

Chapter 7. Good, Harmful and Useless Economic Activity

==== Draft: To be discussed, critiqued, modified, filled out and enhanced

Summary: Economics does not adequately differentiate harmful and useless from good economic activity. We discuss how this may be accomplished by reference to Overall Good and Dooyeweerd's aspects.

"Love for money is a root of all kinds of evil." I Timothy 6:10

As outlined in Chapter 2, many recent thinkers are concerned, often motivated by something wrong (inequality, climate change, biodiversity loss, etc.) and seek to modify economics to remedy it, while others are concerned by the unproductivity and non-essentiality of much economic activity. On the other hand, some turn their blind eye to such harms, pointing to the immense benefits that economic growth has brought. As one RLDG participant pleaded, though economics has done immense harm, it is not all bad and depends on how economics is used.

Why has economics tended towards Harm? Just as a wind bends reeds one way rather than another, what is the 'ill wind' that bends economic activity towards Harm? [Note: Capitals] The ill wind is partly current economics theory (whether of capitalist and socialist flavour) but, as we shall see, comes from other quarters too, especially mindset and attitude.

Whereas economic activity should contribute to **Overall Good**, that which is **Harmful** destroys the Good and that which we call **Useless** (non-essential or unproductive) dilutes Good. To fulfil its mandate, therefore, economics practice should seek the Good, reject the Harm and curb the Useless, and economic theory should express understanding and encouragement of that.

The challenge we address in this chapter is that good, harmful and useless economic activity are **conflated** together. Nowhere is this more clearly shown than in the makeup of GDP, which we discuss later. Though Harm and Uselessness are recognised, most discussion of them that we have found is quite amorphous, without full, incisive understanding of the nature, types or 'causes' of Good, Harm and Uselessness.

This chapter discusses how understand and clearly distinguish Harm from Good from Useless, in both theory and practice of economics, and into economic activity at all levels. We discuss in some detail at what Harm and Uselessness are, and how to recognise them and the special role of mindset and attitude. We suggest some practical tips on how to assess Harm and Uselessness, and some actions that can be taken to remove the Harmful and curb the Useless. This is made possible by viewing through the lens of Dooyeweerd's aspects. We weave the ideas into economics theory and practice.

Because of the sparsity of discussion on this, this chapter needs to say more and so is longer than others.

7-1. The Difference Between Good, Harmful and Useless Economic Activity

Summary: What are Good, Harmful and Useless economic activity? Why there is a problem here?

7-1.1 Expressions of Concern

Summary: Much recent discussion exposes the difference between Good and Harmful and Useless economic activity, yet does not offer adequate understanding.

Kate Raworth [2017, 4-5] summarises the good that economic activity has achieved:

“There have been extraordinary strides in human well-being over the past 60 years. ... the number of people living in extreme income poverty - on less than \$1 a day - has fallen by more than half. Over two billion people have gained access to safe drinking water and toilets for the first time. all this while the human population has grown by almost 40%.”

But then she expresses her concern about how economic activity has been Harmful:

“That was the good news. The rest of the story, of course, has not turned out so well so far. Many millions of people still live lives of extreme deprivation. Worldwide, one person in nine does not have enough to eat. In 2015 six million children under the age of five died, more than half of those deaths due to easy-to-treat conditions like diarrhoea and malaria. ... To these extremes of human circumstance, add the deepening degradation of our planetary home. Human activity is putting unprecedented stress on Earth’s life-giving systems. ... Around 40% of the world’s agricultural land is now seriously degraded ... over 80% of the world’s fisheries are fully or over-exploited and a refuse truck’s worth of plastic is dumped into the ocean every minute. ...”

Mark Carney [2021] expresses similar concerns. The word “better” in the title of his book, *Value(s): Building a Better World for All* implies that we want Good to replace Harm. In Part II, he discusses several harms that economic activity has done, increasing inequalities and decreasing trust (credit crisis), threatening health (covid crisis), and undermining our ability to feed ourselves and reducing biodiversity (climate crisis). Economic activity has been Harmful. He discusses what can be done, and notes a “malignant culture at the heart of financial capitalism.”

Marianna Mazzucato [2018] contrasts “makers and takers” - one creating value, the other extracting value. Such economic activity is unproductive and generates no value; it is Useless. “In 2009 Lloyd Blankfein, CEO of Goldman Sachs, claimed that ‘The people of Goldman Sachs are among the most productive in the world.’ Yet, just the year before, Goldman had been a major contributor to the worst financial and economic crisis since the 1930s.” [p.xiii-xiv] There is something wrong in our estimation of what is Good.

David Graeber [2018] finds Useless economic activity, not among the wealthy, but among workers throughout Western economies. These are *Bullshit Jobs*, which he defines as jobs “so completely pointless that even the person who has to perform it every day cannot convince himself there’s a good reason for him to be doing it” [p.2-3]. He gives numerous examples, such as “A Spanish civil servant who collected a salary for at least six years without working” who “used his time to become an expert on the writings of the Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza” [p.3]. He starts his book with the example:

In the German military a soldier needs to move to a different office 5 meters down the corridor, including the computer from their desk. Instead of allowing it to be carried, a sub-sub-contractor, Kurt, is called in, who lives 200 km away and must hire a car to drive down to the office, seal up the computer in a box, fill in forms to record this, wait for it to be moved, then unseal and unpack it in the new office, filling in more forms. “So, instead of the soldier carrying his computer for five meters, two people drive for a combined six to ten hours, fill in around fifteen pages of paperwork, and waste a good four hundred euros of taxpayers’ money. ... Kurt’s job might be considered a paradigmatic example of a bullshit job for one simple reason: if the position were eliminated, it would make no discernible difference in the world. Likely as not, things would improve since German military bases would presumably have to come up with a more reasonable way to move equipment.” [p.1-2]

He cites a survey [p.25] that found that office workers spent only 39% of their time doing their primary job duties, and 16% on emails, 11% attending useful meetings, 10% on wasteful meetings, 11% on administrative tasks, 8% on interruptions for nonessential tasks and 5% for other things.

Back in 1979, E.F. Schumacher wrote

“When you travel up the big motor road from London, you find yourself surrounded by a huge fleet of lorries carrying biscuits from London to Glasgow. And, when you look across to the other motorway, you find an equally huge fleet of lorries carrying biscuits from Glasgow to London.”

Both fleets of lorries are there because of economic functioning. “Now, the chap in London says, I sell locally what I can sell,” explains Schumacher, “but that doesn’t fully load up my capacity. And, in order to get it fully loaded up, the marginal costs are only a small fraction. So I can let my marginal product travel long distances - to Glasgow. Even if the transport costs absorb most of the difference between marginal cost and average cost, as long as there is something left it’s profitable for me to do so. And he’s quite right. Except that the Glasgow chap thinks the same, and he, in order to fill up his capacity, invades the London market. And so, while it is logical from the point of view of the one manufacturer in London and the one manufacturer in Glasgow, if you add it all together it’s a total absurdity.”

It is absurd because

- ◆ Both journeys consume large amounts of fuel (over 800 miles round trip each), generating climate change emissions and health-harming pollution. That economic activity is **Harmful**.
- ◆ Neither journey is really necessary, in that biscuits made in each city could stay there. Moreover, it takes up at least two driver shifts, which could be employed in more productive things. Non-essential and unproductive economic activity is what we call **Useless**.

An economy bloated with harmful and useless economic activity is not healthy, neither for the economy itself nor for the other spheres of life.

These examples of concern - and many other - suggest that there is something about **the way economics operates** that generates such absurdities and harm and, what is worse, does not even consider them absurdities. If economics is to contribute to Overall Good, we need to clearly differentiate Good from Harmful and Useless.

Read most recent thinking in economics, and you will find there is = = = =

7-1.2 Conflation and Confusion

Summary: In most economics and theory and practice, especially in finance, Harmful and Useless economic activity are treated as Good. There is no basis for distinguishing them.

Many today are concerned that our economic activity should be less Harmful or Useless and more Good. They highlight some problem that motivates their ideas, something Harmful or Useless. Sometimes it is explicitly stated, as in much of the literature of Environmental Economics (see [Chapter 9](#)) and Health Economics. Sometimes it is merely alluded to, or implied when the authors discuss “What can / should be done?” There seems to be a deep intuition of the difference between Good economic activity and that which is Harmful or Useless.

And yet, in economics today, both practice and theory, we find them conflated and confused, all mixed together, at all levels. Economics theory seldom if ever seriously discusses that difference, and economics practice scarcely does better.

For example, in GDP the (quantitative value of the) Good, Harmful and Useless economic activity are all added together, with no differentiation. Governments work to increase GDP by any means possible, encouraging or justifying harmful and useless economic activity. In companies we see something similar, to increase (profit-making) income by almost any means possible. Many politicians and business people, as well as economists, are concerned about this state of affairs but most current equations, models and theories in economics do not allow this concern to be properly expressed or acted on.

We find similar tendencies in households or individuals. For example, "I need to earn more money, so I will ..." (a) go fruit-picking for a local farmer, (b) act as tour guide in my local area, (c) become a social media influencer for a cosmetics firm, (d) sell narcotics. All make money, but (a) is probably good, (c) is fairly useless in that it does not matter if it does not happen, (b) and (c) are unnecessary to different degrees and for different reasons (which we include in Useless, below). (d) is harmful. If we extend beyond money to other resources, such as "I will spend my evening time doing ..." (a) to (d) but also (e) volunteering to plant trees or to give respite to carers, (e) help more with housework. Both those are probably good, and necessary.

At all three levels, if we consider only money, time, labour, skill, etc., as mere resource without considering what they are used for, we tend to conflate the Good, the Harmful and the Useless. As a result, Harmful and Useless activity is often positively encouraged alongside the Good. As discussed in [Chapter 4](#), this is especially so with unquestioning adherence to economic growth - a version of "love for money." The difference between harm and good is hidden, and no adequate conceptual tools have been developed for tackling the difference, so most economics theory offers no way to discourage harm, but lets it expand in the Economy.

Yet how? This chapter discusses the difference between Good, Harmful and Useless economic activity, how to separate them in both practice and theory. For example, later, we suggest that GDP should subtract Harm from Good, not add them as it does now.

7-1.3 Some Examples

Summary: Conflating Harmful with Good economic activity leads to many harmful externalities, as varied as junk food, species destruction and laziness.

Yet to separate Harmful and Useless from Good is not always straightforward. (a) Some good economic activity also does some harm (e.g. climate change emissions or losing biodiversity, or imposing unjust conditions on workers). (b) Some harmful economic activity might contribute some good (e.g. tobacco industry contributes jobs and taxes). (c) Useless activity can bring some good (e.g. fun) and some harm (e.g. climate change emissions or, in the case of influencing people to purchase one cosmetic rather than another, an increase in competitive vanity which might destroy erstwhile friendships). Several examples were discussed during RLDG discussions.

Example 1. **Producers of junk food** that causes **obesity** (Harm), yet can provide jobs, generate money flow that "trickles down" to the poor (discussed later), and yield tax income for governments and also helps fund health systems -

but are not those needed to deal with the obesity and other problems they cause? As one of our participants put it, we're just going "round and round and round". There may be some validity in what they say, in that problems can ensue if their warnings go unheeded, but it need not always be taken at face value.

Example 2. The Californian **Delta Smelt**. These unique fish have been threatened with **extinction** by the demands for water by the farming industry for growing **food**. But if we stand back, we find that the people in California are not starving (and often obese). This suggests that the main motivation for destroying this ecosystem and species is not primarily the good of feeding people, but is actually that of competitiveness between the agricultural corporations (as is actually argued by the farming sector to avoid having to reduce water demand); see On Competition and Competitiveness. And yet are there (small) farmers who are not greedy or competitive in this way but have other issues, such as their very survival? See longer discussion in [Chapter 9](r9-env.html#s-mxgh).

Example 3. With **rapid delivery** companies that deliver single items, often of food, within 10 minutes of ordering them "We are democratising the right to laziness" [Wallop 2022]. This is a more subtle conundrum. What is going on here? Rapid delivery encourages both bodily laziness, in not having to stir oneself, and mental laziness, reducing the need to plan, both dysfunctional (in the biotic and formative aspects). Laziness used to be the evil of the wealthy (c.f. Adam Smith); today many more people can indulge, so this is "democratisation", which might seem an unmitigated Good. However, it is not democratisation of something Good, such as ability to survive or have dignity, but of something Harmful. Rapid delivery is set to be a multi-billion industry, dependent on low wages.

Ironically, this democratisation of vices is espoused alike by socialist and capitalist economists and politicians. This an example of mindset about poverty (which we analyse more deeply in [Chapter 6](r6-fun.html#s-apov)). Many socialists support it on the grounds that they find it important that the poor are enabled to do what previously only the rich could afford to do. Many capitalists support it because expanding markets to include the poor expands GDP or capital and offers firms the chance to expand. Both side-step the question of, "**Is what the rich do Good or Harmful?**" Even back to Adam Smith, it has been the case that most rich spend too much of their money on vices, luxuries or conveniences for themselves, often at the expense of others. Yet that is exactly the question that we pose here, and we offer some means of answering it in Dooyeweerd's aspects.

Many other examples may be found, where economic activity, as it is currently theorized and practised, leads to cheating, betrayal, hindering proper development, social problems, misery, and even pandemics and wars. "All kinds of evil."

7-1.4 Our Overall Approach to Differentiation

Summary: We provide a basis for differentiating Harmful and Useless economic activity from Good.

There is a complicated mix of Good and Harm in these examples. Not only that, but they show that though some Harms are obvious and direct (like addiction and obesity) many are indirect and less obvious, like species extinction and "democratization of laziness". Biodiversity loss, from felling rainforests to grow feed for cattle is an indirect Harm, as are the climate change emissions from flying and road-use, and psychological problems from undue work pressure on

employees. How may we resolve such conundrums, especially in a way that cannot be obfuscated by vested interests on either side?

One problem is that calling economic activity Harmful or Useless because it generates climate change, obesity, wars or laziness is not meaningful by reference to the economic aspect but **only to other aspects**. So such repercussions are either ignored or relegated to the anonymous category of “externalities”, discussed in

We will separate out kinds of Good and Harm, with the aid of aspects, bringing externalities right into the centre of economic theory and practice. Every aspect, and its impact on and from the economic aspect, becomes an indispensable part of economics. Doing this can avoid the usual side-taking and open up recordable discussion. This can bring true motivations to the surface, which can provide a basis for differentiating between, for instance, greedy and non-greedy farmers in California. Aspectual mix is discussed later.

We will also separate the functionings that are labour and use, which helps us understand what is going on in rapid delivery, of which several issues are included in Figure f7-eqns below. It also helps to recognise the kernel norm of economics being frugality (sustainability) rather than mere provision of “necessities and conveniences” [Adam Smith].

Economics practice seems to be ahead of economic theory in this. For example the State of Maryland has developed a **Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI)** of 26 variables, which takes account of inequality, includes non-market benefits, and identifies and deducts costs like environmental degradation. Economics practice calls for better theories of how Harm may be differentiated from Good.

We also want to tackle Useless economic activity - the unproductive or non-essential - which are sometimes not even included in externalities. Useless economic activity might not be Harmful but it dilutes or delays our contributions to Overall Good - what economists might call “opportunity costs.” Examples might include much of what Mazzucato calls the renter economy, the “takers” as opposed to the “makers”, and what Graeber calls “bullshit jobs”, and RLDG discussions added the production, marketing and consumption of non-essentials like transient baubles that do not even truly delight. Useless economic activity tends to bloat an economy to look larger than it really is (as a contribution to Overall Good), filling it with that which is unhealthy even for the economy, let alone the wider world. Are affluent economies unhealthily bloated? Would the world’s affluent economies work better if less bloated - i.e. shrunk rather than grown? We discuss de-growth etc. elsewhere.

7-1.5 Two Distinct yet Related Issues

Summary: Harm and Uselessness of economic activity are different problems yet are related.

This Rethink advocates growth of the Good and degrowth of the Harmful and Useless. We seek not just reduction or prevention of Harm, but the positive increase in Overall Good. Jackson’s idea of Post-growth is similar. To do this, we must treat Harmful and Useless activity separately:

- ◆ **Harmful economic activity** destroys and diminishes Good.
- ◆ **Useless economic activity** wastes human effort, time and resources that could / should have been devoted to contributing to Good.

Figure 7-1 depicts this. Along one axis are Good and Harm and, on the other, Good and Useless. These are the opposite ends of two dimensions, with

most economic activity falling somewhere in between in both dimensions. Many result in some Harm and some Good; many are partially Useless.

<img src = "pix/ghu.gif" alt = "Two dimensions of Good versus Harmful and versus Useless economic activity. 1360,600" width = 453 height = 200

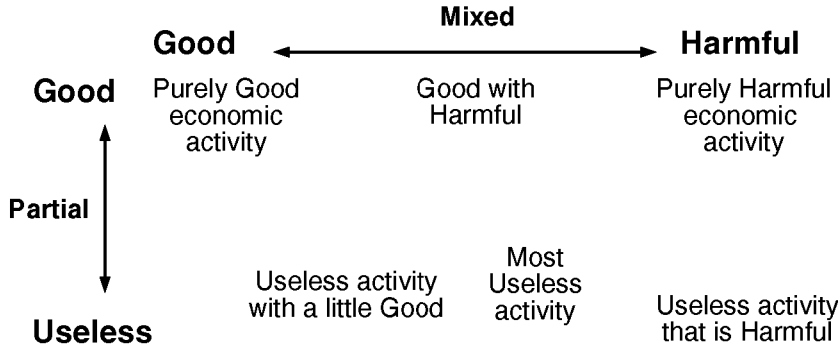


Figure 7-1. Two dimensions of Good versus Harmful and versus Useless economic activity.

On the Good versus Harm dimension, we find some attempts to address the issue in practice, where it is part of reality, but theoretical treatment is inadequate and almost non-existent especially in mainstream economics. On the Good versus Useless dimension, we find a meagre discourse in the theoretical literature and some more in the practical, professional and popular literature. In the public media and especially in politics, which seem committed to economic growth at all costs, there is almost zero recognition of Harm and Uselessness. So we attempt discussion of them in the next two major sections.

7-2. Good Versus Harm

Summary: On what basis to differentiate Harmful from Good economic activity, in both economics theory and practice?

“Love of money” is one root of evil that Paul saw operating around him. It is not money as such, but “love of money” [Note: Love of Money] that is a root of many kinds of harm, an adherence to money as something to aim to increasingly possess, and as the “measure of all things” and their value, so that we ignore and downplay all the multiple kinds of value discussed in Chapter 5.

Example: Poaching Black Rhino for their horn; the rhinos are tranquilized, their horns are hacked off and the rhino bleeds to death slowly and painfully. Black Rhino horn attracts a high price when sold to China and Vietnam as a medicine or status symbol. Impoverished people find the high prices paid for horn very tempting, especially if they have been led to assume money is the way to obtain things.

Example: It is this adherence that leads banks and retirement funds to continue to finance fossil fuels, despite knowing of the harm they do.

Most neoclassical / neoliberal / capitalist economics refuses to recognise the difference between Good and Harm, their only norm being that of the economic aspect itself, related to productivity or frugality. Most socialist economics also implicitly recognises a kind of Harm, inequality or injustice, but that is just one and they ignore other kinds. Many recent thinkers however are motivated by some kind of Harm, whether environmental, health, injustice or whatever; there are many kinds. So **we need** to understand the kinds of harm that are possible.

7-2.1 Limitations in Current Discourse

Summary: Current recognition of Harm in economics is inadequate.

While some recent discourse recognises kinds of Harm, there are three main problems with it.

1. Often, the recognition of Harm is **only implicit**. It relies on our intuition to agree with the thinker that their concern is indeed a kind of Harm, and seldom provides in-depth understanding of that kind of Harm, how it comes about and what to do about it. Sometimes, Harm, being expressed by a corresponding Good like socialization, innovation, education and longer-term thinking [Mazzucato [= = =, 263-267]] or wellbeing [SNA 2025, etc.], is too abstract to provide understanding of the details of Harm. Some economists argue that a Harm like inequality is actually Good. **We need** to understand exactly what is harmful and why.

2. Overall, we have a **fragmented view**. little understanding of the diversity of kinds of Harm and how they interrelate. With a few exceptions (e.g. Raworth [Note: Raworth diversity]) most focus on one or two kinds of Harm. But it is little use rectifying one kind of Harm and leaving the others to wreak their havoc on lives (and on the Economy, as we shall see later) because all are interconnected. For example, those who are cruel to animals are often cruel to humans too [Sampson = = =]. For example, poverty and environmental destruction reinforce each other [= = =].

3. Much recent thinking is reactive, to specific areas of concern, and so is **orientated to the past**. Problems / Harm yet to be recognised are left out of our considerations.

As explained in Chapter 3, using Dooyeweerd's aspects can make implicit things explicit, bring coherence and can help us imagine future possibilities.

7-2.2 Kinds of harm

Summary: Dooyeweerd's aspects can help us understand Good and Harm more clearly and more deeply.

If we are to differentiate Harm from Good, in all their kinds, we need a clear understanding of the basis of such differentiation [\[Note: Basis of Harm\]](#). Dooyeweerd's aspects can provide this, allowing to ask, for each thing we might consider harmful (or good), "Which aspect makes it meaningful to see this as problematic?" For example, inequality of income is problematic, not simply because it is a quantitative difference, but because it is unjust, so it is the juridical aspect that makes it problematic. Applying this to the harms listed in Chapter 2, we might find:

- ◆ Injustice to workers: juridical
- ◆ Injustice to LDNs: juridical
- ◆ Environmental destruction: biotic
- ◆ Climate change: physical, biotic
- ◆ Commitment to economic growth: pistic
- ◆ Narrow values: pistic about ethical
- ◆ Inequality in affluent nations: juridical
- ◆ Unconcern for future generations: ethical
- ◆ Disregarding of mundane work: aesthetic, pistic
- ◆ Ignoring unpaid household activity: pistic, ethical, juridical
- ◆ Cruelty to animals: psychical, juridical
- ◆ Health problems: biotic, psychical
- ◆ Addictions: psychical
- ◆ Spiritual poverty: pistic
- ◆ Unproductivity, waste: economic.

(Such a list is only a sample of harms and is in need of further discussion.)

Addressing one does not usually address others and might even make them worse because they are ignored and even sacrificed on the alter of the one given all the attention. (Some early attempts to address environmental issues seemed to make poverty worse; early attempts to address hunger destroyed the environment; examples of both can be found in India.) Overall Good requires ensuring this does not happen.

7-2.3 Understanding Harm

Summary: How Harm operates - as repercussions of dysfunction in each aspect.

To properly understand such Harms and harms, how they operate, what future possible harms might occur, and what we might do about them, we need to understand how each kind of harm comes about. Something generates the harms; what is it, and why and how does it generate harms rather than purely good? (Remember: much conventional economics treats economic activity as good-in-itself.)

Assuming that few individuals, companies or governments actually intend Harm, how does (most) Harm come about? Often as an unintended consequence of other action.

For example, an individual just fancies something, has the money and buys it, unaware it is harmful junk food. A company aims to increase its income or profits and chooses to sell products that are harmful (or non-essential) but "in demand". A government wants money to pay for health services (and other things!) and chooses to allow harmful sectors that pay high tax to remain, wants to stay in power to tries to appeal to voters who "just fancy" junk food. Similarly for all other kinds of Harm.

We need to understand both the Harmful "unintended consequences", and also the "other actions" that led indirectly to them. As explained briefly in Chapter 3, most kinds of Harm arise either as repercussion of a dysfunction in one or more aspects in which humanity functions, discussed here, or as undue elevation of an aspect, discussed later.

From Dooyeweerd's perspective, Harm and harms come from what we do, our functioning. Though some harms come from natural events like volcanoes erupting, here we are trying to understand Harm and harms for which we are responsible, and can maybe do something about, including long-term harms like climate change, as well as short-term ones.

As mentioned in [Chapter 3](#), The repercussions of functioning or dysfunctioning in any aspect may be expressed approximately by the following formulae:

WHEN F_x THEN G_x .

or conversely,

WHEN D_x THEN H_d .

where F_x is functioning and D_x is dysfunction in an aspect x , and G_x is a repercussion that is good according to that same aspect, x , and H_x is the correspondingly harmful repercussion. (The case of cross-aspect repercussions is discussed below.)

In each aspect the formulae refer to different kinds of functioning and repercussion. Examples of F , G , D and H are shown in Table t3 of Chapter 3, reproduced here for convenience [Note: Aspect details].

Table t7-GHFR. Good and harmful functioning and repercussions in each aspect (examples)

(Click on table for full size)

< a href = "pix/t3-ghfr.gif" >

< img src = "pix/t3-ghfr.gif" alt = "Examples of good and harmful functioning and repercussions for each aspect 1328,1800, from fpr:t04-nvy" width = 432

height = 600 > < /a

Aspect	Functioning (F _x)	Dysfunction (D _x)	Repercussions	
			Good (G _x)	Harmful (H _x)
Quantitative	Amount as given		Reliable totals Sequence	
Spatial	Simultaneity Continuity		Continuous extension	
Kinematic	Movement		Dynamism	
Physical	Force, causality		Persistence	
Organic / Biotic	Feeding Reproduction	Starvation Sterility	Vitality Survival	Disease Extinction
Psychic / Sensitive	Interaction	Insensitivity	Alertness Emotional health	Sensory deprivation Addiction
Analytic	Distinction	Conflation	Conceptual clarity	Confusion
Formative	Planning Working, constructing	Laziness, Destroying	Achievement Construction Technology	Lost opportunities Destruction
Lingual	Expressing	Deceiving	Information	Misinformation
Social	Relating, befriending Taking a role	Disdaining, hating Refusing to fit in	Friendship Amplified activity	Working against each other
Economic	Frugality	Squandering	Well-resourced prosperity	Unsustainability Destitution
Aesthetic	Harmonizing Enjoying	Fragmentation	Wholeness Interest, fun, beauty	Fragmentation Boredom
Juridical	Giving due, responsibility	Irresponsibility	Justice Appropriateness	Injustice Inappropriateness
Ethical / Attitudinal	Self-giving love, vulnerability, trust	Selfishness, self-protection	Culture of goodwill	Competitive, harsh culture
Pistic / Faith	Belief, courage, commitment	Idolatry, disloyalty	High morale in society	Loss of meaning, morale

Idolatry: Treating something non-absolute as absolute

In most aspects the **boundary between Good and Harm** can never be sharply defined. This is because (a) the meaning-kernel of each can never be precisely defined, (b) each aspect contains analogical echoes of all the others. Instead of demanding precise, sharp boundaries, we need humility and willingness to err on the side of caution, even if by doing so we might seem to miss out on the final small percentage of benefit to self. That way lies wisdom, especially in the longer term.

Real-life economic activity includes functioning in all aspects, whether well or dysfunctionally. When the functioning is Good, then economic activity can bring Good, such as in the fourth column. When there is dysfunction in any aspect of our economic activity, we will find harm resulting in any spheres of life,

as in the final column. (So far, this section has presented a negative view of economic activity, because it has seldom been discussed adequately, but the above equations and table provide a basis for returning to a balanced view, as discussed below.)

Overall Good comes from our functioning well in every aspect, with zero dysfunction in any. Dysfunction in any aspect not only detracts from Overall Good but it also introduces a kind of Harm, which often acts like a poison or cancer that spreads. This is because we react to the dysfunction in the same or other aspects.

Example: Misleading advertisements (lingual dysfunction) lowering trust and increasing cynicism (ethical harm).

Example: The owner of a football club becomes greedy (ethical dysfunction) and begins taking money out of the club for themselves (juridical dysfunction) rather than investing in players (economic). As a result, the club does poorly in the League (aesthetic dysfunction), the fans get angry (pistic, psychical), begin bad-mouthing the owner (lingual dysfunction), the club gets a bad reputation (pistic, social), and its income reduces (economic) as fans stay away. ["n.html#n-newc"](#) [Note: Source]

This example shows not only how dysfunction in aspects of economic activity, whether advertising or monetary strategy, spreads harm - and also how this returns to harm economic performance, which we will discuss next.

7-2.4 Harm to the Economy

Summary: Dysfunction in other spheres returns to harm economic activity.

Not only does economic activity impact other areas of life, but they impact economic activity, including the economy. Since this is well known among economists and in the business and management community, this topic needs little discussion here, except perhaps to suggest a new way to understand it, based on the innate coherence of all aspects. Dooyeweerd argued, all aspects cohere and work together, this two-way impact is expected.

One impact, overlooked until recently, is that of climate change and biodiversity loss (biotic dysfunction) on the economies of nations, especially those of the Global South [Note: Global South Economies]. Others have been known about for longer, ranging from corruption (juridical dysfunction) to worker stress (psychical), and things like high fault rates in equipment (formative), poor technique (formative). Whether known or not, what is less often discussed is why they happen and how to consider them all together.

Example: At the time of writing this (December 2022), the UK is facing **strikes** by many different workers: nurses, railway workers, postal workers, and so on - mostly those who were required to work throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, often at risk of their own lives and under very stressful conditions. According to one railway worker, with whom one of the RLDG participants was in conversation, had they been given "a proper thankyou" for working through the pandemic, all this trouble would not have happened. Instead, the UK government cracked down on the railway companies, demanding that they pay back the financial support they had been given during the pandemic. Comment: A clear case of (a) elevation of an isolated economics, (b) ignoring values like thanks or mercy, and of toxic culture, a phrase she used.

Toxic culture in any organisation is pistic and ethical dysfunction, often manifested as prioritization of own interests by management, taking advantage of workers, especially their sacrifices during the Pandemic [Note: Toxic culture]. Hence strikes.

Many such impacts are gradual and unexpected, especially when the mindset among economists, politicians and media is of economics as isolated from other

spheres ([Chapter 4](r4-mmm.html#s-maec)) and only monetary value is acknowledged and assessed ([Chapter 5](r5-val.html#s-assv)).

Research project. Investigate the impact of dysfunctional management attitudes on economic performance of companies, and compare with that of generous attitude.

Conversely, good functioning in other aspects, such as trust or good information, enhances good economic activity and might even repair the Economy. Especially, a generous culture can do wonders for an economy, both in organisations and in a nation. Sadly, however, this is too often taken for granted and not explicitly taken into account. Dooyeweerd's aspects help us, not only to see them all together, but also how the cumulative impact on the Economy might be larger than focusing on any one of them might suggest.

In real-life economic activity, however, good and harms are mixed together.

7-2.5 Mix of Good and Harm

Summary: Harm and Good mix together, but Dooyeweerd's aspects help us untangle them.

Harm and Good mix, and if we are to reduce one and increase or encourage the other, we need to conceptually untangle the various kinds of Harm from kinds of Good found in real-life situations.

It is well-known that hunger can mean that people do not think so well (e.g. children at school without breakfast) - but why?. Not thinking well can lead to unwise decisions that overlook possibilities for real prosperity and make us ignore the basic norm of frugality, and instead commit to harmful or useless economic activity. Lying leads to lack of trust, which undermines the entire economic system. These are all inter-aspect dependencies: biotic dysfunction leading to analytical dysfunction, to formative, to lingual, to ethical, and then to economic dysfunction. In the reverse direction, economic dysfunction of waste and destitution makes devastating hunger more likely. Arrogance (pistic dysfunction) can lead to injustice (juridical), thus to conflict (aesthetic, social), to destruction of food resources and hunger (biotic). And so on.

Dysfunction in one aspect leads to Harm in others. Dooyeweerd's theory of inter-aspect dependency offers a way to clarify and discuss what is going on or what could go on, so properly understand how multiple harms arise. See section on Wisdom.

Dooyeweerd's aspects help us to reveal the various factors at play for good and ill. Two examples from Confusion and Conflation may be analysed aspectually as follows:

The threats to the Californian **Delta Smelt** by farming interests may be understood more clearly this way. Growing food (and thus demanding water) seems a biotic Good, while extinction is a biotic Harm. But if we delve deeper we find other aspects at play. That some people in California are not starving but obese is another biotic Harm. The competitive motivation is of the ethical and pistic aspects and, as discussed later, Harmful. The plight of small farmers, when genuine, is meaningful in yet other aspects. See longer discussion in [Chapter 9](r9-env.html#s-mxgh).

With **rapid delivery** companies and their "democratization", Is not democratisation juridical Good? In this case, we must take the target aspect of that juridical functioning into account. 'Democratization' of education (in John Knox's Scotland and by Comenius) and of hygiene (in Victorian Britain) were good because both are aspectual virtues (lingual, biotic), but 'democratization' of vices is harmful and should not be supported. But democratization of vices like laziness must not be considered a Good. Bodily laziness, which it encourages, is biotic Harm and reducing the need to plan is often formative Harm. Some of these factors are shown in Figure f7-eqns. (Note: Laziness differs from leisure, an aesthetic Good when not out of proportion.) That rapid delivery is set to be a multi-billion industry, dependent on low wages, may be a juridical evil. That analysis was carried out

by critics of rapid delivery; those who support it might draw attention to other aspects, then dialogue can begin, instead of just being for or against rapid delivery.

Most resign themselves to such mixes, but doing so is far from ideal. It robs us of **incentive to address the Harm**, boosts cynical attitudes, which themselves are dysfunction that spreads (pistic aspect), and allows perpetrators of Harm to excuse themselves. Dooyeweerd’s thesis is that no aspect undermines others and that Harmful activity is not totally inescapable. Seeming conflict between the norms of aspects (such as “Being too ethical jeopardises profits”, a supposed conflict between ethical and economic aspects) betrays a misunderstanding of the aspects concerned. Dooyeweerd’s suite of aspects not only helps us separate things out, reveal issues that had been overlooked, especially hidden motives, opens the door to deeper understanding and more open dialogue, but also gives incentive to work out how apparent inter-aspect conflicts may be reduced and Harm removed from the mixture. It also helps us move away from simple for-or-against stances, into more fruitful discourse.

Underlying much Harm is the selfish, unconcerned love of convenience, and presupposing a right thereto, (ethical and pistic dysfunction) - our old friend, **mindset-attitude**, which we discuss later.

7-2.6 Harm in Labour and Use

Summary: Labour and use generate Harm or Good via different routes.

The above formulae are not adequate when trying to understand labour and its **indirect contribution** to Overall Good or Harm of the production of a good/service. The good/service only contributes once it has been used; its contribution is potential yet to be realized, though the activity of producing it contributes directly. The potential is different in each aspect. So the formulae above may be modified for this indirect contribution as follows:

$$\text{WHEN } P (p(G_a)) \text{ THEN } G'_a$$

and conversely

$$\text{WHEN } P (p(H_a)) \text{ THEN } H'_a$$

where $P ()$ indicates “production of”, $p ()$ indicates “potential Good or Harmful contribution to Overall Good/Harm”, G_a and H_a indicate Good and Harm meaningful in aspect a , and G'_a and H'_a indicate Good and Harm in aspect a indirectly generated by the production.

The two pairs of formulae apply to different parts of Figure f6-luog in Chapter 6, as shown in Figure f7-eqns. The first set applies to the two arrows that feed directly into Overall Good, and the second set to the arrow feeding from production to use. The diagram also shows factors in the example of Democratising the Right to Laziness, mentioned earlier.

<img src = “pix/f7-eqns.gif alt = “Direct and Indirect Contributions to Overall Good or Harm from production and use, with examples from rapid delivery. 1952,825” width = 651 height = 275”

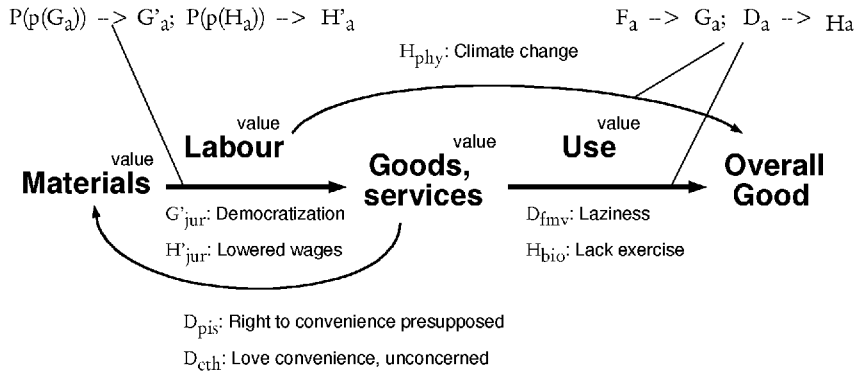


Figure f7-eqns. Direct and Indirect Contributions to Overall Good or Harm from production and use, with examples from rapid delivery.

7-2.7 The Role of Mindset-Attitude

Summary: Mindset and attitude are often the ultimate and deepest root of Harm and route to Good.

As also discussed in Chapter 6, our **attitudes and mindsets** impact all our economic activity retrocipatively and usually in powerful, hidden ways because they are our functioning in the ethical and pistic aspects. Frequently, at the **root of the best and worst economic activity** lies mindsets and attitudes.

Example 1: In the UK, the Inquiry into the Grenfell tower fire disaster of 2017, when fire spread through flammable external cladding and killed 72 people, found that contractors were to blame because they installed flammable cladding, up which the fire spread rapidly. Root causes include (a) the building designers loved to be "innovative", (b) warnings about the possibility of fire were ignored by the local authority (Westminster City Council, one of the wealthiest in the UK), who might have broken safety laws, (c) the suppliers of the cladding panels had distorted test results in order to get their product past safety conditions, (d) which happened because UK Government building regulations were deficient and could be exploited by unscrupulous developers. These all involve dysfunctional mindset and attitude.

Example 2: The attitude and mindset of senior management in the UK Post Office led to the **Horizon Scandal**, where sub-postmasters were wrongly accused and convicted of stealing money, because of a faulty computer system; the management refused to consider the system to be faulty, and took a vindictive attitude towards those they accused, then hindered investigations, and, when they were forced to pay compensation, did so very reluctantly.

To properly understand, reduce, rectify and prevent Harm, we need to address these two hidden aspects, not only the more visible ones. The Grenfell case shows Harm arising from economic activity rooted in an attitude of greed by the contractor firms and unconcern by wealthy local authorities.

Good **functioning in the ethical aspect** increases trust and generosity, which enhances economic activity, and indeed the entire economy. An example is when Lever Brothers, Jusiah Boot and Thomas Cook made soap, medicines and holidays, which had previously been sold only to the wealthy, available to the poor. The result was not just healthier and happier people but also a burgeoning economy - Good in several aspects. Notice that this was motivated, not primarily by economic self-interest (nor even by Smithian self-love) but by genuine concern and generous, risky self-giving (ethical functioning).

Contrariwise, **dysfunction in the ethical aspect**, as selfishness, self-centredness, self-protection, distrust, meanness and the like, causes Harm. These undermine economic activity especially in the longer term and also cause much harm in other aspects, not least environmental harm.

Which ethical functioning we do is often determined by our pistic

functioning. For instance, the above-mentioned philanthropists believed that the poor are of value and committed to their work cause in the face of opposition.

Good **pistic functioning** orientates us towards reality, how things 'work well' in other aspects, in our beliefs, expectations, assumptions, aspirations, commitments, etc.

Pistic dysfunction manifests itself in several ways: holding the belief that harm in another aspect does not matter, commitment to some thing (e.g. tobacco, fossil fuels) that causes harm elsewhere, hidden agendas, vested interests, undue elevation of an aspect (such as the economic), giving it too high a place in our estimation, sacrificing other things for it, ignoring aspects that threaten it, and so on. The main harm from unduly elevating aspects occurs because other aspects are ignored, not cared about, analysed nor planned for, and often sacrificed on the altar of the elevated aspect. For several of these, we have used the word "idolatry" in Chapter 4 [Note: Idolatry]. For example, giving absolute priority to the economic aspect, whether money or productivity, can incite things like deceit (lingual dysfunction), corner-cutting (juridical dysfunction), little injustices or illegalities (juridical dysfunction), undermining relationships (social dysfunction), trust-breaking (ethical dysfunction) and so on.

Some economists emphasise how the **structures of society** impact economics and its delivering good or ill [= = = refs], usually emphasising how policies and laws of a society constrain people's economic activity towards certain directions rather than others. As discussed in <r6-fun.html#s-strf> §6-4, not only do laws and policies do this (juridical structures) but also ethical and pistic structures, i.e. attitude and mindset.

So, when considering Harmful economic activity, do not overlook the hidden, indirect impact of mindset and attitude. They play an even greater role in Useless economic activity, as discussed below.

7-2.8 Concluding Remarks about Harm and Good

Summary: Harmful economic activity can be differentiated from Good by understanding all aspects thereof.

To be written = = = = . Therefore, instead of trying economic solutions, we should first seek to understand in which aspect(s) the dysfunction is occurring, and address that. Very often, there is dysfunction in the ethical and pistic aspects, as discussed as <r6-fun.html#s-mdst> mindset and <r6-fun.html#s-attd> attitude.

7-3 Good versus Useless Economic Activity

Summary: Useless economic activity is of two types, unproductiveness and production of non-essentials, and both should be discouraged and reduced.

= = = = = to be shortened

Keynes is reputed to have predicted in the 1930s that GDP of European and American countries would increase to a certain amount and then become stable, and was surprised to find GDP continuing to increase. He assumed that people would satisfy their needs, but instead, we keep on increasing our 'needs', turning wishes and wants into 'needs'. There is a propensity in affluent cultures to keep wanting more and more of what is, in reality, non-essential, and to allow unproductivity to spread.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK Road Haulage Association reported (8 April 2020) that 46% of the UK truck fleet was parked up because nobody was purchasing "non-essentials" (the word they used, especially when interviewed in the BBC Today Programme)! If so, could the

transport sector halve its carbon footprint and all the other externalised damage it does if we no longer demanded non-essentials?

A year later it was found that the clothing sector had reduced by 50% and fuel by 25% (in round figures). Every year 120 bn items of clothing are manufactured, 30% are never sold and another 40% are not used; only 30% are properly used, so the remainder are non-necessary. Could the ecological footprint of the global clothing industry, and other damage it does, be more than halved if we did not demand non-essentials?

The Covid-19 pandemics revealed something of what is essential and what is not - half of our economic activity, if not more (see later). The combination of unproductivity and non-essentials may be called "**Useless economic activity**".

Various authors have drawn attention to each, especially from the business community if not the economics/ finance communities, such as Colin Mayer.

Examples of useless: 1. Schumacher's trucks carrying biscuits made in Glasgow to London and biscuits made in London to Glasgow, seems like a waste of two whole driver shifts. 2. Yet another business meeting or conference just because someone expects it is a waste of time. [Note Spree] 3. Much of our defence spending is wasteful [Note: Jim Radford] 4. "Bullshit Jobs", in which "if the position were eliminated, it would make no discernible difference in the world. Likely as not, things would improve" [Graeber 20 = = , 2] are a waste.

Though examples may be mentioned and deplored, there is little data on the prevalence of the problem, and no adequate discussion of its nature. This section discusses two modes of useless economic activity:

- ◆ unproductivity
- ◆ non-essentials.

We sometimes alliterate these to Bullshit Jobs and Baubles, after Graeber and Adam Smith.

We discuss why they are problematic, the challenges they present, and propose a way of understanding them, unproductivity first, then non-essentiality.

7-3.1 Why Useless Economic Activity is Problematic

Summary; Useless activity is problematic chiefly because it displaces Good activity, and often also does Harm - even if also a little Good.

Briefly, the main reason Useless economic activity is problematic is not necessarily that it does harm (though often it does). but that, by absorbing human effort, **Useless economic activity substitutes for Good activity** (opportunity costs), replacing, delaying and sometimes preventing it. For these reasons economic theory, practice and policy should be designed not only reduce Harmful but also Useless economic activity.

"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientist, the hopes of its children." Dwight D Eisenhower, 1953

Some Useless economic activity **can bring some Good**, for example some enjoyment (meaningful in aesthetic aspect). In addition, as discussed in Chapter 6, [Adam Smith](r6-fun.html#s-adam) observed that even producing baubles for the luxurious wealthy produces some good can arise, in enabling the poor to survive. While some dispute the validity of such examples, we accept it as part of the whole picture - and as part of that picture we place against them the importance of heart attitude. Do we over-emphasise *our* enjoyment over the very needs of others far away? Do we make the Smithian trickle-down an excuse to continue with our useless activity, or are we doing it genuinely for the good of others (for example some philanthopists who hired local stone masons and labourers to construct lasting edifices or even to pave footpaths, as in

Todmorden, England). It is inherent in the aspects that some Good results from their functioning, even while also much Harm or Waste. (x Religious people might see the Providence of God in that. x) But such Good is marginal and such instances are rare, and **most Useless economic activity is detrimental** (x and would be judged by the same Providential God x).

Especially, much **Useless activity also does Harm**. Obviously, weapons often do much Harm when used. But, most other Useless activity also does Harm, especially in a self-serving, affluent culture. One person's (or nation's) aesthetic pleasures or luxuries given priority over justice to others, especially the poor (people or nation) are non-essentials that do harm. And so are many of the conveniences we take for granted in affluent cultures. Into this category might come (a) the car, (b) rapid delivery (discussed [above](#)); both cause harm directly and indirectly - climate change emissions, road traffic injuries, destruction of wildlife. So does the surfeit of meat eating. Massive sugar consumption in affluent cultures causes obesity.

From a Dooyeweerdian perspective, both may be understood as a **dysfunction in the economic aspect**, in that it is waste or surfeit. Bullshit jobs are a waste of the resource of human functioning, which could be directed towards generation of Overall Good instead. Bauble production, whether of goods or services, is surfeit, as well as a waste of productive capacity and raw materials, which could (and should instead) be directed towards Overall Good.

7-3.2 Unproductive Economic Activity

Summary: Unproductive economic activity is a waste and has opportunity costs.

David Graeber begins his 20 = = = book, *Bullshit Jobs*, with Kurt's story above. Throughout the book, with many other examples, he argues that, not only socialist economies but also [p.6], "Contemporary capitalism seems riddled with such jobs", his estimate being 40% of jobs. He lists examples of "bullshit" jobs:

- ◆ "apparently endless growth of administrative responsibilities in British academic departments" [p. xvii];
- ◆ "A Spanish civil servant who collected a salary for at least six years without working ... He explained that while he had worked for many years dutifully monitoring the city's water treatment plant, the water board eventually came under of higher-ups who loathed his Socialist politics and refused to assign him any responsibilities." [p.3-4] (He actually used his time fruitfully in educating himself about Spinoza);
- ◆ "a YouGov poll found that in the United Kingdom only 50 percent of those who had full-time jobs were completely certain their job made any sort of meaningful contribution to the world" [p.6];
- ◆ Possibly "telemarketing, market research" [p.11] and "lobbyists and financial consultants" [p.12];
- ◆ "customers had to go through three different clerks to buy a loaf of bread" in a Communist country [p.17];
- ◆ "many nurses, for instance, complained to me that as much as 80% of their time is taken up with paperwork, meetings and the like" [p.24];
- ◆ "assigning minor tasks as an excuse to have them hang around making you look impressive. ... Doormen are the most obvious example. ... receptionists and front-desk personnel at places that obviously don't need them." [p.30]
- ◆ "I worked as a receptionist ... The phone rang maybe once a day so I was given a couple of other tasks ... Keep a candy dish full of mints ... wind a grandfather clock ..." [p.30];

- ◆ “My job, as a cold caller, was to call these people ... emphasising that I was calling on behalf of a broker. ... The reasoning behind this was that the brokers themselves would seem, to the potential client, to be more capable and professional if they were so damn busy making money that they needed an assistant to make this call for them.” [30-31]
- ◆ “The only full-time job I ever had ... was there only because the HR specialist was lazy and didn’t want to leave his desk” [p.34];
- ◆ “They bring us adverts for well-known branded products ... and we use visual effects trickery to make it seem like these products actually work” [p.37];
- ◆ and so on.

Unlike some other Useless jobs, which produce technologically exciting non-essentials, such as cars, Bullshit jobs often have very little meaning, and are against human dignity. Graeber includes in his definition of them, that the employee knows they are meaningless and do little good. Whatever other Harm such jobs do, this robbing of dignity is Harmful - in the pistic and social aspects especially.

Mazzucato has a similar concern [= = = , 6]: “Also crucial is whether what it is that is being created is useful: are the products and services being created increasing or decreasing the resilience of the productive system.” Notice, however: useful to the “productive system” not other spheres of life.

7-3.3 What is (Un)productivity?

Summary: There is little agreement on what (un)productivity is, so we need a way of understanding it.

What, however, is productivity? What is it to be productive or unproductive? Mazzucato [2018] uses the idea of the “*production boundary*” between them but gives no adequate definition except that productive work adds value while unproductive work does not and, as we have seen in Chapter 5, there are many kinds of value. However, her reviews of European and North American ideas about productivity from the 1600s onwards, in her chapters 1,2, offer a useful overview that we adopt here, of which the following is a summary, with a few comments added.

The mediaeval Roman Catholic church treated most merchants, who “bought cheap and sold dear” as unproductive. In reaction to that, Merchantilism arose. Merchantilists like Sir William Petty and Gregory King defined productivity as having income exceeding expenditure, though they differed on who was productive and unproductive. Soldiers were productive to Petty but unproductive to King (and possibly to Eisenhower above?). The ‘great professions’ (clergy, lords, lawyers and civil servants) were productive to King but unproductive to Petty, who considered them a mere necessary evil. The difference may be explained by how their backgrounds formed their idea of what is meaningful and good (pistic functioning). François Quesnay viewed the economy metaphorically as a metabolic system, in which everything comes from somewhere and goes somewhere, so he saw farmers and miners as productive, in that it is nature that produces new things (plants from seeds, minerals from soil), while all others were unproductive, mere shapers of these. ARJ Turgot took a similar perspective, of the fundamental importance of agriculture, but saw as productive anyone who met various needs or kept society afloat, including artisans and judges. Quesday’s and Turgot’s primary motivation (pistic functioning) was to defend the (French) aristocracy against merchantilism.

Adam Smith identified productivity, which had increased enormously due to division of labour and trade, mainly with skill (formative power), the making of

things, especially helped by machines and by specialised techniques of production, and thus birthed the labour theory of value. David Ricardo, noticing that how labour wages is distributed is ignored by Smith even though it regulates the growth and wealth of nations, and that basic wages were tied to the price of food, so linked productivity back to land, and its agricultural quality, and to landlord rent. Consumption, he believed, could sometimes be productive, when used to 'buy labour' and thus reproduce itself, but is unproductive when consumed on luxuries (c.f. non-essentials). A primary motivation (pistic functioning) for both Smith and Ricardo was horror at the extravagant, luxurious lifestyles of the aristocracy and some landlords, especially when addicted to gambling; so industrial capitalists were heroes. Karl Marx, continuing with the labour theory of value, was motivated (pistic functioning) by horror at the injustices generated and perpetrated by industrial capitalism. So it was worker labour that is productive, whether in agriculture or mining (primary), industry (secondary), services (tertiary) or even some forms of finance, which performs the service of circulating wealth, whereas households and government are unproductive.

Those thinkers sought **objective** views of value and productivity. They differed widely in what constituted productivity. A fundamental weakness of such objective attempts is that all too often each view is driven by wanting to oppose or criticise some previous view: the Merchantilists wanted to uphold the value of merchantry against those who had dismissed it, the Physiocrats, the value of land over against the merchants, the Smithians, the value of human labour over against land-owning aristocracy, and so on. As a result, views swing wildly and much that is of value is overlooked altogether. It may be noticed that most of these thinkers saw household production as unproductive and presupposed money as the only measure of productive value.

Recent thinkers adopt **subjective** views of value (and hence productivity), as being in the eye of the beholder. To cope with this, the utility theory of value was born: the value of something is its utility to its consumer, and this could be anything, even how much a new car impresses the neighbours.

Though, in theory, this might allow for a wide range of kinds of value to emerge, there are problems. One is that what subjectivity is at the mercy of society or individual dysfunctional attitudes and mindsets, especially those expressed in fashionability. The other is that the single concept of utility is so elegant, and also amenable to mathematical treatment, that it discourages discussion of what kinds of value are possible. A third is that it makes us blind to value in anything not subjectively values (as was the case with climate and biodiversity until recently, though even Mazzucato overlooks that). Utility theory developed into the belief that price determines value, that "it is only what fetches a price in the market (legally) that can be termed productive activity" [Mazzucato 2108, 66], that "Inherent in equilibrium is the idea that everything is in everyone's interest" [p.67] and that "markets are the most efficient allocators of resources" [p.69]. Some of these rest on assumptions that are actually seldom true; inevitably other aspects that economics tries to ignore invade into life.

This complex historical picture is, perhaps, the reason why Mazzucato attempts no definition of productivity. To bridge the subjective-objective divide, and also take account of the various ideas of what constitutes or generates value, requires philosophy. As discussed in [Chapter 5](#), We advocate an aspectual view, which acknowledges all kinds of value (and hence productivity), including some not yet widely recognised. Graeber perhaps gets near it when talking about meaninglessness.

7-3.4 Non-essentials

Summary: Many goods and services, especially in affluent economies, are non-essential and should be discouraged rather than encouraged.

In affluent cultures, we throw away 30% of our food [= = =]. At Christmas a large proportion of gifts are not wanted. We fly to unnecessary business meetings. Manufactured products are replaced rather than repaired. Many of the goods we purchase are non-essential, as are many of the conveniences we demand. During the Covid-19 pandemic, whereas the savings of the more wealthy (in the UK?) increased, those of the poorest 20% reduced; this is evidence that the wealthiest had previously been spending on non-essentials - and the two figures cited earlier put that at around 50% of the UK economy.

Unfortunately, good figures are not yet available for how much of our (affluent) economies is non-essential, because economists have not done the research. To study non-essentials seems politically untenable. 'Right-wing' economics treats non-essentials as unquestionably good and to question that is seen as an attack on the freedom to purchase whatever we wish. 'Left-wing' economics sees the luxuries and conveniences enjoyed by the wealthy and argues that the non-wealthy should have equal access to them.

But, as mentioned at the start of this chapter, the Covid-19 pandemic perhaps revealed an approximate magnitude of around 50%. Of course, it is not as simple as that - but it does at least oblige us to find better figures and take action. Research needs to be carried out to both provide good quality data and understand its mechanisms.

That discussion of non-essentials is sparse may be for political reasons: neoclassical economics treats the production and consumption of non-essentials as Good, in that it contributes to GDP and a 'growing economy', while those concerned with inequalities too often have taken the line that whatever luxuries or conveniences the rich have or do should be available to the poor equally. Neither differentiate non-essentials from Good, nor question whether they are harmful or not.

7-3.4 What are non-essentials?

Summary: Understanding non-essentials.

Here we try to make a start at understanding non-essentials - What are they? Why should we be concerned? How do they operate in a way that causes concern?

Non-essentials could be "baubles and trinkets", as Adam Smith called them, such as luxury goods or services that offer only insignificant improvements in a person's life or a company's situation. 'Iconic' projects are often of this kind. They are often tokens or displays of personal or national affluence. Pleasures, stimulants, comforts and conveniences that we have become used to in affluent cultures are often non-essential.

Another type of non-essential is things made 'necessary' by earlier unwise decisions, such as offspring going to live 3000 miles away, which then 'necessitates' flights (Harmful) by family to see them.

In the larger picture, non-essentials might arguably also include rectification of wrongs. In a perfect society, with zero crime, police and judiciary would be non-essential. In a perfectly healthy society, some hospital services might become non-essential. However, we do not consider such things as non-essentials here because society is unlikely to become like that, but rather as Good. Whenever, however, we consider economics from an eschatological perspective (x e.g. the Christian idea of the renewed Earth x) then it would be

right to bring them into economics as non-essentials. Here, we confine non-essentials to added pleasures, conveniences, etc.

7-3.5 Challenges of Identifying Non-essentials

Summary: It is not easy to clearly distinguish essentials from non-essentials, for several reasons. Dooyeweerd's aspects can help us do so.

It is far from easy to clearly differentiate non-essentials from essentials, however. The following observations arose from the RLDG discussions, and we suggest how each might be addressed. This section might make a useful contribution to the sparse discourse about non-essentials.

1. There is no sharp **boundary** between essential and non-essential, such that something is either one or the other, yet the difference between the extremes is clear. Very few things are absolutely essential or non-essential. For example, is food essential? Yes - but what kind of food and when? No - for those who are fasting. Is having a third yacht essential? Probably not. Is having a boat essential? Almost certainly if you are surveying waterways (though could much be done from their banks?). Is a rescue helicopter essential? Not always but sometimes. At the extremes, essentials are obviously and importantly Good, while non-essentials like Smith's "baubles and trinkets" contain very little important Good - yet many cases are borderline.

2. Instead of a sharp boundary, can we assign some **quantitative scale to essentiality**, as more or less essential? That might be useful for portrayal during presentations, but quantitatively precise numbers misleads evaluation and decision-making. (Non-)Essentiality seems to be a qualitative rather than quantitative matter. Something is essential *because* of some kind of Good it brings, and decision-makers should take full responsibility of properly considering all relevant factors, rather than trying to shirk it by reducing it to numbers.

3. Is essentiality **objective** judgment or a **purely subjective** evaluation? Neither. Even though many people assume, expect and might argue - their subjective beliefs - that what they are buying, producing or doing is in some way essential for them, yet the world cannot afford these so-called essentials; c.f. the ecological footprint of most affluent nations is 3 whole earths or more. (This is one of the weaknesses of *Doughnut Economics*.) Instead, we need some less subjective understanding even though we need not seek complete objectivity.

4. It **depends on context**. For example, to most of us, decent food and reasonable pleasures are essentials while to ascetic monks they are non-essential. However, this can become an excuse. The wealthy person's context treats many non-essentials as essentials. Is one car per person rather than family actually essential, or a mere convenience to avoid having to negotiate sharing? Worse, is the social pressure to accumulate "baubles" to make us look good to others really essential? That social context might suggest so. Yet we cannot allow context as such trump all other considerations; after recognising the importance of context, we must question it very critically. Are some such contexts ultimately evil?

5. Essentiality and non-essentiality is always **relative to reasons why**. They are bound up with meaningfulness, and this is the reason why aspects, as modalities of meaning, are appropriate.

6. Many non-essentials occur for **aesthetic reasons**, whether fun, enjoyment, art, music, leisure, sport, games, etc. If we want to reduce non-essentials, should we reduce our involvement in such things? Should we cut them out altogether, as some in the past have tried to do? Such attempts did not work, in that they set up a reaction that, arguably, led to more excess than

before. There seems to be something undeniably Good in aesthetic ‘non-essentials’. (x Christians and Jews might remember that God deliberately set apart the seventh day, as a day that is meant to be ‘unproductive’; life should not become a treadmill - not for employees nor even for animals. x) Why is this? And why should “baubles and trinkets” be frowned upon? These questions cannot be answered from within economics and aesthetics alone, but need a wider perspective.

This may be provided by Dooyeweerd’s aspects. The ways they can help with each of these are:

- ◆ 1. No sharp boundary. Each aspect defines a different kind of Good and therefore a different boundary between essential and non-essential (and also Mazzucato’s productiveness boundary). Something is essential only by reference to those aspects that makes it meaningful and Good; in most other aspects it is often non-essential. Food is essential biotically, but it need not be tasty (psychical aspect) nor delicious (aesthetic aspect) to fulfil this function. Company might be essential because it is a Good of the social aspect, but not essential biotically. Skill is essential by the formative aspect, though again not biotically.
- ◆ 2. Quantitative scale. Rather than seeking some quantitative scale, addressing non-essentials via aspects offers a well-grounded qualitative approach. However, the results of qualitative assessment may be presented quantitatively, such as [aspectual fir trees](r5-val.html#s-qnvv).
- ◆ 3. Essentiality subjective rather than objective? Dooyeweerd’s aspects transcend the subjective-objective opposition and open the way to more fruitful discussion of Useless activity, so we do not have to opt for one or the other. They do not answer the question “Is X Useless?” but they allow us to deconstruct that question so we may answer it in a more meaningful way.
- ◆ 4. Depends on context. Contexts are multi-aspectual, and may thus be understood by asking in what ways each aspect is meaningful within it.
- ◆ 5. Relative to reasons why. The Why question may always be answered by reference to aspects. A good tool is essential for crafting (formative aspect) but seems non-essential to accountants (quantitative, analytical) - but sometimes the craftspeople falsely claim essentiality because of hubris (pistic dysfunction).
- ◆ 6. Aesthetic functioning as non-essential. Though Dooyeweerd himself focused on harmony as the meaning-kernel of the aesthetic aspect, Seerveld and others emphasise enjoyment, an inherently non-essential thing. See also the introduction to [The Aesthetic Aspect on the Dooyeweerd Pages](http://dooy.info/aesthetic.html). This suggests that aesthetic functioning is deep in the heart of humankind and, to have some enjoyment in life, some aesthetics, is important and Good even though seemingly non-necessary. The reason it becomes problematic is when, by demanding excessive enjoyment, we (a) break the very laws of the aesthetic and economic aspects (against harmony and frugality) [\[Note: Excessive enjoyment\]](n.html#n-xsnj); (b) transgress the laws of the juridical aspect by treating our enjoyment and non-essentials as more important than the essentials of others, especially those we are hardly aware of, such as in the Global South; (c) transgress the laws of the ethical aspect by selfish demand; (d) idolise ourselves with “I have a right to live for my own pleasure!” [\[Note: Right to happiness?\]](n.html#n-rthp)

Using aspects, however, is there a danger of the unscrupulous, self-interested or arrogant finding aspects that make anything they like meaningful, in order to justify it? In most cases we must proceed with wisdom, humility and responsibility. Sometimes, legal systems are adept at winking out the appropriate facts on which to make a reasonable decision [Note: Legal], but not always.

None of 6(b) to 6(d) are visible to the economic and aesthetic aspects, but they are the ones that help us towards real beauty and enjoyment in aesthetic living, and towards wisdom in dealing with non-essentials. The economic idea of surfeit can also help. We in affluent cultures tend to have a surfeit of enjoyment in our lives, take it for granted and expect it (our societal pistic functioning of mindset) and life would not usually suffer if we reduced the surfeit.

Wisdom urges us to question our own cultural presuppositions, such as about egalitarianism, individualism and affluence. For example, servants of old might be pleased to contribute to their master's or mistress's enjoyment because of love and genuine respect (though we do not hear much of them). (x Jewish law catered for the possibility that slaves might opt to stay with masters whom they love. x)

Those challenges are philosophical in nature, to do with the very nature of Good and Harm. There are also a few political challenges, for example people emphasise the good in their own sectors or interests and stoke up fear of possible consequences, which obfuscates analysis and debate - as happened with the tobacco and fossil fuel companies.

7-3.6 Why Useless Economic Activity Occurs

Summary: Useless economic activity arises from a number of factors, some meaningful in the economic aspect, some because of undue elevation of an aspect, and some from mindset-attitude.

Useless economic activity - unproductive work or production of non-essentials - displaces, delays or prevents Good activity and much also does Harm. But why does Useless economic activity occur? It is important to understand this if we are to reduce it. What are its 'causes'? There are several.

1. It is the **size of our economies** (as measured by money: excessive disposable income) that enables the affluent world to spend resources and money on a surfeit of non-essentials. People in affluent cultures spend their vast disposable incomes to seek fun, leisure, luxuries and especially those that distinguish them above their neighbours or rivals. Similarly, with the unproductive 'bullshit' jobs, which proliferate because organisations' disposable income is too large to act to question them. This is a 'cause' meaningful in the economic aspect. But it is something of a circular argument, since the very purchase of baubles and payment for Bullshit jobs increases the size of the economy, so it does not give complete or even useful understanding. We must look more deeply.

2. **Misunderstanding of the economic aspect** and elevating this misunderstanding, ignoring other aspects. One major misunderstanding is that economics is almost solely concerned with markets, trade, consumption and production, as in Adam Smith, Marx, Aquinas, and others. These are mechanisms by which economic activity occurs, but they are not the entirety of what may be understood about the economic activity. There is little recognition of frugality, except perhaps as an unfortunate limit on those, and otherwise of little importance. It is these, not markets, that tell us why economic activity is

absurd or even wrong, and without such norms Useless economic activity is not recognised as such and can abound. That is indeed what has happened.

Examples: This is what is seen in Schumacher's biscuit manufacturers, who both want to expand their production and see opportunities in distant cities, without considering the environmental and other impact, and without recognising that self-restraint is Good. As a result, they end up in situations that are absurd when seen from the perspective of the economic aspect itself. Another is GDP, in which useless economic activity increases and the almost universal commitment to ever-increasing GDP 'causes' ever-expanding Useless economic activity. Both exhibit commitment that is often idolatrous. We suggest a way to rectify this in GDP later.

3. **Questionable presuppositions.** It is sometimes claimed that some good might come from Useless economic activity, for example, the provision of jobs and wages. While there is some truth in that, there is also much untruth, especially when we presuppose the absolute Good of jobs and wages. This involves three assumptions, (a) that jobs are commodities to be produced; (b) that non-paid work is valueless; (c) that there is no alternative Good economic activity possible. All such assumptions are questioned in Chapter 8, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 respectively.

4. **Undue elevation of the aesthetic aspect.** Baubles (non-essentials) often indicate an undue elevation of the aesthetic aspect, the giving undue importance to our enjoyment, fun, art, music, sport, leisure, parties, expensive jewellery and decoration, treats, gaiety, distractions and the like - and yet they rarely satisfy fully. And, all the while, the poor suffer and are oppressed, habitats are destroyed, and many animals are killed or suffer. Given that some aesthetics is important in life, as discussed [above](#), the operative word is "undue". "Undue" is a word meaningful in the juridical aspect, and refers to, for example, giving our aesthetic functioning priority over the necessities of and justice to others. It is especially so with regard to the less-affluent world (not all of which is in other countries!). Instead, the functioning in the aesthetic aspect must be harmonized with other aspects, especially the juridical aspect of justice [Note: Harmonization]. (x Christians and Jews and Muslims will be aware of many words of prophets echoing this. x) This cannot be expressed in rules, but requires wisdom, responsibility and a good attitude.

5. **Convenience** is a major aesthetic. It was suggested above that cars for each member of the family might be considered essential by the wealthy because it avoids the need to negotiate sharing. But is avoiding negotiation really an essential? Is it not merely a convenience and probably not very important at that? Most people in affluent cultures have become used to conveniences, by which we avoidance effort etc. (Are they not also often to our own detriment in that we become lazy and deteriorate mentally as well as physically?) Most such conveniences are ultimately non-essential, and our love of, and assumption of, convenience is a major cause of a surfeit of non-essentials. And also, in many cases, of unproductive, Bullshit jobs.

6. **Undue elevation of another aspect.** Bullshit jobs (unproductivity) often arise from undue emphasis on various aspects. Kurt's useless job arose from over-emphasis on juridical ideas of security and safety, and also rule-keeping. Some arise from favouritism (social aspect dysfunction). Many arise from people wanting to seem important or give a certain impression of professionalism; see list above. Management in affluent organisations spend disposable income on managerial conveniences, vanity projects (usually ethical dysfunction) and the like, or over-adherence to rules or reputation (pistic dysfunction). This closely ties into ethical dysfunction, in treating the resources at my disposal as absolutely "mine, and nobody else's", which is discussed in Chapter 8.

7. Undue elevation often verges on **idolatry**. Aesthetics is an essential part of life, but do not we in affluent cultures demand and assume enjoyment and ease in life, seeing it as a right, something to expect, and get angry about being asked to lessen our demands for it? This reveals idolatry at the personal level. If we believe ourselves to be worthy of the sacrifice of others, then we will more likely purchase many non-essential baubles rather than use our wealth for contributing to Overall Good. Idolising something [Note: Idolatry] often leads to unproductivity because we accord it special importance and sacrifice things for it, including resources. Might we also detect the ethical dysfunction of self-protection of those who force others to follow the rules in order to avoid criticism from those higher up? Goudzwaard [1984] discusses four *Idols of Our Time* at the national level, economic growth, technology, national security and revolution, and the damage they do. An idol is something to which much else that is good is sacrificed, and which is allowed to determine all the way we live. Jobs are created to support the idol, which turn out to be meaningless, idiotic and wasteful. The potential Good that people could and should be doing is sacrificed for it.

Example: We may analyse Graeber's German military idiocy, cited earlier, as follows. The idol here seems to be national security, and the sacrifice is the multiple resources of people, time and fuel wasted, and "the way we live" is governed by military regulations, drawn up to appease the idol of military security, and hence has departed from "a more reasonable way". The primary idiocy here is dysfunctions meaningful in the formative aspect (of achieving nothing) and economic aspect (waste). We can see the following kinds of waste: distance driven (kinematic), two people's time (multi-aspectual), paperwork (lingual). This operation incurs the following obvious kinds of harm: climate change emissions (physical-biotic), tiredness from driving (psychical). What is the reason for this idiocy? We may ask why the regulations are in place. One reason is the contracts between the parties involved (juridical, social aspect). Another is the possibility of computers that might contain military secrets being lost or stolen. This again is juridical aspect, but it is motivated by self-protective fear, a dysfunction in the ethical aspect. The presence of this dysfunction may be taken as a warning of hidden harm occurring, which is usually attributed cynically to 'the system' - in this case, the multiple waste that occurred.

8. Almost always [[Note: Statistics]], at the root of all kinds of surfeit of non-essentials lies dysfunctional attitudes of **selfish expectations**. Those who are selfless will usually spend much more of their disposable income on Good, giving away generously rather than accumulating a surfeit of non-essentials, as those who are self-centred do [= = = refs]. In affluent cultures, we assume a right to as much non-essential and unproductivity as we wish, and strongly resist those who question the right. This is the root that is pistic dysfunction. Assumption of this right excuses hard-hearted meanness towards the poor. (Christians and Jews will remember many warnings against that attitude of heart, and Muslims from the Qur'an, and also other religions similarly.)

Behind most of these lies our old friend, **mindset-attitude**.

7-4. Assessing Good, Harmful and Useless Economic Activity

Summary: Some guidance on how to assess Good, Harmful and Useless separately.

= = = = = to be shortened; might repeat earlier stuff

Given the importance of replacing Harmful economic activity with Good, and of reducing Useless activity, and also the need for assessments of value, discussed in Chapter 5, we need ways to analyse, assess or measure them. Sometimes overviews are needed, sometimes comparisons must be made, sometimes we need to understand what is going on, sometimes we need to make decisions, make future plans, regarding Good, Harmful and Useless economic activity. That is what this section discusses. A quick calculation of the amount of harmful and useless economic activity in the UK economy is made from empirical sources,

which shows there is a major problem. So we discuss how to assess Harm and Uselessness using Dooyeweerd's aspects, then propose how GDP might be reformed, and end with suggestions for economic planning.

7-4.1 A Quick Empirical Calculation of Amount of Harmful and Useless Economic Activity

Summary: The amount of harmful and useless economic activity in the UK is surprisingly high.

As discussed in Chapter 5, it is difficult to assess and measure value and, as discussed above, it is probably even more challenging to differentiate the Harm from the Good, and to cope with the Useless.

If economic planning, whether in government or business, is to separate Good, Harmful and Useless economic activity, they need an estimate of how much economic activity over which they have control is Harmful and Useless. To plan strategically, governments might wish to know which sectors generate more Harm or Useless economic activity, and which generate more Good. Currently, the main metric is only the amount of money made.

As far as we can discover, few have discussed this, and few are interested in even doing research on this. Why? Maybe because of the prevailing mindset about economics (as discussed in [Chapter 4](#), that all economic activity is to be welcomed as Good?) The above discussion might offer a route to obtaining such estimates. Let us assume, for now, that quantitative measures are valid; the following might help us towards those. But use caution; the following calculations, which are of the UK economy, are far from accurate, giving a ballpark figure that surprises us, but they show there is a problem that needs addressing, and an urgent need for better methods.

7-4.1.1 How much useless economic activity in the UK economy?

Summary: About three quarters of the UK economy is Useless (and may be lost without much pain).

It is not easy to estimate the amount of useless economic activity for reasons discussed earlier, but the Pandemic offered an opportunity to estimate very roughly the amount of non-essentials in the economy, because then most people reduced their consumption of non-essentials. As calculated above, figures released suggest that at least half the goods and clothing bought in the UK, and half the goods carried by trucks, were non-essential. If these figures are correct, non-essentials might make up about half the UK real economy.

Graeber [= = ,] estimates that 40% of jobs in capitalist economies are "bullshit", i.e. unproductive and not worth doing, absorbing human labour yet bringing little or no Good.

The amount of Useless economic activity is the combination of those. Do we just add them together (to get 90% of the economy as Useless)? Of course not! Do we take the maximum of the two figures, i.e. 50%? Probably not, because that would only be valid if all the Bullshit jobs are devoted solely to production of baubles (non-essentials); many of Graeber's examples come from industries and sectors concerned with essentials. If, as is more reasonable, we assume some overlap between them, then we might argue that 40% of jobs in both the production of essentials and the production of non-essentials are Bullshit (i.e. non-essentiality and unproductivity are statistically independent factors). Combining the figures this way [Note: Combination] means that around **70% of the UK economy may be classed as Useless**. In the USA the figure is probably worse.

That 70% is a huge figure. Imagine if that 70% of the workforce were to be devoted to contributing Good instead! Is it merely coincidence that 70% is by how much the UK's [ecological footprint](#) needs to shrink to bring it down to 1 Earth? Can we achieve this just by removing Useless economic activity? A tempting idea!

Of course, that figure was based on weak and limited empirical evidence, but there is at least reasonable logic behind it: when people are keenly aware of national and global emergencies, they will tend to focus on what is essential.

However, we need proper estimates - probably needing a **research project** to obtain them, with empirical study guided by the methods outlined above. The challenge in doing this lies not only in its technical difficulties (which human ingenuity will usually be able to overcome, given the will), but in that many thinkers dislike and resist the very notion that so much of our economy is Useless, so their hidden motivation will be to try to find ways to reduce that figure, rather than truly estimate it. We need honest research!

7-4.1.2 How much harmful economic activity in the UK economy?

Summary: Nearly four fifths of the UK economy does Harm (and should be removed).

A few empirical figures are available from which we might calculate the proportion of harmful economic activity in the UK economy. Each comes from a different sector, and a proper calculation must be made.

One is [ecological footprint](#), which, for the UK is 4.2 Earths [\[WPF 2023\]](#). This includes what humanity's demand for raw materials and for food and for absorption of our waste and pollution by the planet would be if all humans had the same impact as those in the UK. Oversimplifying perhaps, we may say that any excess over 1.0 Earths must be treated as harmful activity. This gives us a proportion of $3.2/4.2 = 76\%$ ecologically harmful economic activity in the UK. That figure might include unpaid economic activity and whether or not that should be included or excluded from calculations depends on their purpose. However, given that our mindset in the UK assumes most of life involves money, unpaid activity may be assumed small.

To this figure should be added other harms to health from air pollution, obesity etc. These are 9-19 and 10 billion UKP respectively, which is about 6% of the economy [\[DEFRA 2023\]](#). Other kinds of harm might add another 6%. When combined with the 76% harm because of ecological footprint, this gives a total of $76\% + 12\% - 76\% * 12\% = 79\%$ of the UK economy does harm.

7-4.1.3 Combining these

Summary: Taking both Useless and Harmful figures together should make us think carefully.

These figures, 76% useless, 79% harmful are astounding. They leave very little of the UK economy that is Useful Good (7%).

That figure will shock many - including we in the RLDG. Even we expect it to be wrong - but what other better figures are there? Let us **invest heavily in honest research** to find out the true figures. Hopefully more than 7% will turn out to be healthy, but it would not be entirely surprising to find it more-or-less true, given the state of the world and the mindset and attitude that pervades affluent cultures today. (x Might Jews and Christians remember Genesis 6:5:

“every inclination of the thoughts of [humanity’s] heart was only evil all the time”? x)

A more nuanced analysis is needed, but that shock figure should serve as a warning that we should not take lightly. Thinking aspectually might open the way to a more nuanced assessment of what proportion of the economy is Useless and is Harmful. Dooyeweerd’s aspects can help us here.

7-4.2 Preparatory Aspectual Analysis

Summary: Some steps of aspectual analysis to prepare for qualitative and quantitative assessment.

Before assessing, we need a clear idea of what it is meaningful to assess. The following are some steps help us do this, preparing for qualitative or quantitative assessment. The first few are described in [Chapter 5](#), and give us a picture of (possible) Good in the situation we are assessing.

- ◆ Identify which **aspect(s)** most makes each meaningful.
- ◆ Ask whether values meaningful in **other aspects** should be included.
- ◆ Think about the **full constellation** of each relevant aspect, to fill out our understanding and maybe prompt further observation or study.
- ◆ Keep in mind the **Good** as well as Harmful.
- ◆ Use **inter-aspect analogy** to bring up other issues.
- ◆ Identify **relationships** among those.

Those conceptualize Good. Now bring Harm in, and how things operate.

- ◆ Think about **corresponding dysfunction** and harmful repercussions of each issue.
- ◆ Consider the **Good and Harmful repercussions** of those in each aspect, both actual and possible, and how the dysfunction both causes harm in each aspect and also prevents good.
- ◆ Link these together as **inter-aspect dependency**. For example, what role does education (lingual functioning) play in productivity (economic, formative), or productivity in education?
- ◆ Look especially at the role of **mindset-attitude**, pistic and ethical dysfunction or good functioning, in warping the functioning of other aspects towards Harm or steering them towards Good. For example, using Graeber’s example, does elevation of the juridical aspect undermine productivity of an organisation?
- ◆ Do you need to **cycle back**; for example, have any other aspects come to mind while understaking these steps?

Though presented as a sequence of steps, they can be executed in any order. This gives us a picture the kinds of Good and Harm that characterize the situation we are assessing. The Good and Harm might be in different aspects, but can also be in the same aspect. Remember, things might be meaningful in ways we do not expect; do not overlook them.

7-4.3 Qualitative Methods for Assessing Harm and Good

Summary: Harm versus Good may be assessed by several methods, both qualitative and quantitative.

In **qualitative assessment** of Harm and Good, we must consider **all kinds of good and harm**, both human and and the non-human environment, and how different kinds **interact**? The above steps can prepare us by assembling many meaningful issues to be assessed.

Causal maps can be useful visual aids to thinking about what 'causes' what harm and good, and presenting our thinking about them. Figure 7f-eqns above is a broad-brush view for rapid delivery. Figure f7-causal below shows a more detailed causal map, redrawn from Figure 1 of Garcia-Andreu [2017] with aspects added that make each issue problematic or at least meaningful.

<img src = ""pix/f7-causal.gif" alt = "Example causal map showing multiple factors harming the agriculture sector. 1808,2250" width = 603 height = 750

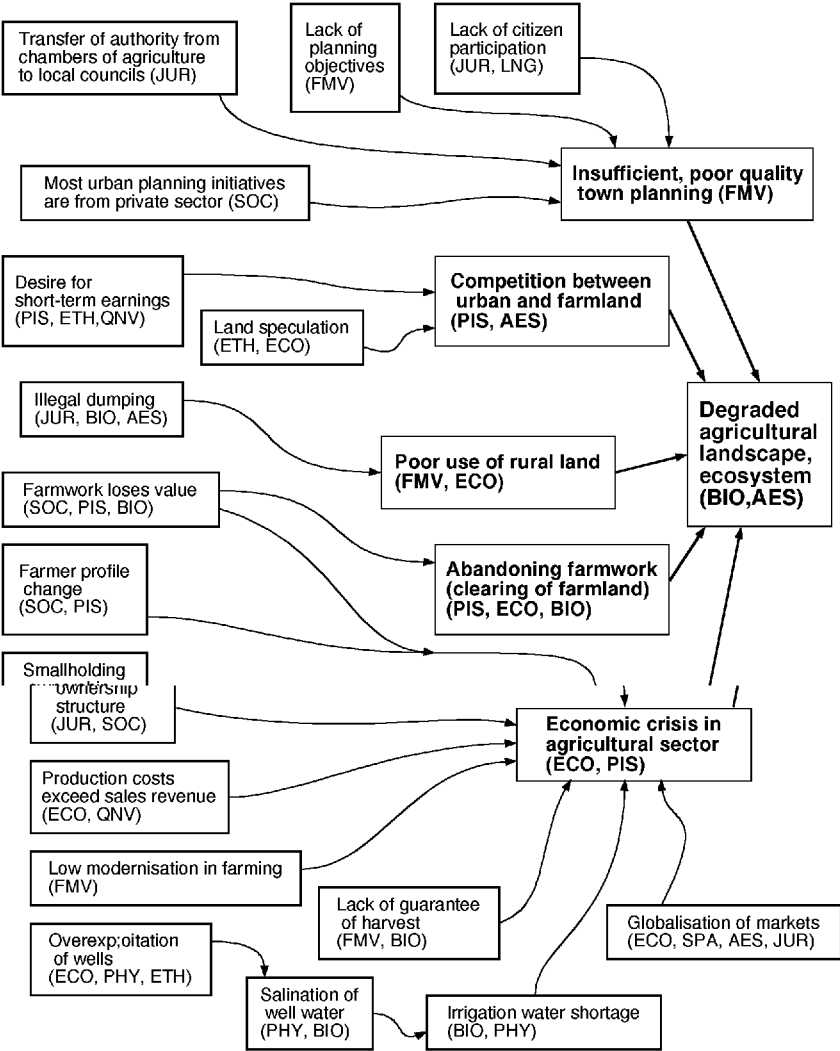


Figure f7-causal. Example causal map showing multiple factors harming the agriculture sector

This diagram shows several things: (a) multi-stage 'causality'; (b) that one factor can 'cause' several things; (c) most factors have several aspects that make them important. Notice also some mistakes to avoid: (a) Some items bespeak harm (e.g. farmwork losing value) while others are merely neutral (e.g. farmer profile). (b) Some penultimate factors are all very general and arguably do not 'cause' the final factor; for example, to say that an economic crisis leads to degraded landscape and ecosystem is not very helpful because nothing can be done about it. There are four questions that may be asked to improve such causal maps:

- ◆ “Why?” of each link between antecedents and consequents, e.g. “Why does farmwork losing value” lead to degraded ecosystem and landscape?
- ◆ “What else?” might contribute to a consequent, e.g. “What else beside dumping might contribute to poor use of rural land?”
- ◆ “What is?” to clarify the precise meaning of a factor, e.g. “What exactly is poor use?”
- ◆ “When not?” to see if there are conditions under which a causal link does not operate, e.g. “When might low modernisation not lead to economic crisis?”

7-4.4 Quantitative Assessment of Good and Harm

Summary: There are various quantitative ways to assess Good and Harm in or by the economy.

In **quantitative assessment**, assign quantitative values or amounts to each meaningful functioning and/or repercussion. As discussed in Chapter 5, this may be precise or approximate. The ‘fir tree’ shown in Figure 7f-firtree shows the amount of Good and Harm meaningful in each aspect of some situation, as the length of bars, Harm to left, Good to right.

<img src = “pix/aspect.tree.gif” alt- “‘Fir tree’ showing ‘amount’ of Good and Harm in each aspect 736, 871” width = 368 height = 436

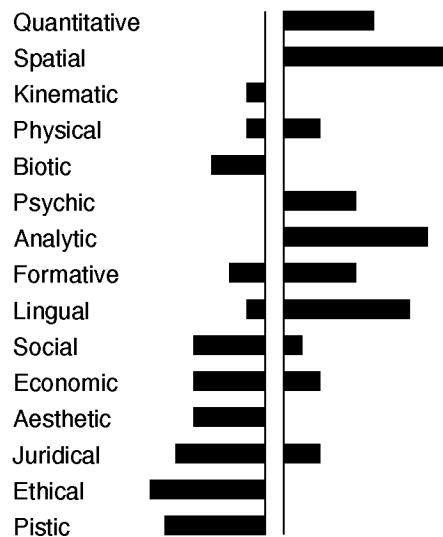


Figure 7f-firtree. ‘Fir tree’ showing ‘amount’ of Good and Harm in each aspect.

Such quantitative depictions offer an overview understanding. Look, not at the precise quantitative amounts, but at patterns. Notice that there can be both Harm and Good meaningful in the same aspect simultaneously. For example, building a new coal mine can bring justice to workers but injustice to planet and future generations by contributing to climate change (juridical aspect). One way to construct such ‘fir trees’ is to obtain detailed, and wide-ranging descriptions and views of the situation of interest and ask, for each phrase, “Which aspects makes this important as either Good or Harm?” and count up the number of times each aspect appears. A variant may be to assign weighting to each such occurrence of an aspect.

Such pictures can stimulate and guide further investigation, to obtain deeper understanding. Aspects with high levels of Harm prompt us to understand why Harm occurs there and maybe do something about it. Aspects with high levels of Good might be investigated to see whether the Good is actual, or just commonly

assumed, and also to understand what leads to it, so that it will not be undermined. Aspects low in either might be checked to see whether any Good or Harm has been overlooked. All such investigation is likely to be qualitative rather than quantitative in nature and, as mentioned in Chapter 6, to be based on understanding aspect kernel meanings along with inter-aspect relationships.

More precise quantitative assessment of Good and Harm might involve market prices. In conventional economics quantitative values are assigned to entities like capital or wages, and that indeed might be done but only as a secondary adjunct, because what is really important is the functioning in each aspect and its repercussions. It is those that contribute to Overall Good. The prices of goods might usefully be used in calculating repercussions, along with other factors.

Our approach can be useful both in augmenting, refining and extending current ones and in devising new measures. Example of using this are given later to enhance GDP and Supply-and-Use tables.

7-4.5 Assessing Useless Economic Activity

Summary: Several practical tips on assessing Useless economic activity.

To assess Useless economic activity presents different challenges from assessing Harm. Whereas empirical evidence may be obtained from pandemics etc., as above, these can be only indicative and we need deeper understanding. It is tempting to assume essentiality (and even productivity) is purely subjective, with no objective standard for assessment, but that too often hides externalities, including threats to the planet and ecosphere, and makes us unconcerned and self-centred, often focusing on our rights rather than responsibilities. The following questions, in three groups, can be useful (though draft as yet).

1. **Indicators** of Useless economic activity. By asking the following questions about an economic activity, a rich picture may be constructed.

- ◆ What would happen **if this economic activity did not occur**?
- ◆ What **surfeit** of anything (food, material goods, comfort, technology, convenience, pleasures, and the like) is there? Especially when compared with those in non-affluent but stable cultures? Surfeit can indicate non-essentials.
- ◆ What **imbalances** in economic activity are there? These can indicate unproductivity, or the production of non-essentials. For example, a huge marketing effort probably indicates non-essentials, especially when accompanied by incentives or pressure, because they are trying to turn wishes and wants into needs and decisions to buy.
- ◆ Does something happen **purely for reputation**, e.g. “iconic” projects? These often waste considerable amounts of resources for little benefit.
- ◆ Are there people who believe the economic activity is **absurd**, such as Schumacher’s biscuit lorries? If so, in which aspects is it absurd?
- ◆ **Opportunity costs**: What Good is not being done that could and should be done?

2. **Motivations**. These can help us reveal supposedly Useful economic activity as Useless.

- ◆ What are the **real motivations** for this economic activity? Ask “Why does it occur? Why is it important?” to obtain some first level motivations, which are meaningful in aspects that people already agree on. These are only

surface motivations however, so ask “Why is that motivation important?” Often, a deeper motivation is revealed. If necessary, ask “Why?” about that. (Note: take note of both surface and deeper motivations together, according to the aspects that make them meaningful.)

- ◆ Are these deeper motivations self-centred or self-giving? Are they valid elevation of an aspect or undue elevation, even idolatry? This reveals **mindset-attitude** of those involved. Self-centredness and idolatry very often indicates non-essentials and unproductivity, and can reveal the hidden agendas that fuel them.
- ◆ How much of the motivation is **aesthetic** (as discussed in 7-3.4 Challenges of Identifying Non-essentials). Since aesthetic functioning is often tied up with non-essentiality, identify in what ways, so that judgement may be made whether it is valid and within reasonable limits, or idolatrous, selfish and a surfeit. Do not judge by the rationality and norms of the aesthetic aspect, but by those of post-aesthetic aspects, such as the juridical aspect of whether the aesthetic activity generates or perpetrates injustices, such as slave labour. So justice (to the poor, to the planet, to future generations and, as Christians and other religious people might add, in the eyes of God) are usually more important than my aesthetic pleasure and convenience. But this priority is not to end in legalistic or ascetic obliteration of the norms of earlier aspects. In trying to curb excessive aesthetic functioning that does injustice, do not forget love by which a person is pleased to give enjoyment, at their own expense, to another. No, claims C.S. Lewis, we do NOT have a “right to happiness” [Note: Happiness

3. **Spread.** Useless economic activity can become widespread and the impact of this should be considered. Example: Decades ago, flying and driving were done very very few, so the environmental damage they did was of little concern. Now that these have become widespread in affluent cultures, and transport contributes one third of all climate change emissions and is the only sector in which it is rising, it has become a major concern. That most of it is non-necessary, means that we can (voluntarily) drive and fly much less than we do without serious harm to our lifestyles. Three main questions may be asked in considering spread.

- ◆ What would happen if this economic activity became **widespread** (by millions or billions of people) across society or even globally, especially if heavily marketed so that its products become an aspiration, then an expectation? Consider different contexts that are currently unforeseen.
- ◆ What harm would the economic activity do to the **environment or climate** if it became global? What contribution to harmful ecological footprint? Consider direct and indirect impacts together.
- ◆ How might **attitude and mindset** of community, society or world be changed by widespread acceptance of this Useless economic activity? Impact of attitude and mindset back onto economic activity is discussed elsewhere.

These questions help us assess how important it is to remove Useless economic activity, whether non-essential or unproductive. In quantitative evaluation, the assessment might not be taken as precise numbers so much as indicators that can move us towards wisdom - and transparency - not driven by vested interests and hidden agendas. (x Many religions say that we will be judged harshly for the latter by God, who “judges the heart.” x)

7-4.6 Assessing Juridical, Ethical and Pistic Structures

Summary: How to assess societal structures that bend societies and economies towards the Harmful and Useless.

Since the three aspects that constitute societal structures, juridical, ethical and pistic, retrocipate so many others (including economic activity), they require

special consideration, as discussed in [Section §6.2.4](#). The Good, Harmful or Useless economic activity cannot be properly understood or assessed without these.

When assessing the juridical aspect of economic activity, we must take into account:

- ◆ Acts of justice or injustice, appropriateness or inappropriateness, by agents (individuals, households, firms, governments, etc.);
- ◆ How rules, laws, policies etc. bend agent functioning towards Good or Harm.
- ◆ How rules etc. are shaped by ethical and pistic functioning.

When assessing the ethical aspect of (attitude that shapes) economic activity, we must take into account:

- ◆ Individual acts of self-giving or selfishness, generosity or meanness, openness or self-protection, trust or distrust, sacrifice or competitiveness, by agents;
- ◆ How self-giving or selfish attitudes bend other agents towards either Good, Harm or Uselessness in any aspect;
- ◆ How the attitude that pervades society (e.g. competitive self-advantage) shapes policies and laws that are set in place.
- ◆ How attitudes are impacted by mindset.

When assessing the pistic aspect of (mindset underlying) economic activity, we must take into account:

- ◆ Individual acts by agents, of belief or refusal to believe what is reasonable, courage or cowardice, loyalty or betrayal, right worship or idolatry, and what agents take to be most important or meaningful, what they assume, presuppose and ignore, in which the 'what' might be understood in terms of which aspects most make it meaningful;
- ◆ How the beliefs, expectations, aspirations, assumptions that prevail in society bend people towards Good, Harm or Useless activity in any aspects;
- ◆ How the prevailing beliefs etc. shape the rules, laws and policies that we set in place, especially in what society presupposes as meaningful and meaningless, the latter sometimes drilling loopholes in laws;
- ◆ How the prevailing beliefs etc. encourage and foster self-giving or selfishness, trust or distrust, sacrifice or self-protection, helpless or competitiveness, etc.

Exactly how these are taken into account, qualitatively or quantitatively, depends on our needs. Much still needs exploring. Academia has seldom done the necessary research, and teaches these very inadequately, if at all, so they remain something of a mystery. **Research project:** Investigate good ways to assess those.

This is why mindset and attitude are so important, and economics needs urgently to take them into account. They are often hidden, indirect and longer-term in their effects. They are less obvious than the juridical, yet pervasive, not only within particular jurisdictions (juridical structures), but across cultures. It can be a long time before they are recognised and taken seriously - if they even recognised at all. Selfish or idolatrous agendas prevent us thinking carefully of many kinds of possibility that do not suit them - until somebody arrives whose attitude and mindset is different. (X. Being such a person might be one of the genuine contributions that Christians or followers of other religions can prophetically and powerfully yet gently offer.)

7-4.7 GDP: An Initial Proposal

Summary: GDP may be redefined in a way that subtracts Harmful economic activity,

In [Rethinking GDP](#) we suggest that instead of calculating GDP as all (monetary) all economic activity, whether good and harmful added together, it may be calculated by **subtracting the harmful**. That is,

$$\text{GDP} = \text{Good} - \text{Harm}$$

Good and Harm are measured for each aspect and then totalled. This has some interesting implications.

7-5. Action to Reduce Harm, Discourage Useless and Increase Good

Summary: What changes are needed to bring into economics the distinction between Good, Harmful and Useless economic activity?

How should economics theory and practice change to take the difference between Good, Harmful and Useless into account? How can we reduce Harm, discourage Useless economic activity and increase Good, as a proportion of individual, communal, national or global economic activity? **significant changes are needed**. Some changes are radical, some are incremental. Even though our critique of economics is more radical than most, it does not require the complete reordering of society in the way that some thinkers suggest. To provide practical specificity, we discuss economic planning, then discuss kinds of change meaningful in each aspect. Some changes are to individual agency, some to societal structures, but most involve both radical and incremental changes.

7-5.1 Radical and Incremental Changes

Summary: We need both radical and incremental changes, not one or the other.

Some argue for incremental changes, some for radical changes, usually of whole structures of society. We argue for an integrated advance on both fronts. On the one hand, incremental changes have so far brought many improvements in human life, such as health, nutrition, life expectancy, the dignity of the disabled, etc. On the other hand, incremental changes have proven to be insufficient. The incremental changes that are being suggested are nowhere near enough to prevent catastrophic climate change and biodiversity loss, for example. Radical change is needed too. (x Jesus said his disciples were salt and light; is salt incremental and light more radical? x)

Note that incremental-radical is not identical to individual-societal; we need both in both.

Instead of arguing this at an abstract level, we have used Dooyeweerd's aspects to consider actions of both kinds, categorising them by aspect and encouraging the building of a complete picture. We start with action meaningful in the economic aspect and then discuss some others.

All are examples, and not the entire changes needed.

7-5.2 Economic Planning Around Harmful and Useless Economic Activity

Summary: Economic planning should aim to increase Good, prevent or rectify Harmful and reduce Useless economic activity.

However much or little the economy is planned, by governments or companies, at least some strategy decisions are and should be made by those with responsibility to do so. The aim of economic planning must be to **increase Overall Good** and decrease Harm and maybe discourage Useless economic activity, while remembering that all people make the actual contributions to these. We discuss government planning but similar principles apply in company economic planning.

Chapter 4 outlines some [discussions](r4-mmm.html#s-daeg) about economic growth. Many, especially politicians, just assume growth is Good, but, since it is becoming obvious that that is false, a growing number of people are suggesting post-growth, de-growth or beyond-growth. The [EU \[2023\] study on *Beyond Growth*](r.html#r-eu23) brings out many important points. It is most likely that affluent nations will need to abandon their commitment to economic growth and **shrink their economies**, allowing poor nations need to grow their economies, both within a sustainable ecological footprint.

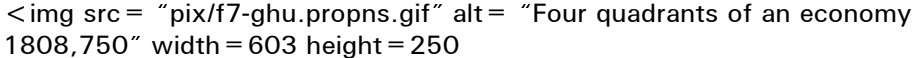
7-5.2.1 Economic planning without aspects

Summary: Calculating amounts of Harmful or Useless economic activity against Good, can help planners prioritise actions or policy-makers, their policies.

Current economic planning presupposes the Goodness of all economic activity. Can it be modified to separate out Harmful and Useless activity from Good? A simple overall strategy might be:

- ◆ Activity encourage and grow sectors that contribute mainly Good.
- ◆ Actively discourage and shrink sectors that contribute mainly Harm.
- ◆ Slightly encourage or discourage sectors that are Useless but contribute small amounts of Good or Harm respectively, and do so according to context in history, ecology, culture and religion.

Strategic planning involves setting priorities. Figure 7-5.2a demarcates the economy into four quadrants: Useful-Good, Useless-but-Good, Harmful-yet-Useful, Harmful-Useless.

 alt = "Four quadrants of an economy 1808,750" width = 603 height = 250

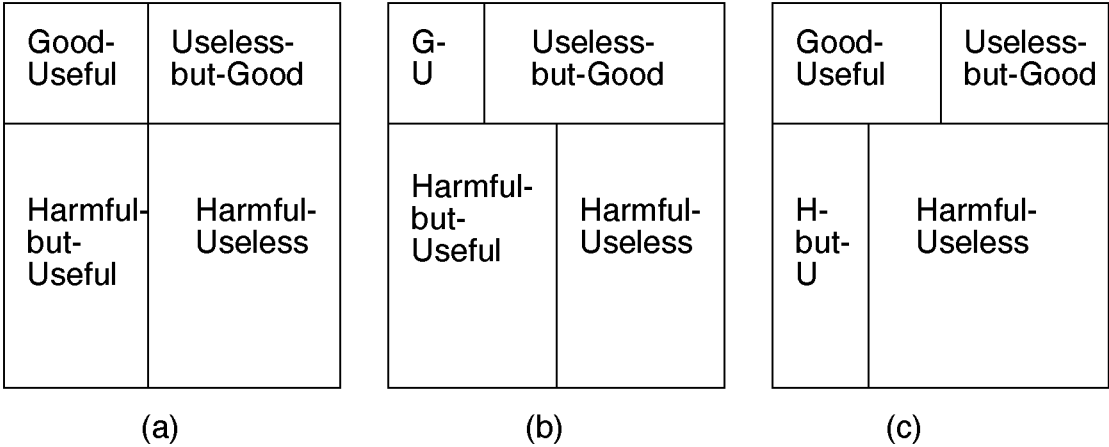


Figure f7-ghu.propns. Four quadrants of an economy. (a) Useless, Harmful independent; (b) More Useless in Good; (c) More Useless in Harmful.

Wisdom and the aim of contributing to Overall Good would suggest the following strategic priorities:

- ◆ Priority 1: Actively shrink Harmful-Useless; actively encourage Useful-Good.
- ◆ Priority 2: Shrink Harmful-but-Useful by actively finding other (Good) ways to achieve the Useful.
- ◆ Priority 3: Reduce Useless-but-Good, probably by actively encouraging Useful-Good to displace it.

How these are carried out does involve policies and legislation but it requires much more than these, action in all aspects as discussed below. (Legislation alone tends to arouse anger and resistance, these days.)

That is the overall idea, but we can do better. First we can recognise that the proportions of Useless in the Good and Harmful might differ. Two possibilities call for two different strategies. If a greater proportion of Good is Useless than that of Harm (Figure 7-5.2b), then the strategy might put more emphasis on finding ways to achieve more Useful-Good, displacing the Useless-Good. If the a greater proportion of Harmful is Useless than that of Good (Figure 7-5.2c) - as we might suspect it is at present in affluent economies today, not least because it does Harm to attitude and mindset - then the appropriate strategy might be to target the Useless, on the grounds that doing so will also reduce Harm, and it can potentially become more acceptable to most citizens, if handled aright, because, in their deepest intuitions they know these things are non-necessary and/or unproductive and do Harm. during the pandemic, while the savings of the more wealthy increased, those of the poorest 20% reduced, suggesting that the wealthiest had previously been spending on non-essentials. If so, could we reduce the consumption of non-essentials without undue hardship?

A further refinement is to enhance **Supply and Use Tables**, which show the total economic value in each sector of a nation's economy, divided between domestic and that which is traded with other nations; see Table t7-sut. As with GDP, they conflate Harm, such as pollution or climate change emissions, with Good and omit high-value unpaid work, such home-making. The figure for each sector may be split into two, the amount of Good and Harmful economic activity in it, as in Table t7-sut. Then planners gain a clear picture of which sectors should be reduced or discouraged, and, more importantly, why. As a quick rule, sectors high on Harm should be discouraged, even shrunk, sectors high on Good should be positively encouraged. Attached to each table should be an aspectual explanation of how it was calculated, especially a qualitative explanation of the Good or Harm being done and why it is given the value it is.

Table t7-sut. Example of Supply and Use Table (a) original, (b) showing Good and Harm

(Click of picture for full size)

< a href = "pix/t7-sutables.gif" >

<img src = "pix/t7-sutables.gif" alt = "Example of Supply and Use Table showing Good and Harm 1664,825" width = 555 height = 275

Products	Domestic output		Imports						
			Goods			Services			
	Good	Harm	EU		Rest of world		Good	Harm	
Good			Harm	Good	Harm	Good			Harm
Agriculture									
Production									
Construction									
Distribution									
Information									
Financial									
Real Estate									
Support services									
Government									
Other services									

Exactly how quantitative figures are calculated in detail, and the role of market prices, is still being explored and calls for research. Aspectual assessment has been carried out in various fields, and shown to be possible, operational and fruitful; its application in economics requires development.

Amount of Useless economic activity in each may be added as a third column of SU Tables, but assessing Useless usually needs a more nuanced approach.

In Figure f7-sut, we have taken the UK figures for 2019 (a year before the Pandemic and while the UK still claimed to be in front of climate responsibility) and split each figure by our intuitive estimate of the proportion of each that brings Good and Harm. For example, in Agriculture, we assign as follows, with a bias towards climate and environmental responsibility (so readers may assign their own proportions instead).

- ◆ Domestic output: 60% Good, 40% Harmful (soil depletion, destruction of biodiversity, obesity, etc.);
- ◆ EU Goods: 65% Good, 35% Harm, because EU countries are better at organic farming that does less Harm;
- ◆ Rest of World Goods: 35% Good, 65% Harm, because (a) climate change emissions in shipping; (b) much imported from LDNs deprives local people of their food-growing land;
- ◆ Services: 40% Good, 60% Harm, because much of them is Useless so only their Harmful effects are important.

Those are only illustrative examples. In similar ways, many other extant measures can be modified by splitting.

7-5.2.2 Economic planning using aspects

Summary: Using aspects we can make more specific economic plans and policies.

Derived from extant models without reference to aspects, those approaches suffer from disadvantages. One is that those in a sector might fight to defend it from being shrunk, outsourcing their Harm to others. Some sectors of the economy are notoriously Harmful, such as aviation, fossil fuels, tobacco or gambling. Those sectors should shrink because of the harm they do, despite some good they might contribute, such as “providing jobs”, paying taxes or personal convenience or pleasure. (One reason governments resist this is the assumed belief that “everyone must have an airline” etc.; see [r6-](#)

[fun.html#s-atdf](#)) > *Attitude as Functioning*.) But proposals to shrink named sectors invites political backlash.

Another disadvantage is that different kinds of Harm are mixed together. Since different kinds of Harm call for different kinds of solution, it is not wise to hide the differences among them.

So, instead of separating by sector, as in Supply-and-Use Tables, it may be wiser to collect together all Harms of one kind from all sectors, and address them all together. Kinds of Harm and appropriate solutions align with aspects. We have already discussed how to quantify Harm and Good in each aspect.

To reduce Harm, and increase Good, we need to address all aspects of our functioning head-on - while not forgetting our economic functioning but integrating both together. (This is another manifestation of the [r4-mmm.html#s-iwvn](#)) > interwovenness of economics.)

7-5.3 Economic Aspect Action: Taxes, Incentives and Subsidies

Summary: Taxes, incentives and subsidies take on a different aura when we consider aspects.

Taxes that are aimed at discouraging Harm (e.g. Pigouvian taxes) have some effect, but also many failings. Not least is the problem of measurement and determining the right level of tax for some Harm that is non-measurable. Also, they do not take into account connections with other factors, as our idea of [r4-mmm.html#s-iwvn](#)) > multi-aspectual interwovenness requires. For example, if a widespread Harm is taxed, governments have a strong incentive to encourage that Harmful activity because they obtain income from taxes. Such conundrums make relying on taxes to reduce Harm ineffective. At the individual level, if the Harmful or Non-essentials become expensive, they often become aspired to, and this actually encourages rather than discourages Harm and Uselessness. Much of the success of Pigouvian taxes relies on functioning in aspects other than the economic, such as those of psychology or motivation. Nevertheless, such taxes have a valid role in encouraging Good and discouraging Harm, when they are part of a wider strategy that takes all aspects into account.

Incentives and **subsidies** designed to encourage some Good economic activity may also be used, maybe to leverage other finance. However, most subsidy regimes do not have such an aim in mind. Conventionally, subsidies are categorised along two dimensions, one being what economically- meaningful thing is being subsidised (production, consumption, taxes, etc.), the other being whether they are broad or narrow. There seems to be no attempt to categorise them by the kind of Good they might bring about - unless this is tied to certain sectors that the governments favour. One weakness of relying on subsidies is that they can become "perverse" in that they begin generating Harm, for example fisheries subsidies have led to overfishing. Because they are often part of the status quo, perverse subsidies are not tackled as robustly as they should be.

Adherence to economic growth encourages both Harmful and Useless economic activity more than Good, because of our selfishness and idolatry. So some have tried austerity, especially in the framework of a command economy. Austerity might have some useful role, in that it prevents over-expenditure on Harm and Non-essentials [= = = ref: effects of austerity on externalities and non-essentials] but it has other ramifications that are both counter-productive and Harmful. In cultures where most people assume they have a right to their affluent lifestyles, people get angry about what they see as austerity and resist, reinforcing selfish attitudes.

What undermines the effectiveness of taxes and subsidies as (dis)incentive is the impact of other aspects. We will briefly consider several, especially the ethical and pistic aspects. For example, governments could find ways to accept lower tax income on large Harmful sectors, but they choose not to because of their heart attitude is self-centred and they idolise income or the protection of certain sectors.

Other economic actions, such as incentives, insurance, or debt, debt cancellation, markets, etc. could also be analysed in such ways. We leave that to readers, and to future research.

7-5.4 Psychological, Analytical and Formative Aspect Action: Behavioural Methods

===== to be written about behaviour modification and reaction training. Draw on experience of behavioral economics.

7-5.6 Lingual Aspect Action: Information, Education and Persuasion

===== to be written. Education, information. media, advertising

7-5.7 Social Aspect Action:

===== to be written: social influence, working together; arranging social structures; peer pressure

7-5.5 Juridical Aspect Action: Policy and Responsibility

Summary: Responsibility is important in planning.

In our juridical functioning, we have juridical actions like policy-making, and a juridical disposition of a sense responsibility.

Governments can legislate, forming policies and laws that govern economic activity. Let us consider the example of **expanding or shrinking sectors of the economy**. The RLDG discussions recognised that differentiating Harm and Useless from Good implies that some sectors of the economy must shrink, and others no longer be encouraged to grow. Is that an elephant in the room of politics and political economy, and also of most conventional economics? There seems to be no serious discussion among our legislators and opinion-formers about which sectors must shrink, and how to ensure they do.

Various contrarian groups like Just Stop Oil call for certain sectors to be shrunk. But they are a “voice in the wilderness”, which does not get heard by the establishment, each makes a specific call concerning one sector, with little holistic awareness, and they seldom discuss how to shrink their nominated sector without incurring ===== other harms. Such groups, such voices, are needed because of the intransigence of the establishment.

Yet humanity (both the establishment and contrarion groups together) has responsibility to think about these things, not just engage in battles one against the other. (Jews and Christians will see what we say as like to God giving humanity the mandate to ‘shepherd’ the rest of Creation rather than just please itself.)

Responsibility is a disposition more than an action, almost an attitude. There needs to be a **sense of responsibility** among us if we are to excise Harmful and reduce Useless economic activity. A “sense of responsibility” is wider than responsibility to a particular party. “Our first duty is to shareholders” will not do.

That is what led the East India Company to heinous cruelty and arrogance during famine.

Economic responsibility has been defined as “====” [Negru ===]. Notice the commitment to something that approximates to multi-aspectual Overall Good. Responsibility is functioning in the juridical aspect to give full due to all, where this targets all and every aspect and kind of entity. Narrow responsibility to just one kind of entity (e.g. shareholders) or one aspect (e.g. the economic or even the juridical itself) alone does Harm not Good.

=== sees economic responsibility as one of four components of **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**, along with environmental, ethical and === responsibility. However, CSR is often narrowed, especially when used by companies as a reputational tick-box exercise. Frequently some aspectual dysfunction is mixed in, and firms seldom seriously look at the Harm done by their products. When CSR is undertaken for selfish reasons (e.g. to boost the reputation or shareholder attractiveness of a firm) it is ethical dysfunction and so contributes indirectly to Overall Harm by reinforcing self-centred attitudes, including cynicism, in society.

However, the incorporation of CSR into the culture of business, even in this limited sense, has been helpful in instilling throughout society a change in mindset-attitude away from “our profits only” to some sense of responsibility. The lingual functioning of media and discourse and the social functioning of peer pressure have played important parts in this welcome shift. But we need to go further, to ensure a fuller, wiser idea of CSR prevails.

However, “Reform must come from within, not from without. You cannot legislate for virtue.” [James Cardinal Gibbons] Adopting a sense of responsibility is not itself juridical functioning but rather ethical and pistic.

7-5.8 Ethical and Pistic Aspects Action: Change of Heart Attitude-Mindset

Summary: Attitude and mindset (heart) are even more important to take into account in economic planning.

This refers to changing our functioning in two aspects, ethical and pistic, in such a way that a different attitude and mindset pervades (affluent) society, as well as in individuals. Change of heart is the most radical of all changes, not least because it affects all else.

Changing our pistic functioning refers to changing aspirations and expectations, assumptions and presuppositions that we take for granted. Especially we must turn away from idolatry or undue elevation of the economic or any other aspect or institution or even our own views, and from our hidden agendas and stubborn refusal to change. It works by inspiring, more than coercion, or offering a new way of seeing things.

But it requires **repentance**, not mere reductions or reparations (incremental). True repentance is radical, as discussed in [Chapter 3](#). It is not just saying “Sorry” or making a few reparations (though reparations will usually occur willingly when someone truly repents), but a deep, “I was and am wrong; Help me change” (pistic functioning). It is contrition of the kind that leads to action that is costly to self (ethical functioning). Perhaps one of the most important areas of repentance required is that the entire field of economics needs to repent of making self-interest and competitiveness its centre, presupposed as good and necessary, along with repenting of its addiction to growth for growth’s sake in affluent economies. Again, this is among both individuals and society/culture.

We can see pistic change in individuals (e.g. religious conversion), but it also refers to collective pistic functioning too - change of mindset - the aspirations and expectations of a society or culture. Bringing that into our Rethink, it requires at least that affluent culture should turn away from affluent expectations of what is 'normal' and what people have a right to when these are Harmful and/or Useless, while those in non-affluent cultures should turn away from aspiring to the things they see in affluent culture that are Useless or cause Harm. (x Christians will remember Paul's words, "and having food and raiment, let us be therewith content" and Jesus' warnings to the affluent. x)

Change in our ethical functioning involves turning from a selfish, self-centred, self-protective, competitive, unconcerned attitudes towards others, including the non-human world. (x Christians will remember Jesus, when asked who the neighbour is whom we are supposed to love as ourselves, mentioned a member of a despised race and referred to heart of compassion rather than ethical rules.) Any limiting of to whom we take this attitude shows we have not yet this attitude as fully as we should. As with pistic functioning, this applies not only to individuals but to collective, cultural, societal attitudes, which are often constituted as tacit agreement.

Usually pistic and ethical functioning go hand in hand. Thus, in individualistic cultures, our presupposition of the supremacy of the individual makes it easier to allow, agree and encourage selfishness rather than self-giving. This may be why many recent thinkers [e.g. Trainer = = =] call not only for change to economic systems but also a move to a more communal (not communistic) society. Yet the mere call for communality is doomed to fail because it reduces the change needed to the social aspect and ignores mindset and attitude. The link between pistic and ethical is why true repentance almost always leads to willingness to make reparations that are costly to self.

A number of thinkers have discussed the need for this [Carney; = = =] and how it might be achieved [= = =] but the idea of repentance is usually lacking in what they propose, or else deeply hidden.

Whether such change of heart requires radical social nor even political restructuring is open to question, and examples both ways can be found; it is not discussed here because it depends on context.

Change of heart of a culture (pervading attitude and mindset) cannot be brought about by change of legislation, policies or such structures (juridical change), nor by education, marketing nor better information (lingual change), nor technological change (formative), nor even economic changes like austerity or prosperity, nor by aesthetic changes like comedy, novels or art, on their own, these aspects precede the ethical and pistic, which is where the problem lies. To change culture needs change in the ethical and pistic aspects, which then opens the way for all these pre-ethical changes to take effect too. Ethical change requires a turning from self-centredness, self-protection and a competitive attitude, to self-giving, open and generous attitude. Pistic change requires a shift in what we deem of ultimate importance. Both involve repentance not just problem-solving. To be fully effective, ethical and pistic changes must take place at all levels - individuals, households, companies, nations and even internationally. Such changes set an example that is followed by others, and then others, and yet others too; the mindset and attitude spread. (This may be an insight that Jewish and Christian ideas can contribute, even into secular debate, as discussed in Chapter 3, especially what has been learned from revivals.)

For more, see the discussion of <r3-dyx.html#s-xpsh> > Salvation and Hope and <r3-dyx.html#s-xpss> > Transforming in Chapter 3, whether or not one adopts a Christian belief. Let those of us who can or wish to do this now. Time is fast running out!

With such changes in culture, all other kinds of change are made more effective; we discuss this next.

7-5.9 Integrated Change

Summary: In economic planning, we need to keep all aspects in mind together.

Just as Dooyeweerd maintained that all aspects are equally important, so we need change of all the above kinds (and yet others not yet discussed). Just as he maintains all aspects cohere, so we integrated, coordinated, cohesive action in all aspects together. This will integrate incremental change (mainly meaningful in the earlier aspects) with radical change (mainly the final three aspects).

On one hand, none of the pre-attitudinal changes will achieve what we need without change in ethical and pistic functioning of attitude and mindset. For example, France legislated some mildly 'green' policies, and the Yellow Vests then rose up against them - the hearts of the people had not yet changed sufficiently. For example, too few affluent countries have admitted "We were wrong!"

Once attitude is changed, then the other measures - taxes, subsidies, policy, behavioural methods, education, etc. - can become effective. This is what happened during the Pandemic in most affluent countries: many people believed it was important and were willing to make what they saw as sacrifices and enjoy it. Such changes may be seen as a 'carrier' for ethical or pistic functioning.

On the other hand, changing attitude of heart without change in all other aspects is mere hypocrisy (important in Christian perspectives). Change in heart must be accompanied by change in action. For example, one of the few issues over which affluent nations have admitted "We were wrong" is slavery - but most are still reluctant to even consider reparations, which would show genuine repentance. (Another, smaller example is repudiation of CFCs in the Montreal Protocol, but that was much easier, requiring very little sacrifice.) For example, should we repent of the presupposition of free Oxygen from Brazilian and Indonesian forests?

Better science or more logical thinking (analytical functioning), better planning or technique or technology (formative), education or marketing (lingual), cooperation or social pressure (social), institutions (social), economic incentives or policy (economic), joined-up thinking (aesthetic) or rules and policies (juridical) are all important, but if soured by dysfunctional attitudes (ethical) or mindsets (pistic), they will ultimately fail. All of those actions are deeply influenced by attitude and mindset. For example, media content and entertainment help shape mindset and attitude, but the existing mindset and attitude of those who own and run media and entertainment companies determines what content they allow, so the media is particularly important in shaping society's mindset.

Only thus may culture be changed in the way that Ted Trainer [= = =] and others call for.

7-5.10 The Normative Practices Approach

Summary: = = = = to be written.

Hoogland's [= = =] Normative Practices Approach is an attempt to operationalize the normativity inherent in Dooyeweerd's aspects in engineering projects. Some of its insights might carry over to economics.

It rests on two foundations, "1. = = = = get text (constitutive side) 2. = = = = (regulative side)." It thus expresses something of the above need to employ both the attitudinal and other aspects together.

= = = = = then explain a little about how it works.

7-5.11 Conclusion of Actions

Summary: = = = = =

Beware! Treat the above honestly, and not just pick and choose pieces of it to suit our prejudices and vested interests.

7-6 Some Issues in Economics

Summary: We show how understanding the difference between Good, Harmful and Useless can be applied to various economics issues.

Several issues common in economics were discussed by the RLDG, applying the perspectives described in Chapter 3 and the ideas developed in these chapters. GDP has been discussed earlier. We discuss several others here, not to offer final commentary but to illustrate how extant issues may be addressed by the ideas in this chapter.

7-6.1 Monopoly and Innovation

Summary: = = = = = to be written

Most people believe that monopoly is harmful. But why? What is right and wrong about monopoly? Let us examine various aspects of the functioning of monopoly.

See ze21:

- # review the diverse problems leading to monopoly, incl econ, pis, eth, ling, social, jur aspects.
- # monopoly hinders innovation; buy up patents for good ideas
- # don't like to challenge their market
- # [is it monopoly or bigness?] oligopoly too
- # advantage of large corp, can invest in innovation.
- # [the attitude aspects of monopoly]

7-6.2 Competition and Competitiveness

Summary: Competitiveness is a Harm not a Good, and should not be put at the root of the Economy.

[Needs better treatment]

By many, **competition** presupposed as good and important yet **competitiveness**, the trying to put oneself above others, is a dysfunction in the ethical aspect of self-giving. Sadly, competitiveness seems to be a primary desideratum in business and economics. Let us lift a cover on competitiveness and competition.

Ironically, Googling "problems of competition" brought up many papers and articles that discuss how to remove hindrances to competition, rather than articles discussing competitiveness as problematic. Competition, it is presumed, guarantees innovativeness and is necessary for economic growth. Threats to competition are seen de-facto as bad and to be prevented almost at all costs. American antitrust legislation is designed to protect and promote competition.

Company (or university) management accepts without question being driven by competitiveness against rivals.

But what is the reality? Perhaps surprisingly to many, competition is not so applauded by economists as most assume. It is harmful for the environment [\[Porter & van der Linde 1995\]](#) and for health [\[Barros et al. 2015\]](#), and other things, because the logic forced upon companies is that they must disregard environmental and other issues in their Spenceristic struggle against their competitors. Much management in affluent cultures succumbs to this despite misgivings.

Competition is even often “**suboptimal**” for the Economy itself [Stücke 2013; Deutsch 2006]. Stücké [2013] examines competition from the perspective of Antitrust jurisprudence, designed to prevent barriers to competitiveness, he first reviews some of the supposed **virtues of competition**, mostly well-known (lowering costs, improving quality, widening choices, stimulating innovation, higher efficiency and productivity, as well as higher-level things like economic growth, and, supposedly, equality, democracy and wellbeing). He then discusses the not-so-known **downsides of competition**. Competitiveness drives firms to exploit weaknesses in customers, escalates bidding and thus increases costs, instils fear of being disadvantaged (e.g. when bidding), leading to illogical, wasteful and harmful decisions. Competitiveness is sub-optimal when individual interests diverge from those of the group or society (and, we add, Overall Good), especially in situations of lobbying, encourages lying and misinformation, favouritism, status-seeking and undue risk-taking. It increases the “appeal of materialism” [Fisher 55]. Competitiveness among intermediaries encourages deceit, inflating or distorting assessments of value.

Now, Stücké [2013] writes as one who uses economics. Economists themselves, however, are challenged by the **Paradox of Competition**, in which competitiveness eventually undermines itself and even delivers the opposite. Example: A detergent company advertises and increases its sales at the expense of others; they also advertise; in the end, no company benefits, but all reduce their profits because of their expenditure on advertising! Similarly with opening hours, wages, currency devaluations, etc. To a view from the economic aspect alone, this is a paradox, but from a wider, multi-aspectual view, it is no surprise that, ultimately, competition is counterproductive. (Even allowing for economic growth does not ultimately overcome the paradox; not argued here, except to point to the increase in Useless and often Harmful economic activity that occurs.)

The holistic, **multi-aspectual perspective**, with an understanding of repercussions of aspectual (dys)function in various aspects, which this Rethink brings, can help us separate out the benefits and harms of competition. Notice how the lower-level virtues are mostly meaningful in the economic aspect while the problems are meaningful in both economic and other aspects.

It also provides ground for an important distinction often overlooked, between **competition and competitiveness**. Competition is narrowed down in its meaning to being one bulwark against harmful monopolisation, a juridical concern. Competitiveness is an attitude, an ethical dysfunction that retrocipatorily sours and undermines functioning in most other aspects and depends on dysfunction therein.

For example, competitiveness both fosters and depends on deceit (lingual dysfunction). What drives competitiveness at the deeper level is often the thrill of achieving (formative aspect) regardless of consequences, and then greed or fear of losing out (both ethical dysfunction), upon which the lower-level virtues are cited merely as justifications. Examining the virtues of competition, we can see that most of them would still accrue with a collaborative or gift economy,

where good ethical functioning dominates. The supposed need for competitiveness presupposes the ethical dysfunction of self-interest apparently introduced by Adam Smith, which we argue is ultimately harmful and counterproductive. "To be, is to be in competitiveness" which most presuppose, is "the philosophy of Hell" [Lewis = = =, 92].

Even if we allow a narrowly-circumscribed competition to be beneficial as a bulwark against an evil monopolisation, it is not the only bulwark, so it is not essential.

What this implies is that, at the very least, economists and other opinion formers should recognise that a healthy economy *does not* require competition and *should not* encourage competitiveness. Work is underway to devise non-competitive economics, but it is often weakened by not explicitly understanding the ethical and pistic aspects (attitude and mindset). The presupposition of self-interest is false and fruitless, as has already been shown in our discussion of Adam Smith.

Research project: However, the above ideas are only initial. They need working out more precisely. Rethink competition and competitiveness via aspectual functioning and its good and harmful presuppositions, especially taking account of the ethical and pistic aspects.

7-6.3 Trickle-Down Economics

Summary: Trickle-Down Economics, that money made available to the wealthy ends up helping the poor, is argued for or against. Instead, we try to understand the deeper reasons why it does not currently work well, but might have some validity. This is a worked example of the above thinking.

= = = = this requires rearranging and shortening, and talking about attitude reasons.

What some call Trickle-Down Economics refers to money being made available to wealthy people metaphorically eventually trickling down to the poor. It is "made available" (supply-side) usually by government subsidies or cutting taxes. Supporters of Trickle-Down Economics argue that it encourages investments, which provides more jobs for 'the poor'. The idea is obviously favoured by most wealthy people and by those who dislike government taxes or impositions, to shield themselves from left-wing accusations of injustice to the poor. The word "trickle-down" is pejorative, coined by those who criticise it. We want to get beneath the pejorativity, to understand what is happening, and when it is harmful and when it is valid, and why.

There have been times when Trickle-Down Economics seems to have worked, such as the Reagan era, but most of the time it fails in fact. The main left-wing criticism of Trickle-Down Economics, however, is weak because it rests on the presupposition of money as owned commodity ("I should have as much money as you"), which is discussed in Chapter 8, and is weakened by the fact of money as flow (money flows to the poor), which Trickle-Down Economics recognises. There are **stronger and more fundamental reasons** why it fails: one relating to aspects, one relating to attitude-mindset around it, and one that it instils a negative attitude in society.

Almost all of the arguments among economists over *whether* Trickle-Down Economics works or not, are in terms, concepts and rationalities meaningful in the economic aspect, usually failing to properly consider *why* these effects occur.

The *why* involves multi-aspectual functioning, in which the economic functioning is an expression in that aspect of functioning in other aspects, but

those other aspects are not explicitly considered. Consider the following. Supporters refer to the Laffer Curve, which plots the amount of income governments would obtain against the rates of tax they impose, obviously zero for 0% tax, also zero for 100% tax because (they assume) nobody would work, but some in between, with a peak at some tax rate. It has been pointed out [Amadeo 2021a] that Laffer failed to give numbers for this, so it remains a motivating idea more than a useful tool for economic planning. That is all that can be seen via the single lens of the economic aspect. However, in reality, even with 100% tax, some might still work, because we like working (formative and aesthetic aspects) and like benefiting others (ethical aspect). These are reasons that are not visible through the lens of the economic aspect, but only via the lenses of other aspects.

Likewise, opponents argue only in terms of the economic aspect, for example, "Cutting taxes for the wealthy often does not translate to increased rates of employment, consumer spending, and government revenues in the long term" [Amadeo 2021b] and "The actions of a government don't take place in isolation. There are other factors that impact what companies and wealthy individuals will do with their capital, such as interest rates and the propensity to save" [Cattlin 2022]. But *why* does tax-cutting not "translate", *why* is there a propensity to save, and what determines interest rates? The answers involve factors like trust, fear, herd instinct, assumptions and aspirations, which are meaningful in the social, aesthetic, ethical and pistic aspects. (Actually, opponents do bring in a version of the juridical aspect, as in "The added income for the wealthy, resulting from tax cuts, will simply increase the growing income inequality" [Amadeo 2021b] but it is a thin version [See Inequality above.]

Most arguments resting on a one-dimensional understanding from the perspective of the economic aspect are limited, failing to align with practical reality, and misleading policy-making and planning. Instead, seeing economics as "[" among other spheres, meaningful in other aspects, allows us to ask "Why?" and "What else?" questions, such as "What else occurs at 100% tax rate?" "Why is it that cutting taxes for the wealthy often does not achieve what is promised?" Answering such questions is necessary for a full understanding. Various components of our Rethink suggests the following reasons why Trickle-Down Economics cannot work.](\"r4-mmm.html#s-embd\">embedded</a)

[= = = = this para to go before the three flaws?] We **critique Trickle-Down Economics** in terms of its contribution to Overall Good, asking what Good, Harmful or Useless economic activity is enabled by money at each of its steps. Resourcing the poor is usually Good economic activity, i.e. contributing to Overall Good (in the biotic aspect of keeping alive, the juridical aspect of justice, and maybe in the ethical aspect of care). That money eventually trickles down to the poor is thus a Good. Investment might also be a Good (in the formative aspect of innovation and industry) but this depends on what is invested in (i.e. the target aspect of the formative functioning), and this might be Harmful or Useless rather than, or as well as, Good. Moreover, the human functioning most directly enabled by the availability of money might itself be Harmful.

Therefore, Trickle-Down Economics might yield Harm rather than Good (which of course is not recognised in GDP) - and even in economic terms, markets often react to harm. Yielding harm is more likely among the wealthy, because their attitude is often "unconcerned" or "arrogant" [Ezekiel 16:49], dysfunctioning in the ethical and pistic aspects. (A Christian perspective also suggests the wealthy are further from what God intended because camels cannot get through eyes of needles.)

Perhaps for similar reasons, the first step of Trickle-Down Economics (the money made available to the wealthy) often yields Useless economic functioning instead of Good. It is only after several steps that it trickles down to those who will use the money received for more Good functioning, such as keeping alive or helping others. In such cases, the contribution to Overall Good is delayed rather than direct.

However, there is an exception, *Effective Altruism*, such as McGaskell's *Giving What We Can*, in which billionaires give their money away in a way that directly does Good. Those who want to battle over *whether* Trickle-Down Economics is goody or baddy can argue the finer points of how much altruism actually goes on, but we will not do so. Our concern would rather be over how to take account of structural issues, such as why there is a need for altruism in the first place, which are concerns about structures and attitudes that pervade society.

Yet again, we must highlight the importance of attitude: the ethical functioning that pervades society as either selfish or self-giving attitude, and the pistic functioning of what society tends to belief, commit to, aspire to, expect and assume - in short, what it worships. If all our attitudes were perfect, then it is likely that Trickle-Down Economics would work well to bring Overall Good, but because they are not, it fails to do so. Even more, the emphasis on making money available to those already wealthy does itself give a certain 'message' that exacerbates self-centredness and idolatry.

Instead of taking sides over Trickle-Down Economics, we try to understand it, and find that, in the present era, it usually is more Harmful than Good. It is interesting that some advocate Middle-Out Economics, in which money is made available to middle-earners, which then 'trickles' both up and down. Such people are, arguably, less likely to take so brazenly a self-centred and idolatrous attitude, and also mean that there are fewer steps that delay eventual Good.

7-7. Conclusion

Summary: = = = = = to be written

Why hadn't we understood the harm that was being done? Because it wasn't meaningful to economists or others.

We are not used to thinking GHU, so we will have to learn, and learn through experience, including making mistakes. [scrap-221203]

Here We have been able to distinguish Harm from Good because (a) we have identified aspects that are inherently normative, (b) we see economics as functioning in these aspects rather than as merely concerned with entities like capital.

- » Why our approach might be feasible in principle.
 - challenge: huge effort to evaluate all in each aspect
 - feasible because we as humanity already do that effort for GDP, but it is accepted and distributed among business reporting, tax returns, etc.

The examples in this chapter demonstrate how Dooyeweerd's aspects can help us tease apart the various components of each side of the argument, so we can think more carefully and perhaps more deeply, and lay things bare. They are NOT to be taken as an actual comment on the situation, because I know too little about it, and of course the following probably shows something of my biases, but it is an example of the **process of aspectual analysis**.

Notes and References

Notes

References

Deutsch M. 2006. Cooperation and competition. In M Deutsch, PT Coleman, EC Marcus (eds.) *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*, 23-42. Jossey-Bass, San Fransisco, USA.

Porter ME, van der Linde C. 1995, Fall. Toward a new conception of the environment-competitiveness relationship. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 9(4), 97-118.

Stücke ME. 2013. Is competition always good? *Journal of Antitrust Enforcement*, 1(1), 162-197.

Lewis CS. = = = . We have no right to happiness. *Saturday Post*, = = = = .

Schumacher EF. 1979. *Good Work*. Harper-Collins.

Wallop H. 2021, June 12. 'We are democratising the right to laziness': The rise of on-demand grocery deliveries. *The Guardian*. Retrieved June 17, 2022, from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/jun/12/the-rise-of-on-demand-grocery-deliveries/>

Created: From Section 7 in xnr2 Dec 2022.

Last updated: Many to 2 January 2023, extricate from n-e. 5 January 2023 responsibility: EIndiaCo. 6 January 2023 starting edit, to kinds of Harm. 7 January 2023 editing to mix. 9 January 2023 mix, to action. 10 January 2023 assess att, gdp, and action. 11 January 2023 intro rw, dealt with = = = = = , #. 19 January 2023 urbanisation, village. 21 January 2023 section on attitude. 23 January 2023 incremental and radical change. 31 January 2023 paradox of competition. 6 February 2023 formulae. 11 February 2023 est GHU amount. 16 February 2023 7-; investment from ch6. 22 February 2023 Ing hm: ads. 2 March 2023 summary. 16 March 2023 ?. 21 March 2023 summaries; no sharp bdy. 24 March 2023 BSjobs loss of dignity. 4 April 2023 edits to rearrange. 5 April 2023 continued major edits and rearrange. Uploaded. 6 April 2023 assess harm; various edits. 11 April 2023 moved note on idolatry to Ch 4 section. 12 April 2023 mz quote. 20 April 2023 type of n-e. 10 May 2023 some changes, and rearrange 7-1. 5 June 2023 new ch smy. 15 June 2023 Ezek, bit. 30 June 2023 from r4.

17 July 2023 rearranging. 18 July 2023 Concerns; Conflation. 20 July 2023 first few sects; conflation and GH mix. 21 July 2023 tips; causes of useless. 22 July 2023 causes; more on Useless. 24 July 2023 tips for assessing Useless. 25 July 2023 Planning. 4 August 2023 lots edits --- printed. 7 August 2023 ballpk figures. 8 August 2023 Planning, rid GDP. 10 August 2023 better on competn. 15 August 2023 edits. 16 August 2023 more. 17 August 2023 aspanal. 21 August 2023 intro, 19 September 2023 Harm rw. 20 September 2023 two Hm2econ merged; completed (K) of 230821. 22 September 2023 competitiveness. 23 September 2023 dealt with some = = = = = . 25 September 2023 ed Useless; list Bullshit. 26 September 2023 rw Non-ess challenge; some = = = = = . 28 September 2023 summary's. 29 September 2023 headings; ----- uploaded.