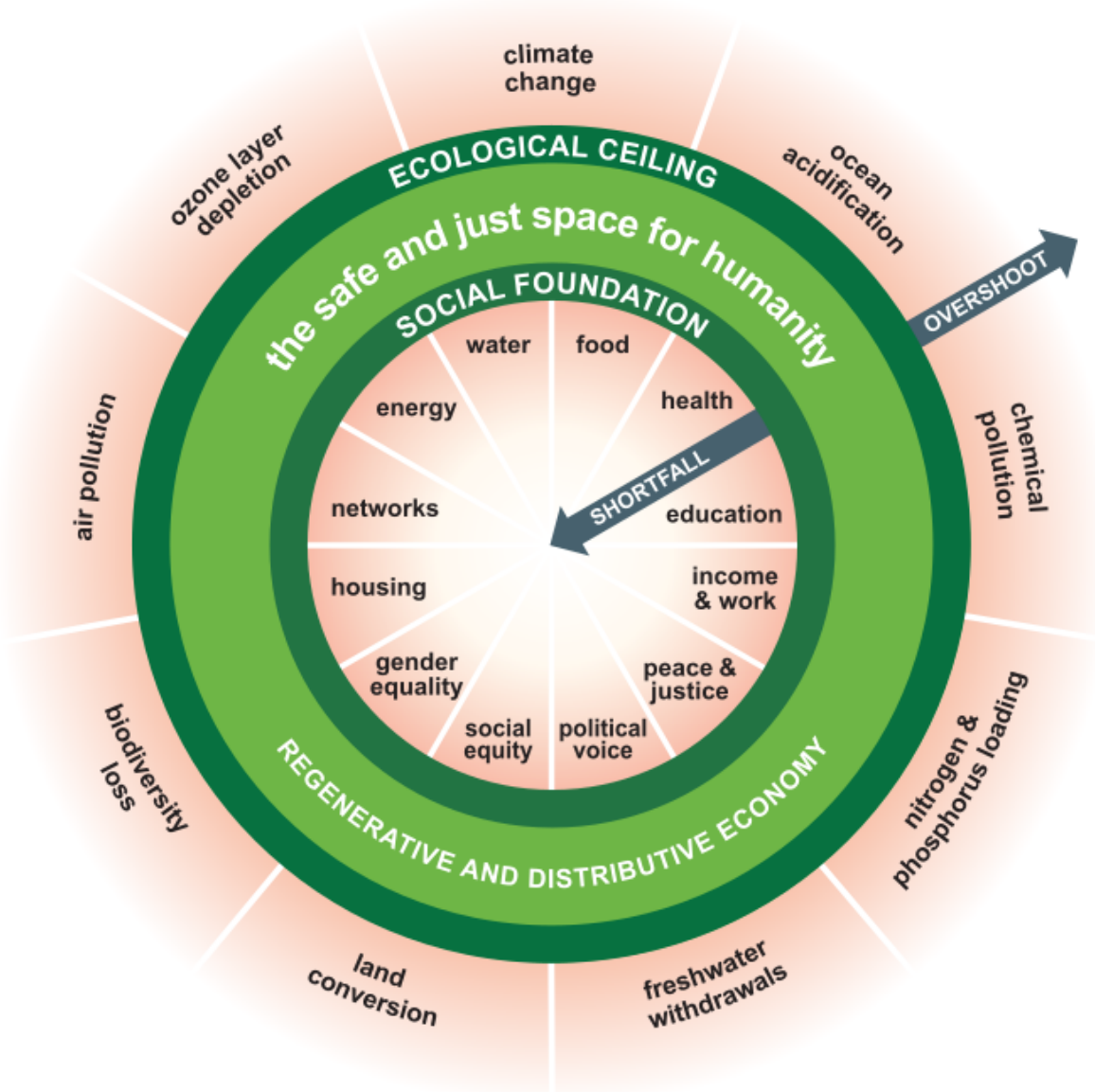


# What is the Doughnut?

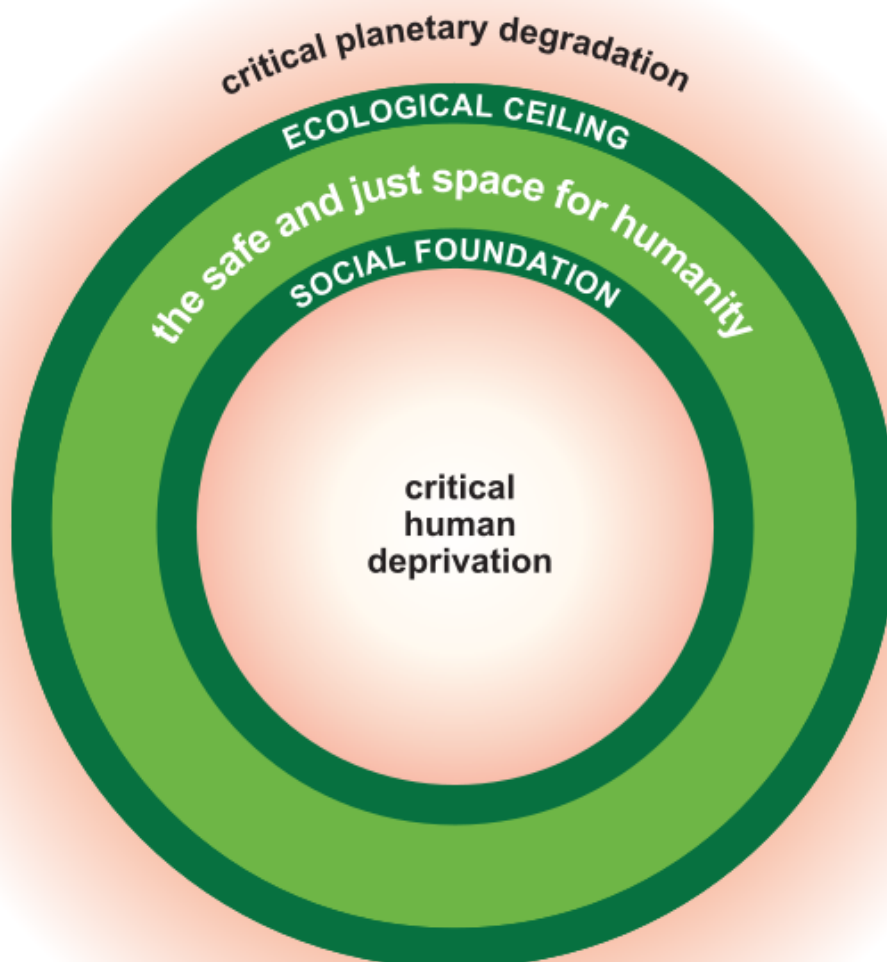
Think of it as a compass for human prosperity in the 21st century, whose goal is to meet the needs of all people within the means of the planet.

It consists of two concentric rings. A social foundation – to ensure that no one is left falling short on life’s essentials, and an ecological ceiling – to ensure that humanity does not collectively overshoot planetary boundaries. Between these two boundaries lies a doughnut-shaped space that is both ecologically safe and socially just – a space in which humanity can thrive.



# The essence of the Doughnut

1. The social foundation – below which lies critical human deprivation
2. The ecological ceiling – beyond which lies critical planetary degradation



These two boundaries are foundational in the sense that humanity should always seek to avoid critical human deprivation and critical planetary degradation. But how best to define their specific dimensions and measure their current status relative to desired outcomes will keep evolving over time.

# The dimensions of the Doughnut

(as of 2017)

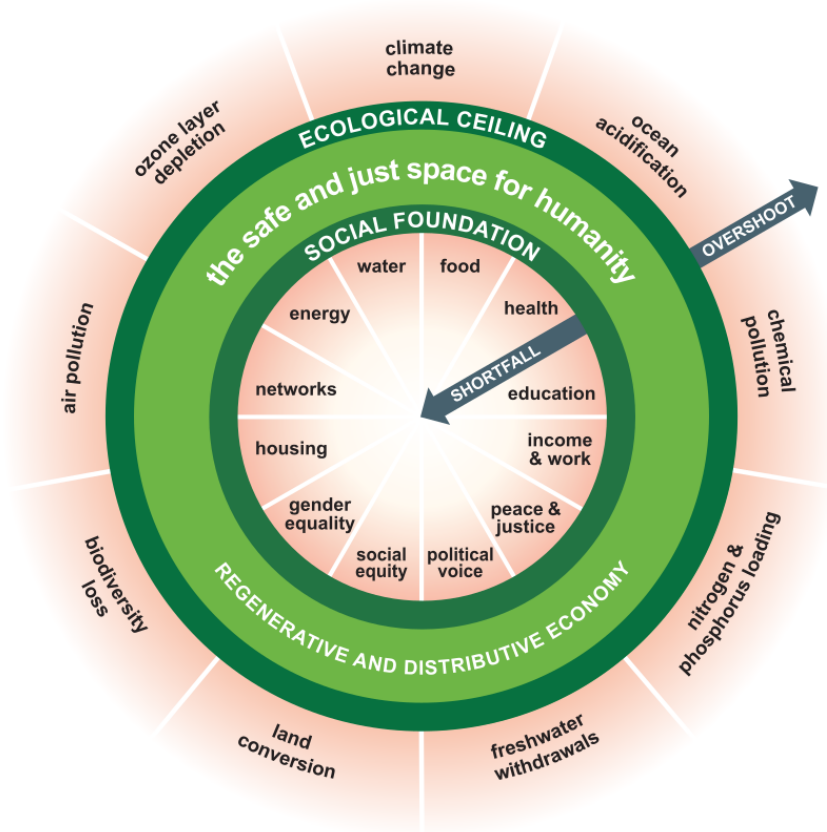
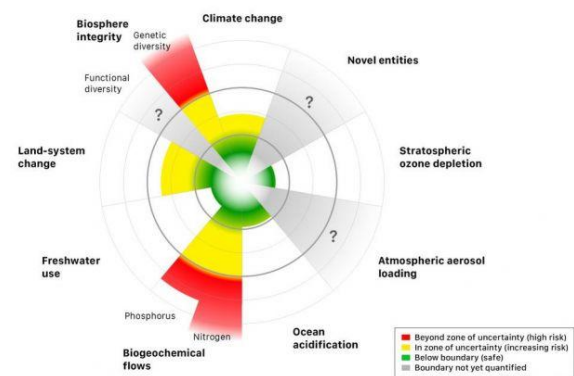
## Social Foundation

The 12 dimensions of the social foundation are derived from the social priorities agreed in the Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015)



## Ecological Ceiling

The 9 dimensions of the ecological ceiling are the nine planetary boundaries defined by Earth-system scientists (Steffen et al., 2015)



# Quantifying the Doughnut

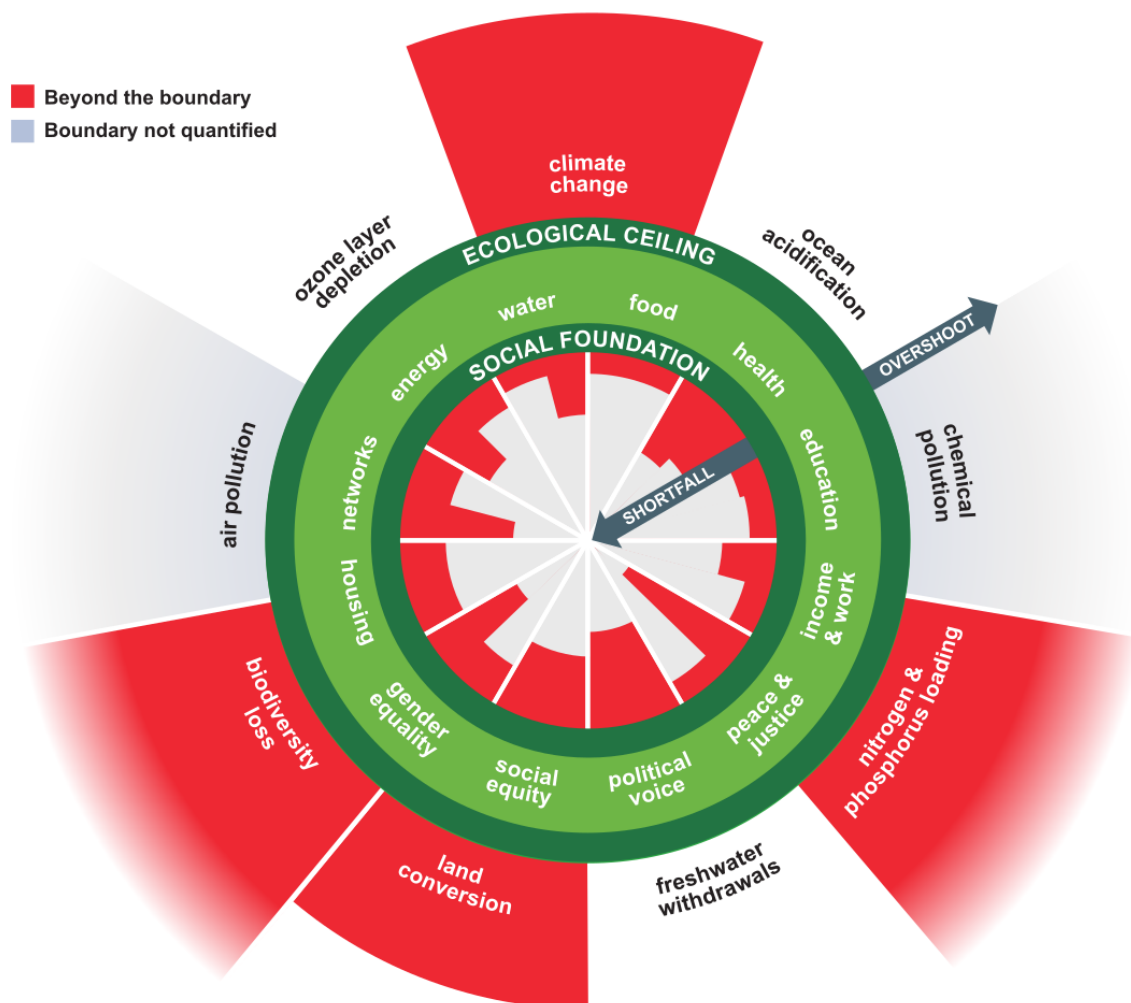
The image below reveals the state of humanity and our planetary home; think of it as humanity's 'selfie' in the early 21st century.

Each dimension is measured, where possible, with 1 or 2 indicators.

The red wedges show the extent of shortfall and overshoot of the Doughnut's social and planetary boundaries.

It shows us that millions of people still fall short on all 12 of the social dimensions, and that humanity has already overshoot at least four planetary boundaries (air pollution and chemical pollution are currently unquantified).

To achieve the 21st century goal of meeting the needs of all within the means of the living planet means eliminating all of the red in the Doughnut, and this must be done from both sides at the same time.



# Impact of the Doughnut

Since its first publication in 2012 the Doughnut has gained international recognition and widespread application.

Some of the reasons for this include:

- It's a powerful and simple visual
- It's a holistic vision that connects social and ecological dimensions
- It has scientific rigour, based on widely accepted measures
- It's playfully serious
- It provides a convening space
- It can be applied in many contexts at many scales

To find out more about the Doughnut and its applications, visit [doughnuteconomics.org](https://doughnuteconomics.org), where you can:

- Explore the dimensions of the social foundation and ecological ceiling in [Dimensions of the Doughnut](#)
- Explore how the dimensions were selected, including their limitations in the [Lancet Planetary Health Publication](#)
- Read [Chapter One of Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economics](#)
- Explore the many [tools and stories](#) to help turn the idea of Doughnut Economics from radical idea into transformative action