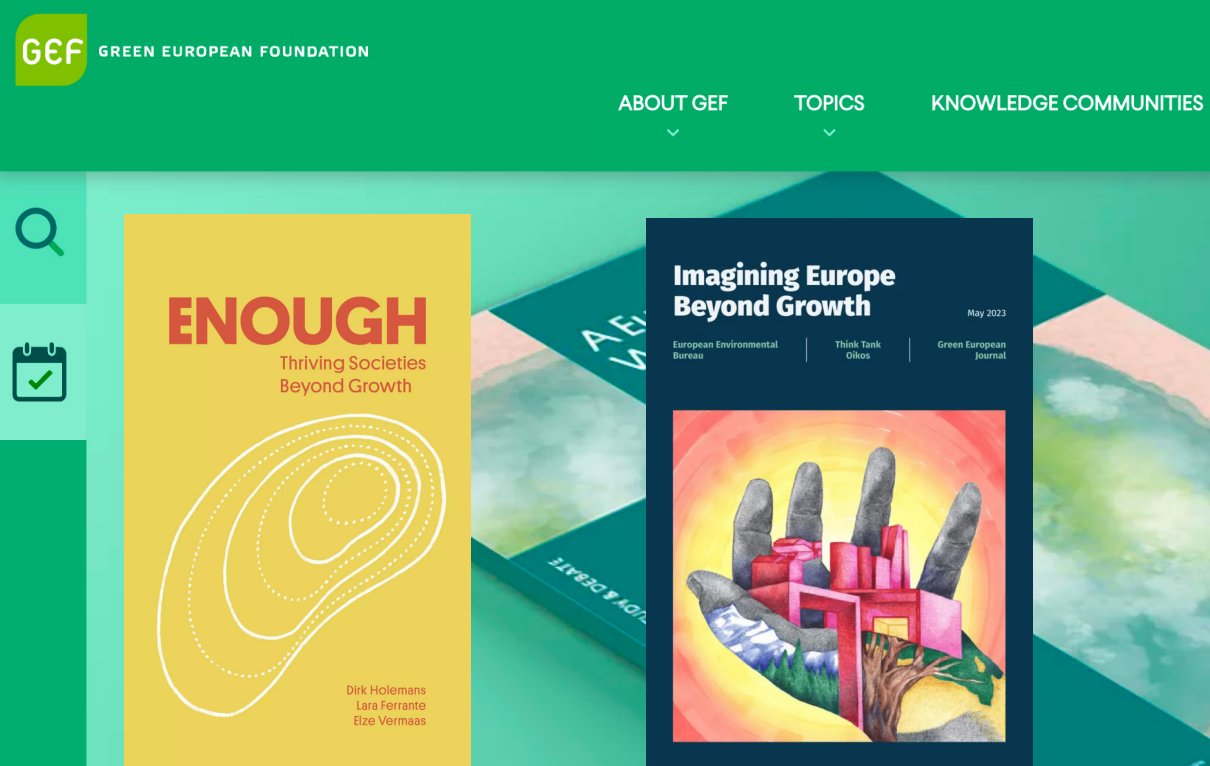




Sufficiency: a Good Life for All within Planetary Boundaries

Dirk Holemans



Think Tank Oikos (B)
Green European Foundation
Workshop Cogito, 11 May 2026

Time of 'deep' discussions on paradigms

Too dry in summer, too wet in winter

COMMENTAAR

Te droog in de zomer, te nat in de winter



© belga

Klimaatverandering maakt regens heftiger en hardnekkiger, en droogtes harder en langduriger. Het IJzerbekken is daar extra kwetsbaar voor. Tijd voor nieuwe antwoorden.

Climate change makes rains intenser and more persistent, and droughts harder and longer. It's time for new answers?

Flanders is doing the wrong thing, says hydrologist Willems. “We have to tear down the dikes to avoid flooding”.
And what about the dykes in your brain?

INTERVIEW PATRICK WILLEMS

Vlaanderen is fout bezig, zegt hydroloog Patrick Willems: ‘We moeten de dijken net afbreken om wateroverlast te vermijden’

Time of 'deep' discussions on paradigms

CNBC LIVESTREAM SIGN IN

Please, please, please .

Denmark urges citizens to avoid driving as oil prices spike

PUBLISHED THU, MAR 12 2026 5:40 AM EDT
UPDATED THU, MAR 12 2026 5:58 AM EDT

Sawdah Bhaimiya WATCH LIVE

KEY POINTS

- Denmark's energy minister called on citizens to reduce their energy use amid the ongoing Middle East conflict.
- Oil prices jumped to over \$100 a barrel on Thursday, raising fears of rising inflation.
- "If it is not strictly necessary to drive the car, then don't do it," the minister stressed to Danish

"What the Danes should please, please, please do is that if there is any energy consumption that you can do without, if it is not strictly necessary to drive the car, then don't do it," he said in an interview with local broadcaster DR, translated by Google.

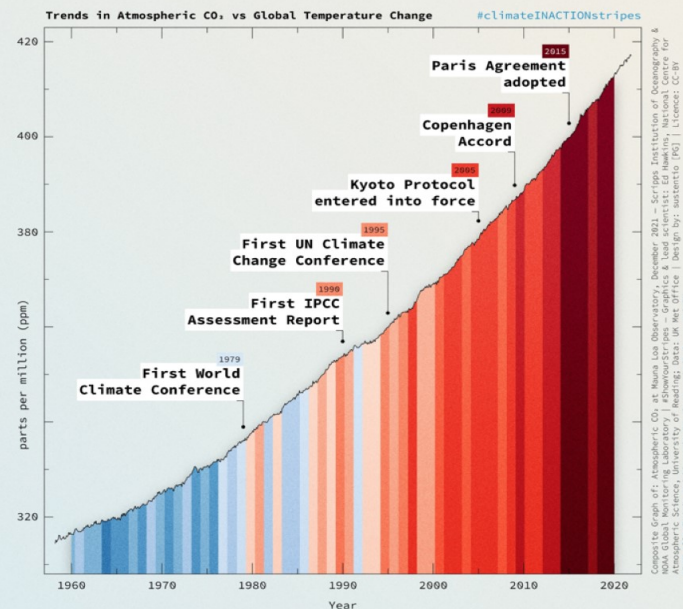
If Denmark saves energy in the near future, there will be two positive effects that can be felt both by citizens and the government, he said.

"Firstly, it can be felt in the private wallet, and secondly, it can help stretch our reserves so that they last longer," Aagaard said.

Time of 'deep' discussions on paradigms

Where do we stand, after 50 years of environmental consciousness, 40 years striving for sustainability ...

In a society where economic GDP-growth seems the main goal?



LIVING PLANET REPORT 2024

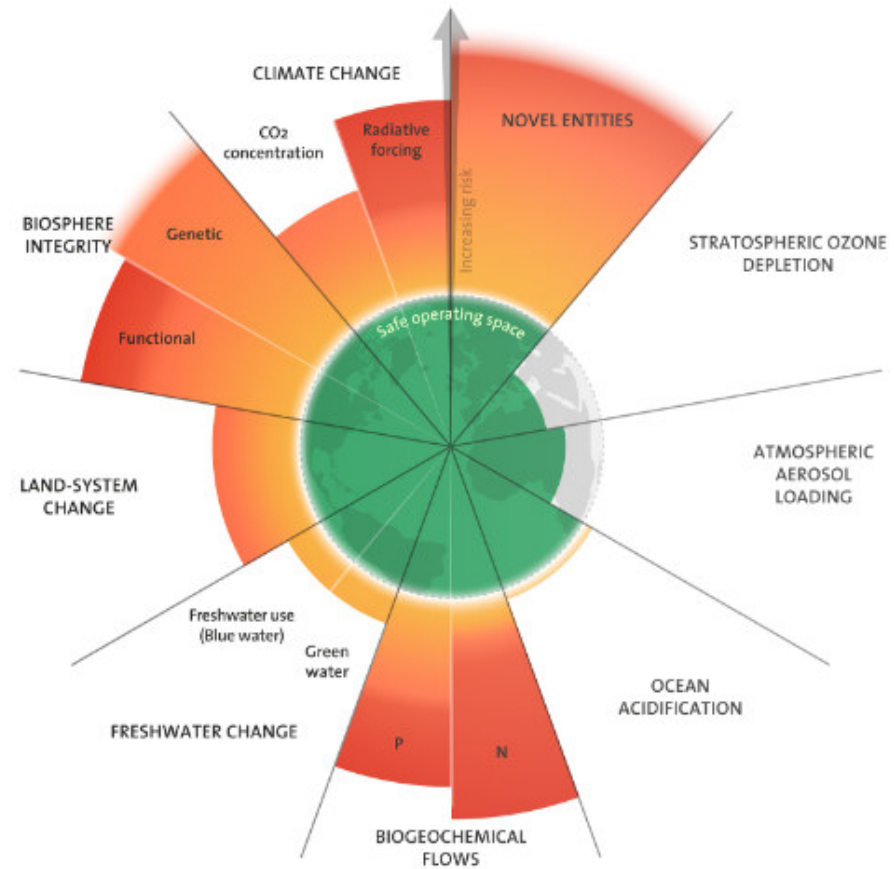


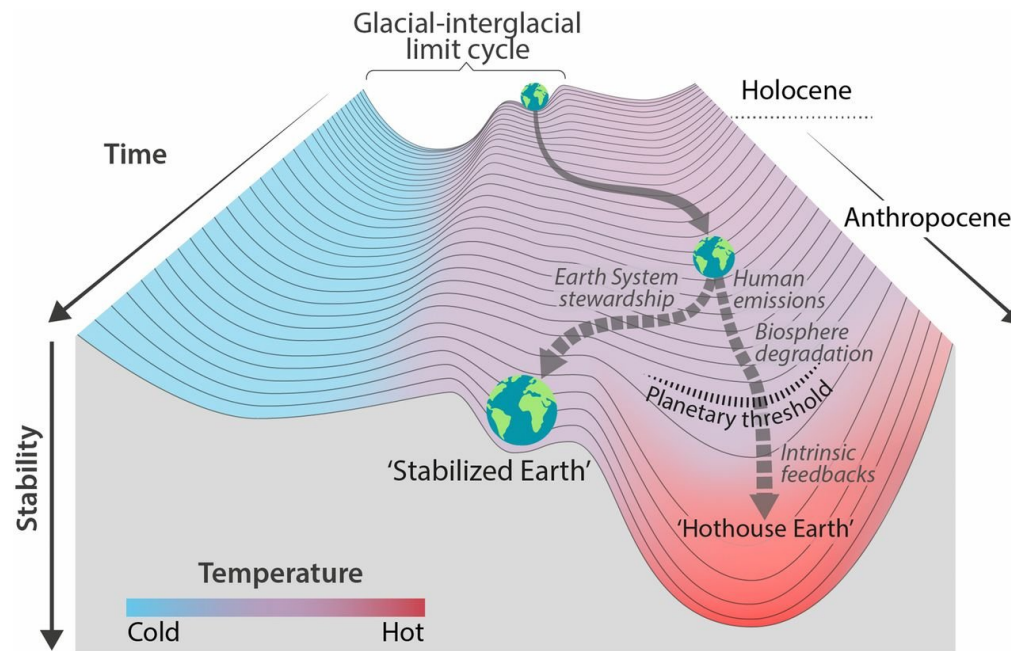
**NATURE IS DISAPPEARING: THE AVERAGE SIZE OF WILDLIFE
POPULATIONS HAS FALLEN BY A STAGGERING 73%**

Planetary boundaries: life supporting systems

“Safe operating space”

**9 boundaries researched,
7 clearly beyond the safe zone**





Steffen, W., Rockström, J., Richardson, K., Lenton, T. M., Folke, C., Liverman, D., ... Schellnhuber, H. J. (2018). Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115(33), 8252-8259. doi:[10.1073/pnas.1810141115](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1810141115)

Example tipping point: AMOC Warm Gulfstream

Critical Atlantic current significantly more likely to collapse than thought

Scientists say finding is 'very concerning' as collapse would be catastrophic for Europe, Africa and the Americas



Warmte voor Europa

Schematisch verloop van de AMOC



Europe faces deep winter freeze if Atlantic current collapses, study finds

London, Oslo and Paris could face extreme winter temperatures even in a 2°C warmer world, new modelling shows

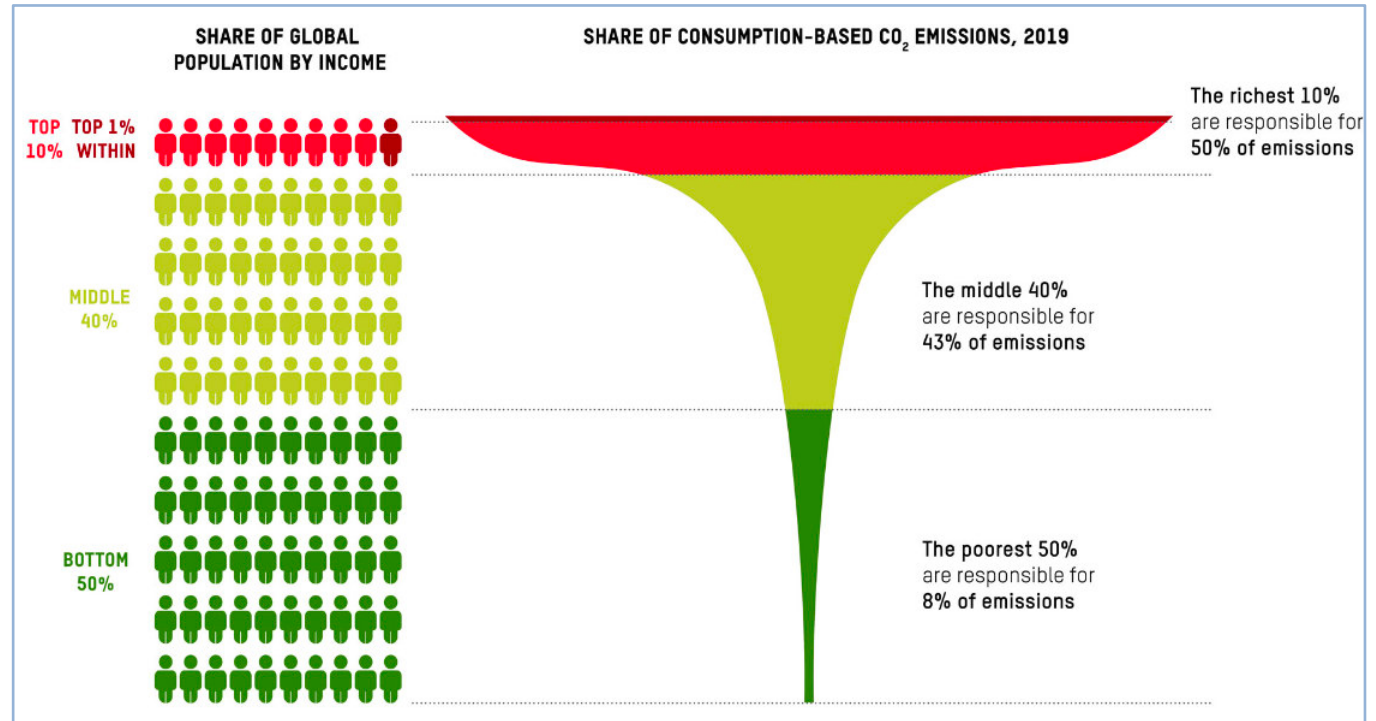


Oxfam report

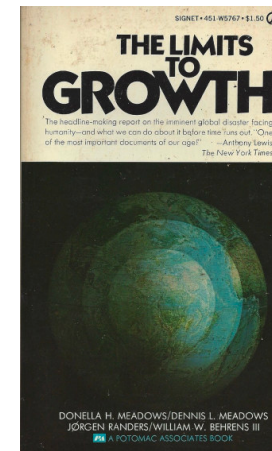
*Is radical
change
possible
without
change of
system?*

CLIMATE
EQUALITY:

A PLANET FOR THE 99%



2022: Limits to Growth, 50 years later

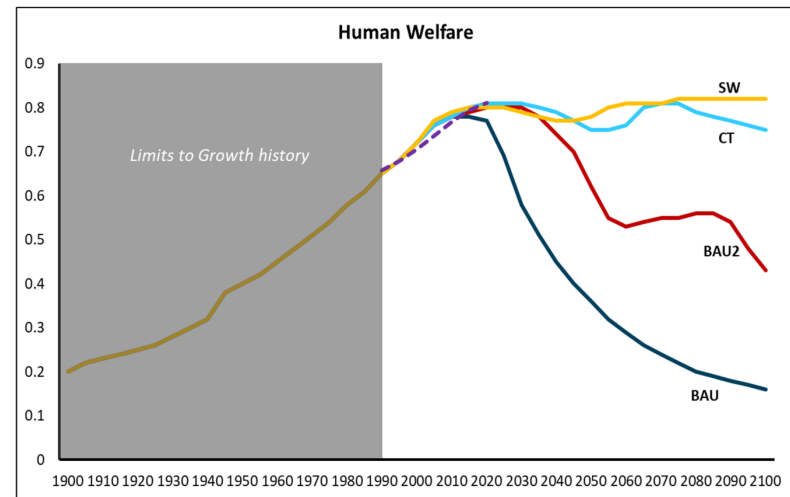


Gaya Herrington



My findings

- ❑ Growth is not a good goal, and business as usual might very well lead us to ecosystem breakdown.
- ❑ Humanity has a “now or never” opportunity to deliberately and significantly change course.
- ❑ For this, it *has* to redefine its core values and paradigms. The goal of the economy *must change* from growth to **meeting human needs within planetary boundaries.**



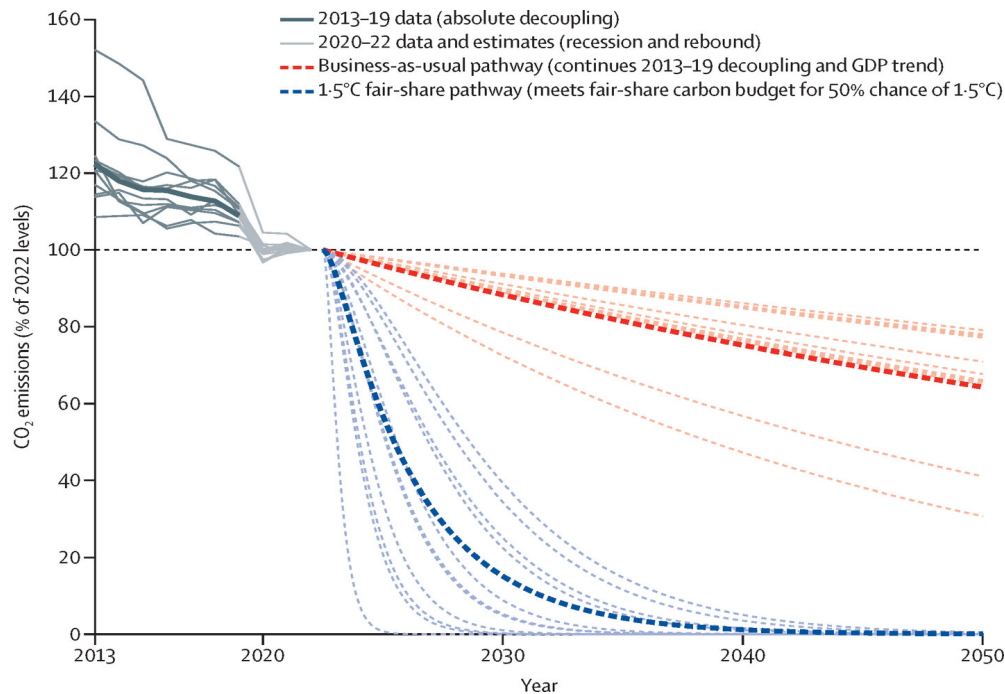
Empirical data (UN Human Development Index) plotted against human welfare variables for all four scenarios. See journal article for all graphs, datasets and details on methodology.



A 1970s paper predicted societal collapse in 2040 - here's what the analyst who confirmed it says

Her Harvard thesis offers a bleak outlook on the course of civilization but sustainability expert Gaya Herrington **tells Louise Boyle** that the worst-case scenario is not inevitable. "We need to completely re-envision what our role is in the world"

What about decoupling? (between GDP-growth and resource use & pollution)



With current ‘green growth’ policies, it will take 212 years before high-income countries reach net zero

Is green growth happening? An empirical analysis of achieved versus Paris-compliant CO₂–GDP decoupling in high-income countries

Jeffrey Vogel, Jason Hickel

Only working on efficiency doesn't work: Rebound effects



People insulating houses becoming less attentive on turning off the heating...

Woningen isoleren is een belangrijk wapen tegen klimaatverandering en volatiele gasprijzen. We dreigen de energiewinst echter te overschatten, waarschuwen experts. Een gedragsverandering blijft nodig.

Pieter Van Maele

Maandag 6 Februari 2023 om 3.25 uur



Recent example: mobility system: more cars, bigger cars, more kilometers ...

Most cars on EU roads emit same carbon levels as 12 years ago: report

By [Sean Goulding Carroll](#) | EURACTIV ⌚ Est. 5min

📅 24 jan. 2024 (updated: ⌚ 9:32)

Content-Type: News



“Continuous improvements in engine technology and the introduction of hybrid powertrains have made engines more efficient, but the increased vehicle mass coupled with more powerful engines outweighs the technological progress made,” the report states.

Technological efficiency gains are lost due to:

- business strategy (focus on SUVs)
- Consumer behaviour
- > electric car the solution?

In 2021, transport emissions accounted for 23% of the EU's total greenhouse gas emissions, with passenger cars responsible for more than half of this figure. [[Kichigin / Shutterstock.com](#)]

Recent example: mobility system

Rubberplantages in Kameroen

Bossen voor banden

Trees for tires: electric cars, saving the climate by killing the planet?



How much is enough?

Sufficiency

Systemic approach: how can benefits in efficiency and sufficiency reinforce each other?

A Good Life for All while equitable decreasing *flows* of energy & resources

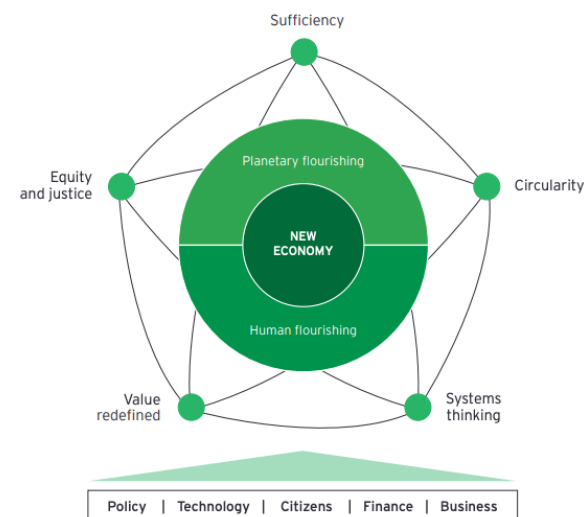
The 2022 IPCC report on climate mitigation defines “sufficiency as a set of policy measures and daily practices that avoid the demand for energy, materials, land, water, and other natural resources while providing wellbeing for all within the planetary boundaries”.

By 2050, sufficiency has the potential to reduce emissions, compared to current policy scenarios, by more than 50% in almost all sectors. Yet, sufficiency policies are overlooked in climate policies and scenarios aiming at a 1.5°C temperature target by



1 Sufficiency: enough for a good life, within planetary boundaries

Sufficiency is a powerful lever for bringing planetary systems back within a safe operating space, by promoting both sustainable types and sustainable levels of production and consumption, so that everyone, everywhere, has enough to meet essential needs and enjoy a good quality of life within ecological limits.





TRIODOS NL Headquarters: demountable and modular – made from sustainable and recycled materials.
Imagine the unthinkable: what if, within 10 years, all buildings were required to be constructed in this way?

Concrete: how much is enough?
-> selling as much as possible cars?
OR
-> ensuring the right on mobility?



Care Economy: basic needs instead of preferences



WELLBEING
ECONOMY
ALLIANCE

The UK's first ever Parliamentary Debate on a Wellbeing Economy

On Tuesday, MP Caroline Lucas of the Green Party led the UK's first ever Parliamentary debate on the topic of a 'Wellbeing economy approach to meeting climate goals'. As she put it,

"The GDP figures we're using to measure economic success also measure the rate at which we're barrelling towards climate catastrophe."

The debate was made possible by over 65,000 signatures from across the UK on a **petition**, to urge the Government and Treasury prioritise the health and wellbeing of people and planet, by pursuing a Wellbeing Economy approach.

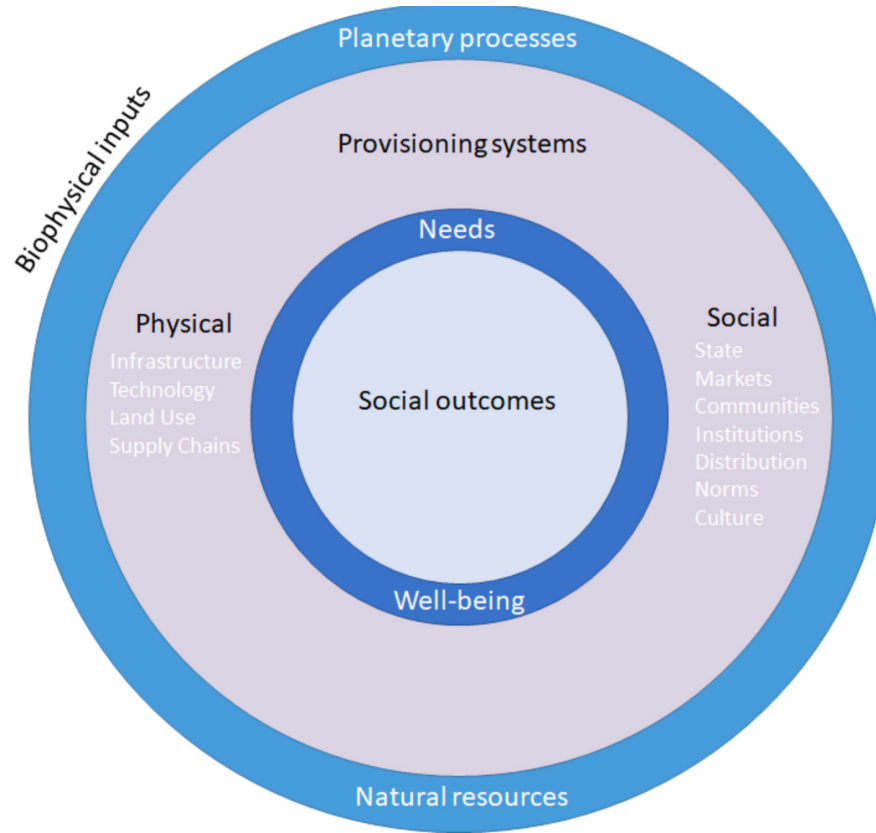
Wellbeing Economy

1. Respect Planetary Boundaries
2. Focus on **basic needs** instead of consumer preferences
3. Strive for a **fair distribution of resources, income and wealth**
4. Emancipation requires so much more than material consumption
5. This requires new governance systems: fair, transparent and accountable

Economic growth is no longer an objective

‘To define economics *as the study* of social provisioning is to emphasize that at its root, economic activity involves the ways people organize themselves collectively to get a living. (...) *Social provisioning need not* be done through the *market*; it need not be done for selfish or self-interested reasons, although neither of these is inconsistent with social provisioning, either.’⁸²

Core concept = provisioning systems



Thinking in terms of systems:
Provisioning systems focused on basic needs

Universal Basic Services

Role of state, market and citizens (commons):
demarketization,
decommodification in crucial sectors



By E&T editorial staff

Published Wednesday, February 15, 2023

The Welsh government has scrapped all major road-building projects in order to focus on infrastructure initiatives that “reduce carbon emissions and support a shift to public transport, walking and cycling”.

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are non-profit organizations that treat land as a public good





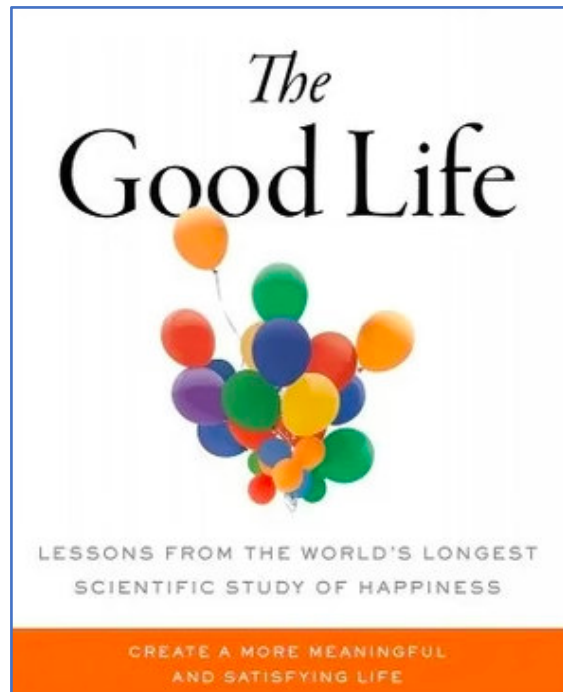
In many First Nations', the provision of basic needs and security as well as matters of spirituality are a collective responsibility. Edgar Villanueva beautifully illustrates this way of thinking in his book *Decolonising Wealth* (2021) in which he cites Dana Arviso, director of the Potlatch Fund and member Navajo:

Sufficiency is about infrastructures: material, institutional but foremost mental

'They told me they don't have a *word* for *poverty*. The closest thing that they had as an explanation for poverty was "to be *without family*". They were saying it was a foreign concept to them that someone could be just so isolated and so without any sort of safety net or a family or a sense of kinship that they would be suffering from poverty.'⁵⁴



Harvard study, almost 80 years old, has proved that embracing community helps us live longer, and be happier



HEALTH

Good genes are nice, but joy is better



The Imagination Challenge: An Attractive Economy of Enough

**How would a sufficient Stockholm
look like?**

How can we design and create it?



What the caterpillar calls the end, the rest of the world calls a butterfly Lao Tze