

# **Pathways, politics and contested sustainabilities**

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Introduction to session on Emerging  
Opportunities and New Challenges:  
Negotiating Trade-Offs in Conservation and  
Development

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# Framing the debate

- Is it possible to operationalize conservation and development objectives as co-equal and how?
- What do we know about negotiating trade-offs or achieving win-wins?
- What is the role of different sectors/actors in negotiating trade-offs between conservation and development?

## **(Re) framing the debate**

- Is it possible to operationalize conservation and development objectives as co-equal and how?
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***Negotiating amongst multiple pathways to different sustainabilities***

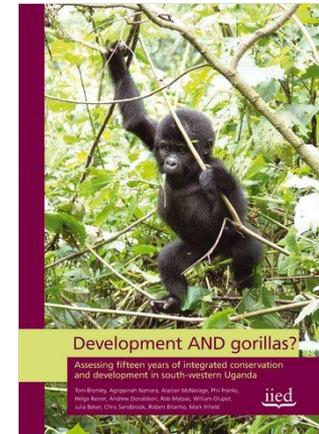
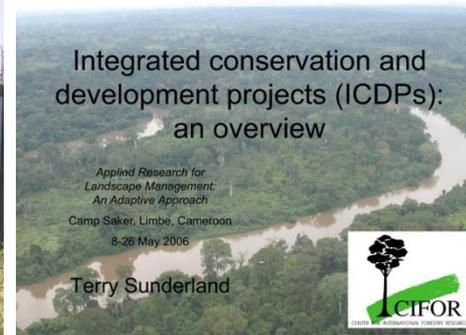
# Conservation versus development?

A dichotomy shaped by:

**narrow definitions:** 'global biodiversity' vs. 'local poverty reduction'



**institutional histories:** from colonial and post-colonial 'people vs' parks' to integrated 'marriages of convenience'



# Pathways to sustainabilit(ies)

## Broader definitions:

Conservation is about safeguarding ecosystem integrity and functioning

Development is about promoting human wellbeing and good societal and economic change



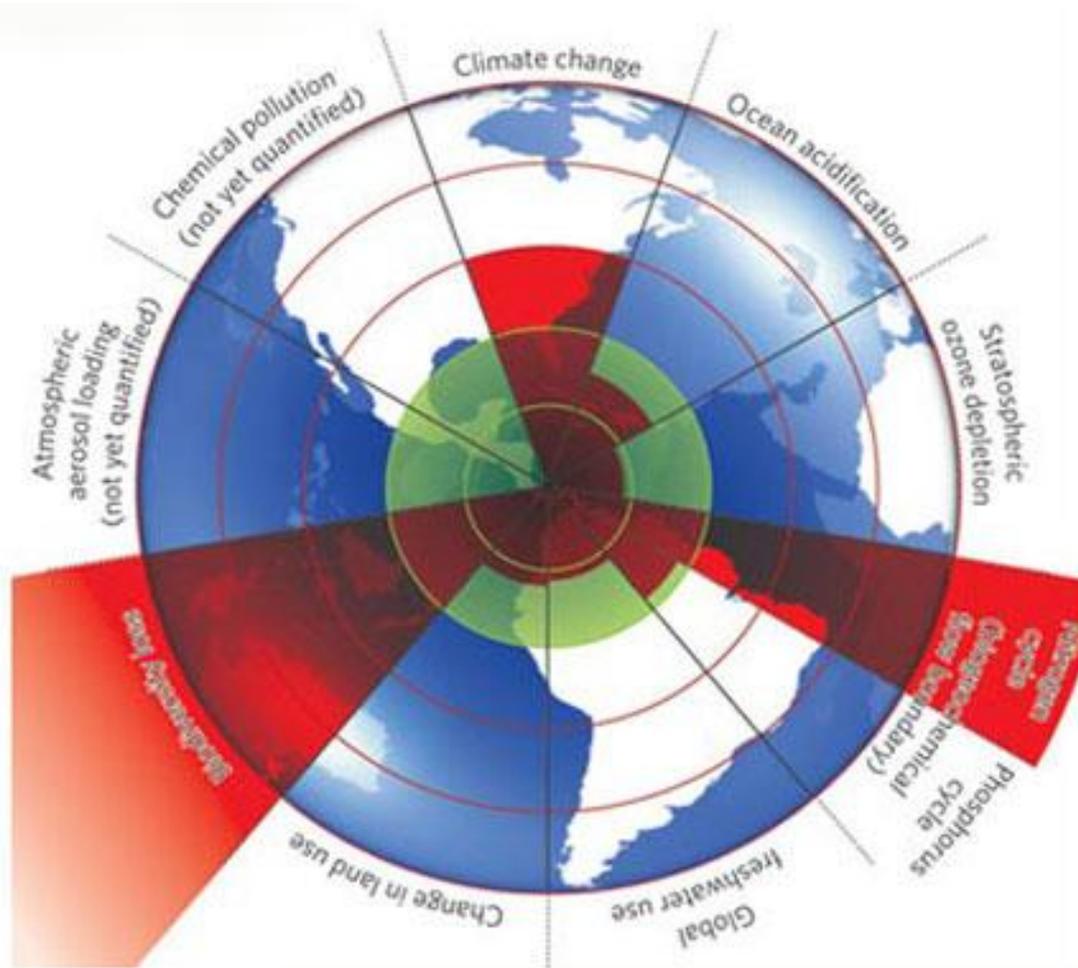
## Pathways to sustainability:

**Pathway** - particular directions in which interacting social, economic, ecological, technological and institutional processes co-evolve over time.

**Sustainability** - maintenance of *specified* qualities of human wellbeing, social equity and environmental integrity

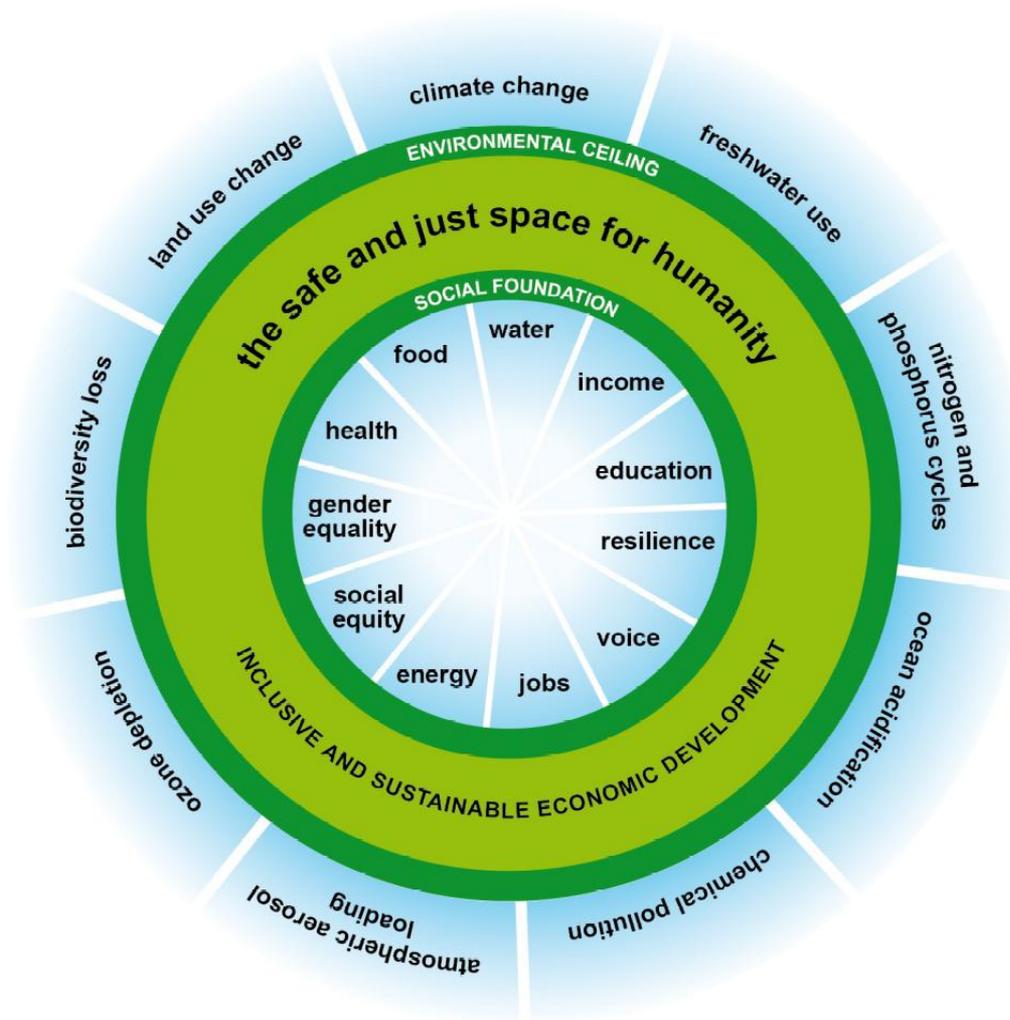
***Sustainability of what for whom? Multiple, contested versions.....***

# Planetary boundaries



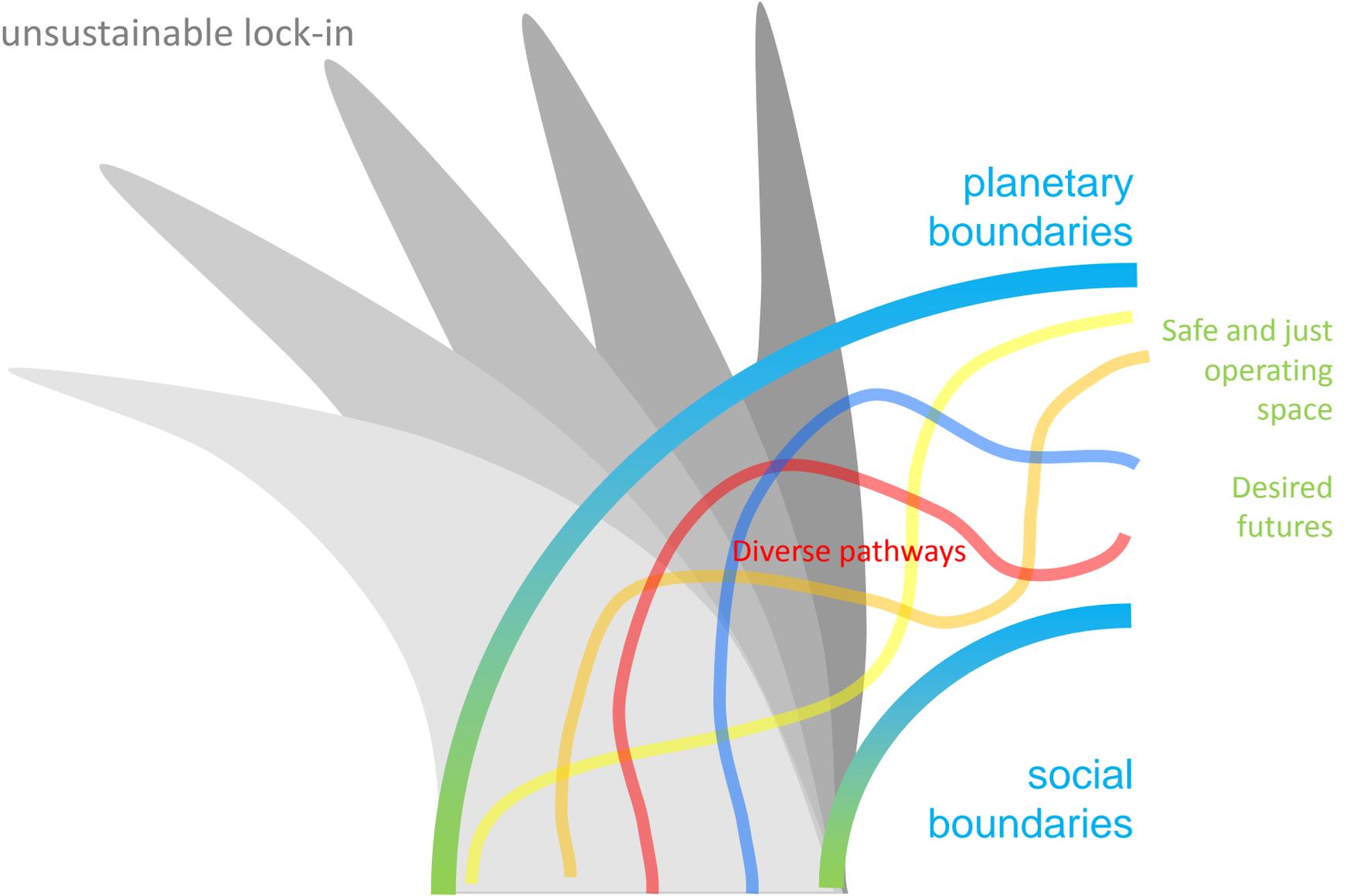
Johan Rockström et al 2009

# Social foundations



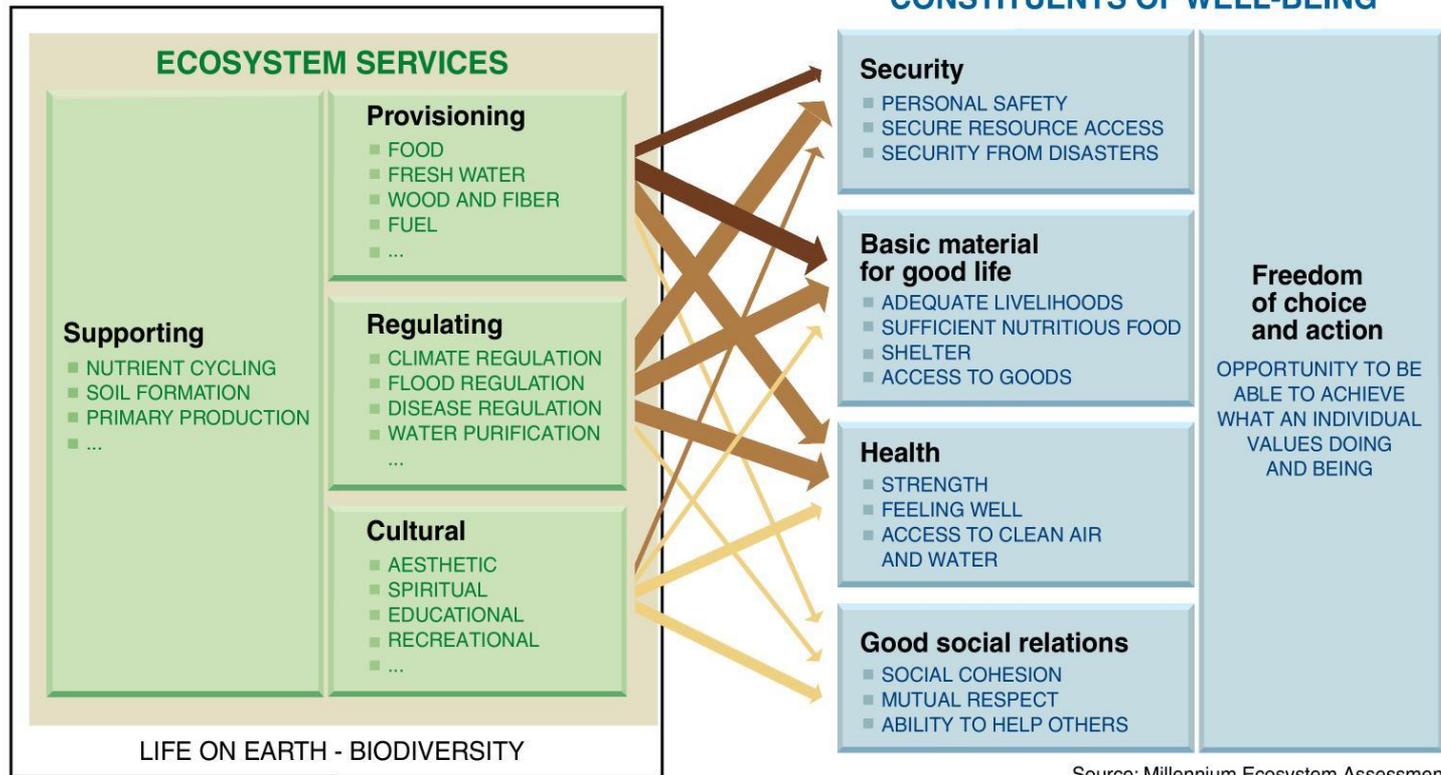
# Steering within a safe and just operating space

business as usual –  
unsustainable lock-in

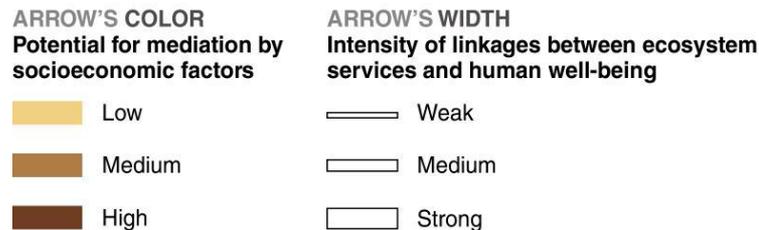


alternative pathways towards different sustainability goals

# Multiple ecosystem services, multiple dimensions of wellbeing



Source: Millennium Ecosystem Assessment



# Multiple actors, interests, institutional positions

Within households – women and men, youth and elders....

Within communities – wealthy and poorer, migrants and long-term residents, different ethnic or occupational groups....

Within nations – urban and rural, state agencies, businesses...

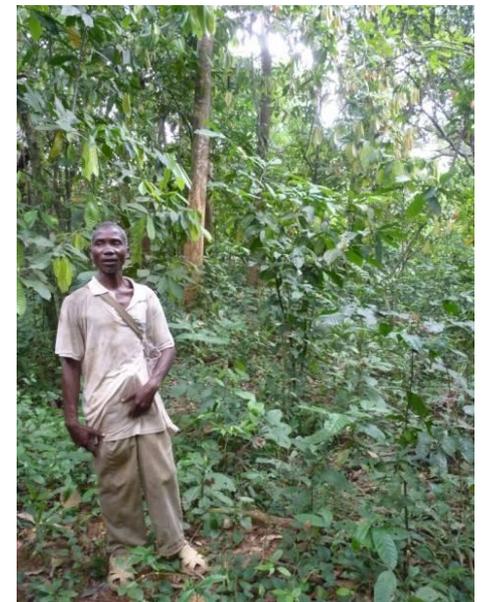
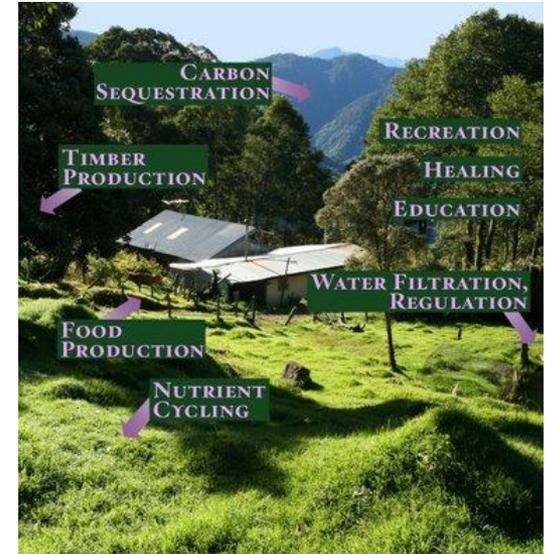
Globally – international agencies, distant consumers, foreign investors and traders....



# Multiple pathways to different sustainabilities

## West African forests:

- Preserving carbon stocks for global climate change mitigation
- Protecting keystone bird and animal species for global publics
- Timber production towards state revenues and national economic growth
- Protecting women's access to saleable non-timber bush products
- Promoting men's interests in tree crop agroforestry
- Supporting bushmeat hunting by young men
- Intensifying household bush-fallow farming systems
- Converting to oil palm plantations for 'green' biofuel
- Or.....



# Multiple pathways to different sustainabilities

## Dryland Kenya:

- Building national food security through boosting maize productivity, using modern plant breeding and genetic engineering
- Tackling diverse local food insecurities through farmer-participatory approaches
- Building climate resilience through soil and water conservation
- Supporting diversification towards horticultural and wild plant use strategies favoured by many women
- Promoting soil carbon sequestration through private sector-led biochar schemes
- Or.....



# Emerging opportunities

- **Technologies** – agro-biotechnologies, geo-engineering, renewable energy, ICTs.....
- **Financial and market mechanisms** – payments for ecosystem services, carbon and biodiversity markets, ecotourism.....
- **New actors and alliances** - companies, consultants, brokers, venture capitalists, GIS service providers, intermediaries



Ecosystem Marketplace

***New pathway convergences and win-wins; divergences and 'green grabs'***

# Pathways and politics

- **Challenging** the power relations, institutions and political economy supporting unsustainable pathways
- **Deliberation** amongst multiple possible pathways to contested versions of sustainability
- **Inclusive** debate that involves and empowers the marginalised



*Roles for new alliances?*