

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

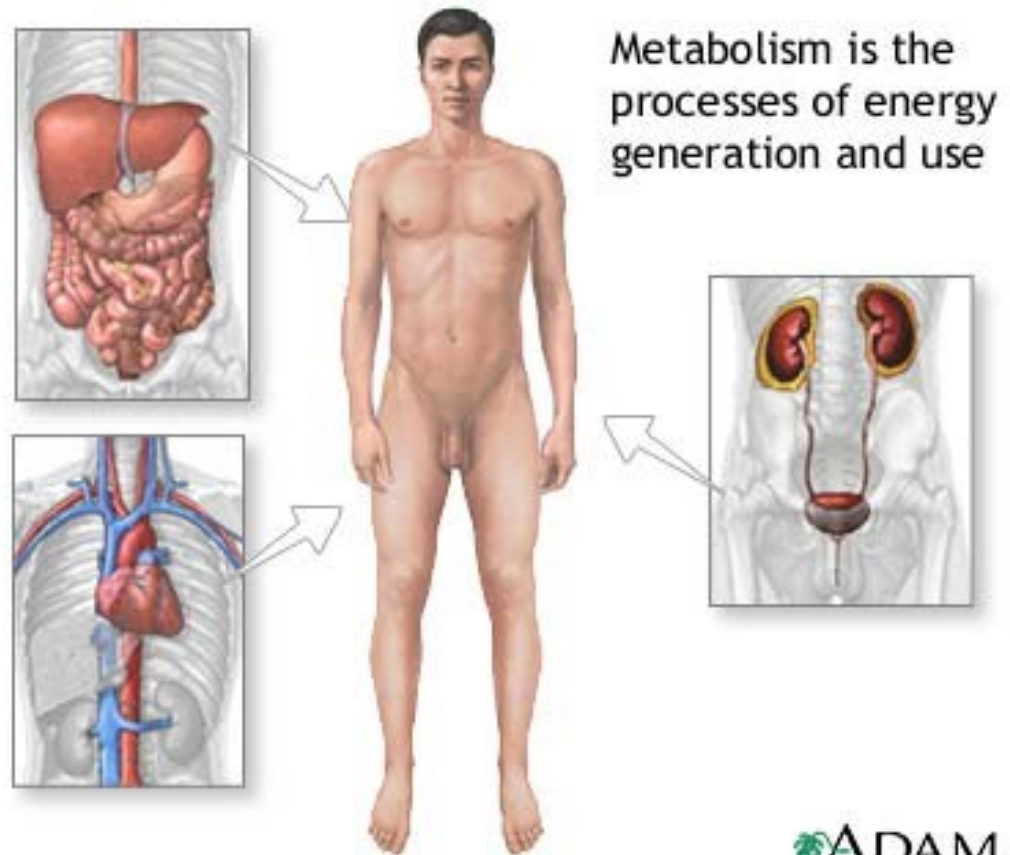
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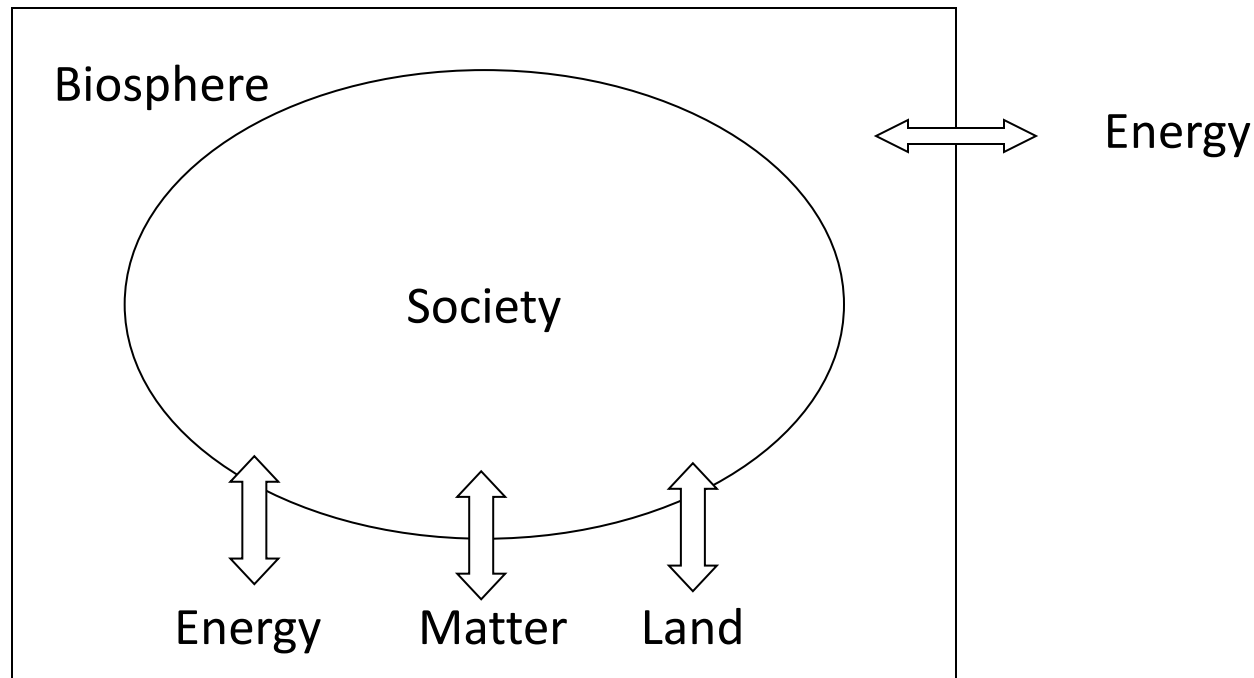
# Outline

- 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?

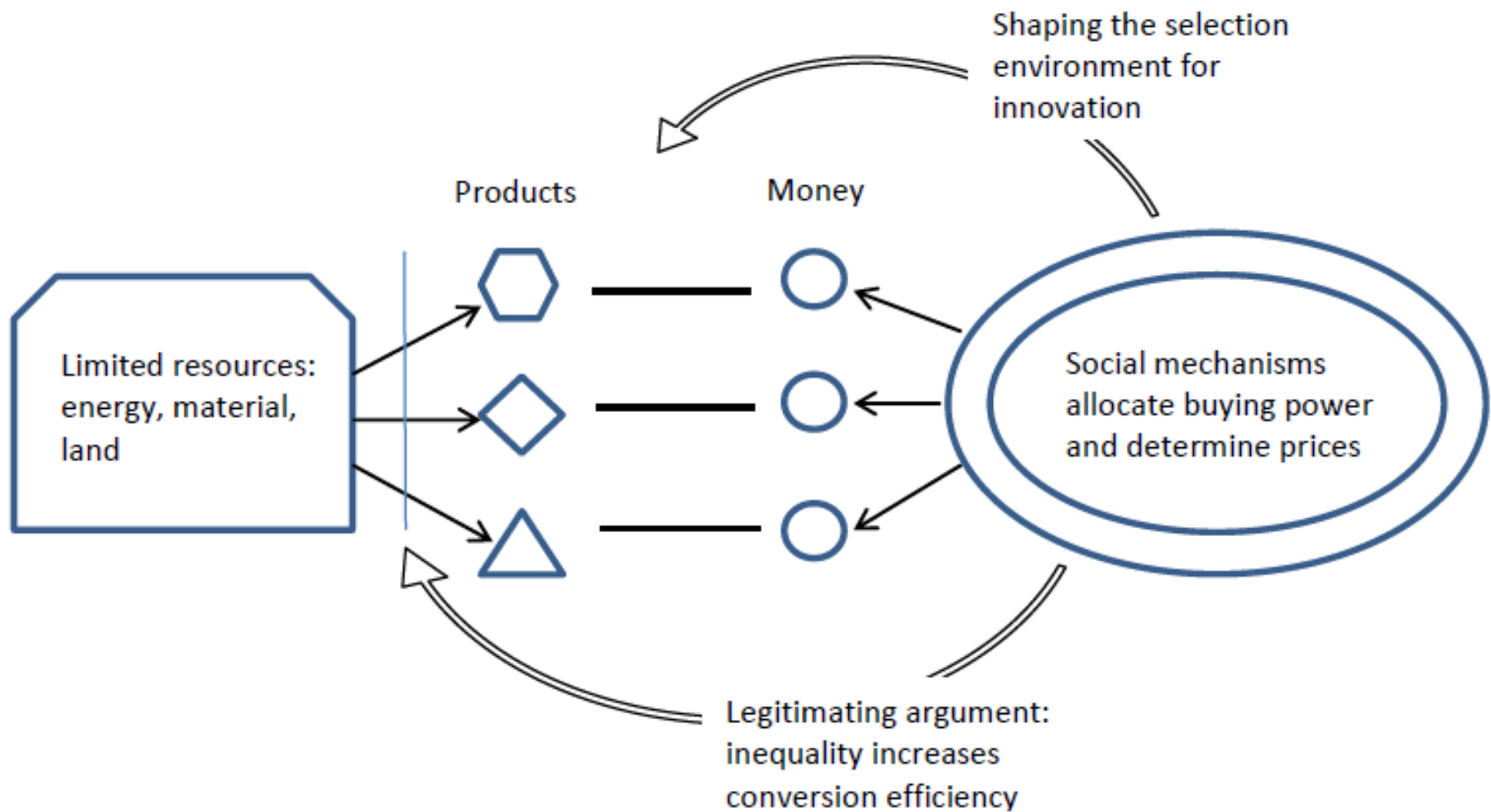
- We appropriate large quantities of resources:
  - Resources are cheap: externalities and short-sighted markets
  - Global sweatshops



# 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