

Doughnut Economics

Ioannis Theocharis

Phd Candidate in Environmental Sociology

Topic: Circular Economy/Society

- Ecological Economics Scholar
- Master Thesis: Doughnut Economics as mitigation tool for Urban Development Conflicts

Doughnut Economics

- *Why do ethics matter?*
- *What are planetary boundaries?*
- *Why are the planetary boundaries relevant for sustainable business?*
- *Which value and mindset set help us to transform business into sustainable ones?*

https://doughnuteconomics.org/tools/doughnut-design-for-business-core-tool

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DEAL Design for Business

Core tool
(5 hours)

Redesigning
businesses
through
Doughnut
Economics

How does the design of your business block transformative action?

How could a redesign of your business unlock transformative action?

Posted by [the DEAL Team](#)

November, 02, 2022

210 likes

Quelle: DEAL

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Doughnut Design for Business Case Studies

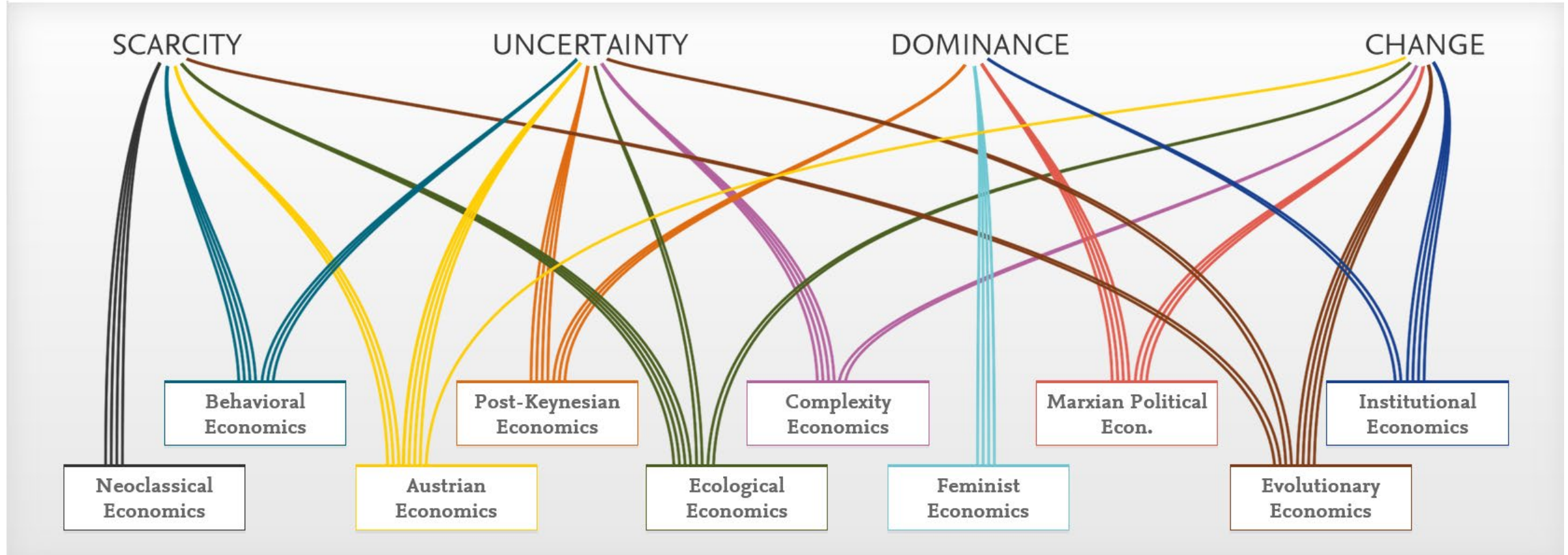
A series of case studies that explore real-world businesses through the perspective of Doughnut Design for Business.

Posted by [the DEAL Team](#)  November, 04, 2024  30 likes

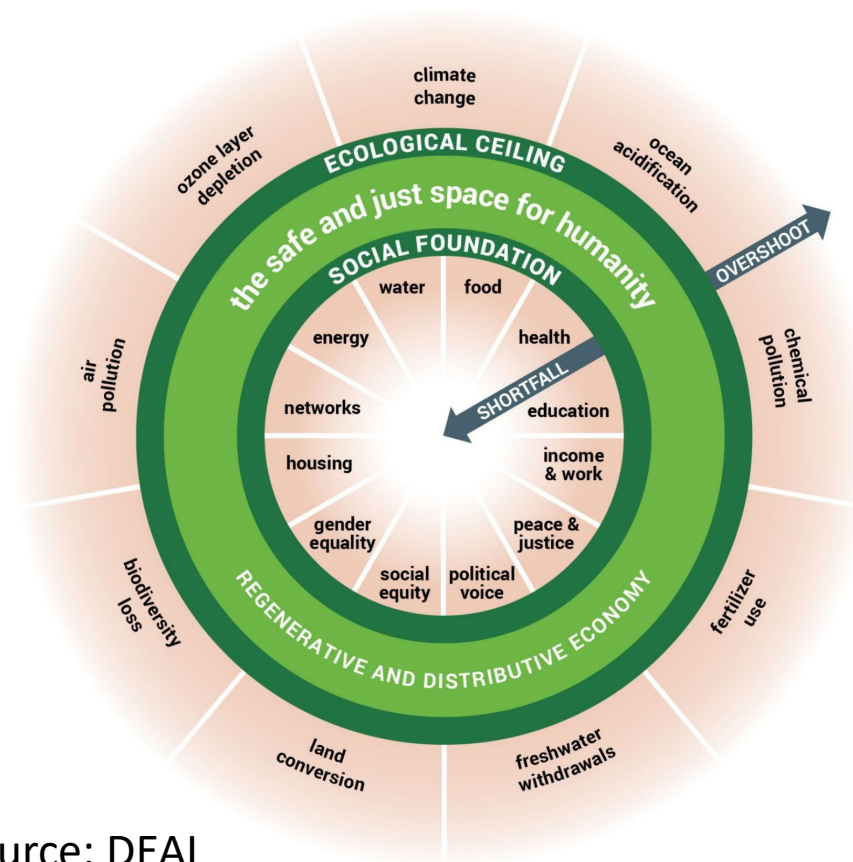


Doughnut Economics

Normative: The goal of the 21st century is to meet the needs of all people within the limits of the living planet's capacity.



Doughnut-Economics - Human Needs and Ecological Limits



Source: DEAL

What is new in this goal?

Normative: The goal of the 21st century is to meet the needs of all people within the limits of the living planet's capacity.

Friedman Doctrine

....The social responsibility of Business is to maximize profit for the shareholder...

Friedman doctrine

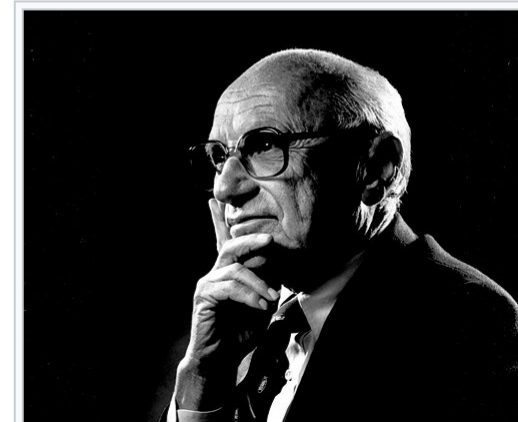
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From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **Friedman doctrine**, also called **shareholder theory**, is a [normative](#) theory of [business ethics](#) advanced by economist [Milton Friedman](#) that holds that the social responsibility of business is to increase its profits.^[1] This [shareholder primacy](#) approach views shareholders as the economic engine of the organization and the only group to which the firm is socially responsible. As such, the goal of the firm is to increase its profits and maximize [returns](#) to shareholders.^[1] Friedman argued that the shareholders can then decide for themselves what social initiatives to take part in rather than have an [executive](#) whom the shareholders appointed explicitly for business purposes decide such matters for them.^[2]



Doughnut Economics and Stakeholder Value

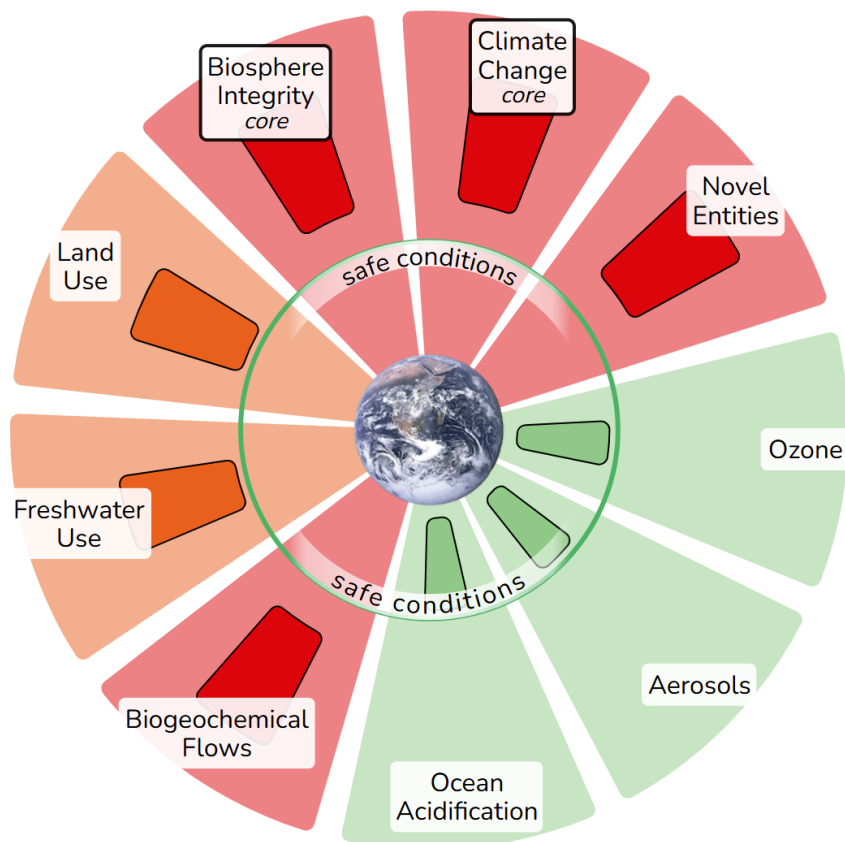
Normative: The goal of the 21st century is to meet the needs of all people within the limits of the living planet's capacity.

Who is the stakeholder? How I can define the stakeholder?

Planetary Boundaries

There is no business on a dead planet!

Planetary Boundaries



Show Legend

2021

1900

2021



Introduction

Processes

Boundaries

Planetary Boundaries is a framework for expressing the resilience of the Earth as a system, and the risk that human activities are destabilizing the system. The Earth system has been remarkably stable for thousands of years. Losing that stability would be very harmful to humans and society.

The **diagram** shows which Earth system processes are being pushed to dangerous levels, and which processes are still at relatively "safe" levels with low global risk.

Select a **wedge** to find out more about a process and how we're monitoring it.

Find out more about the Planetary Boundaries framework through the **tabs above**, and watch our [introductory video](#).

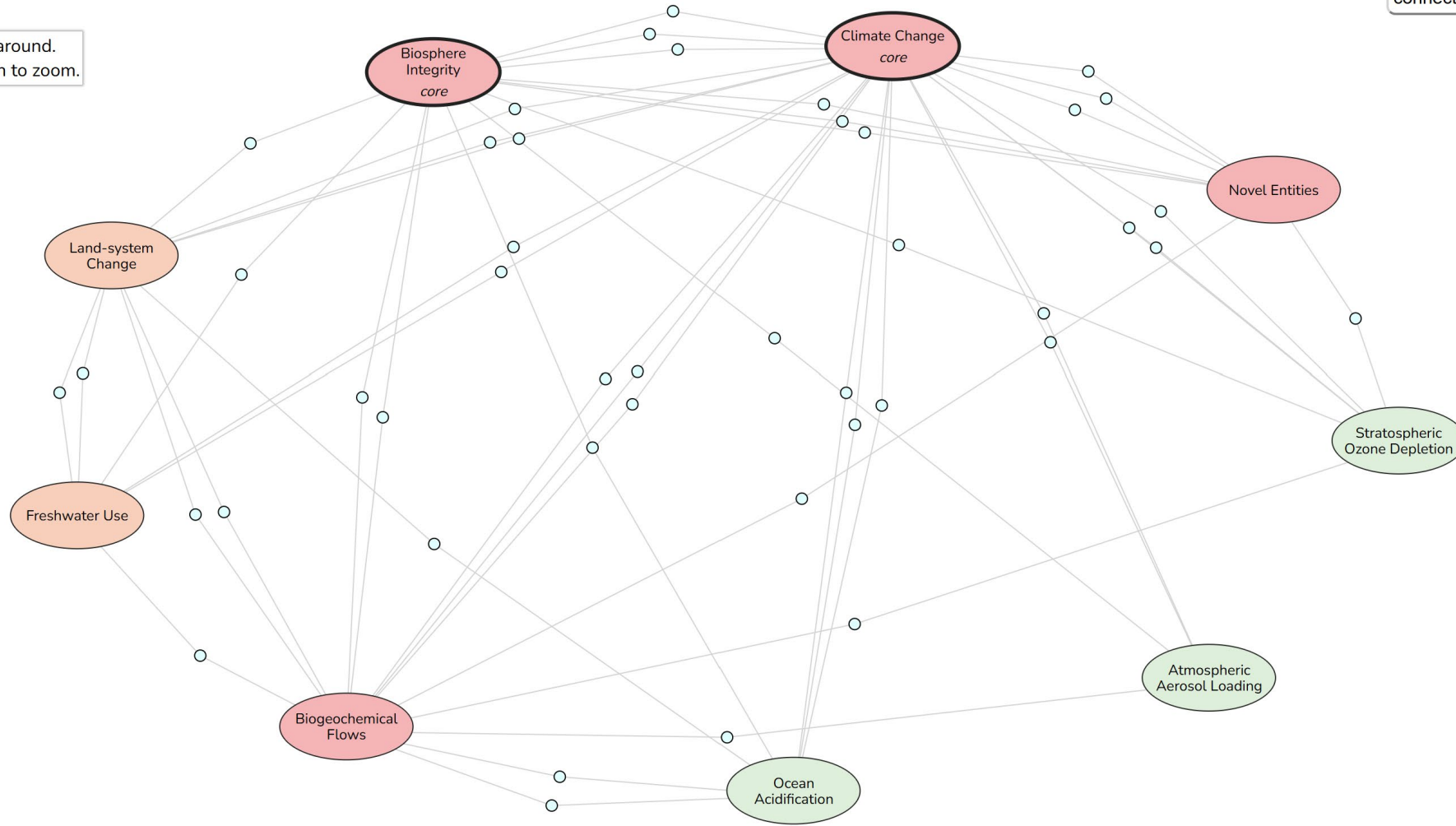
The *Planetary Boundaries* framework was created at:
[Stockholm Resilience Centre](#) | [Stockholm University](#).
 (Rockström et al., 2009, Steffen et al., 2015)

This applet was created at:
[The King's Centre for Visualization in Science](#) | [The King's University](#).

Web of Earth System Process Connections

Reset

Drag to look around.
Scroll or pinch to zoom.

Download
connections (CSV)


It is serious!!!!

- Status: RCP8.5(SSP5 8.5) IPCC Path of 2.1 °C to 3.9°C (Kemp et al, 2024)
- Even in the ideal mitigation scenario (2030) path of 1.9°C – 3.6°C (ebd.)
- Mitigation of IPCC (Intergovernmental panel on climate change) Technofix with BECCS & DAC (Knorr, 2024)
 - Not Working (Not mature Tech, Cost/Benefit, Material Footprint)
- Over 1.5°C „buckle up“ (Rockström, 2025)
- Riskcascades(Hemp, spill over Risk, tipping points are crossed)
- IPCC focused in risk mitigation in 1.5°C to 2°C scenario
- Tactical communication, Complexity (Knorr, 2024)
- JP Morgan Investment Bank plans profits for a 3.0°C (Hiar, C, 2025)

Karlsruhehochschule International University

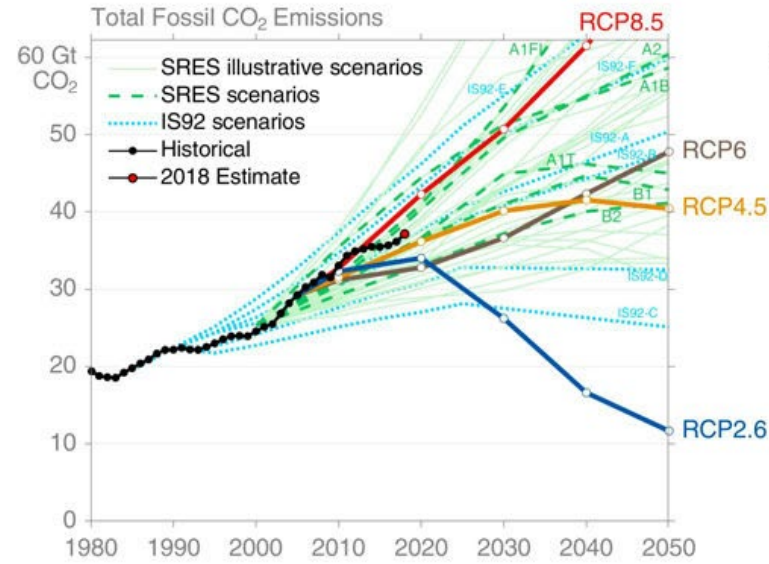


Figure: @robbie_andrew, @Peters_Glen

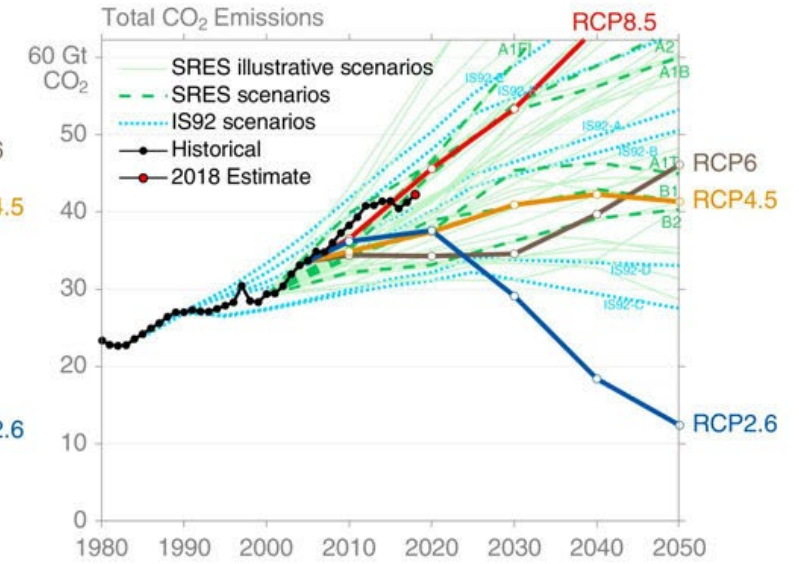
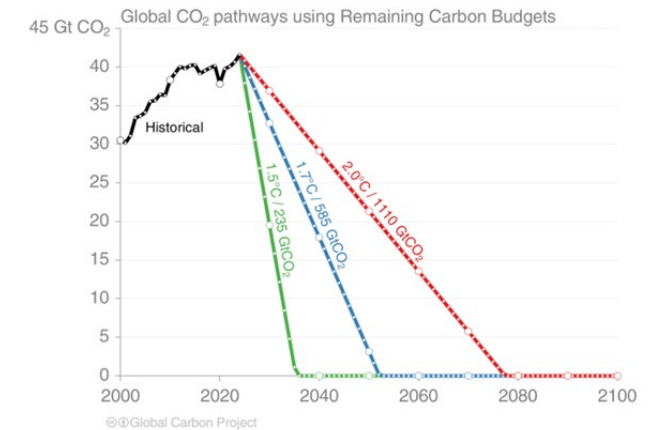
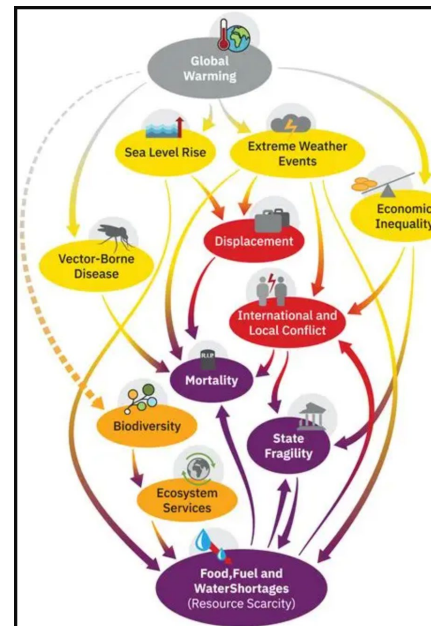


Figure: @robbie_andrew, @Peters_Glen



- <https://robbieandrew.github.io/GCB2024/>



Abbildung 8: Maßnahmen Kategorisierung, „Doughnut for Urban Development“, Birgisdóttir (2023), S.53

Figure 3: From degenerative to regenerative design

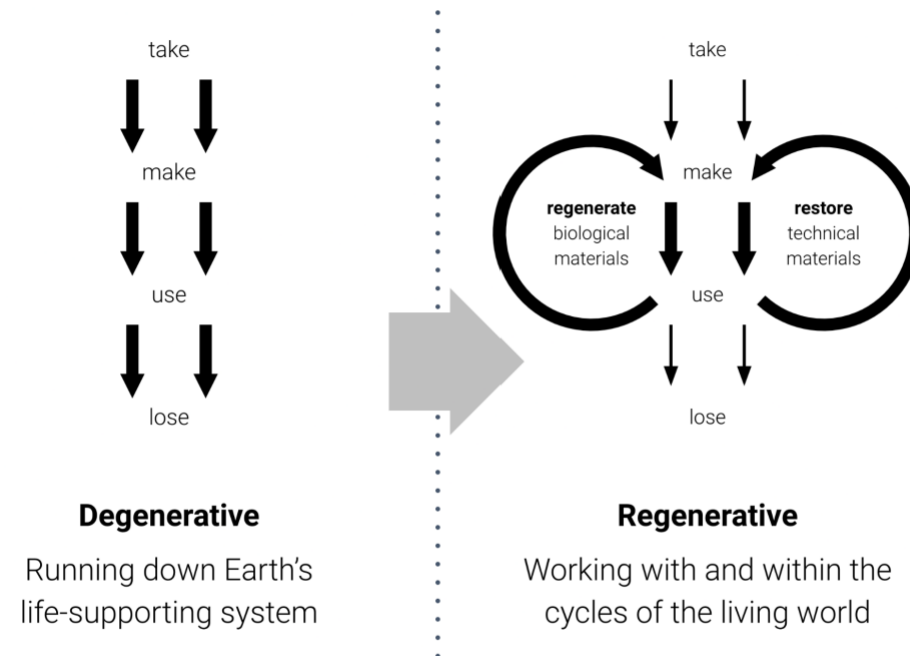


Figure 3: From degenerative to regenerative design

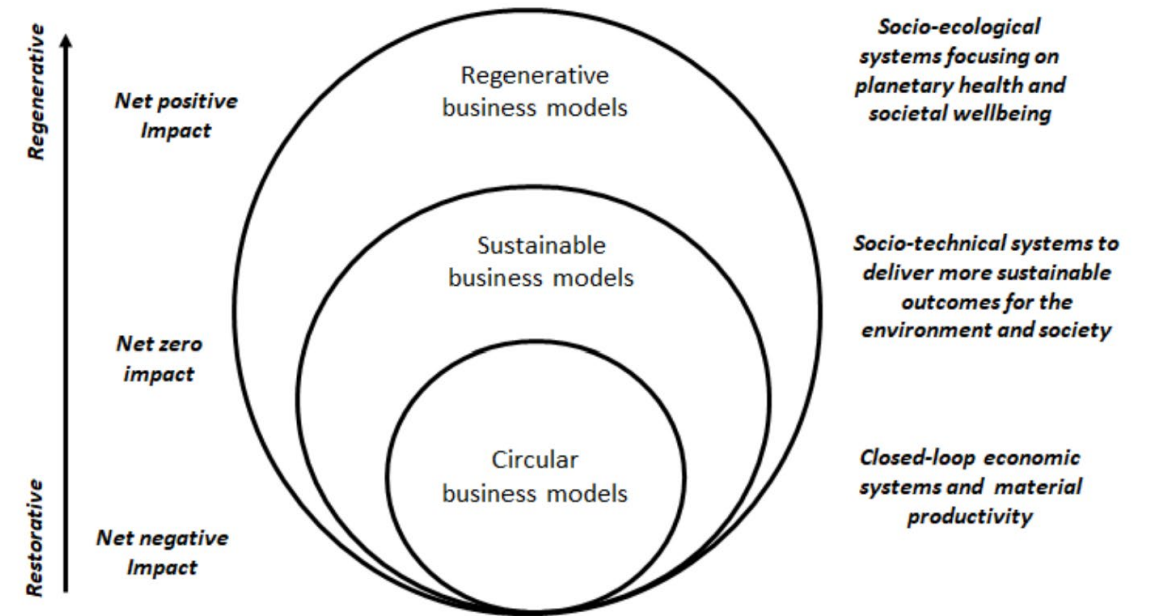
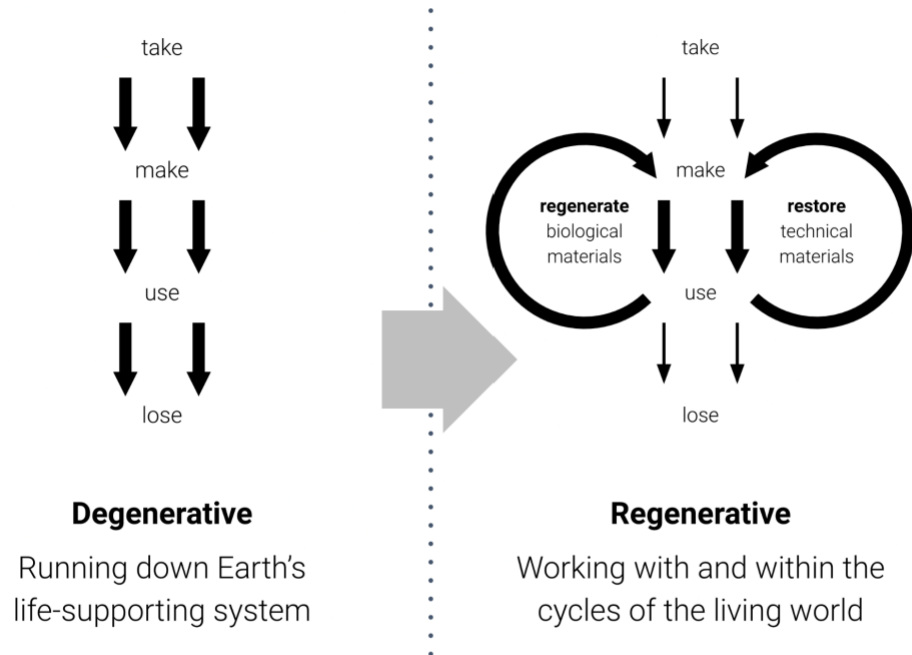


Figure 1. Hierarchical model of business models in CE.

Journal of Circular Economy (2025) 3:3, 342-357
<https://doi.org/10.55845/QOPR9934>

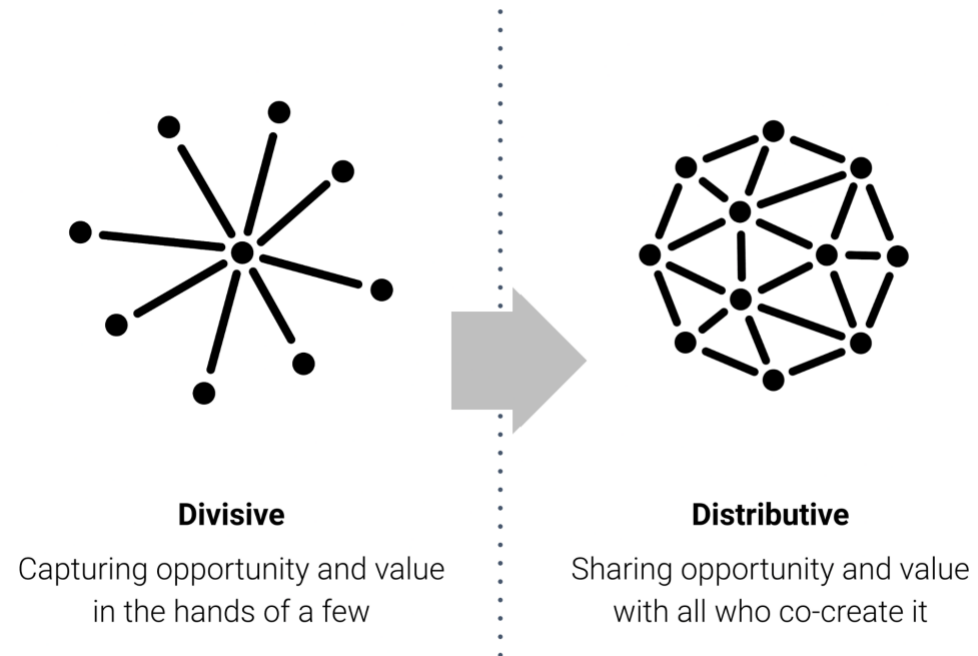
8 Models for Circular Economy Profit

This collection of 8 different material-use optimizing profit models can help convince businesses to become circular.

Posted by [Craig Bossley](#)  October, 20, 2025  0 likes



Figure 4: From divisive to distributive design

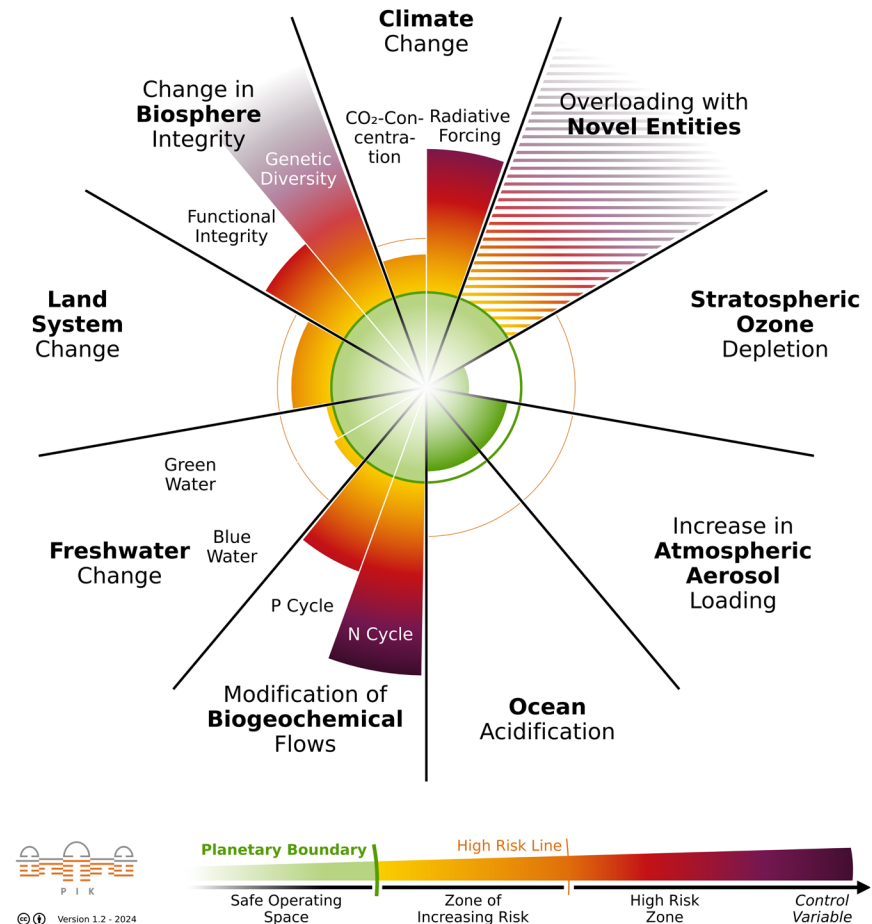
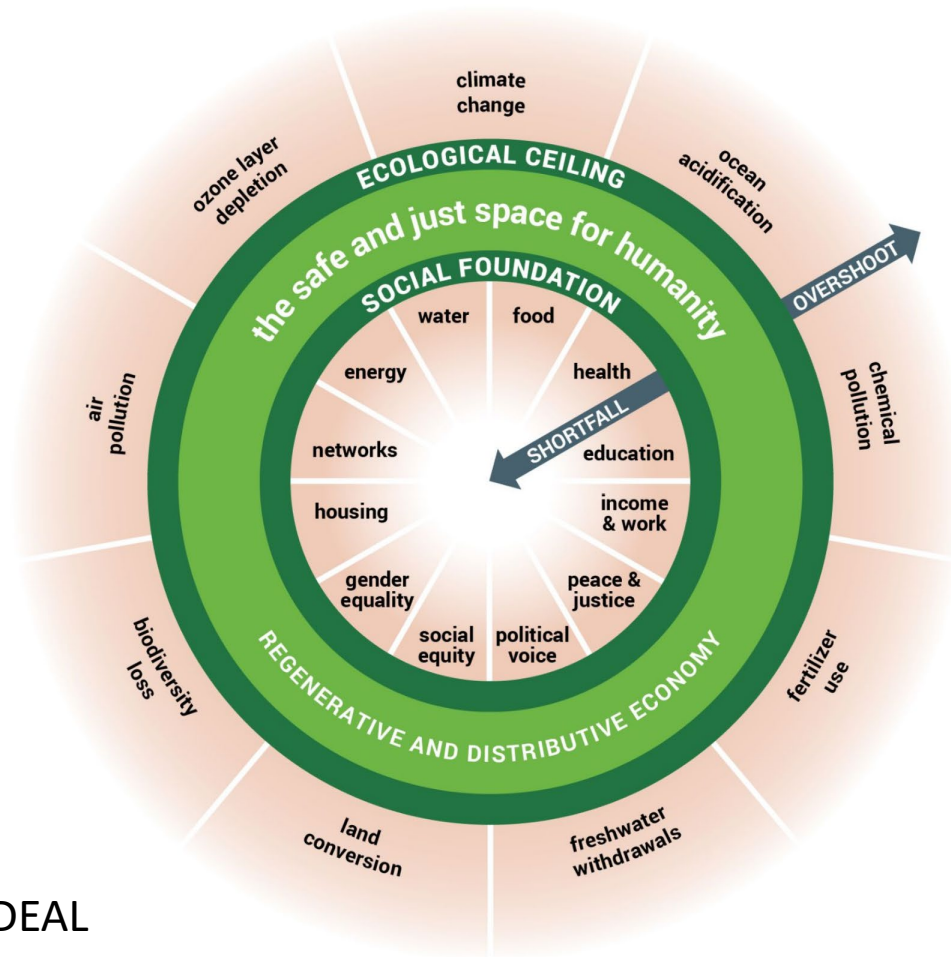


How to operationalize this Context Knowledge

or

How to guide for Doughnut Economics for Business

Doughnut-Economics and Planetary Boundaries

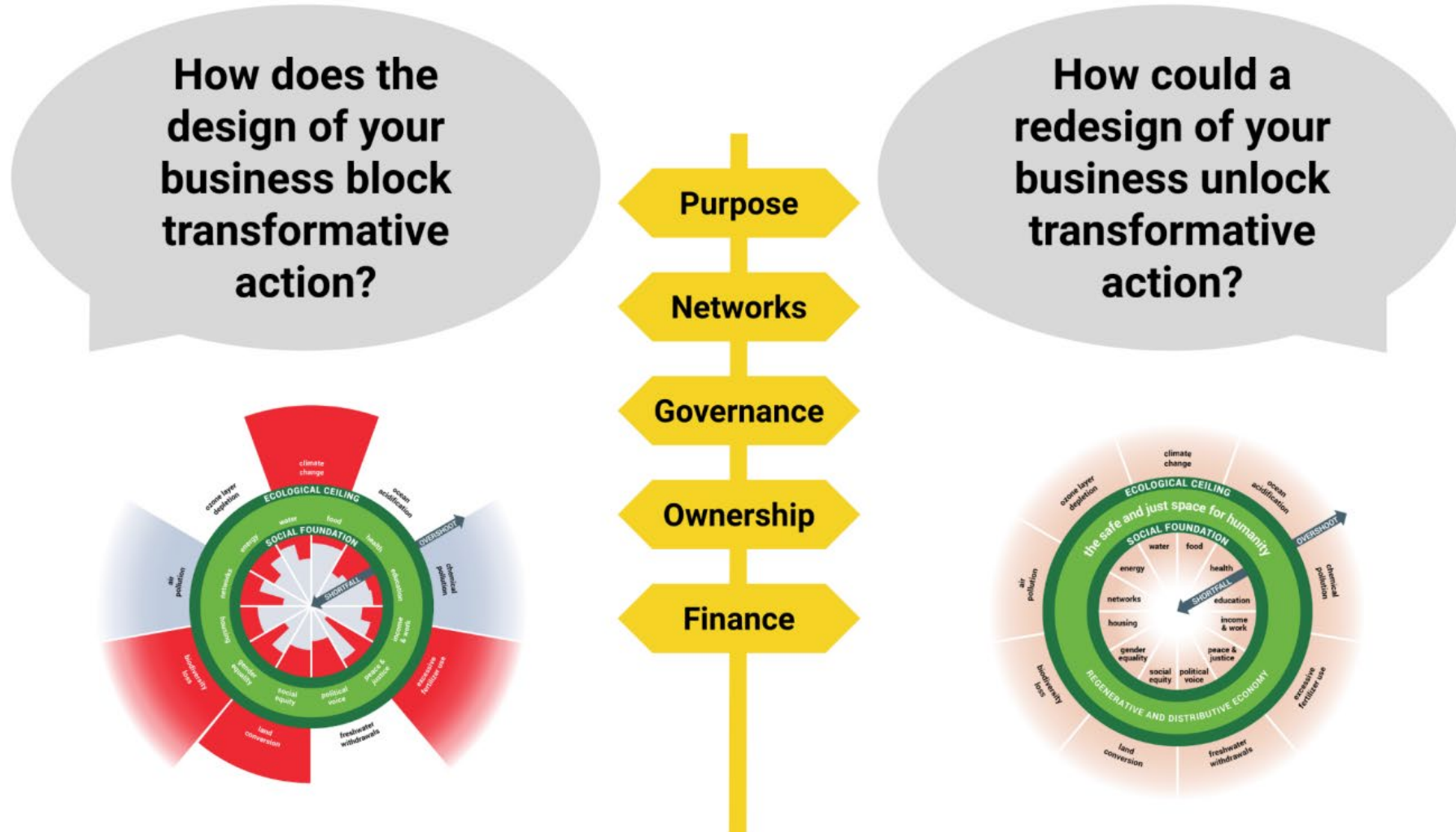


Quelle: DEAL

The Socioecological context in which you do Business!

[Doughnut Economy by Country](#)

Figure 6: Five layers of business design



“Purpose goes beyond the statements in company reports and marketing campaigns and is found in the shared goals that staff across the business understand and pursue. **It is made visible in the way the business navigates trade-offs**”

Purpose



“For instance, Manos del Uruguay is a fashion business that makes all of its design, production, and marketing decisions with the goal of creating **maximum benefits for the women artisans who own and democratically govern the company**. In contrast to fast fashion brands, it plans all production, costing, and pricing in a way that maximises benefits to the communities of producers behind the business”

Questions on Purpose and your Business

- 1) What is the gap between your company's stated purpose and its day-to-day culture and actual operational impacts?
- 2) If you were to write a desired purpose from a Doughnut perspective, rather than a financial perspective, what would it be?

Thus Ownership

Owners of a business typically hold the power to decide what the purpose and goals of the business should be.

Businesses can be owned by individuals and families, by foundations and trusts, by workers and farmers, by venture capital and private equity funds, and they can be owned by a mix of institutional and individual shareholders through listing on stock exchanges.



Ownership

Legal Frameworks for bounded Profit margin that aims to hinder capitalization: • gGmbH (Deutschland)

- L3C und Public Benefit Corporation (USA)
- Community Interest Company (CIC) (UK)
- B.V.M. (Netherlands)

Legal Frameworks for non – profit Organizations:

- Foundation,
- Hybrid Form or synergetic Foundations and Social Entrepreneurship



Ownership

Legal Frameworks: Steward Ownership

- Goal: To secure the long-term corporate purpose and the associated social/ecological mission. To prevent a purely profit-oriented focus.
- Concept of the Purpose Foundation, which separates control over corporate management from capital ownership.
- Separation of voting rights and profit rights: profits flow into the company or charitable causes, while control remains with those who pursue the company's purpose.
- “Golden share”/veto share: blocks the sale of the company and protects against unwanted takeovers that could jeopardize the company's purpose.

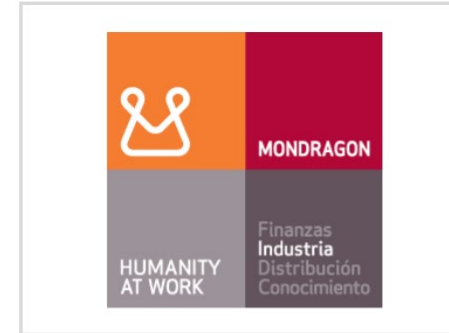
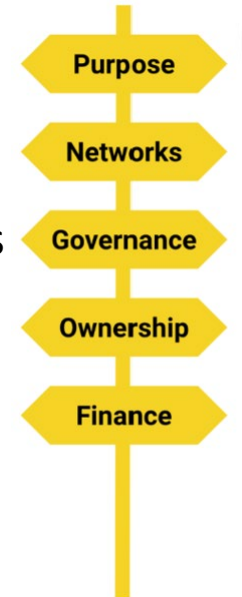


Ownership

Legal Frameworks: Cooperatives

Cooperatives: Democratic enterprises owned and controlled by their members.

- Stakeholder **governance**: Members have equal voting rights and make decisions collectively.
- Collective ownership: Means of production belong to the members.
- Promotion of: Fair labor, regional economy, social justice.
- Innovative models: Platform cooperatives as an alternative to monopolies (e.g., Drivers Cooperative vs. Uber).
- “Exit to community”: Sustainable business succession through transfer to the community.



- 1) What expectations do owners have on the ecological, social, and financial performance of the business?
- 2) Which stakeholders could become part owners? And how could voting rights among owners best be distributed to protect the purpose?



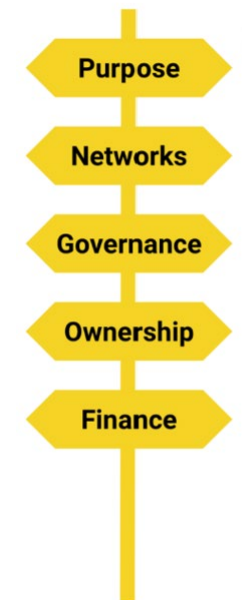
“The governance of business “identifies who has power and accountability, and who makes decisions. It sets the objectives of a business and shapes how these are pursued. It shapes the strategies and plans of a business, determining the processes for its decision-making”

Source: DEAL



An example of multi-stakeholder governance comes from the German food and homewares brand and distribution business El Puente. Their suppliers, employees, customers, and founders each have equal shares and representation on the board. For instance, El Puente's suppliers (who **are long-term business partners committed to Fair Trade and the goal of supporting economically marginalised farmers, workers, and artisans worldwide**) elect among themselves a representative for the El Puente board

Source: DEAL



- 1) Who should be on your board? Who will represent the interests of all those who are affected by your business?
- 2) How do your approach to governance **navigate trade-offs between ecological, social, and financial goals?**
- 3) How should decision-making processes engage with transformative ideas?

Source: DEAL



Businesses create and belong to multiple networks including trading networks across supply chains and with commercial partners, service providers, and customers.

Other networks include relationships with staff, communities, and governments, as well as networks of peers in their industry, or business networks that speak on behalf of the broader business community

Source: DEAL





Jetzt Fördermitglied werden

BEGLEITUNG

PROJEKTE

ÖKOsystem

VERANSTALTUNGEN ▾

PODCAST

ÜBER UNS

KONTAKT

EINE NEUE FORM DER VERBUNDENHEIT

Ein Ökosystem für gemeinschaftsbasiertes Wirtschaften.

Für uns ist ein Ökosystem kein bloßes Netzwerk von Akteur:innen. Es ist ein lebendiges Geflecht, das Menschen, Ideen, Unternehmen und Ressourcen miteinander verbindet – so, dass mehr entsteht, als jede:r für sich allein je schaffen könnte.

1)How will you achieve long-term committed partnerships with your suppliers and other commercial partners?

2)How will you join and support progressive networks of businesses collaborating and advocating to drive necessary transformations?

Source: DEAL



Figure 6 The four lenses of the Doughnut Portrait.

In the words of Marjorie Kelly, “Instead of investments that involve casino finance, alternative approaches involve stakeholder finance, where capital becomes a friend rather than a master.”

....Navigating trade-offs becomes more nuanced when the pressure to extract dividends for owners is removed or significantly reduced....

Source: DEAL

- 1) How is the business currently financed, and what does that finance expect and demand?
- 2) Should margin requirements adapt to enable transformative ideas?
- 3) How can reinvestment be enabled? Should there be a dividend cap to enable it?
- 4) What is a fair return for investors and how can exits (if needed) be managed to retain the purpose?

Source: DEAL

Lessons for business redesign journey

Drawing from the experience of businesses that participated in a range of pilot workshops conducted by DEAL, we suggest seven lessons for the business redesign journey

1. Put the most transformative ideas on the table
2. Explore the limits of your current business design
3. Remember that redesign can ensure business resilience
4. Build momentum and commitment for your business redesign
5. Decide on the right size and scope for the business
6. Tailor the redesign journey and start where it is possible
7. Steer towards systemic change and industry transformation

Literature

The Presentation is based on the Content of Doughnut Economics Action Labs(DEAL):

What Doughnut Economics means for businesses | DEAL. <https://doughnuteconomics.org/tools/what-doughnut-economics-means-for-businesses>

Core Doughnut Economics Literature / DEAL Sources

- Raworth, K. (2017). *Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist*.
- DEAL – Doughnut Economics Action Lab (multiple referenced diagrams/slides).

Planetary Boundaries & Climate Risk

- Rockström, J. et al. (2009, updated framework). *Planetary Boundaries Concept*.
- Kemp, L. et al. (2024). Climate end game
- IPCC. (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). Reports and mitigation scenarios including RCP8.5/SSP5-8.5.
- Knorr, W. (2024). Critique of BECCS & DAC technologies (Technofix commentary).
 - *Plädoyer für einen radikalen Realismus - Klima, Kollaps, Kommunikation*. (2024). <https://www.klima-kollaps-kommunikation.de/beitraege/plaedoyer-fur-einen-radikalen-realismus-wie-uns-die-klimawissenschaft-in-die-falle-lockt>
- Rockström, J. (2020, 10. Oktober). *10 years to transform the future of humanity -- or destabilize the planet* [Video]. TED Talks.
https://www.ted.com/talks/johan_rockstrom_10_years_to_transform_the_future_of_humanity_or_destabilize_the_planet
- Hiar, C. (2025, 1. April). *Big banks predict catastrophic warming, with profit potential*. E&E News By POLITICO. <https://www.eenews.net/articles/big-banks-predict-catastrophic-warming-with-profit-potential/>

Literature

Circular & Regenerative Economics

Article Highlighted in PPT:

Journal of Circular Economy (2025), 3(3), 342–357.

DOI: 10.55845/QOPR9934

Business Purpose, Governance & Ownership

Friedman, M. (1970). *The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits*.

Marjorie Kelly – Stakeholder Finance, Ownership Alternatives

Kelly, M. (2012). *Owning Our Future: The Emerging Ownership Revolution*.

DEAL Business Tooling (Purpose, Ownership, Governance, Networks, Finance).

Steward Ownership & Cooperative Frameworks

Purpose Foundation – Steward Ownership Concepts.

Literature on Cooperative Economics and Platform Cooperatives (e.g., Scholz, T. (2016), *Platform Cooperativism*)

Core Doughnut Economics Resources

Doughnut Economics Action Lab (DEAL):

<https://doughnuteconomics.org>

(Source of most diagrams marked as “Quelle: DEAL / Source: DEAL”)

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Planetary Boundaries & Climate Science

Stockholm Resilience Centre (Planetary Boundaries):

<https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries.html>

Educational Visualization: *Planetary boundaries*. (o. D.). Planetary Boundaries. <https://planetaryboundaries.kcvs.ca/>

IPCC Reports:

<https://www.ipcc.ch>

BECCS & DAC Information (for critique context):

General overview at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/chapter-2>

(specific studies by Knorr referenced in PPT)

Circular Economy & Journal Reference

Article mentioned:

Journal of Circular Economy (2025) 3:3, 342–357

DOI: 10.55845/QOPR9934

Steward-Ownership Frameworks

Purpose Foundation:

<https://purpose-economy.org>

Overview of steward-ownership structures:

<https://purpose.foundation/en/steward-ownership>

Literature

Planetary Boundaries & Climate Science

Stockholm Resilience Centre (Planetary Boundaries):

<https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries.html>

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Purpose Foundation:

<https://purpose-economy.org>

Overview of steward-ownership structures:

<https://purpose.foundation/en/steward-ownership>

Literature

Cooperatives & Alternative Ownership

Platform Cooperativism Consortium:

<https://platform.coop>

Cooperative legal forms (e.g., CIC):

<https://www.gov.uk/set-up-a-social-enterprise>

Examples from the Slides (Case Studies)

Manos del Uruguay:

<https://www.manos.com.uy>

El Puente Fair Trade Company:

<https://www.el-puente.de>

Legal Frameworks Mentioned (Country-specific)

German gGmbH (nonprofit limited company):

<https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/gmbhg/>

U.S. Public Benefit Corporation (PBC):

<https://benefitcorp.com>

UK Community Interest Company (CIC):

<https://www.gov.uk/set-up-a-social-enterprise>

Dutch B.V.M. (Maatschappelijke BV):

<https://business.gov.nl/regulation/bvm>