

# Comments on growth independence – the precautionary post-growth approach

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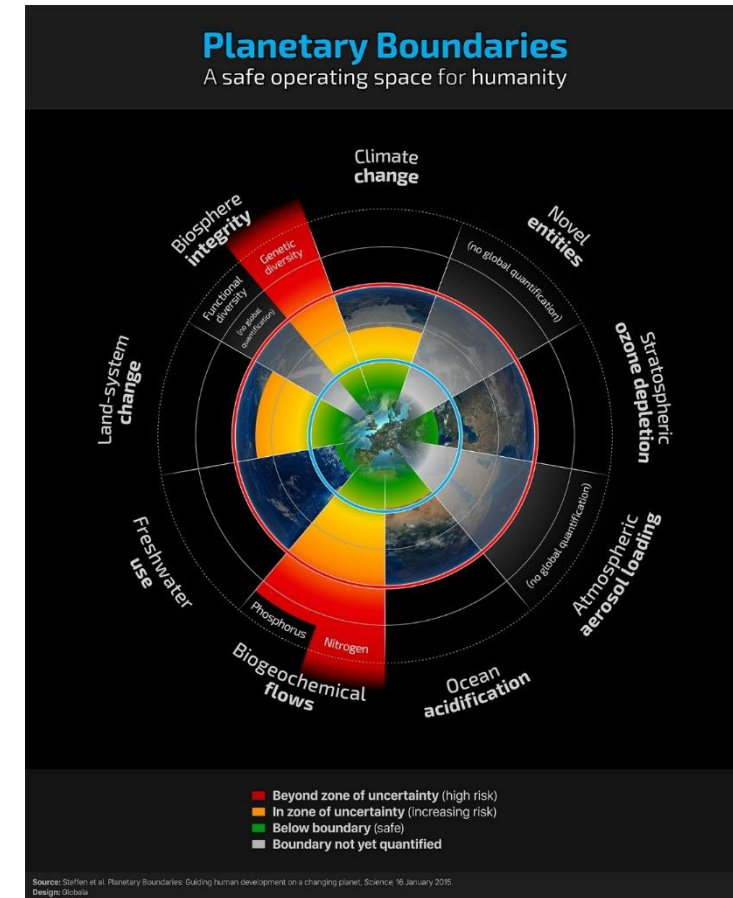
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# A key logic of the approach

- We want to stay within planetary boundaries
- We don't know what the transformation implies for GDP
- If transformative policies decrease growth, can this then become a problem?
- Yes, some important systems are dependent on GDP growth (Covid 19 has demonstrated this point)
- This can serve as an argument against transformative policies
- Let's remove the argument by making the systems independent of growth
- Then we can all agree...



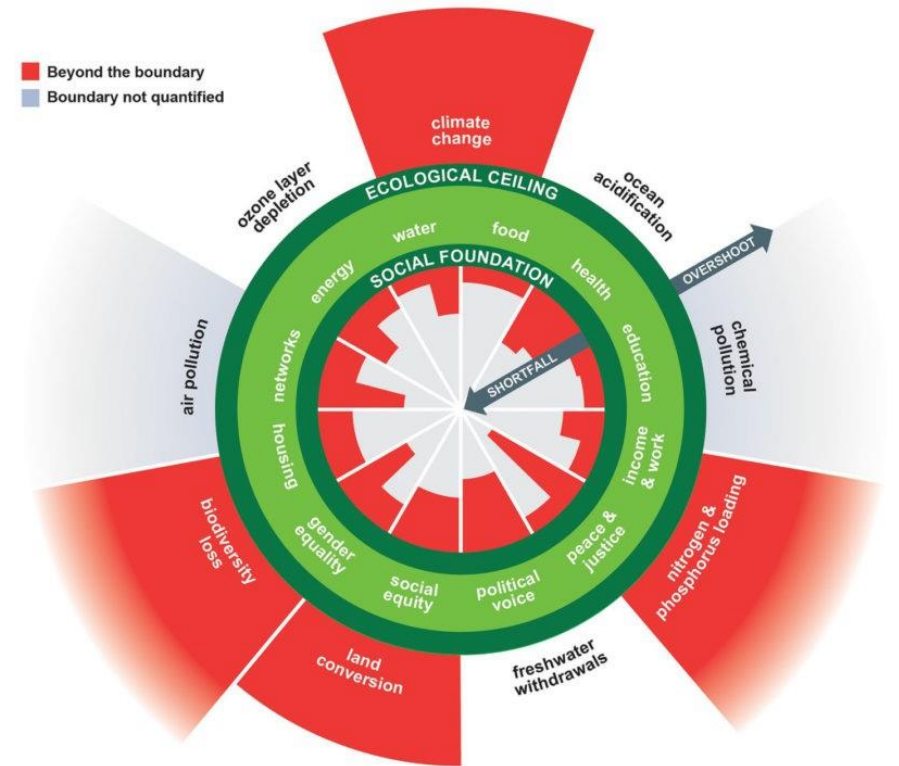
# Do we agree on the environmental challenges?

- Too optimistic?
- Many people and politicians do still not understand the seriousness of the problems
- The Danish example: rely on technology, no pain
- Social tipping points ahead?
  - Interview with Maja Göpel: windows can open for strong changes
- Does consensus discourse help?



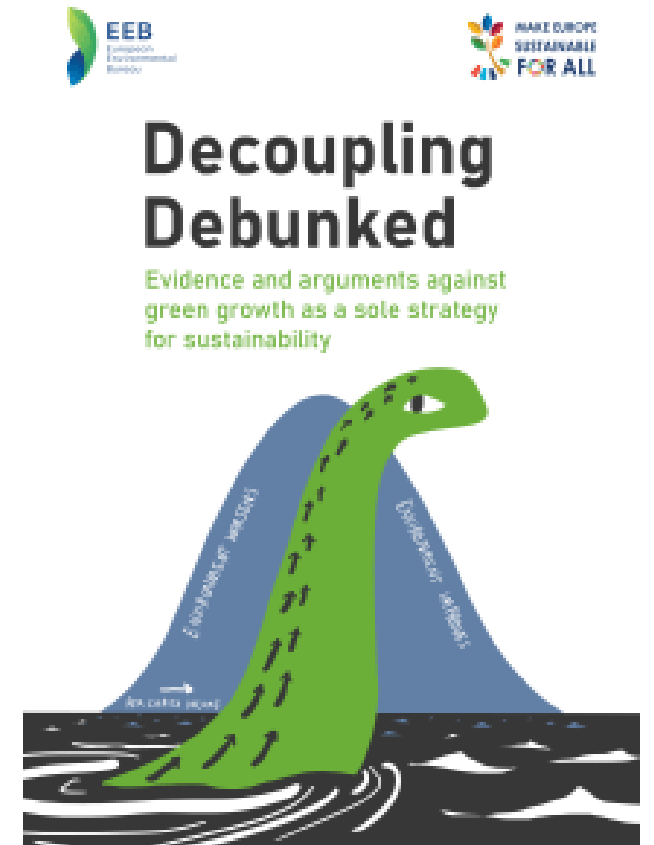
# Do we agree on the goals?

- Social well-being within planetary boundaries. Sounds good, but what does social well-being mean?
- The focus seems to be on the quality of life in Germany
- This focus differs from the goals of "Doughnut economics": fulfilment of basic needs for all
- The approach is weak on global connections: the recognition of the dependence of high living standards on other people's poverty
- Understanding planetary boundaries begs the question: should we share or should we fight?
  - This key question is mostly avoided
  - Consensus seems to rely on the idea: transformation is not so costly



# Will transformative policies decrease growth?

- We know more, e.g. Parrique et al. 2019: "Decoupling debunked"
- "The validity of the green growth discourse relies on the assumption of an absolute, permanent, global, large and fast enough decoupling of economic growth from all critical environmental pressures." No empirical evidence and bleak future prospects
- "While almost all SDGs have very important goals and targets that humanity desperately needs to achieve, SDG8's pursuit of the economic growth is undermining the possibility of achieving the others."
- The next step is much needed...



# Which institutional changes are needed?

- Relevant to remove growth dependence from health, pension, employment etc.
- Suggestions in addition to growth-independent design:
  - Economic instruments
  - Social innovation, participation, experiments
- Considerable social conflict potential acknowledged, but tough issues avoided
- Sustainability transformation is impossible without dramatic changes of distribution, globally and nationally. Discuss:
  - Financial systems, makers and takers
  - Patent systems
  - Reduced global trade, localization
  - Inheritance tax, wealth tax
  - Land value tax (briefly mentioned)
- Does the consensus hold when power and interests are confronted?

