

Socially responsible climate and energy research?

**The human side of climate change
Bergen October 2015**

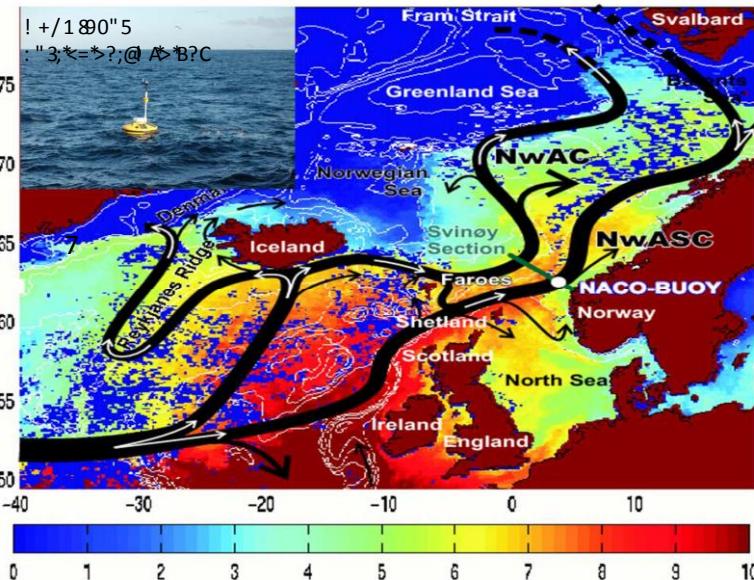
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<http://cs-n.org/>**

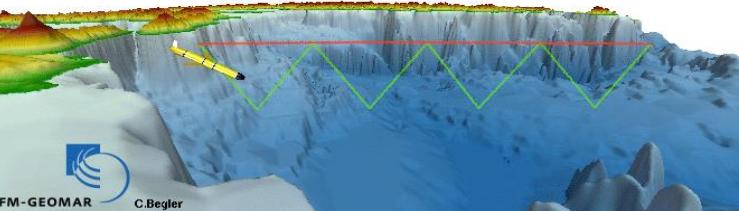
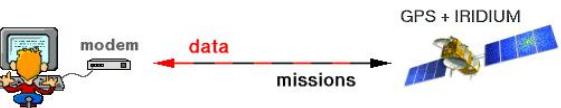


My focus in recent years:

1. The Geophysical Institute
2. Ocean observation systems
3. Science in society - CCS, geoengineering and communication
4. Energy transition and renewable energy



Example of ocean observation technology
– GFI/UiB running a national research facility with glider and buoy observatories off the Norwegian shelf



While professors talk about green cities and sustainability,
(I did in Izmir, Turkey on 8 May 2014)
students demand a fossil free university



7 May 2014 at University of Bergen

Evolution of climate and earth system science the last 25 years

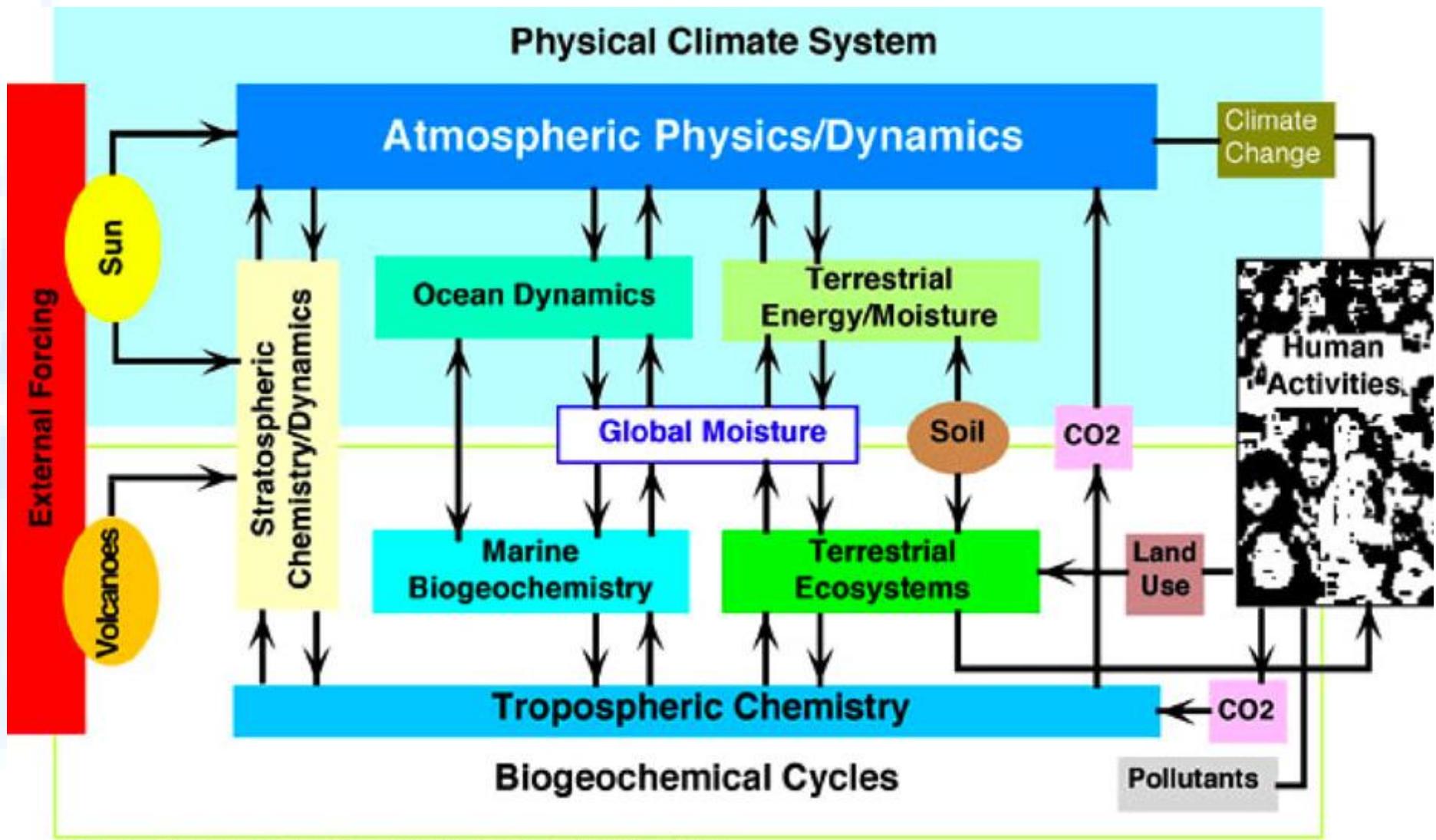
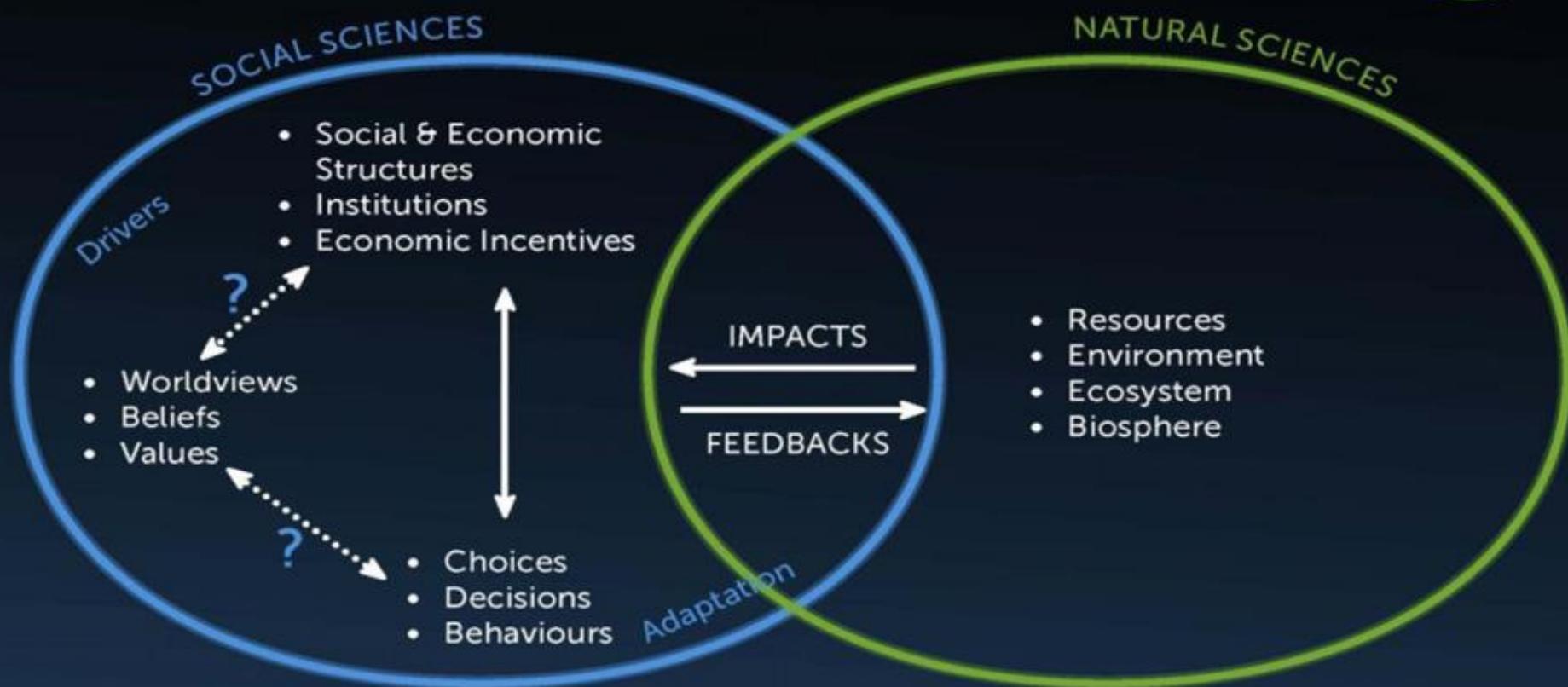


Fig. 1 – The Bretherton diagram (simplified version).

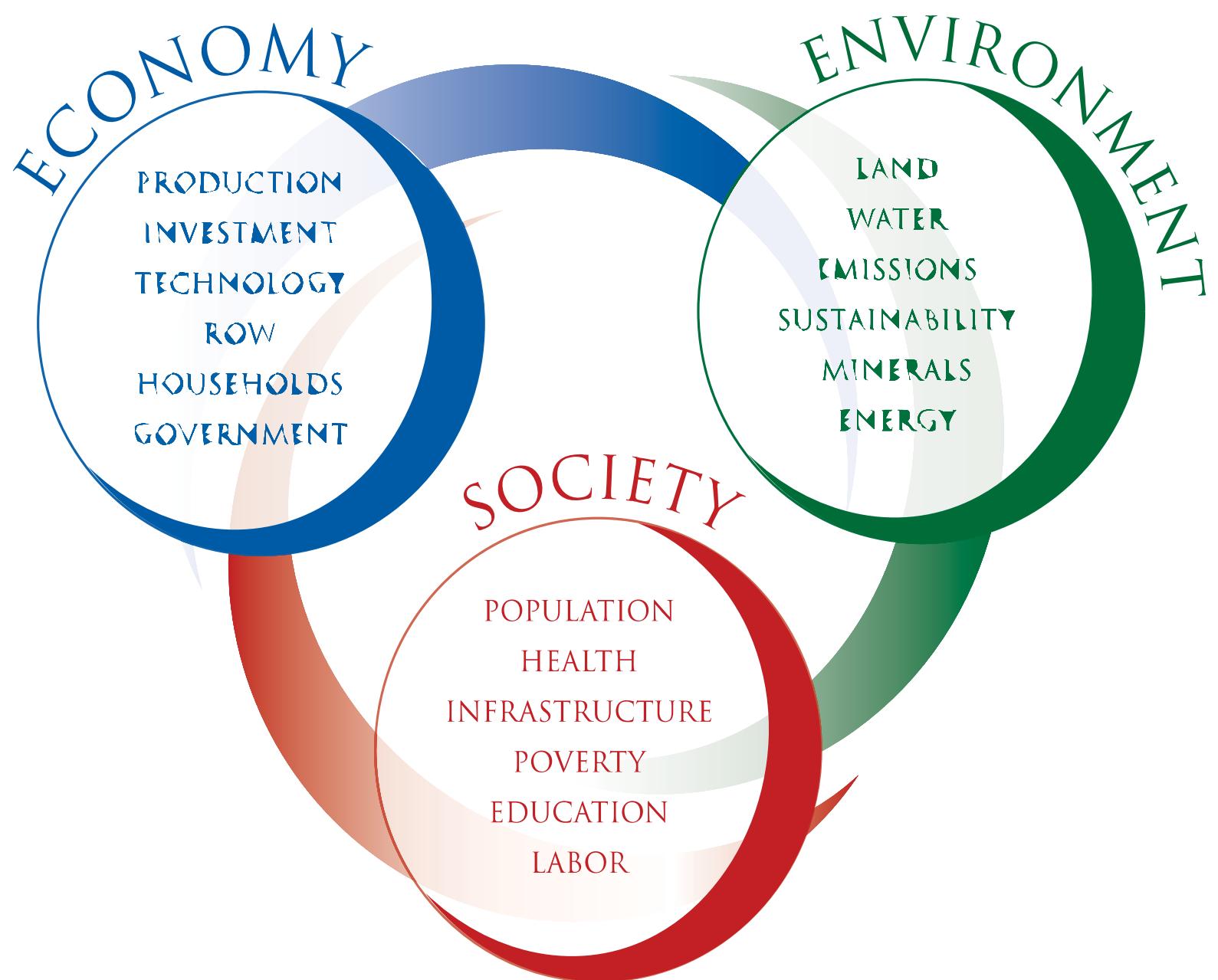
Understanding Human Values, Institutions, and Behaviours on a Changing Planet



IHDP | International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change

Fig. 2 – Beyond the Bretherton diagram.

From Palsson et al, 2013. Environmental Science and Policy. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2012.11.004>



The three pillars of sustainable development

Bent Flyvbjerg's phronetic model of (social) science

The *phronetic model* of social science takes as its point of departure the fact that despite centuries of trying the natural science model still does not work in social science: No predictive social theories have been arrived at as yet.

The phronetic model is named after the Aristotelian concept *phronesis*, which is the intellectual virtue used to deliberate about which social actions are good or bad for humans. The basis of deliberation is value rationality instead of epistemic rationality.

At the core of phronetic social science stands the Aristotelian maxim that social issues are best decided by means of the public sphere, not by science.

(Bent Flyvbjerg 2001. *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again*. Cambridge University Press.)

Ways to do science

The epistemic or natural science model sees social scientists and social science professionals as technocrats who – through their insight into social theories and laws – may provide society with solutions to its social ills.

The phronetic model sees social scientists and social science professionals as analysts who produce food for thought for the ongoing process of public deliberation, participation, and decision making.

I suggest this applies to to climate/natural science as well!

1. The modern model: “*... there is only one correct description of the system, and it is to be provided by science*” (Funtowicz and Strand 2007)
2. The model of extended participation (essentially post normal science): science should *aid* in making the correct decisions based on the current knowledge at hand. One important aspect of this method is the inclusion of non-experts, creating an “extended peer community” (Ravetz 2004).

We seem to need three components in order to make science relevant, meaningful and socially responsible

1. Episteme, theoretical know why...
2. Techne, practical, pragmatic...
3. Phronesis, ethical, common sense...

Or perhaps:

1. Science (like in a lab)
2. Philosophy (theoretical)
3. Practical knowledge (of the real world)

Which part is most critical for contemporary climate research?

- The quality of the science (as measured by peers)?
- The ethical basis? Precautionary principle, intergenerational aspects
- *Or practical knowledge about the world in which we are living?*

Common statements about the climate problem

It will/would be expensive to decarbonize the economy.

Climate change is all about burden sharing: Rich countries and citizens of today need to pay and reduce their own economic growth rate.

Intergovernmental negotiations (UNFCCC – COP) are very important.

My hypothesis: All these statements are wrong.

If so, what about scientific activities that accept the narrative?

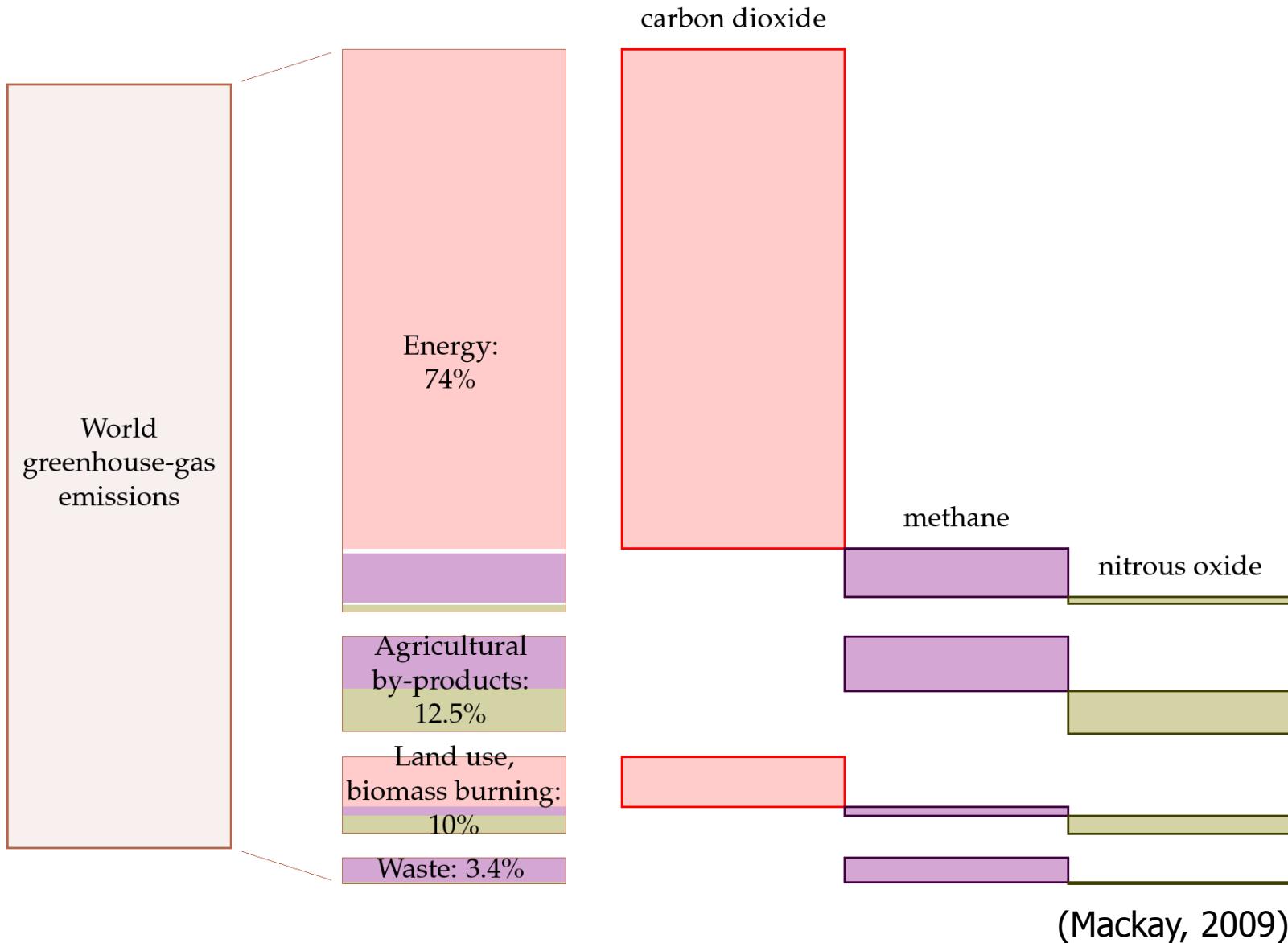
Other false statements that should also be challenged:

Carbon dioxide capture and storage is an important technology to combat climate change (Norwegian primary school textbooks).

Planting trees in Norway is a good thing for climate because it may sequester more carbon in the long run (Norwegian action plan).

We should address the cheapest actions (lowest hanging fruit) first, i.e. implement carbon taxation (Norwegian international policy).

Our common climate future is determined by the energy future



Analysing the CO₂ problem

The Kaya-identity (Professor Yoichi Kaya, Japan, 1995):

$$\text{CO}_2 \text{ emissions} = N \times (\text{GDP}/N) \times (E/\text{GDP}) \times (\text{CO}_2/E)$$

Four factors:

Population, wealth, energy intensity, carbon intensity

N = Population

GDP = Gross Domestic Product

E = Energy use

CO₂ = CO₂ emissions

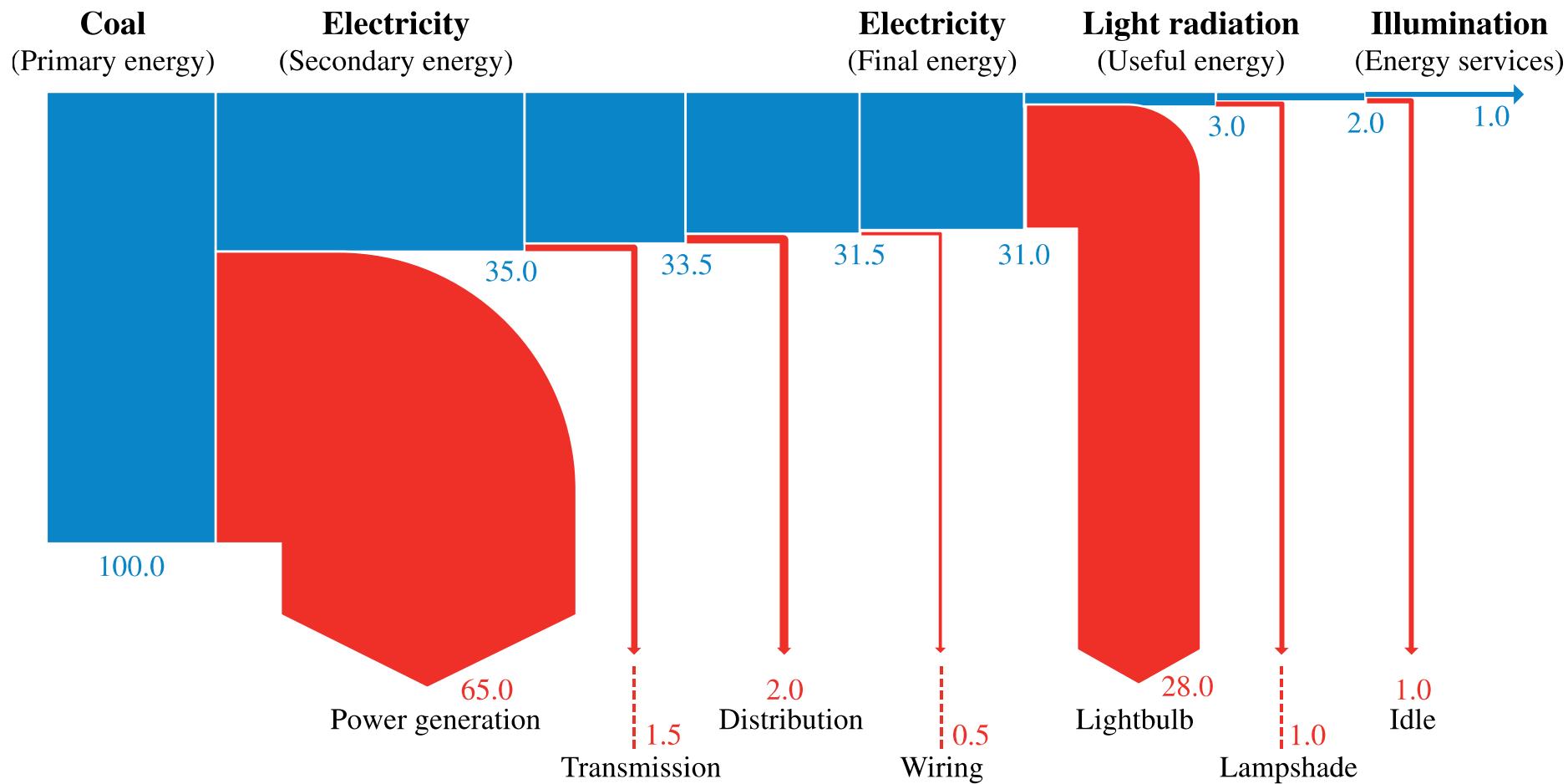


Renewable energy reduces the carbon intensity CO₂/E.

Yoichi Kaya

Note: Secure energy supply has been the most important motivation for development of renewable energy until recently. Perhaps other aspirations will be at least as important as climate and CO₂ also in future.

Only 1-3 % of coal energy burnt in power plant reaches the energy service of illumination when using traditional light bulbs



Global Energy Assessment

Toward a Sustainable Future

Key Findings
Summary for Policymakers
Technical Summary



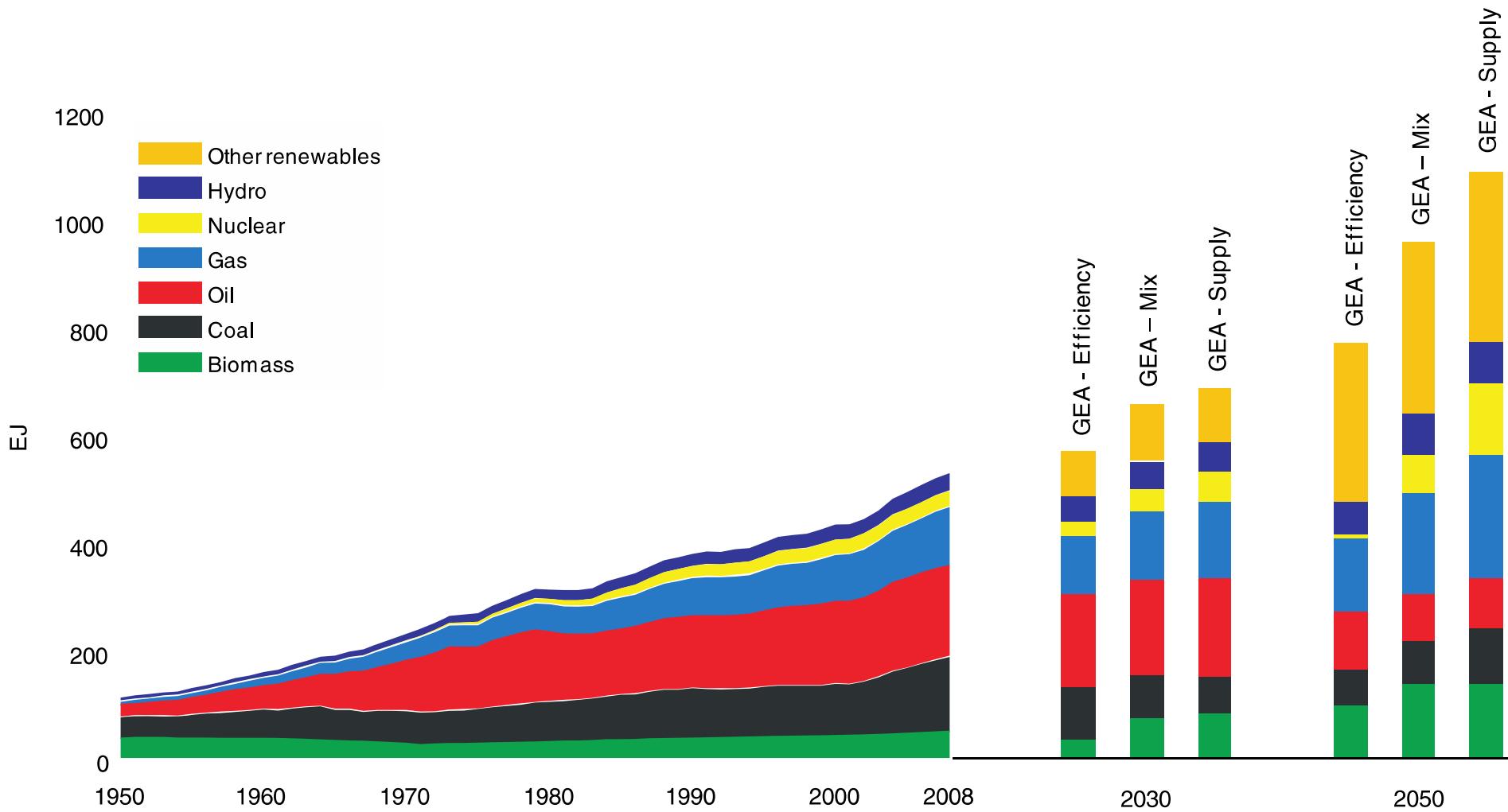
GEA 2012

About 300 authors and 200 reviewers used 6 years to produce a 2000 page report and models.
Work protocols similar to IPCC.

What is needed to achieve politically accepted goals for:

- Climate (the 2 degree target)
- Health (outdoor and indoor air quality)
- Access to electricity for all
- Energy security (reduced dependency on import of oil and others)

Some global total primary energy pathways from GEA



Global Energy Assessment

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GEA 2012

Worked with 60 pathways of which 41 fulfilled the normative goals.

Worked with 11 (5) world regions with their specific characteristics.

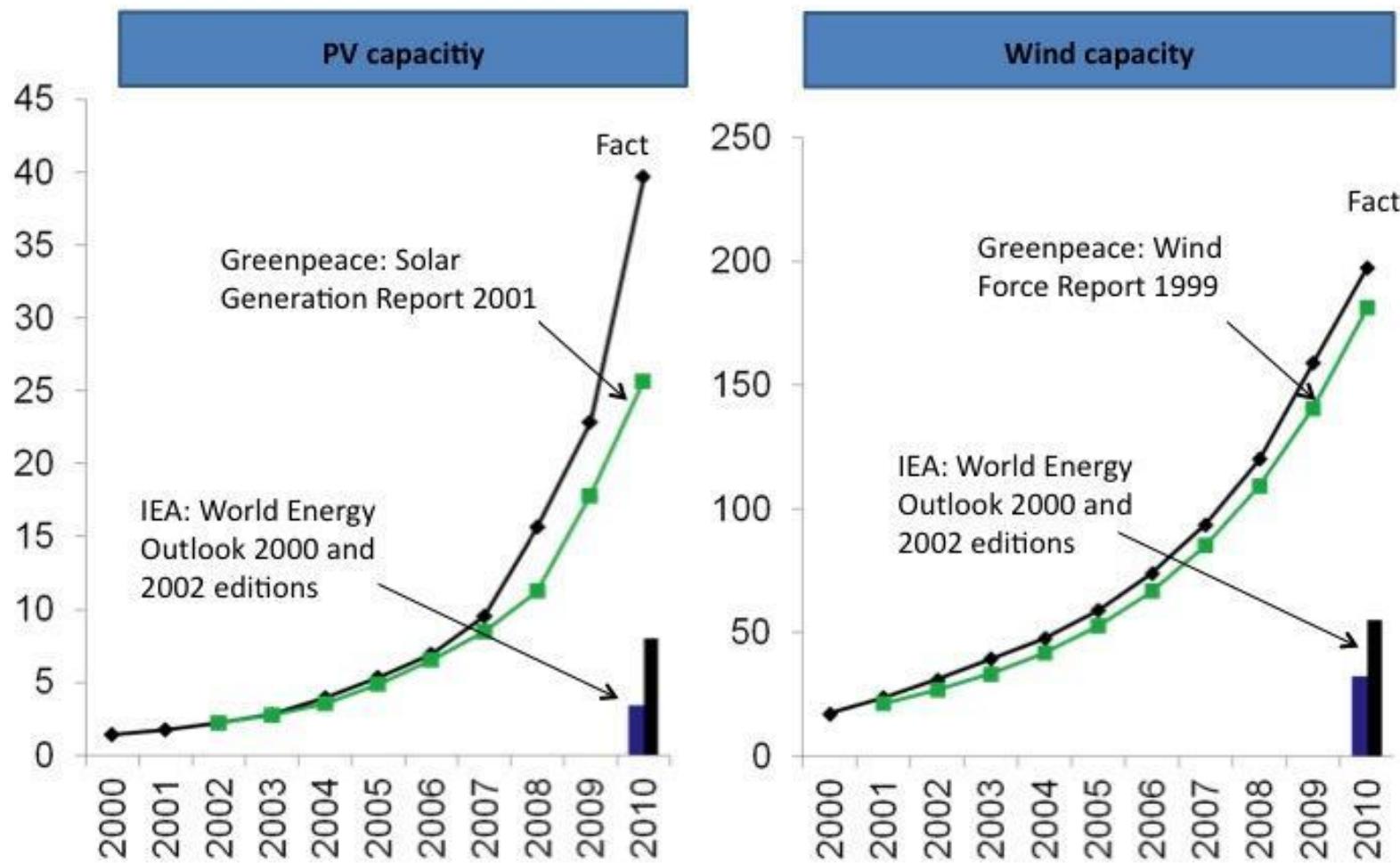
Population scenario with 9 billion in 2050.

Main result: Transformation is not only possible but cheap.
It requires

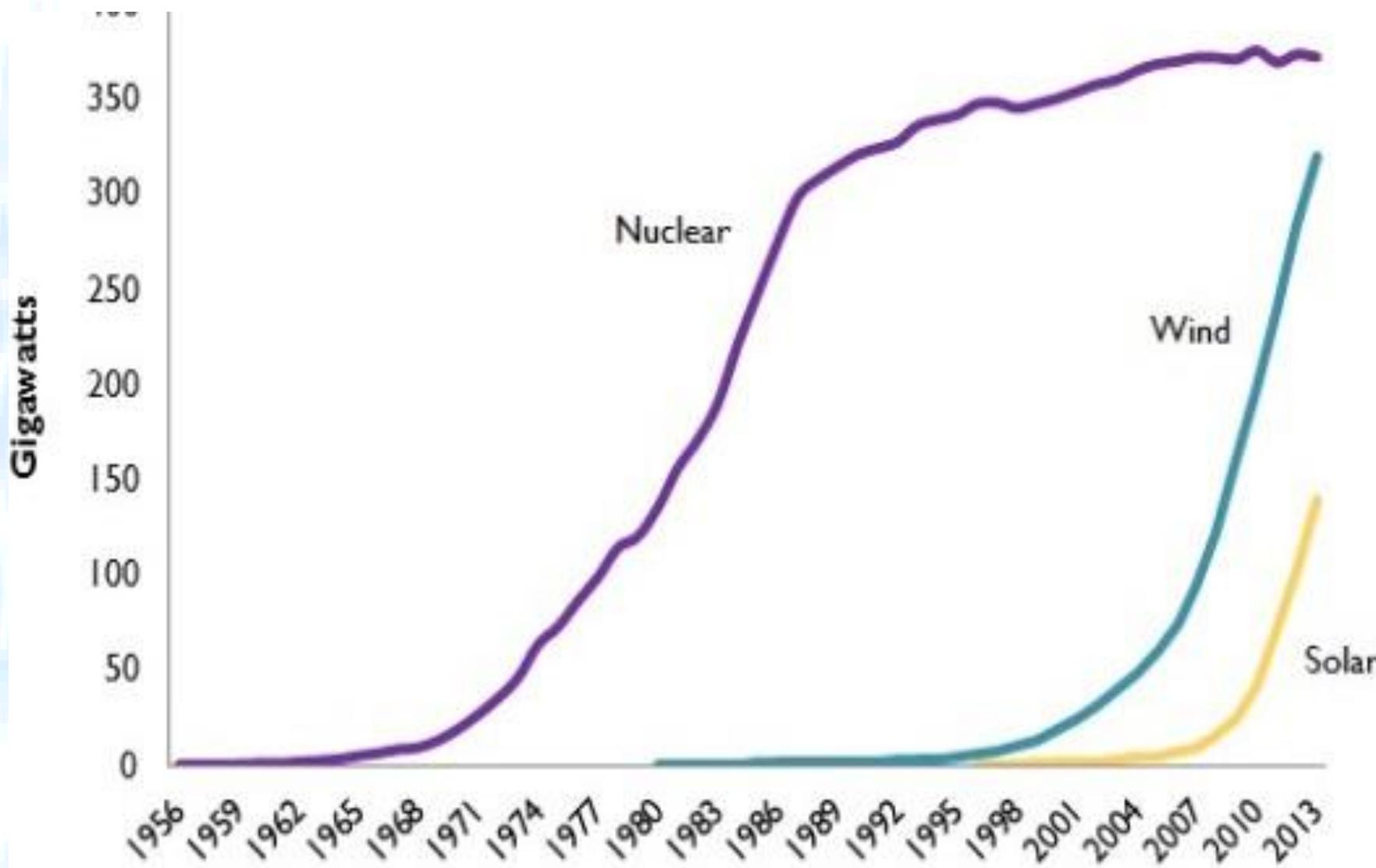
- Strong early renewable energy growth
- Rising requirements for storage technologies
- Strong medium term bioenergy growth

Not all agents are objective – IEA has repeatedly severely underestimated penetration of new renewable energy

Greenpeace Forecasts vs. IEA's and Facts

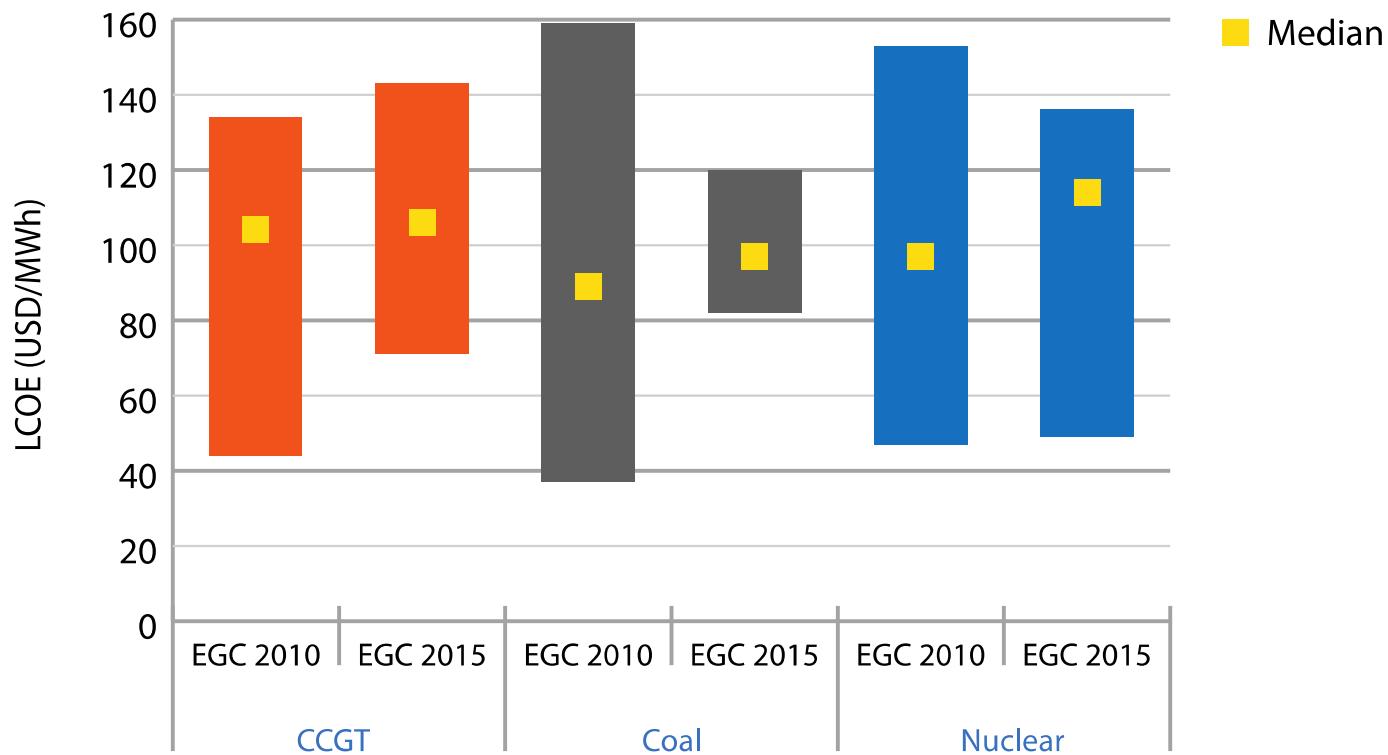


Wind and solar together have bigger capacity than nuclear



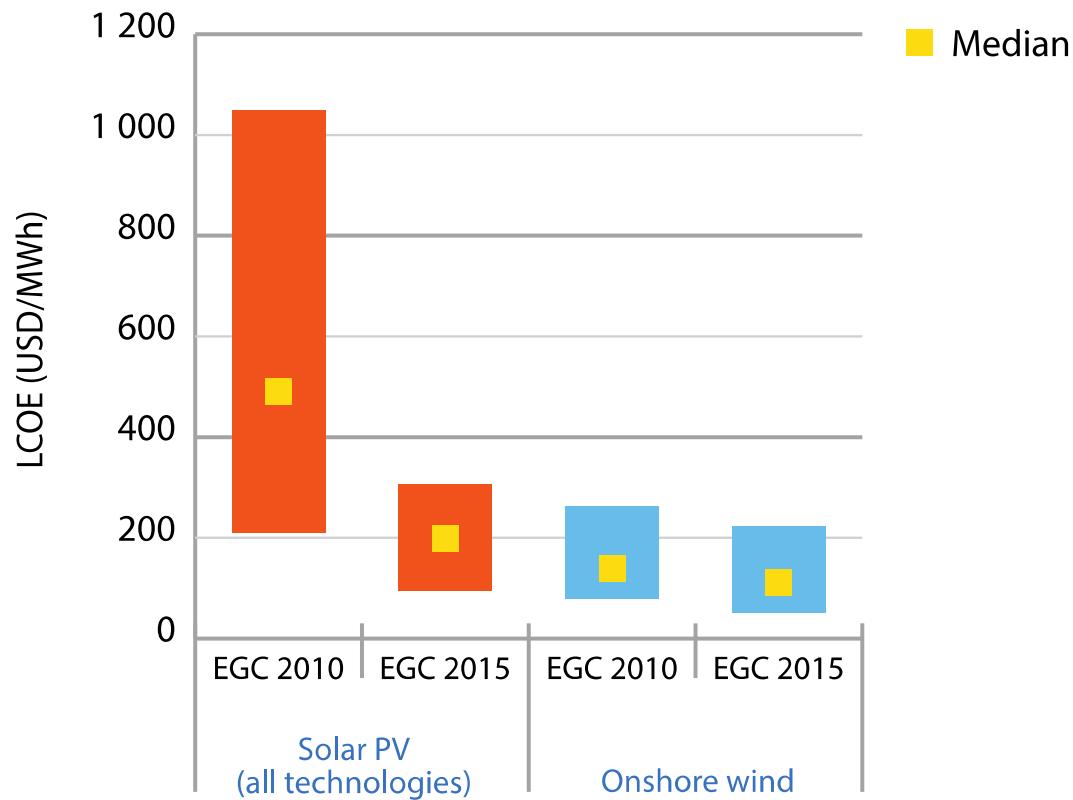
But the IEA has good data for past and present:
New levelized Cost of Energy (LCOE) estimates show
that gas, coal and nuclear getting more expensive

Figure ES.3: EGC 2010 and EGC 2015 LCOE ranges for baseload technologies
(at 10% discount rate)



And: Solar and wind getting much cheaper

**Figure ES.4: EGC 2010 and EGC 2015 LCOE ranges for solar and wind technologies
(at 10% discount rate)**



Because of high capital costs, the LCOE of renewables depends strongly upon discount rate, here assumed at 5%.

Most economists now suggest max 2-3% as socially acceptable – favor solar and wind

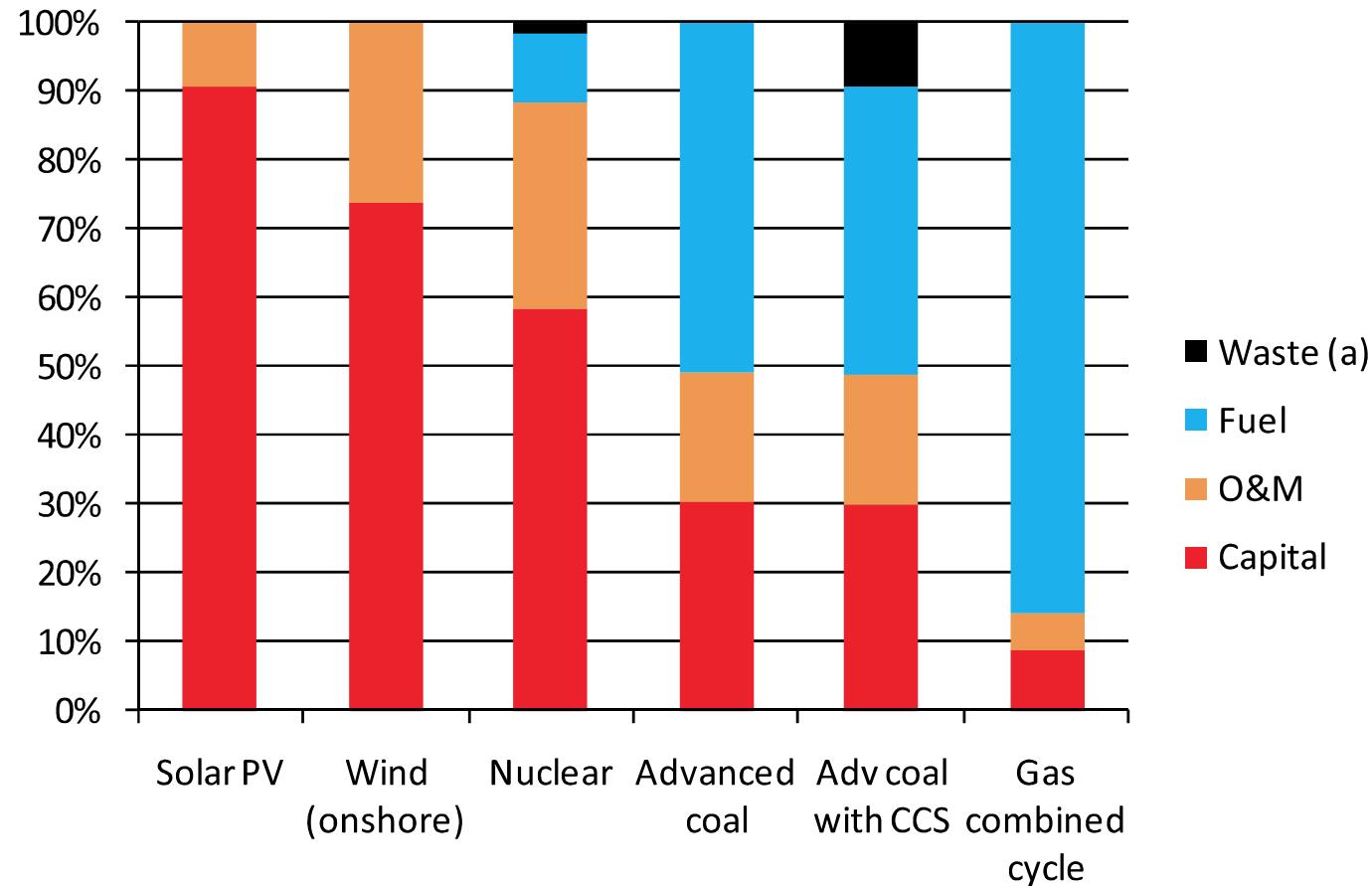


Figure 1.26 | Structure of total leveled costs of different electricity generation technologies (in percent using a 5% discount rate) and representative cost ranges for 2030 as used in the GEA pathways (cf. Chapter 17) for capital costs, operation and maintenance (O&M), fuel costs, as well as waste disposal costs for nuclear and advanced coal with carbon capture and sequestration (CCS). All values are given in 2005US\$ and are shown in Table 1.9. Note: (a) Includes decommissioning costs for nuclear power and costs for transport and disposal of 90% of CO₂ emissions for advanced coal power plants with carbon capture and storage (CCS).

From the IEA 2015 report

- ◆ The median cost of electricity from ground-mounted solar cells (PV) is equivalent to the median cost of power from combined-cycle natural gas plants *)
- ◆ This is only 20-30 % higher than cost from existing coal and nuclear plants in the OECD area.

*) Equalizing costs and revenues using a 3 % real interest rate, based on present day data, applicable to 2020 implementation

My comment:

Even if CCS did work (it may not), the costs of CCS would make coal fired power with CCS more expensive than solar power.

Solar energy is plentiful.

Energy efficiency, storage and flexibility will ease the transition.

Conclusions and way forward

1. Our common climate future is determined by the energy future.
2. Feasible and cheap technical solutions to decarbonized energy supply exist.
3. Do not believe that the energy future is particularly much influenced by climate policy - be critical:
 - Stop playing to the tune of burden sharing.
 - Stop glorifying the role of negotiations (COP).
 - Stop applauding illfounded solutions like CCS and planting of trees.
4. Stop supporting bad narratives by doing limited scope research on parts of them.
5. Socially responsible research requires up to date knowledge on practical issues like population, technology and costs - what science is right to do and not do changes with time.

(+ please more research on forces controlling public info)

Some literature

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Lubchenco, J. 1998. Entering the Century of the Environment: A New Social Contract for Science. *Science*. 279 (5350), 491-97.

Bay-Larsen, I. and P.M. Haugan 2015. A knowledge-based policy for the high north. *Ottar* 4/2015, Tromsø University Museum (in Norwegian).

GEA, 2012: Global Energy Assessment - Toward a Sustainable Future.

<http://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/research/researchPrograms/Energy/Home-GEA.en.html>

+NB! Non-scientific sources needed to be on top of rapidly changing practical aspects.