
Characterising provisioning systems for living well within planetary boundaries

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Résumé

The concept of "provisioning systems" has recently emerged as a way to understand the large differences observed in resource use across societies that achieve similar social outcomes. The idea is that all societies have physical and social provisioning systems that mediate the relationships between biophysical inputs and social outcomes, but some are more efficient than others. However, the general characteristics of provisioning systems remain poorly defined, which makes the term ambiguous from an applied perspective. Here, we develop the idea of provisioning systems further through a systematic analysis of six conceptual frameworks from across the natural and social sciences, namely (i) the complex adaptive systems approach, (ii) the multilevel perspective on transitions, (iii) the social-ecological systems framework, (iv) the social provisioning perspective, (v) the systems of provision approach, and (vi) practice theories. For each conceptual framework, we evaluate the unit of analysis, core elements and their interrelationships, and how change is envisioned. Of particular importance, we analyse the relevance of each framework to understanding the relationships between resource use and human well-being in the context of a "safe and just space" for development. This comparative analysis is ongoing with results expected prior to the conference on the strengths and weaknesses of each framework for our purposes, as well as the tensions and opportunities for bridging their distinct analytical approaches around the explicit goal of providing a good life for all within planetary boundaries. Building on these insights, a general approach for characterising the mediating role of provisioning systems will be discussed.

Mots-Clés: conceptual frameworks, provisioning, safe and just space, sustainability, systems, well, being

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