Potentials and limitations of footprints for gauging environmental sustainability - DTU Orbit (01/02/2019)

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To address the sustainability challenge, a large variety of footprints, aiming at capturing specific impacts of human activities on natural environment, have emerged. But, how do they fit into our addressing of environmental sustainability? Here, we build on a critical literature review to (1) provide an overview of existing footprints; (2) define their roles; (3) position them within the broad spectrum of known environmental problems and control variables of the planetary boundaries; and (4) argue for the need of consistent thresholds to benchmark footprint scores against absolute sustainability measures defined using science-based sustainability targets. Potentials, limitations and research needs are highlighted along these four points.

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