

“Ecological Sustainability and Human Well-Being”
The Ninth Biennial Conference, 15-18, December 2006
International Society for Ecological Economics
The India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

The Constant Imperative:

PROVISIONING BY CULTIVATION AND HOUSEHOLDS

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The Future Imperative:

PROVISIONING BY CULTIVATION AND HOUSEHOLDS

“Ontological presuppositions” of Sustainable Economics?

The law of supply and demand.

The law of supply and demand is the law by which the poor man is condemned. It concerns the poor. And whoever it concerns, at once becomes poor anyway. It means this. That everything the poor man offers cheaply and in plenty, immediately loses any value it may have had. That's the law of supply. The poor man isn't allowed to keep anything there isn't too much to start with. And the law of demand means the poor suffer the following punishment - the price of anything a poor man needs and asks for and begs for and prays for, immediately rockets upwards for that very reason.

Paavo Haavikko in a play "King Harold the Longlived".
 Translated by Diana Tullberg.

1. Introduction

The human economy is based on *the production and growth in living nature*. Therefore the subsistence principles should guide all human endeavours and agency. *Households* have always been functioning *as the basic units of human economy* and a centre of social and economic provisioning. *The man-made industrial economy* – commodity production, industry, trade, and transportation - should operate with a view to serving human needs and preserving natural resources, its growth is not an end in itself. Today the neoliberal economics is imposing the terms of the market on cultivation and households, which is fatal for these vital components of the human economy.

This paper

- questions the ontological presuppositions of the present mainstream economics;
- introduces feminist-ecological economics as the only holistic branch of economics;
- presents propositions for the holistic view on human economy;
- proposes additional ontological presuppositions to the sustainable economics.

The holistic view on human economy contains the essence of its three basic components, the cultivation, households and industrial economy. The ontological presuppositions of economics should include the fundamental essence of all these three with the view of economics to be the science of sustainable human economy as a whole.

2. Ontological presuppositions of economics?

Ontology is the branch of philosophy which concerns existence, what does exist in the universe. There are ontological presuppositions behind every science although they are usually not taught about and not discoursed upon. They are assumed to be known and taken as commonly legitimized thinking and never tested. Therefore the ontological presuppositions remain unquestionable and valid.

Professor and philosopher *Lauri Rauhala* (1990), was the one who introduced to me something about ontology many years ago. He emphasized often that for the purposes of empirical research in any science there has to be a presupposition about the basic nature of the respective phenomenon, subject or object, before the hypotheses can be made. For instance if one wants to study the behaviour of an earthworm the presupposition is that it is a living organism. The methods of research should be suitable for studying a living organism. But if the study will concern the mineral content of an ore the object is not presumed to be living organism but lifeless material. Therefore also the methods of research will be very different.

These assumptions about the basic nature of objects and subjects of science are called ‘ontological presuppositions’. In every science there are ‘ontological presuppositions’, which express the fundamental nature of its basic assumptions. These presuppositions also define e.g. the notion of human being in respective sciences. The human being in biology is a biological being, in psychology a mental being, in history a historical person, etc. But what is the notion of human being in economics, a means of production and consumption or counting and calculation machine?

While preparing this paper, I came across a book by name “The Economic World View. Studies in the Ontology of Economics” edited by a Finnish professor *Uskali Mäki*. As editor he promises that the book examines aspects of the economic world view from a variety of perspectives by raising shamelessly deep questions.

“What is the economy made of? As an economist, do you study only everything that can be gauged by the measuring rod of money? Do you view human interaction in terms of supply and demand? Do you depict human action as seeking self interest in a calculative manner? Is this indeed your view of the world? What kind of general principles govern its functioning, and its change? What drives economic actors, and what mental capacities do they possess? What is utility, or well-being? What is uncertainty, or risk? Do aggregates exist? Are these things historically and culturally invariant universals, or are they relative to context? And many other questions to which economists usually are not able to give sufficiently detailed and refined answers.” (Mäki, 2001)

3. Exploring feminist-ecological economics

Although ecological economics has mushroomed as an area of inquiry, it has barely mentioned gender or women, just as feminist economics has largely ignored ecological concerns, states *Mary Mellor* in her contribution to feminist-economics explorations in *Feminist Economics Journal* November 2005. Both the ecological economy and feminist economy share, however, a critique of the way in which the commodified market system forms a boundary between those things that are

inside (and therefore generally valued) and those that are not (and therefore generally not valued). She is also suggesting that feminist and ecological economists should “present more cogent challenges to deficiencies in both economic theories and systems” if they were to develop new theories. (Mellor, 2005).

In their introduction to FEJ explorations, *Ellie Perkins* and *Edith Kuiper* point out that there are similarities between the ecological economics and feminist economics. Both disciplines pose similar methodological problems, and both cover topics that do not lend themselves easily to monetary evaluations, including domestic work and reproduction in the case of feminist economics and biodiversity and ecological knowledge in case of ecological economics.

“By linking these two concerns – theoretical and practical *gender* and *ecological* perspectives – a feminist ecological economics provides theoretical justification and impetus for those concerned with ecological sustainability or the economic contributions of women. These explorations show the fruitfulness of such a double focus and the importance of linking the discussions in feminist economics and ecological economics.” (Perkins and Kuiper, 2005)

In her earlier works Ellie Perkins also explores the definitions of *ecological economics*, *feminist economics* and *feminist ecological economics*. She also makes the important difference, that ecological economics goes far beyond environmental and natural resources economics, which are applications of neoclassical tools and theory on problems of environmental policy and the ‘tolerable’ rates of depletion of natural resources. The ecological economics is fundamentally interdisciplinary of necessity and makes the fundamental question about how to limit the overall scale of the economy and consumption in relation to the natural resources, which is not dealt at all by the neoclassical theory.

Perkins also points out that feminist economics is *not* the same as gender economics or the economics of women and work, which are only theoretical, historical and policy aspects of gender-based economic differentials of mainstream economics. The feminist economics’ critique of neoclassical economics centres on *whom* economics is for and what it is *about*.

The feminist-ecological economics explicitly discuss interrelationships between the economy and nature, emphasizing the distinction between industrial exploitation of natural resources and the more benign interactions applied in small-scale agriculture and household cultivation. Feminist ecological economics places households and community production and reproduction *at the centre* of economic focus, because without human beings and the society they live in, the economy has no meaning (Perkins, 1996).

4. Fatal shortcomings and misconceptions in history

The economics as science is one of the late comers in academic realm. The ontological presuppositions of economics seem to stem from the time of the techno-industrial revolution in the eighteenth century. One cannot avoid the impression that they are very much influenced by the emerging manufacturing of ores and minerals, invention of the engine and expanding mining of coal. If the founding fathers of economics so much had internalized the thinking and agencies of industrial and scientific revolution of their time as it looks like, we have reasons to elaborate the epistemology of economics more carefully.

There are two major problematic features in the philosophy of economics. It looks that in the evolution of economics the living nature, subjects and agencies of life do not come into the picture at all. Products of living nature become economic items only after they are killed. The meat becomes an item on the grocery shelve or food table only after the animal is killed. The fur is sold in auction after the animals are skinned. The eggs and milk become commodities only while they

don't nourish baby animals any more. Even the monetary value of living animals is calculated according to their prospective price on the market.

The same with forest, grain and vegetables. Forest becomes prized raw material only after it is felled and transported to the paper mill. The grain becomes commodity only after it is harvested. Small part of grain is sold as seeds, but the bulk is processed into bread, cakes and beer. Life as such in plants and animals has no economic value in spite of being the ultimate "engine" of all growth in nature. Since the theory of economics is not able to recognize life as an input in economic process, the only choice is to ignore it.

Maybe due to the paramount factors prevailing in the time and circumstances while the basic theories of economics were created, this science is based on lifeless matters, minerals and coal, functions of engine and the value of lifeless processes in human culture - selling and buying, prices and wages, transactions, calculations, counting and transferring, etc – and the rod of measurement is symbolic, abstract money.

The fact however is, that without the potency of life the growth in nature would not exist at all, no human beings and their culture, nor commodities neither the market, the components of the human economy would be here. The theories of mathematics and physics do not bring the science closer to living nature and the basics of everyday human life. Still life is not included in the "ontological presuppositions" of economics.

The science on processes and economy of living nature is *ecology*, through which we can come to terms with cultivation in human economy. *The cultivation and animal husbandry* are the fields of production, where human economy and economy of nature interact with each other. People cultivating the fields and keeping the cattle have to take the needs of living plants and animals into consideration in everything they do. Furthermore, in this field of human economy people need to know enough, must have learned enough to be able to face the facts of nature in variable climates in sustainable way. In order to manage in these fields people should be sensitive enough to respect the laws of nature and to operate in harmony with them.

Since the economics recognizes only the matters and agencies which are counted in money, *the unpaid work and production within households* forms another black hole in the theory of economics. However, household is the oldest component of human economy which has existed as long as mothers have been nurturing their babies. For hundreds of years it was literally "holding the house", managing traditional living forms, which included agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing and hunting as well as caring and provisioning the members of family. The self-reliant, extended households provided family with all necessities. By studying the history of households we will get an idea also about the importance and particular nature of women's contribution in human economy.

From the beginning both *the processes in cultivation* and *unpaid work and production in the households* have been left out of the realm of *economic science*. Therefore it is obvious that this kind of economics is only *a narrow part of human economy as a whole*. However, during these couple of hundred years this narrow philosophy of economics has become the only theory and language of economics, by way of which the value of production and work, exchange and spending is assessed and measured.

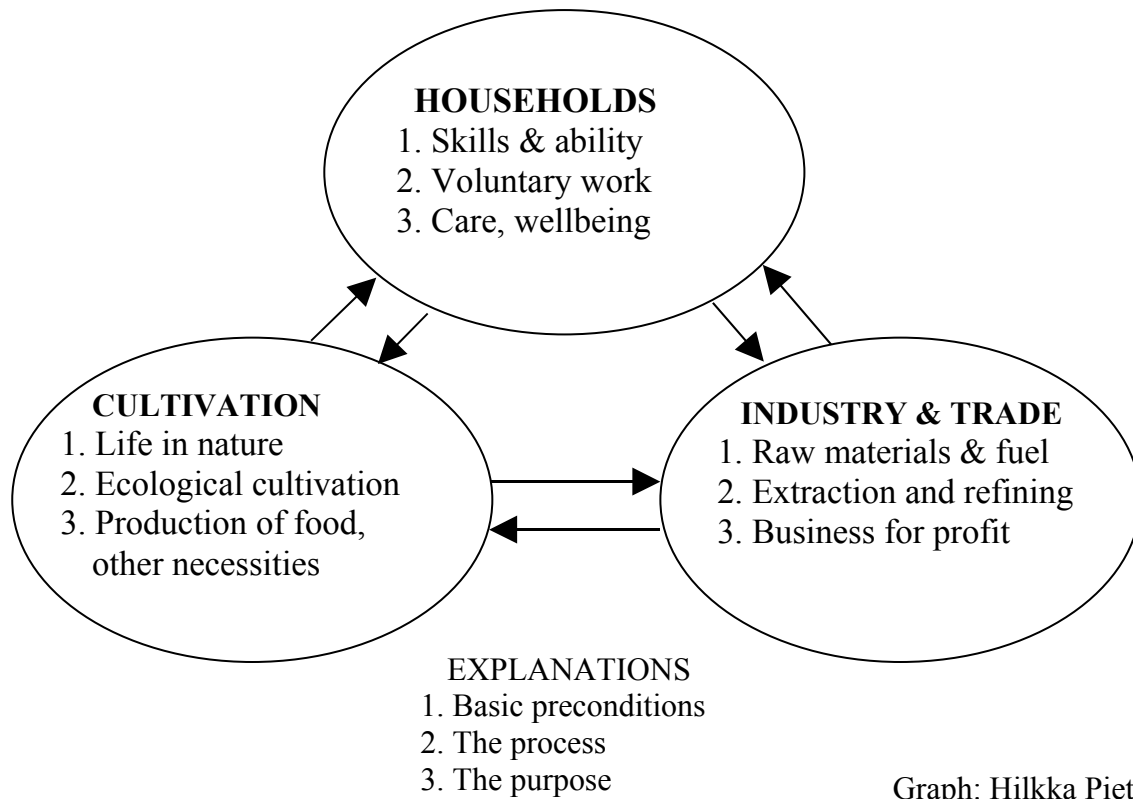
5. Shaping the holistic picture of human economy

At present only feminist-ecological economists are making efforts to shape a holistic picture of the human economy as a whole including its three distinct components of cultivation economy, households and the *industrial business economy*. In this paper we are studying closer the essence of

the cultivation economy and household economies as the excluded components of the human economy. We are studying also the impact and consequences of the implementation of dominant neoliberal economics on human economy.

Figure 1.

THE TRIANGLE OF HUMAN ECONOMY



Graph: Hilikka Pietilä

Figure 1. *Households, Cultivation and Industry and trade are the basic pillars of the human economy. Each one of these components has different foundations and terms of operations. This has to be taken into consideration in the agency of human economy in order to achieve sustainable exchange and collaboration between all three.*

The human economy is composed of these three basic components, cultivation, households and industrial production. In their interactions and relations each one of these three components is operating differently according to its respective logic and terms. At various levels there are many kinds of links and relations between these three components. The flexible collaboration between them is the prerequisite for sustainability in human economy and wellbeing.

In fact, the vital potential within living nature is the basis for all life on this planet. The photosynthesis in plants is the foundation of plant and animal life on the earth. "The more complex forms of life ... are radically dependent on all the stages of life that go before them and that continue to underlie their own existence. The plant can happily carry out its processes of photosynthesis without human beings, but we cannot exist without the photosynthesis of the plants. Human beings cannot live without the whole ecological community that supports and makes possible our existence", as *Rosemary Radford Ruether* has stated (1983).

The fundamental problem is, that economics as science is based exclusively on the logic and terms of industrial production, extraction and manufacturing of lifeless elements, minerals and non-renewable energy resources. Its only measure of value is a fictional notion of money. When the logic of this economics is applied to the living production of cultivation economy and the demands of ever increasing productivity and competitiveness are imposed on agriculture and husbandry, the system is bound to run into difficulties.

Therefore it is urgent that the permanent distinctions between these three components of human economy are acknowledged and each one of them is taken into consideration on their respective terms. The interaction and dynamism between the three components has to be thoroughly studied and understood in order to achieve a successful and harmonious interplay between them, which is the essential prerequisite for sustainable life on the earth (Pietilä, 1997).

- *Cultivation – the Interface between Ecology and Economy*

The cultivation economy is an interface between human economy and the economy of nature; it is interaction between human beings and the nature. There we should adjust the terms of our production and trade to the biological terms of the ecosystems and not to try to do the other way round. (Figure 2.)

Cultivation economy can also be called *a living economy*, while it is regenerating and sustainable, if the ecological terms are taken into consideration. Such unpredictable elements like rain and sunshine, warmth and frost are playing fundamental role in this economy. The amount of these 'inputs' varies drastically in different climatic zones and seasons of the globe. The length and timing of production seasons are very different according to the latitude and geographic location of countries and regions.

Also the life and reproduction cycles of animals are fixed by nature. Therefore it is limited, how much the productivity and output of animal production can be increased by human means. The breeding of animals has already been brought to the extreme. Thousands of varieties of plants and animals have been lost in striving to improve the productivity and competitiveness of agriculture in international trade.

Thus the preconditions of cultivation and animal production vary widely in different parts of the globe. In Finland we can harvest only once a year, irrespective how hard we work or what methods we use. In Southern Europe the farmers can cultivate all year round and get several harvests a year. This example alone illustrates as such how unrealistic are all the claims for agriculture to adapt itself to free trade and competition regionally and globally.

Until 1990s political economy was in the hands of national governments and decision-makers of respective countries. The transfer of capital, export and import, movement of goods and people were regulated through national measures in each country according to their respective needs. Each country was able to conduct appropriate policies for the needs of their people and take the climatic conditions in the country into consideration.

Now so called liberation of trade has mixed up the situation within countries thoroughly. Since regulation is dismantled, even forbidden, many countries have been put at risk even for provisioning their people. The countries which have been able to feed their population – e.g. Finland – will lose their agricultural production in just a few forthcoming decades and become fully dependent on the world trade in this basic need. The alleviation of hunger in starving parts of the world has not succeeded. The world situation concerning the provisions of food for humanity has been made ever more complicated.

- *Comparing the Cultivation and Industrial Productions*

Industrial production can also be called *an extraction economy* or *lifeless economy*, because it was originally based on manufacturing of non-renewable, non-living natural resources - minerals and fossils - which are extracted from the earth. Today also raw materials produced by cultivation economy, like timber, grain, meat, coffee, cotton etc. are processed in factories. The industrial production is not dependent on the terms of nature; therefore its productivity and efficiency can be improved as long as the raw materials are available. Its driving force is profit, not the human needs and wellbeing.

Figure 2. is an illustration and comparison of basic differences of cultivation and industrial economy. The main characteristics of these two distinct spheres of production are listed under the figures, where it is easy to realize how profoundly different systems they are. When we see the different essence of cultivation economy in comparison with the industrial economy, we do understand that it is impossible to apply same liberation and competition policies on both of them. (Pietilä, 1991)

In free trade agricultural products are treated as if they were equivalent to minerals and fossils or mobile phones and cars. The trade negotiations on agriculture are conducted on these terms globally in the WTO. This misperception and mismanagement of cultivation economy is the reason why no solution has been found for starvation in the world in all past decades. And now we are approaching the limits of the arable potential of the planet.

The neoliberal policies impose the pressure for competitiveness on farmers around the world. It drives the farmer to make extreme efforts for improving the competitiveness of his production irrespective of whatever climate he lives in. He increases the size of his farm and applies most modern technology, fertilizers and pesticides, which implies, that his production becomes increasingly non-ecological and not sustainable.

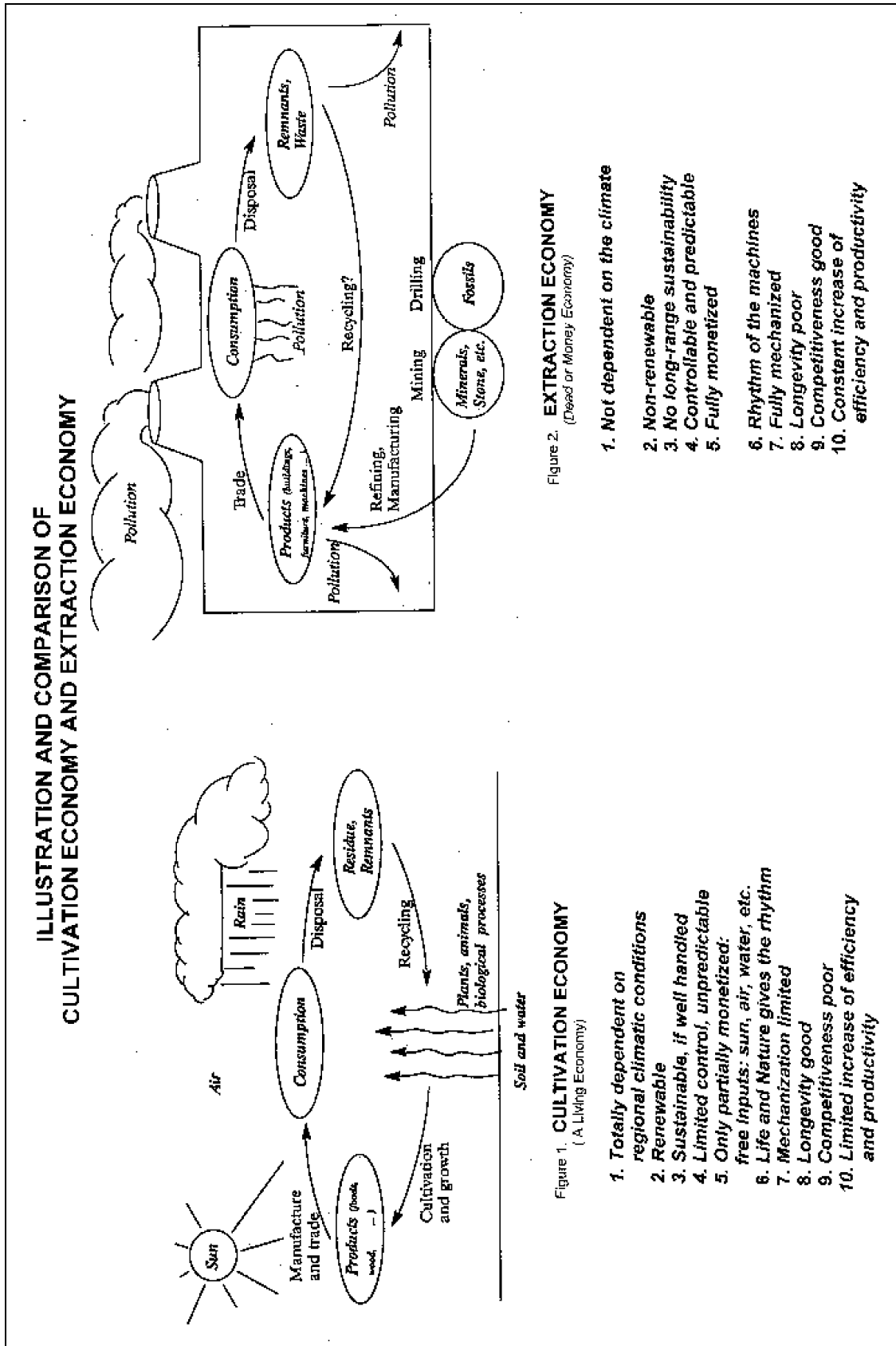
The alternatives for farmers today are either giving up the sustainability or failing in competition. However, they know quite well that giving up sustainability is a short term solution. In fact their terms are unbearable. In India it has led thousands of farmers to commit suicides yearly. In Finland it implies that thousands of small farms are finished every year. This country is about to become the first industrial country where agriculture will be exterminated, although it has been self-supporting for hundreds of years.

With these rules of the game the global provisioning with food for humanity is at risk, the food problems will never be solved. Meaningful priorities and commercial values do not coincide, since the market mechanisms respond only to demand, not to poor people's hunger. The trade of agricultural products should not be subjects of competition at all. Providing food for the growing humanity requires that the food trade will be regulated, not liberated (Pietilä, 2003).

- *Household – the Core of Human Economy*

The basic unit of human society has through the history been *the private family*. In early history it was an extended, broad household including farming, animal husbandry, hunting and fishing as well as housekeeping. It provided family members with all basic needs, like food, clothing, shelter, caring, entertainment etc. In spite of its patriarchal nature women often had a central role in the 'holding the house' due to their vital contributions to the livelihood of the family. Within modernization and industrialization many of the vital functions of the society has been transferred outside the private family. The skills and tasks which used to be women's strengths became dispensable and thereby their hereditary leverage has declined.

Figure 2.



In 1970s a Swedish researcher, *Ulla Olin*, analyzed this process profoundly (1979). She considered the family as a general model of human social organization and thus also of a society at large. Since the state formation increasingly took over the functions earlier performed by the family, she termed the nation state as a symbolic family or *public family* in comparison with *private family*. This fitted particularly Nordic welfare states. (Figure 3.)

In the course of modernization process women still remained in the private sphere, when men went to war, work and politics, children were sent to school, the sick were taken to hospitals, and the old parents put into old-age homes. Thus women were the last ones to enter also the labor market. Therefore they got the most monotonous and mechanical jobs requiring manual skills and patience, while men were not able or willing to do these jobs. As a consequence we still have the discourse about men's and women's jobs and inequality of salaries in the labour market. (Friberg, 1983).

Furthermore, during this process of emerging public family, production, politics, culture and organization outside the private family, was designed, planned and built up exclusively by men, and they did not possess either the particular gifts or the experience which women had acquired over the centuries of managing the private family and nurturing its members. Ulla Olin considered this kind of imbalance of the male and female rate of influence in planning and conducting modern industrial societies to be the virtual source of most of the social, economic, human and international problems and imbalances which we face today.

We can assume that also the specie, money was invented in trade and exchange and was carefully kept by men in their hands for centuries. Women's experience in practically all cultures is that men have had a strong desire to command the money during the transition to the monetary culture. Men realized early that money is an effective means of power, too. Since women's work in the households did not bring money, it remained invisible as well as the importance of households altogether.

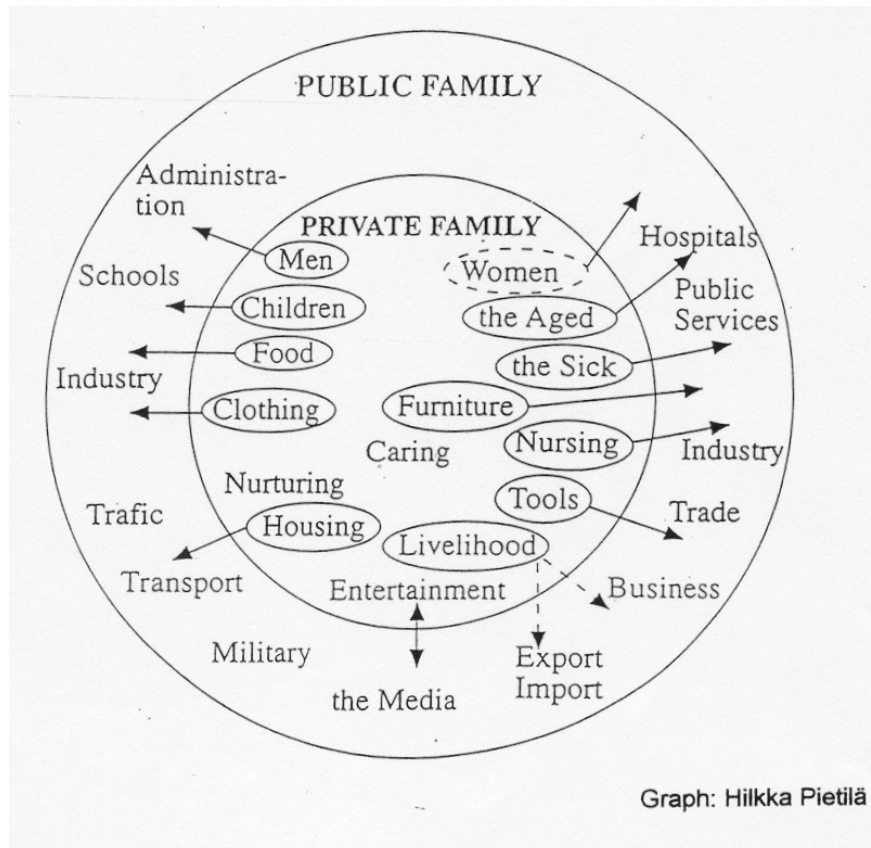
In recent decades plenty of work is done e.g. in the UN International Research and Training Institute for Advancement of Women, INSTRAW and OECD for developing appropriate methods for measurement and valuing the work and production done in the households outside the monetary economy and market (1995). The most prominent proponent for this issue internationally has been *Marilyn Waring*, whose book *If Women Counted. A New Feminist Economics* became a classic right after its publishing 1988. Her criticism focuses particularly on the prevailing international system of national accounts and it undoubtedly contributed to the revision of the SNA by the UN in 1993 (Waring, 1988).

The mainstream economics takes households only as units of consumption and reproduction of labour. Even caring and bringing up children, new members of human family, is seen only as "reproduction of labour", production of workers for the labour market! This well known and generally used formulation reveals how the presuppositions of economics take human beings only as means in economic process, not as human beings with dignity.

In economic calculations such essential functions as child and health care, cooking and cleaning, education and training, etc. are not counted as contributions (inputs!) to the economy as long as they are performed within families. But as soon as someone is employed and paid to do these tasks or they are 'externalized', to be performed by private or public institutions (schools, hospitals, business), they cost money and imply large investments and expenses to both individuals and society. Then they are counted in the GDP.

Figure 3.

The Historical Picture



During the modernization and industrialization process major functions of the traditional household were gradually transferred to the emerging 'public family' outside the private family. In this process many of traditionally vital functions became dispensable and therefore also status of women as providers was declining. This way the life and production started to become monetized and commercialized.

The UNDP/Human Development Report 1995 gives even a global estimate of the amount of women's unpaid labour. "If more human activities were seen as market transactions at the prevailing wages, they would yield gigantically large monetary valuations. A rough order of magnitude comes to a staggering 16 trillion (dollars) - or (if added, it would make a total of) about 70 % more than the officially estimated 23 trillion of global output. Of this 16 trillion, 11 trillion is the non-monetized, invisible contribution of women."

"Of the total burden of work, women carry on average 53 % in developing countries and 51% in industrial countries." Out of the total time of women's work, 1/3 is paid and 2/3 unpaid. For men it is just the reverse, 3/4 of their working time is paid and only 1/4 is unpaid. "If women's unpaid work were properly valued, it is quite possible that women would emerge in most societies as the major breadwinners," concludes the HD report (UNDP, 1995).

Since the non-market household production is so important component of household income, consumption and welfare, it is unbelievable that it is still ignored. Without counting this part of human economy it is not possible to comprehend the totality of the national economy in a country. For any planner and policy-maker it would be decisively important to understand where is to be found e.g. the real flexibility and reserve potential in the national economy.

"For the last fifty years national income statistics have been widely used for monitoring economic developments, for designing economic and social policies and for evaluating the outcomes of those policies. Had household production been included in the system of macro-economic accounts, governments would have had quite a different picture of economic development and may well have implemented quite different economic and social policies," said Ann Chadeau of the OECD already 15 years ago (Chadeau, 1992).

After all, in times of recession or economic transition - as e.g. in Europe 1990s - households provided for national economies a buffer cushion, which soothed the consequences of high unemployment as well as budget cuts on social service allocations and profound transitions in Eastern Europe. For the families the household economy provides a reserve potential to cope with their daily life even in circumstances of unemployment and declining incomes.

Today the household economies are units composed of both, the monetized and non-monetized component. In a country like Finland the amount of cash money, which flows through the households, was as early as 1995 about the same magnitude as the calculated value of unpaid work and production. According to the national accounts it was about 55 % of the GNP (Statistics Finland). This indicates that the households control more than half of the GNP even in cash.

After all both the non-monetary and monetary economy in the households is primarily a female economy. Also the monetary component is mainly in the hands of women, since the decisions to purchase goods and services from the market are made most often by women. Summing up the value of unpaid labour and production as well as money used for consumption in the households reveals that the total production and exchange through the households - and mostly through women's hands - is a huge proportion of the GDP in every country.

This way women do have in reality much more economic power in their hands than usually assumed - and what is realized by women themselves. (Pietilä, 2004)

- *Consumption Society as an Infamous Trap*

In reality the households still are sites of extensive production of goods and services. Every day there are produced meals and care for the members of family, cleaning and laundering, gardening and decorations, repairs and reconstruction of many kinds etc. The family life also brings about cosiness, education, learning, health and comfort, even entertainment, joy and happiness without charge. And doing things together brings to family members feelings of commonality, belonging and meaning of life, which are not available on the market at any price.

Today there are very few options for citizens to influence macro economic issues. The households are a field of economy where people do have power over their own life. Therefore it is the more important that we keep this power in our own hands, the power to shape our everyday life. The choice to decide how much to produce oneself and how much to buy from the market is exactly the leverage of power still in the hands of people. The ultimate power is to decide by oneself on his/her own needs and not to leave it to market forces to dictate or formulate them.

However, the scope of these choices depends on several, very important and decisive conditions. It depends at least on the following terms (Pietilä & Pulliainen, 1983):

- *the level of skills* of an individual or members of the household, i.e. how many skills needed in the every day functions of life they command;
- *the time* available, i.e. to what extent the members of the household can decide themselves on their use of time;
- *the production forces*, i.e. how much and what kind of production forces there are available to the members of the household. (Remembering that training and skills, inherited know how,

creativity, initiative and traditions are production forces as well as capital, land, space, forest, domestic animals and fishing waters.)

No wonder that the market works actively for declining and weakening households. And it does it very cunningly behind the explanations how to make life easier and more comfortable when it is no more necessary to do so much work at home. It is exactly here we need to be very careful and to consider ourselves and together within the family what to do at home and what to buy from the market.

The issue is also learning everyday skills, know how and civilized habits and behaviour while doing things together at home. One hardly learns anything useful in the home where no meals are prepared and served, no caring and comfort takes place. There are no chances for civilizing conversations between the family members, if they are never at home in same time, they are not inclined to them or the convenient situations not likely appear.

Italian economist *Mario Cogoy* elaborated the ideology of the market in *Ecological Economics* in 1995. According to him the extreme form of *market utopia* consists of two ideas: On one hand people are supposed to acquire professional competence only in one single field, where they will earn money enough for buying everything else from the market. On the other hand it implies a total abolition of work and skills from the families, the private life of people. All labour and skills are absorbed into the market. The time people spend outside the economic system is reduced to "pure leisure".

Today this process is speeding up very quickly. In our affluent culture there are hardly any counter forces to make people aware what is taking place with them, how they are made to behave exactly as the market forces want them to do. This is made by means of powerful marketing, advertising and manipulation working days and nights for persuading us to spend all our time and money in buying and paying for goods and pleasures in the market.

All life and society is becoming a market place. Even the schools and education listen to the market very carefully. The number of household teachers declines, the lessons in schools for everyday skills rapidly decrease. The family services and needs are being "externalized" i.e. bought in the market rather than made at home. This is called development and raising standards of living.

Even the free time is no more our own "pure leisure"; now it is hard work for spending money. People are swindled to pay high sums of money for all kinds of mass-events and to spend their time in the huge shopping malls, which have become public living rooms or entertainment centres with chapels, restaurants, swimming pools etc.

According to Cogoy this follows exactly the traditional *dogma of industrial society* that economic progress consists of a continual shift of labour and skills from household-based production to commodity-based consumption. Along with this "progress" the living households would cease to exist and homes might remain only as a place to sleep. All this is the ultimate utopia of the market.

- *The Counterforce to Globalization?*

However, we could make households a counterforce to the market forces. Human being and her wellbeing are the point of departure for the household, her dignity and integrity are its basic values. According to "household ideology" all work and production is done for people, to serve their needs and aspirations, physical, social and mental. This should be the only justification of business and market, too. According to this school of thinking *every individual is indispensable as a dignified member of family and community, a subject in her own life, not an object of anonymous market forces.*

We can turn the transition in another way round and make the household again an asset in the hands of people. The richer the family is in practical skills and competencies of its members, the more independent they are together to decide their relationships with both the labour and commodity markets. And the richer the village, the community or the cooperative is in skilful and multitalented people, the less dependent they are on the goods and services provided by the market. And by gaining more control on their own household and economy they will also gain insight and power how to influence the economy of their society.

“As globalization increasingly strips control over production and consumption from communities, consigning many of them to stagnation when cheaper sources of resources or labour power are found elsewhere, they lose wages and disposable income. If they are able, because of strong community ties, to begin producing locally for local needs, they may be able to remove themselves from the global trading system, at least in part. Community-based employment enables people to reduce dependence on large corporations for jobs and basic goods. Viewed broadly it limits the power and influence of the globalized economy.” (Perkins, 1996)

But wouldn't the increase of work at home again fall upon women? We don't need to let this happen. Therefore it is necessary to equalize the distribution of labour between women and men, girls and boys, in the households. Even for the sake of men it would be necessary to design a new division of labour at home. It will give them again a meaningful and rewarding role in the family. When they can no longer be the single breadwinners anyway, they could become direct supporters of their families in practice (Pietilä, 2005).

Finally we can redraw the Triangle of Human Economy according to this dream of sustainability, equity and wellbeing for all and everybody (Figure 4). In the new picture we rehabilitate the household and put it back to its key position in the human economy. We argue that the cultivation economy everywhere needs support and protection instead of being exposed to the market and merciless competition. And we claim that another new global and equitable economic order needs to be established to regulate the industrial economy and trade to respect the limits of the natural reserves of the globe and the terms of the biosphere and to pursue the survival of the humanity.

In the present situation the households, subsistence cultivation and small cooperatives are the only economic actors which still have some potential power over the market. The more access to production forces - in the meaning as described above - the people living in small communities have the more they also have options to develop some livelihoods of their own. What is important is that people and consumers have the right to decide themselves how much of their work, skills, know-how and time they are willing to sell to the labour market and how much goods and services they are willing to buy from the commodity market.

No household in the industrialized societies is fully self-reliant any more, but even as consumer units the households have options to decide the amount and selection of goods they buy and to regulate their degree of dependence on the market. The pivotal assets are skills and money, but the skills are more important than money. We have to realize, what enormous “hidden market force” or potential leverage of power there is in the hands of individuals, families and households. We saw above that unpaid production of goods and services alone would constitute the biggest single contribution to human wellbeing and national GNPs in each country - if it were counted.

The situation today has also intimidated *the democracy* even in the countries where it has been fairly functional. The consumer movements have tried to mobilize consumer power to substitute the political power. But they have realized only part of the strength, since they have induced people only to make conscious choices between different products. Even this has been effective on several occasions in counteracting the policies of transnational corporations.

Figure 4.

A SKETCH FOR SUSTAINABLE HUMAN ECONOMY

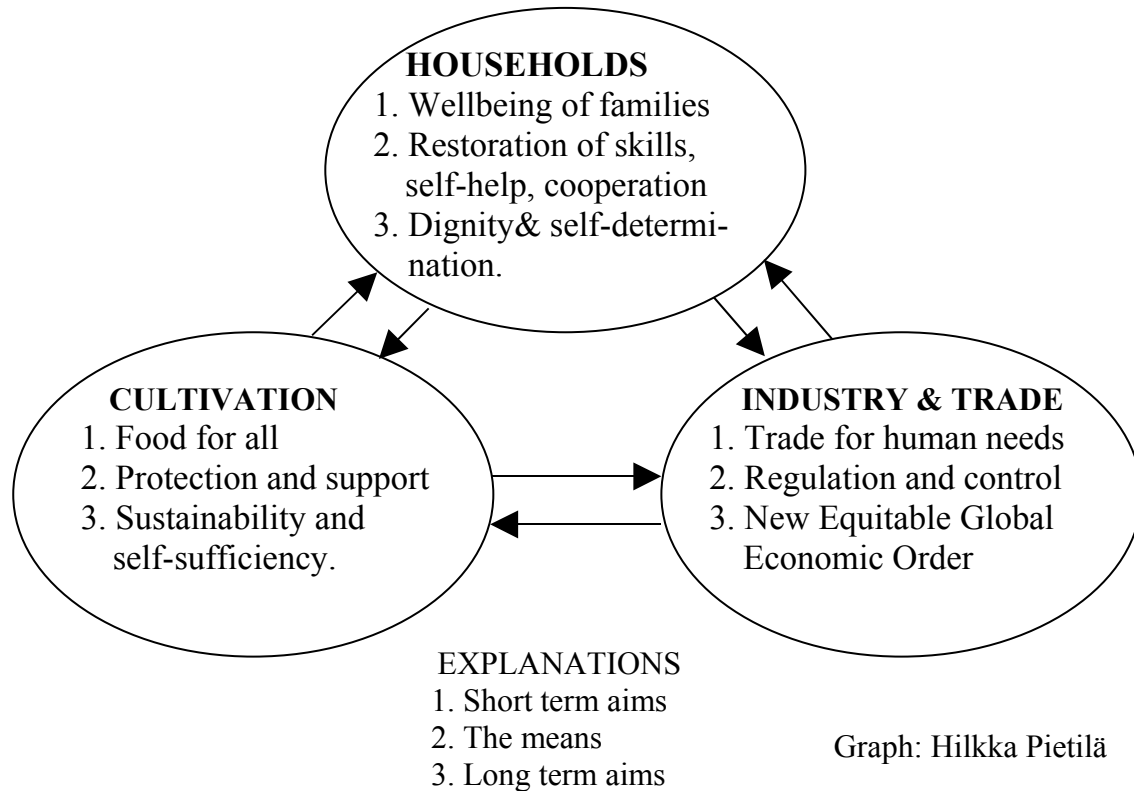


Figure 4. *A sketch for Sustainable Human Economy with three main components and their principle features. The household should be rehabilitated and put back to its key position in the human economy. The cultivation as the subsistence economy everywhere needs support and protection instead of being exposed to the market and merciless competition. The new Global Economic Order has to be established to regulate the industrial economy and trade to respect the limits of natural reserves of the globe and the terms of biosphere.*

The really powerful choice in the hands of people is to buy or not to buy. The point is to learn consciously to reject the impact of advertising, fashions, marketing and other manipulation as much as possible, to defend our minds against these actors and decide independently by ourselves, what we need and what we don't need.

In fact, the market economy today is a disguise of unabated, old capitalism in globalized form. It has rendered our democratically elected governments and political institutions very powerless. From the point of view of individuals and citizens this situation is paralyzing, making also us to feel ourselves powerless. Since there are no foreseeable restraints to this process, there is not much choice but

to denounce the values and rules on which the market capitalism operates, i.e. the constant economic growth, conspicuous consumption, maximization of profits and competition in everything and everywhere.

After all, the entire picture of the human economy should be turned the right side up; the industrial and commercial economy should be seen as an auxiliary to serve the needs of people and families instead of using them as means of production and consumption. This turn around of the economy will never be made by the market or our democratic governments in today's world, therefore we have to do it ourselves. The democracy in the age of globalized neoliberal economy is *the consumer disobedience* against the power of the market.

6. Additional ontological presuppositions to the sustainable economics?

Uskali Mäki introduces “a new generic ontological notion”, that of *the way the world works*, or *www* for short. “Let us suppose that it is of the essence of science that a scientist pursue an understanding . . . how the world works, the way the world functions . . . The *www* constraint is an ontological constraint on theory choice. Good theories are believed to depict the way the world works and thereby to make the world understandable to us.” And he refers even to the solar system, the earth's ecological system and the human organism . . . each one of which has its particular way of working. This kind of references the economists hardly do. (Mäki, 2001)

This paper has discussed two issues, the agriculture or cultivation economy and the household economy and the impact of globalized neoliberal economy on them. Both of them are absolutely vital for human life and thus part of the picture about the way how world works. They are certainly part of the ontology of the *www*, but they are not included in the ontological presuppositions of mainstream economics. Therefore it is important to include them in the exploration about the ways how to save the world, how to preserve dignified way of life for people.

The cultivation economy and the household economy are certainly complementary to the economy of the market, but would they possibly be constraints or counter forces to market forces? They are permanent factors within the world order contrary to the market, which is an auxiliary, man-made component in the human economy. Their strength and impact has to be realized now, when the market is expanding over its limits.

In the beginning of this paper we made explorations into the essence of the feminist-ecological economics, which has evolved from the efforts to integrate two different and separate components of human economy, the sustainable cultivation and the work and production in the households with the mainstream economics. We were also sketching a holistic picture of human economy, which will comprehend all three components of the human economy, cultivation, households and the market.

As the conclusion we can suggest that the efforts towards more holistic theory and practice of human economy are a way of working for saving the future of humanity. These are far reaching and ambitious efforts to complement the picture of the way world works in respect with basic needs and for wellbeing of human beings. Whether this implies or requires rethinking of the ontological presuppositions of scientific economics and reshaping its sphere of functions are the subjects of further philosophical and theoretical discourse.

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