The Budapest Degrowth Doughnut, from workshops to climate policy

2023

Degrowth Doughnut of Hungary

National-level case that preceded the local-level work

Spring 2024

Budapest Degrowth Doughnut workshops

19 local experts defined and validated 23 indicators

2024–2025

Research report

Inputs for the Climate City Contract of Budapest

2025–2026

Papers

On the Budapest Degrowth Doughnut and the Participatory Degrowth Doughnut

Now

DAISY and SPARK4B+

Budapest Degrowth Doughnut as one of the research cases

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The Degrowth Doughnut adds a cultural dimension and a new approach to limits

1 **Three dimensions**

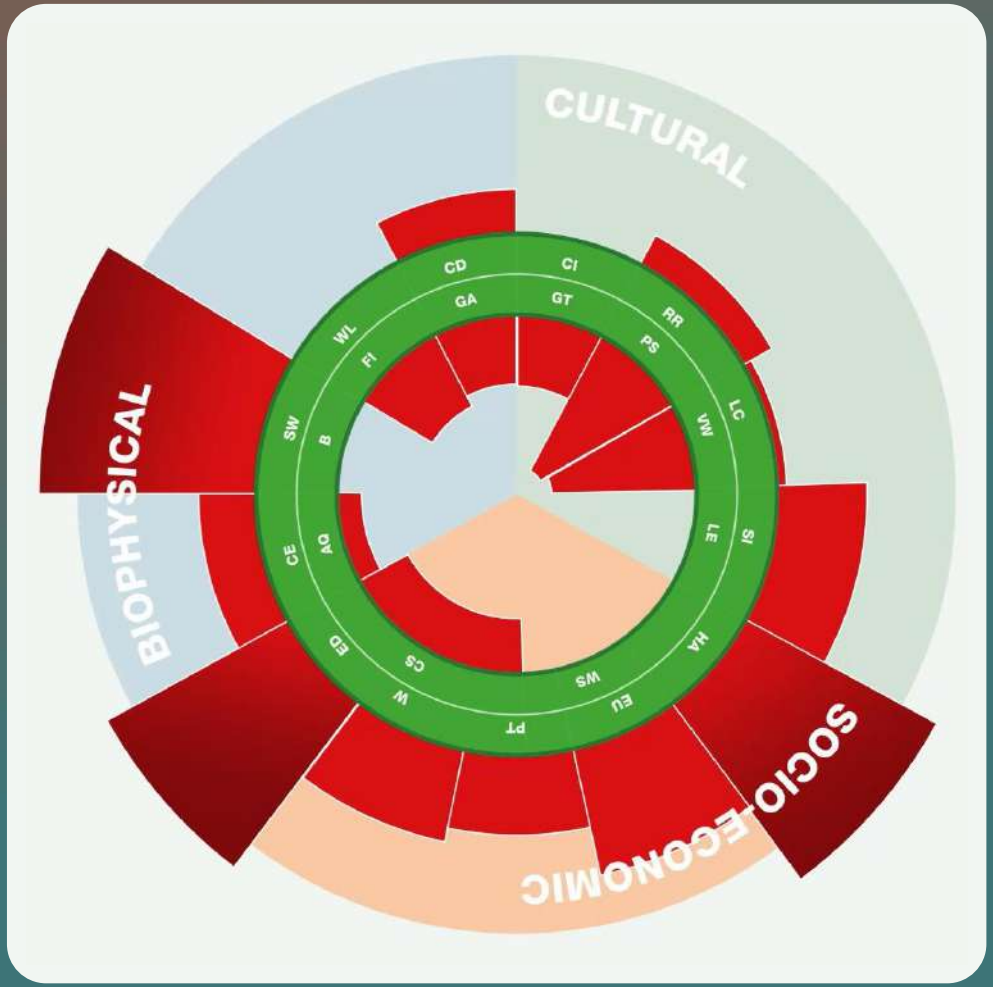
Biophysical, socio-economic and cultural, the last one added to the original doughnut

2 **Thresholds and boundaries**

Limits apply to economic processes and to growth-driven cultural norms, and they are set for the local context

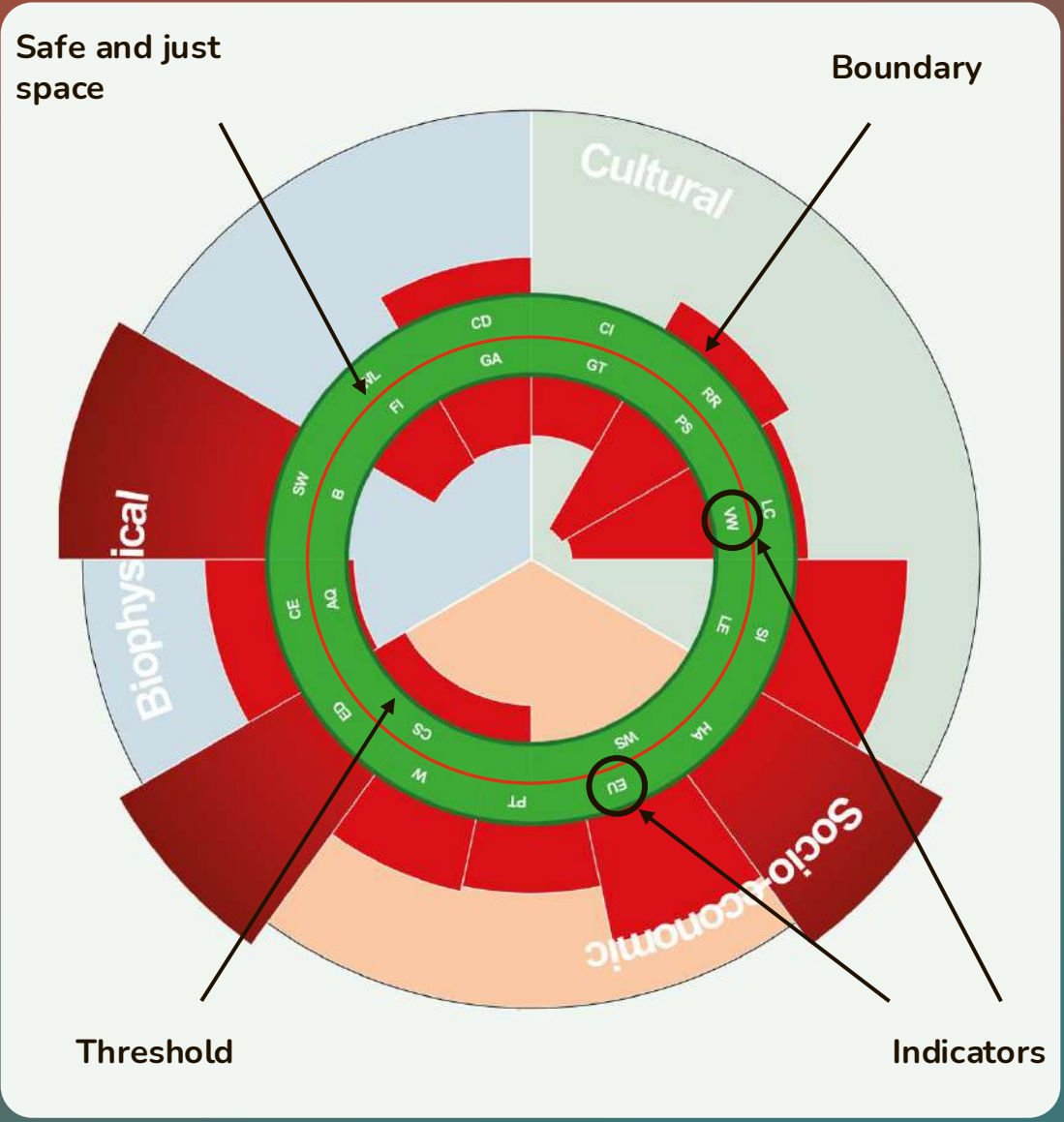
3 **Degrowth principles**

Less centrality of the economy, more well-being, participatory democracy and fair distribution within planetary boundaries



The Budapest Degrowth Doughnut, 23 indicators

Indicator thresholds and boundaries



Every dimension has both thresholds and boundaries

Boundary
Energy Use (EU) has to stay below a ceiling

Threshold
Voluntary Work (VW) needs a minimum level of civic engagement

Biophysical

- **CE** CO2 Emission
- **SW** Ecological Status of Watercourses
- **WL** Drinking Water Loss
- **CD** Composting Deficit
- **AQ** Air Quality
- **B** Biodiversity
- **FI** Food Sustainability Index
- **GA** Green Area Availability

Socio-economic

- **HA** Housing Affordability
- **EU** Energy Use
- **PT** Passenger Car Traffic
- **W** Waste
- **ED** Ecological Deficit
- **WS** Walkability Score
- **CS** Climate Strategy

Cultural

- **CI** Climate Change Ignorance
- **RR** Redistribution Refusal
- **LC** Lack of Culture
- **SI** Social Intolerance
- **GT** Local Government Transparency
- **PS** Petition Signers
- **VW** Voluntary Work
- **LE** Life Expectancy

Impactful indicators are defined together and built into policy

What makes doughnut indicators as impactful as possible?

1 Participatory indicator definition

- Policy experts of the municipality worked with experts from NGOs, academia, business and public sectors
- Indicators were proposed, validated and refined together in three workshops

2 Integration in the climate policy document

- The municipality drew on the research outputs for the Action Plan of its Climate City Contract
- The doughnut helped to consider effects of climate neutrality measures on other aspects of city life

Workshop 1, 8 March 2024
Framework, key factors and first indicator ideas

Workshop 2, 26 April 2024
Indicators validated and system map drawn

Workshop 3, 17 May 2024
Sustainability narrative and policy proposals

Local data, capacity and mainstream thinking limit the impact

Indicator definition

- Lack of locally relevant data
- Proxy indicators describe an area only approximately

Utilisation

- Limited holistic sustainability knowledge and capacity, and no adequate planning
- Mainstream thinking drives municipalities, without degrowth principles

Limits of quantification

- Thresholds and boundaries are often only EU averages, so they are not ambitious enough
- Numbers need the qualitative insights of the participants

Limits of the visualisation

- It shows a snapshot, not a trend
- Links between indicators are not visible, the system map shows them

C2 General

Formalised science-policy collaboration keeps the dialogue alive

Research team

GreenFormation, Corvinus University of Budapest, Institute for Political Ecology (Zagreb)

Science-policy interface

Budapest Degrowth Doughnut research project and DAISY

Municipality of Budapest

Climate and Environmental Department

Formalised collaboration

Collaboration between the research team and the municipality continues in DAISY after the Budapest Degrowth Doughnut research project

Institutionalised dialogue

DAISY keeps the dialogue alive, including the monitoring of the Budapest Degrowth Doughnut indicators

Insights for practitioners putting doughnut indicators into practice

1 **Commitment, not only volunteering**

Participation needs commitment from the experts and from the municipality

2 **Connect seed initiatives**

Link local initiatives, as DAISY amplification tends to do

3 **Plan the workshops around the data work**

Collecting data and finalising the indicator database is very time-consuming. Leave time for it between the workshops.

Workshop 1	Data collection, validation and database building	Workshop 2	Review of indicators from feedback	Workshop 3

Next steps include a publication, Zagreb, DAISY and SPARK4B+

Participatory Degrowth Doughnut

- A publication is under review
- It assesses the methodology against the challenges identified in urban sustainability transformation

Zagreb Degrowth Doughnut

- Applying the methodology in another city
- Testing how far the Budapest findings transfer to different governance conditions

DAISY and SPARK4B+

- Monitoring the Budapest indicators together with the municipality
- Further application of the methodology and collaboration

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Thank you, get in touch

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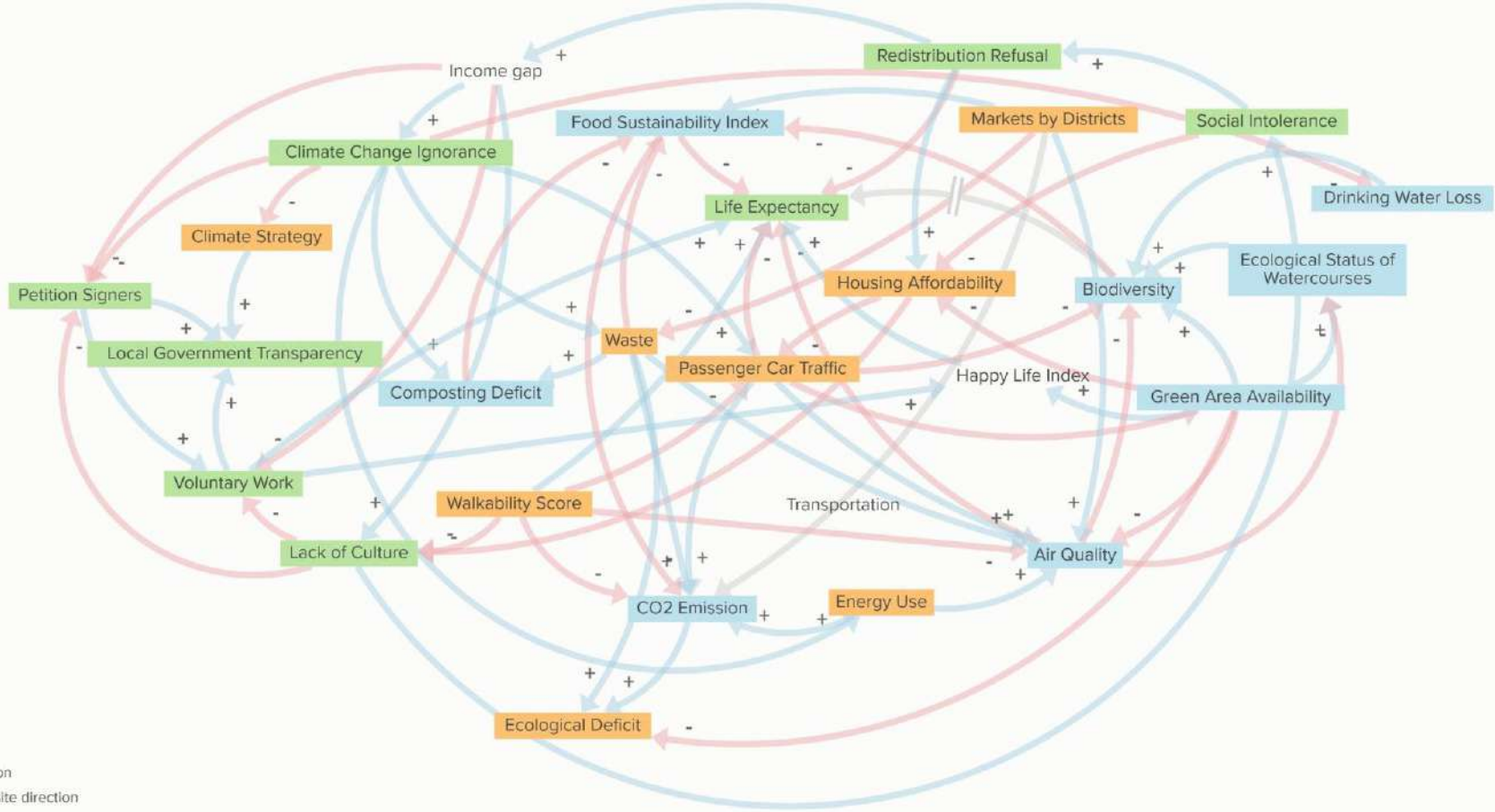
Backup: system map of the indicators