

Conclusions

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This volume has explored the intricate nexus between the ecological and social dimensions, presenting a rich mix of theoretical, empirical and policy-focused analyses. At its core, it uncovers multiple approaches to understanding and articulating the nexus between ‘the ecological question’ and ‘the social question’. These approaches range from theoretical (and also normative) perspectives to detailed empirical investigations and policy analyses. Some of the key approaches identified include transformative perspectives, institutional and political dynamics, policy dimensions and implementation challenges, and global and urban perspectives.

Transformative and normative perspectives were prominently discussed in [Part I](#), where the chapters highlighted transformative shifts towards concepts like planetary well-being and economic limitarianism, advocating for deep structural changes to align human activities with ecological boundaries. Sustainable welfare as a paradigm that integrates social policies with ecological sustainability was also examined, critiquing the dependence on economic growth. At the same time, the debate was also challenged by reflections on hegemony and contestations.

[Part II](#) mapped out actors such as trade unions, political parties and social movements in advancing eco-social agendas. It scrutinised how actors’ actions are shaped by and influence public perceptions and participatory processes. The importance of harmonising diverse stakeholder interests and addressing socio-political complexities was underscored, especially in the context of just transitions.

In [Part III](#), the book explored specific policy areas, including welfare, food systems, energy poverty and just transition strategies at the European level. These chapters revealed the practical challenges and opportunities in implementing integrated eco-social policies, with comparative analyses across different countries highlighting varied policy adoption rates, levels of ambition and integration efforts.

The final section, [Part IV](#), shifts the perspective to a global scale. It addresses urban and regional levels, discussing the integration of ecological and social dimensions in urban climate transitions. These chapters underscore the unique challenges and opportunities in regions such as India, Kenya and Argentina, emphasising the importance of social equity and climate justice. At the supranational level, the consolidation of the eco-social nexus

within the agendas of significant international bodies like the International Labour Organization and the International Monetary Fund is highlighted, exploring both the potential and limitations of these institutions in facilitating just transitions.

Throughout the book, a range of epistemologies, methodologies and perspectives offer a nuanced understanding of the eco-social nexus. By juxtaposing anthropocentric and ecocentric perspectives, it explores how human welfare and planetary well-being can be reconciled, integrating sociological, political and economic viewpoints to address the multifaceted nature of eco-social challenges. The chapters employ a variety of research methods, including qualitative case studies, quantitative analyses, policy mapping, theoretical critiques and comparative studies. This methodological diversity enriches the insights and offers robust evidence for policy recommendations. Overall, the interdisciplinary nature of the contributions highlights the interconnectedness of ecological and social systems, providing a holistic perspective on eco-social transitions.

Despite the diversity in approaches and perspectives, several common threads run throughout the chapters. A recurring theme is the necessity of integrated policies that harmonise ecological and social goals. The chapters collectively argue for policy frameworks that simultaneously address environmental sustainability and social equality, avoiding silo-based strategies. Issues of social justice, equity and fairness are central to the discussions. Whether addressing energy poverty, food systems or urban climate transitions, the chapters emphasise the need for policies that protect and empower the most vulnerable populations. Many chapters focus on the practical implications of eco-social policies, highlighting the challenges of policy implementation, governance structures and stakeholder engagement. The book offers insights into overcoming barriers and fostering inclusive decision-making processes.

By consolidating disparate strands of eco-social research, this book pushes forward our knowledge in the field in several ways, since it i) provides a comprehensive overview of the theoretical and practical dimensions of eco-social policies, ii) identifies critical gaps and future research pathways, and iii) offers valuable empirical findings that inform both academia and practice. The volume's rich interdisciplinary and cross-regional insights contribute to the establishment of a more coherent and consolidated eco-social research field, paving the way for original and critical research and innovative and effective policies to achieve sustainable and just futures for all.