

How do we want to do business? An ecological economic perspective

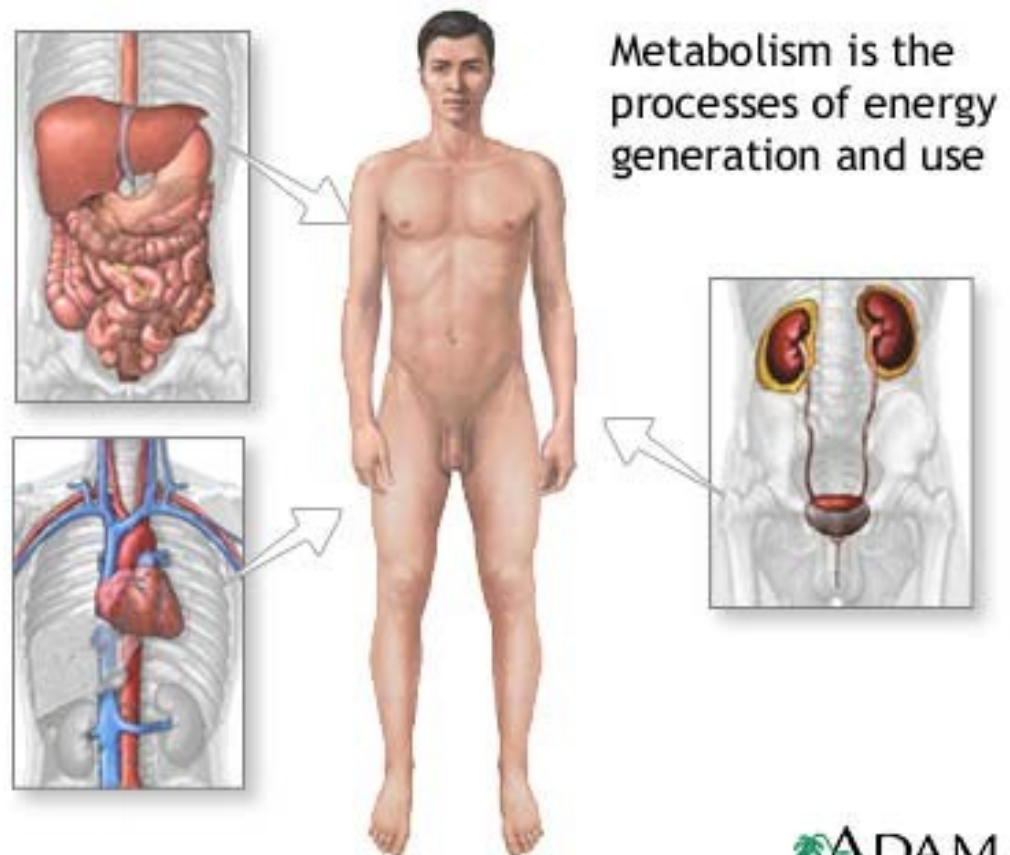
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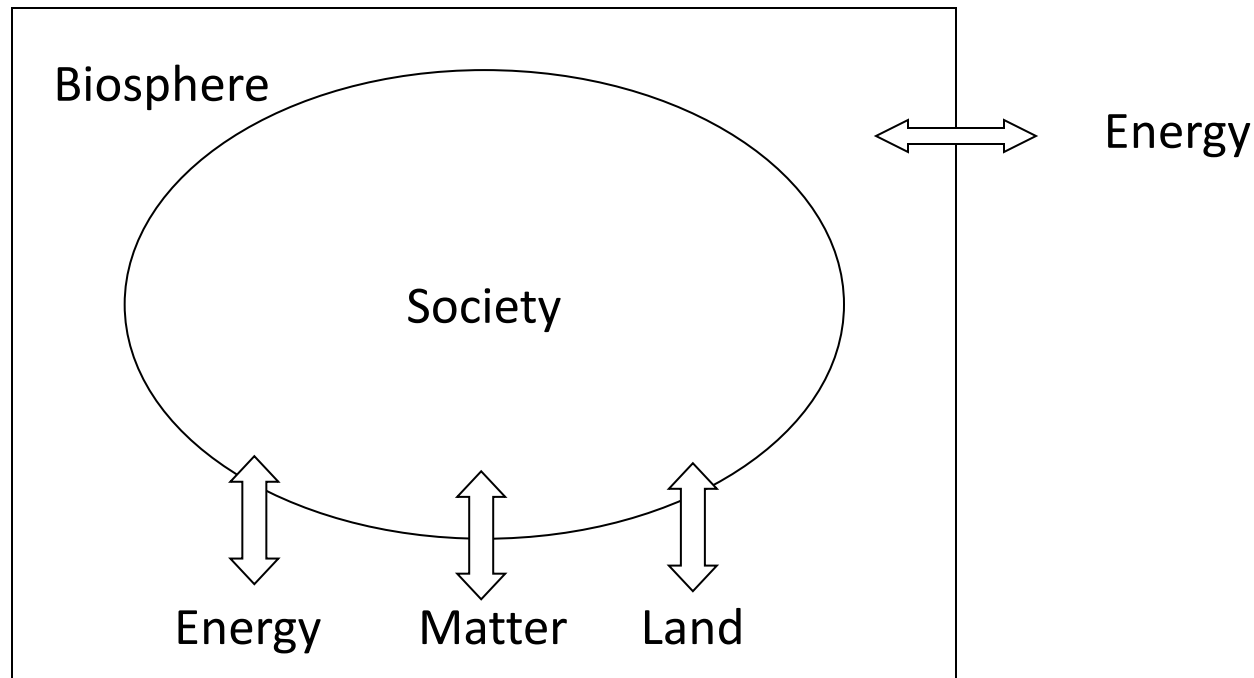
Outline

- Core ideas of ecological economics
- What makes unsustainable consumption in the Global North possible?
- What can business do?

Human societies can be seen as metabolic organisms



The 'full world' perspective



Technological change is far from sufficient to solve the problems

Distribution must appear on the agenda

What makes unsustainable consumption in the global North possible?

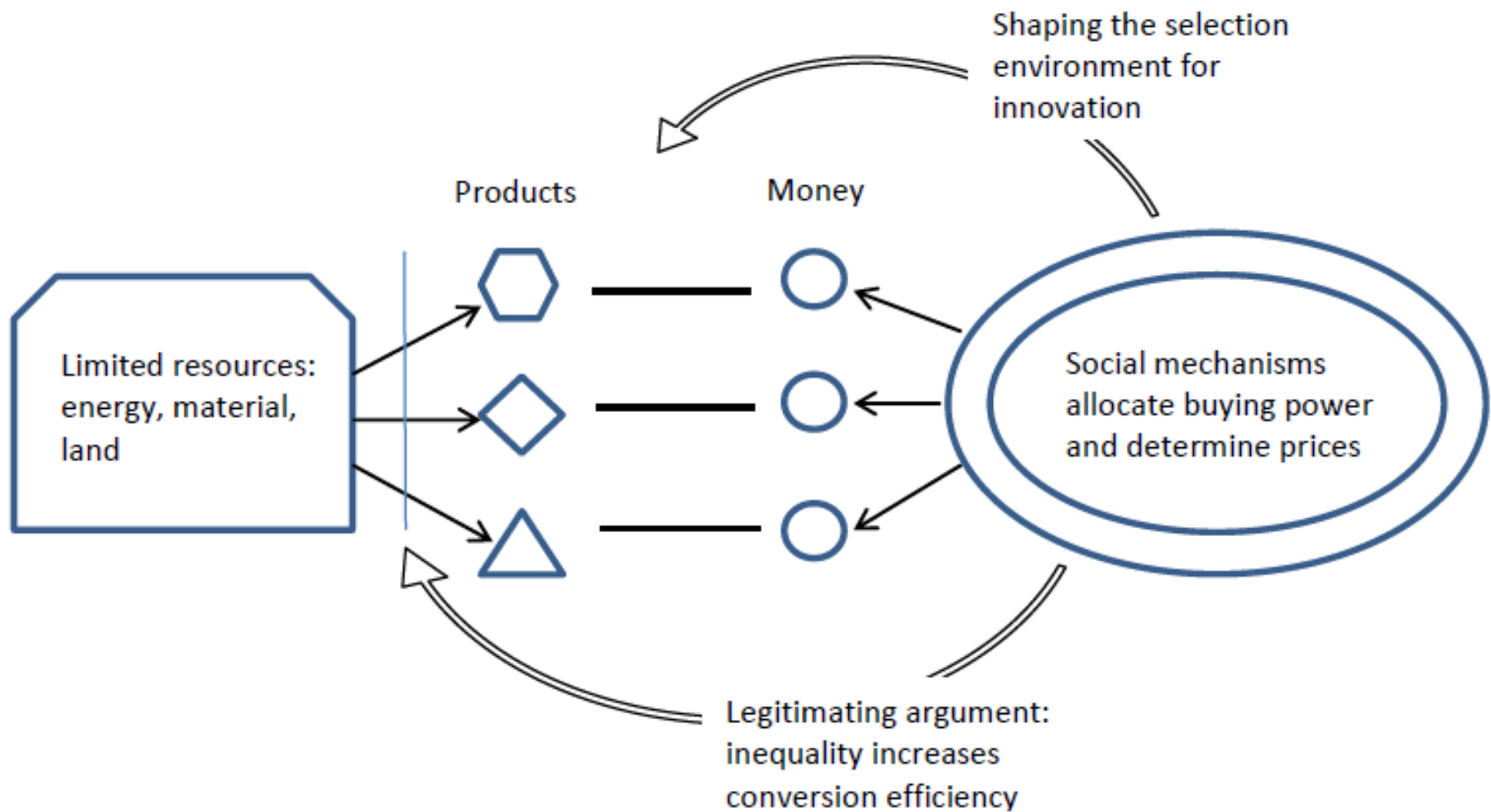
- We appropriate large quantities of resources:
 - Resources are cheap: externalities and short-sighted markets
 - Global sweatshops



What can business do?

- First: acknowledge that design for resource efficiency is not enough
 - Rebound effects
 - Does not challenge the distributional problem
- Consider the framework conditions:





What can business then do?

- Anticipate a more sustainable selection environment, e.g.
 - Product innovation for the poor and for solving social problems
 - Resource savings and investments in system changes, beyond economic arguments
- Lobby for a more sustainable selection environment, e.g.
 - Fewer carbon emission rights
 - Higher taxation of profits and high incomes
 - Limitations of the rebound effects
 - Promote unionisation, higher wages and environmental regulation in poor countries (both to change distribution and to make products more expensive)

Key message: green business
behaviour is about much more
than resource efficiency