbo-5>
105. Upreti, G. (2024) *Ecosociocentrism: The Earth First Paradigm for Sustainable Living*. First Edition. Cham: Springer.
106. Wang, W., Zhang, H., Wang, X., Zhang, Q. & Yu, X. (2023) 'Constructing a Paradigm of Environmental Impact Assessment Under the New Era of Ecological Civilization in China', *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 99, p. 107021.
107. Wang, Y. & Yu, G. (2023) 'Ecosystem Quality-Based Management and the Development of a New Eco-Friendly Economy', *The Innovation*, 4(5), p. 100491.



CROSSING BORDERS: INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION IN RESEARCH

108. World Health Organization (WHO) (2023) *Mental Health in Urban Areas: Challenges and Solutions*. Available at <https://www.who.int> (Accessed: 21 August 2024).
109. World Health Organization (WHO) (2023) *One Health*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/one-health> Accessed 21 August 2024.
110. Wu, G. (2017) 'Global Inequalities Challenge Democracy: Sociopolitical Impacts of Transnational Stratification', in Wu, G. (ed.) *Globalization Against Democracy: A Political Economy of Capitalism After its Global Triumph*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 245–294.