

*Institute for Sustainable Energy and the
Environment (I-SEE)
University of Bath*

The continuing role of hydrocarbon fuels in any
transition to a sustainable energy future



Peter P. Edwards
20th March 2018



'ExxonMobil bows to shareholder pressure on climate reporting'
'Shareholders should help deliver decarbonisation'



GREEN MEGALOPOLIS



Harnessing the Solar Chariot

Each year the sun supplies 219 quadrillion kilowatt-hours of energy at absolutely no cost. That's 3,000 times more than is consumed by the world's entire population

The central body in our planetary system produces energy. In fact, like a gargantuan fusion reactor, it converts 650 million metric tons of hydrogen into helium every second. The temperature on the surface of the sun is a colossal 5,500 °C (Celsius); each square meter shines brighter than a million light bulbs. Here on earth, we benefit hugely: the sun provides light and warmth, controls our weather and climate, and makes the planets grow.

In a mere 30 minutes the sun supplies us with more energy than the world's population consumes in an entire year—and it does so entirely free of charge. In Germany the average solar radiation is around 1,000 kilowatt-hours per square meter per year; in the deserts of the world's equatorial zone, it rises to between 2,500 and 3,000, which is the energy equivalent of as much as 300 liters of oil per square meter per year.

At today's efficiencies it would take an estimated 2,000 square kilometers of photovoltaic modules to cover Germany's power needs. The country already has 2,800 square kilometers of available roof surfaces, one-quarter of which could be used immediately.

Theoretically it would be possible to meet the world's energy needs in full by concentrating a gigantic solar farm covering an area of 400 by 400 kilometers of the Sahara.

The challenge is to harness this huge potential in a manner that is both technically and economically feasible. We all know that urgent action is required to avert the catastrophic consequences of climate change on earth. That said, the sun is not pressed for time: according to astrophysicists, it will continue shining for another five billion years or so.

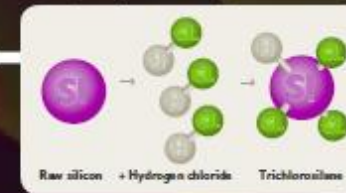
From raw silicon to trichlorosilane

Using a new process, Evonik also converts the raw silicon into trichlorosilane. This takes place at the Rheinolden Plant, Germany, where chlorosilanes (brand name SIRIDICON) are traditionally manufactured. The raw silicon is reacted with hydrogen chloride (HCl) to produce trichlorosilane plus the by-product silicon tetrachloride, which is used in silicic acid (AEROSIL) production at the plant. Evonik has over 60 years of experience in handling chlorosilanes, which are toxic, flammable, and corrosive. Today the company is the world's largest supplier of this class of products.



Purifying trichlorosilane by distillation

Trichlorosilane is a liquid that can easily be purified by distillation. This, in the language of chemists, is a thermal separation process involving a large number of distillation steps carried out in series. Rectification plates can be operated continuously, and therefore separate much more effectively at a low energy input.



From sand to raw silicon

To capture the sun's rays, silicon of a purity of at least 99.999 percent is required. This means that the defects and impurities in the crystal lattice are so few that the efficiency of the conversion of solar energy into electricity remains economically attractive.

The first stage is to melt naturally occurring silicon oxide compounds—as a rule, quartz sand—in an electric arc furnace at a temperature of approximately 2,000 °C and then reduce it with coke or coal to raw silicon, which has a purity of between 97 and 99 percent.



Sand

Sand

Raw silicon



From sand to solar cells—the chemistry of photovoltaics

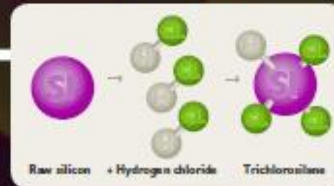
As today's efficiencies fall, it will take an estimated 2,000 square kilometers of photovoltaic modules to cover Germany's power needs. The country already has 2,800 square kilometers of available roof surface, one-quarter of which could be used immediately.

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From trichlorosilane to monosilane

The third stage of the process is to convert the purified trichlorosilane into so-called monosilane. This involves a number of parallel reactions. As a rule of thumb, 17 kilograms of trichlorosilane are required to produce one kilogram of monosilane plus 16 kilograms of silicon tetrachloride, which is used in the production of silicic acid at the Rheinleiden Plant.



Purifying monosilane by distillation

Purity is crucial when it comes to generating solar power. The gaseous monosilane is therefore purified once again by means of distillation. Up to this point, the entire process is carried out by Evonik.

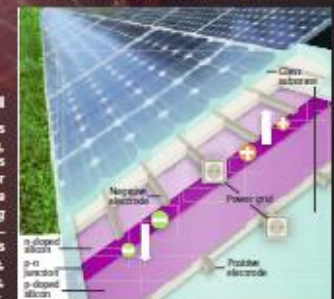
Decomposing monosilane to produce solar silicon

The purified monosilane is then delivered to John Solar Silicon (JSS), a joint venture between Evonik and SolarWorld. The gas is fed into the top of a reactor, where it is split into its elementary constituents, silicon and hydrogen. The latter, a valuable source of energy, is also put to good use at the Rheinleiden Plant. The reactor operates continuously in what is an exceptionally energy-efficient process. The end product is powdered solar silicon of the requisite purity.



From brown powder to blue cell

The high-purity solar silicon—in the form of a brown powder—is fed into a special melting furnace. The molten silicon can then be processed using a variety of methods. One important process is the production of monocrystalline rods, which can then be sliced into thin wafers. These must then be selectively contaminated with foreign atoms in a process known as doping. Finally, individual solar cells are combined to form large-surface modules.



The photovoltaic cell

The classic silicon-based solar cell consists of two layers of the semiconductor silicon, which has been differently doped, thus producing a p-type majority charge carrier (p-conducting layer) and an n-type majority charge carrier (n-conducting layer). At the junction between the two—the p-n junction—an electrical field is generated. When the cell is struck by light, the field drives the electric current, which in turn is tapped by metal contacts.





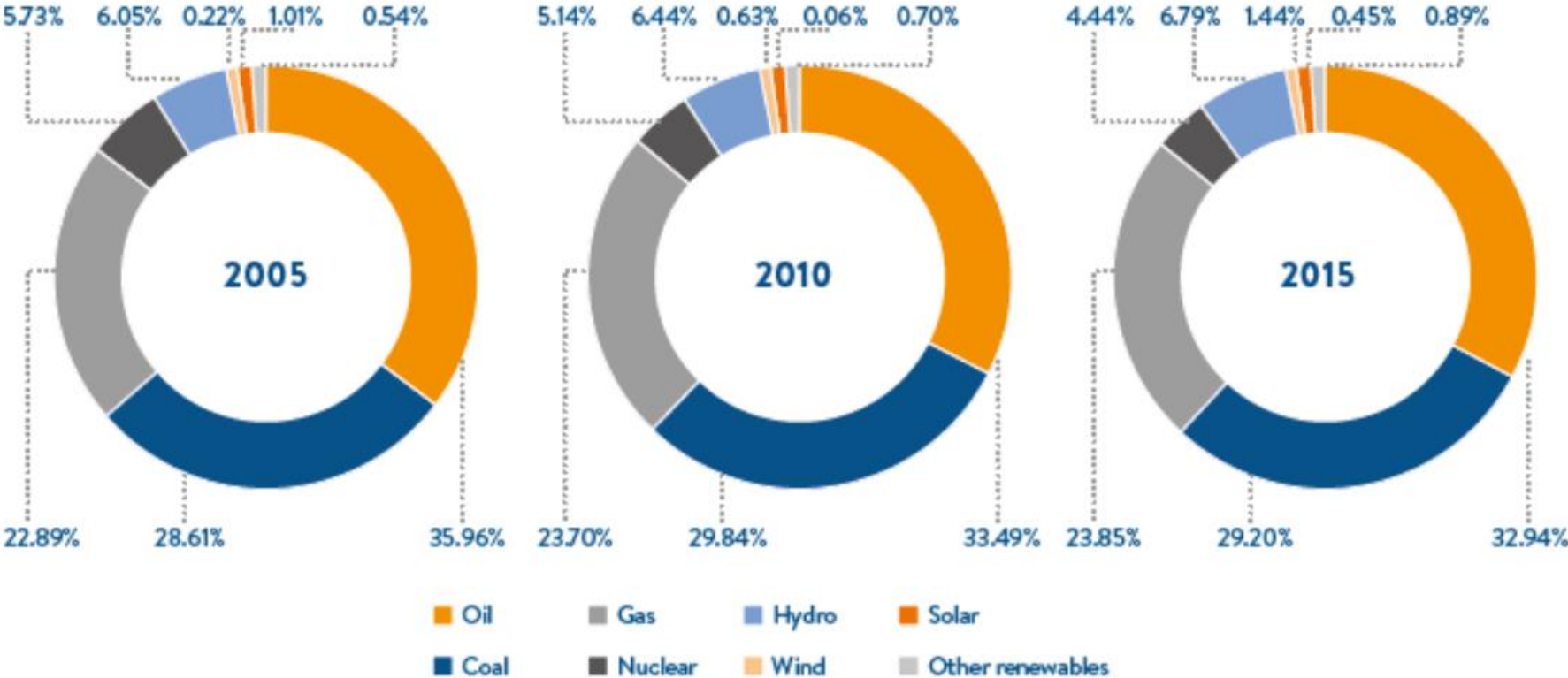
Briefing: Drax Power Station Emissions – Coal-to-Biomass conversion increases levels of dangerous small particles

Biofuelwatch, July 2017

SUMMARY

- Data obtained through a Freedom of Information request shows that Drax Power Station's emissions of PM₁₀ have increased by 135% since the conversion of 3 of 6 units to burn biomass (wood pellets) instead of coal.
- Levels of PM₁₀ are significantly correlated with volume of biomass burnt over the past 9 years.
- The volume of PM₁₀ now emitted yearly by Drax is equivalent to that from adding 3 million extra diesel cars on the roads.

World Energy Use



▶ Humanity faces a choice between two futures: doing nothing to curb emissions (which poses huge climate risks) and bringing them under control (which has costs but also benefits).

A Plan to Keep Carbon in Check

Getting a grip on greenhouse gases is daunting but doable. The technologies already exist. But there is no time to lose
BY ROBERT H. SOCOLOW AND STEPHEN W. PACALA

OVERVIEW

□ Humanity can emit only so much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere before the climate enters a state unknown in recent geologic history and goes haywire. Climate scientists typically see the risks growing rapidly as CO₂ levels approach a doubling of their pre-18th-century value.

□ To make the problem manageable, the required reduction in emissions can be broken down into "wedges"—an incremental reduction of a size that matches available technology.

Retreating glaciers, stronger hurricanes, hotter summers, thinner polar bears: the ominous harbingers of global warming are driving companies and governments to work toward an unprecedented change in the historical pattern of fossil-fuel use. Faster and faster, year after year for two centuries, human beings have been transferring carbon to the atmosphere from below the surface of the earth. Today the world's coal, oil and natural gas industries dig up and pump out about seven billion tons of carbon a year, and society burns nearly all of it, releasing carbon dioxide (CO₂). Ever more people are convinced that prudence dictates a reversal of the present course of rising CO₂ emissions.

The boundary separating the truly dangerous consequences of emissions from the merely unwise is probably located near (but below) a doubling of the concentration of CO₂ that was in the atmosphere in the 18th century, before the Industrial Revolution began. Every increase in concentration carries new risks, but avoiding that danger zone would reduce the likelihood of triggering major, irreversible climate changes, such as the disappear-

ance of the Greenland ice cap. Two years ago the two of us provided a simple framework to relate future CO₂ emissions to this goal.

We contrasted two 50-year futures. In one future, the emissions rate continues to grow at the pace of the past 30 years for the next 50 years, reaching 14 billion tons of carbon a year in 2056. (Higher or lower rates are, of course, plausible.) At that point, a tripling of preindustrial carbon concentrations would be very difficult to avoid, even with concerted efforts to decarbonize the world's energy systems over the following 100 years. In the other future, emissions are frozen at the present value of seven billion tons a year for the next 50 years and then reduced by about half over the following 50 years. In this way, a doubling of CO₂ levels can be avoided. The difference between these 50-year emission paths—one ramping up and one flattening out—we called the stabilization triangle [see box on page 52].

To hold global emissions constant while the world's economy continues to grow is a daunting task. Over the past 30 years, as the gross world

KEN BRON



Fossil-Fuel Dragons!

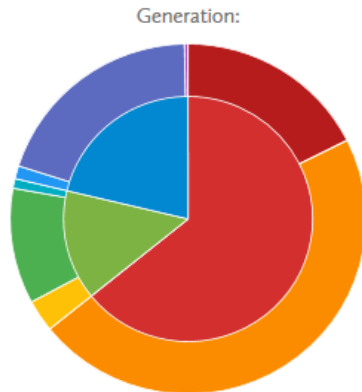


Drowning in oil

National Grid: Live Status (8:20am 20/03/2018)

The National Grid is Great Britain's electricity transmission network, distributing the electrical power generated in England, Scotland, and Wales, and transferring energy between Great Britain and Ireland, France, and the Netherlands.

41.1GW demand



Note: this pie chart shows generation only, and excludes interconnectors

61.5% fossil fuels

Coal	6.94GW	16.9%
Oil	0.00GW	0.0%
Gas (open cycle)	0.00GW	0.0%
Gas (combined cycle)	18.36GW	44.6%

13.9% renewable energy

Solar photovoltaic	1.17GW	2.8%
Wind	4.21GW	10.2%
Hydroelectric	0.35GW	0.9%

20.4% other energy

Pumped storage	0.47GW	1.1%
Nuclear	7.79GW	18.9%
Other	0.13GW	0.3%

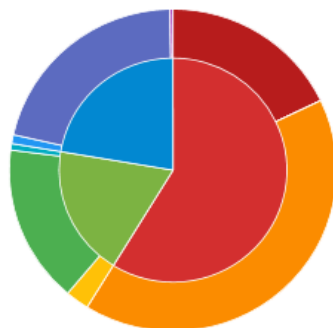
4.1% interconnectors

HVDC Moyle	0.00GW	0.0%
HVDC Cross-Channel	0.95GW	2.3%
BritNed	0.75GW	1.8%
East-West Interconnector	0.00GW	0.0%

Averages

Past day:

Average demand: 37.7GW



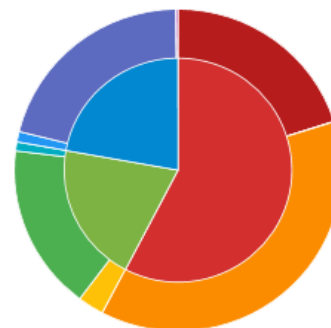
Past week:

Average demand: 34.6GW



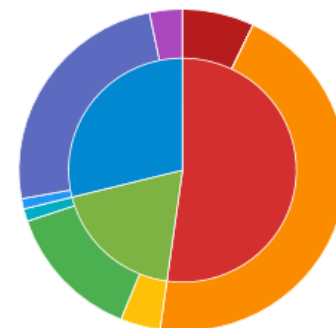
Past month:

Average demand: 36.5GW



Past year:

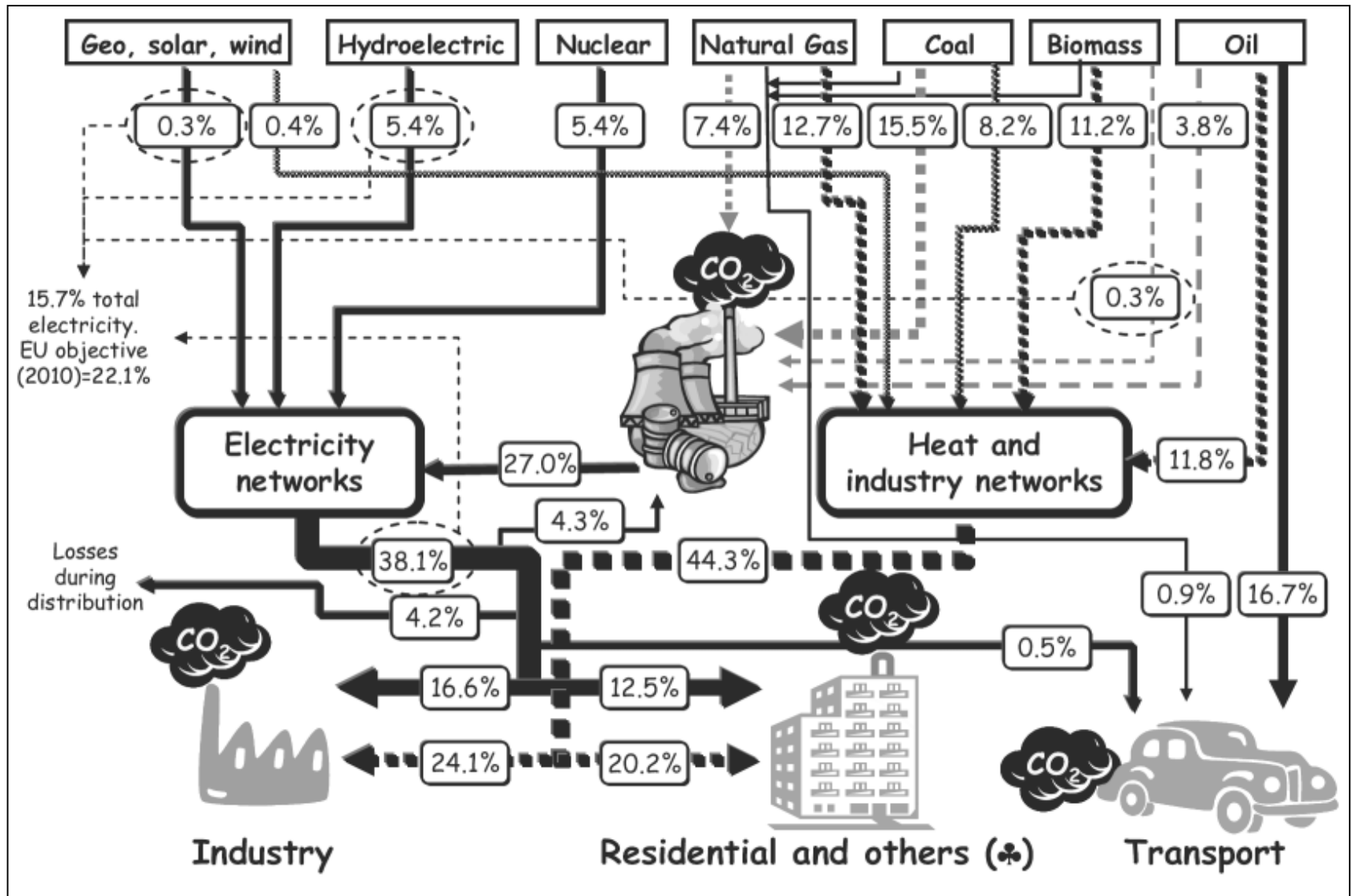
Average demand: 32.4GW



Three fundamental reasons why fossil fuels will remain popular for ..?.. years/centuries(!)

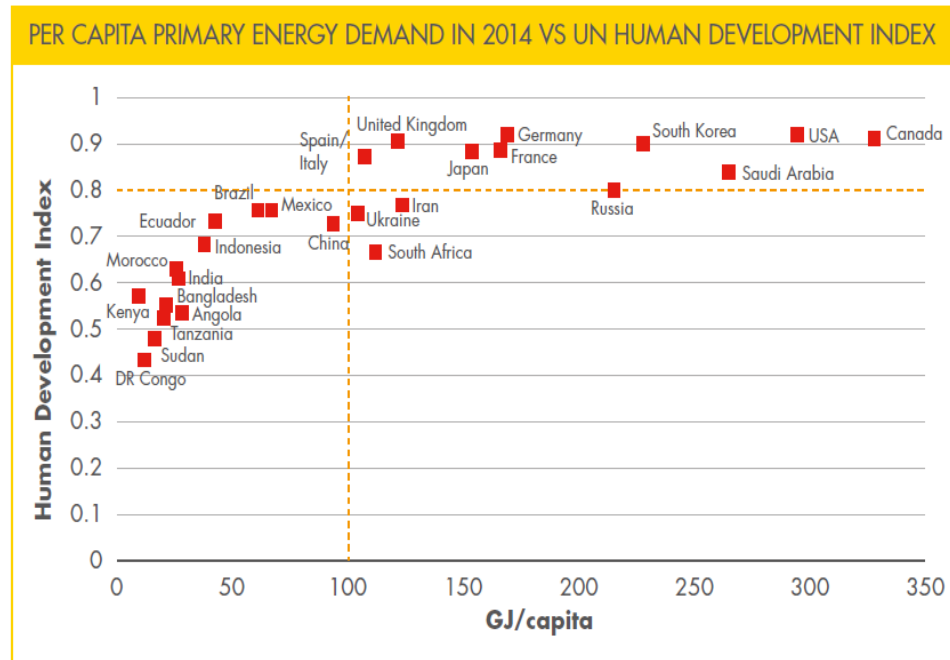
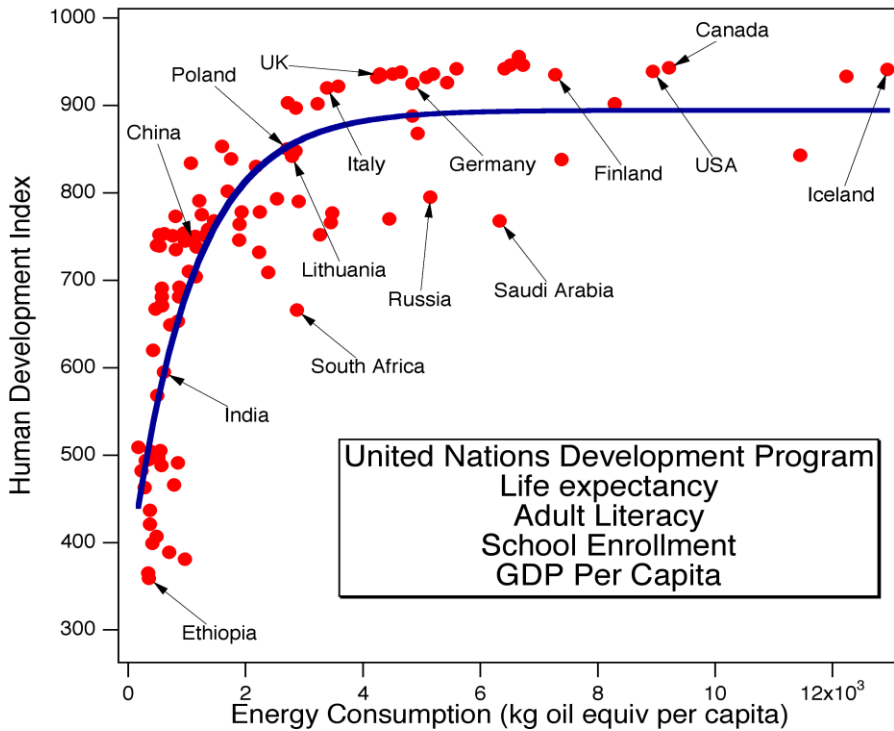
The attraction of liquid carbon-based fuels

I. The Hydrocarbon Economy



The attraction of liquid carbon-based fuels

II. The link to human development



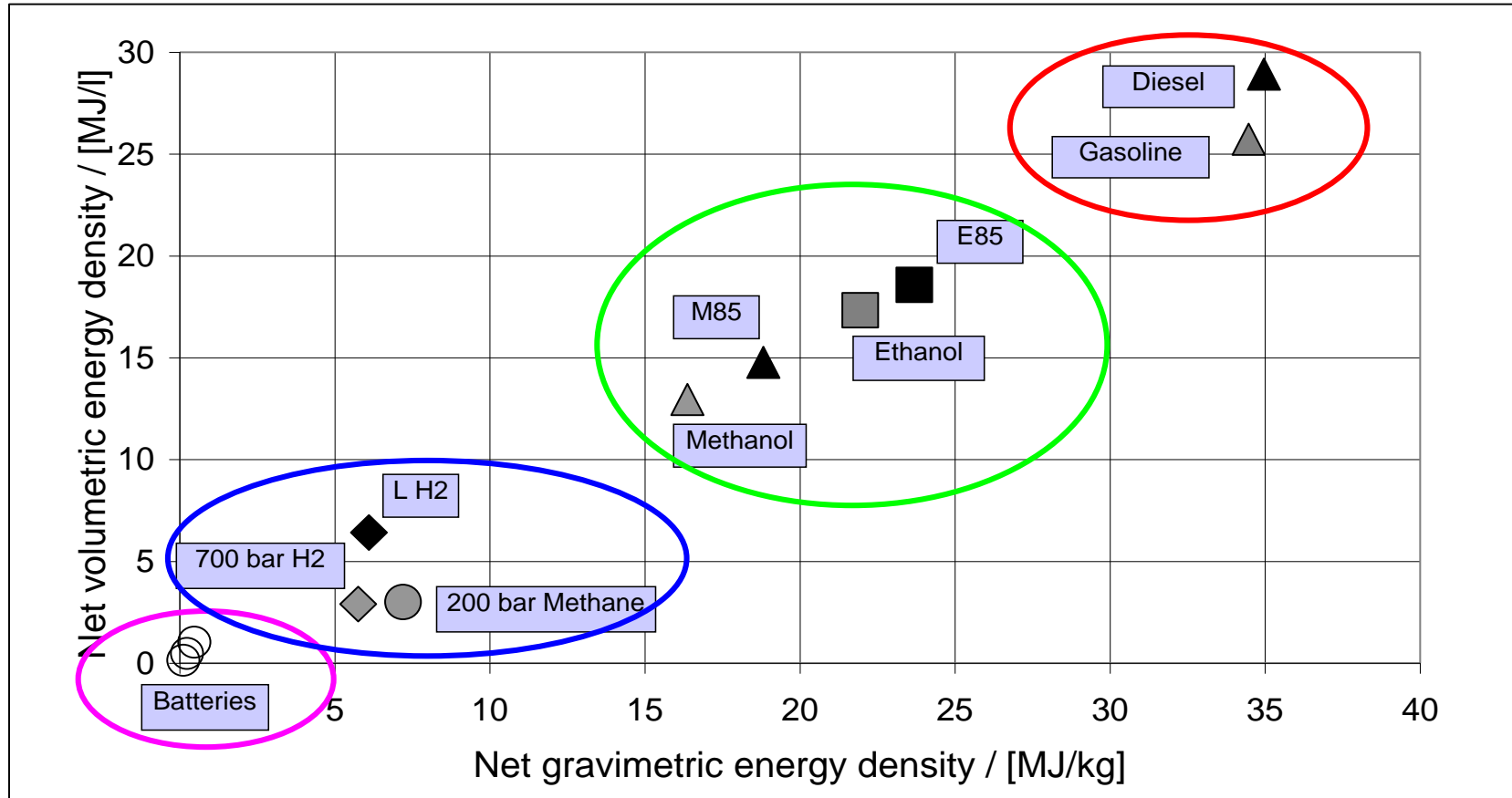
Source: Shell analysis – UN Human Development Index

Kurt W. Kolasinski, *Current Opinion in Solid State and Materials Science* (2006) 10, 129-1312

Shell: A better life with a healthy planet: Pathways to net-zero emissions

The attraction of liquid carbon-based fuels:

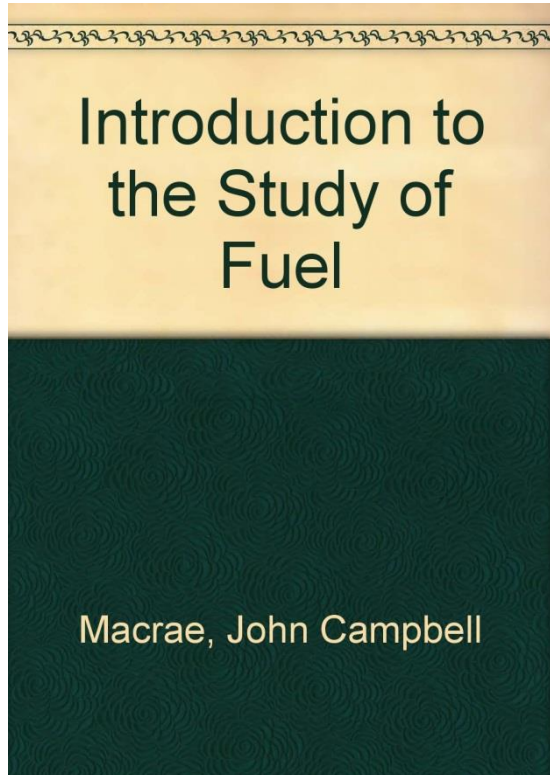
III. Ideal for transportation: On-board energy density



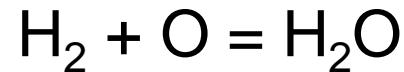
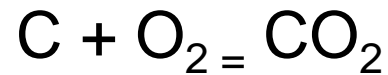
- Liquid fuels can be stored on vehicles at high energy densities in simple low-cost storage systems and are distributed via low-cost, low-loss infrastructures.
- ANL estimate $\$650 \times 10^9$ for a refuelling infrastructure for a 100×10^6 vehicle fleet.

Definition of a Fuel

An Introduction to the Study of Fuel **J. C. MacCrae, Elsevier, 1966**



- Any substances which unite with the evolution of heat;
- Important fuels are carbon compounds... *“not too much to say that our whole industrial society is based upon the reactions”*:



Clean Energy from Fossil Fuels

“Until other energy sources supplant coal, oil and natural gas, the technological challenge is clear: extract maximum energy from the old standbys while minimizing harm to the environment.”

W. Fulkerson et al.,
Scientific American, 1990, p.128

The King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology-Oxford Petrochemical Research Centre (KOPRC)

Clean Combustion
of Diesel

Solid Acid
Catalysts for
Alkylation



Vapour Phase Synthesis of
Propylene Oxide

New Generation High
Performance Solid Acid
Catalysts

with Cambridge

Microwave
Assisted
Processes

Heavy Oil to Olefins

KOPRC I



KOPRC II

CO₂ Activation

New Catalysts for
Polymerisation



Direct Selective
Oxidation of Light
Hydrocarbons to
Oxygenate

with Imperial College

High Efficiency
Nano-Gold Catalysts
with Cardiff

Clean Energy from Fossil Fuels

- Hydrogen and hydrocarbons production from crude and heavy oil;
- Minimal energy utilisation of CO₂ from refineries and power plants;
- Energy and sustainability economics through a complete Life Cycle Analysis: *“The Catalyst Sensitivity Index”*

Hydrogen Storage Materials

Hydrogen Storage Materials The Key Technology Barrier

Energy Production

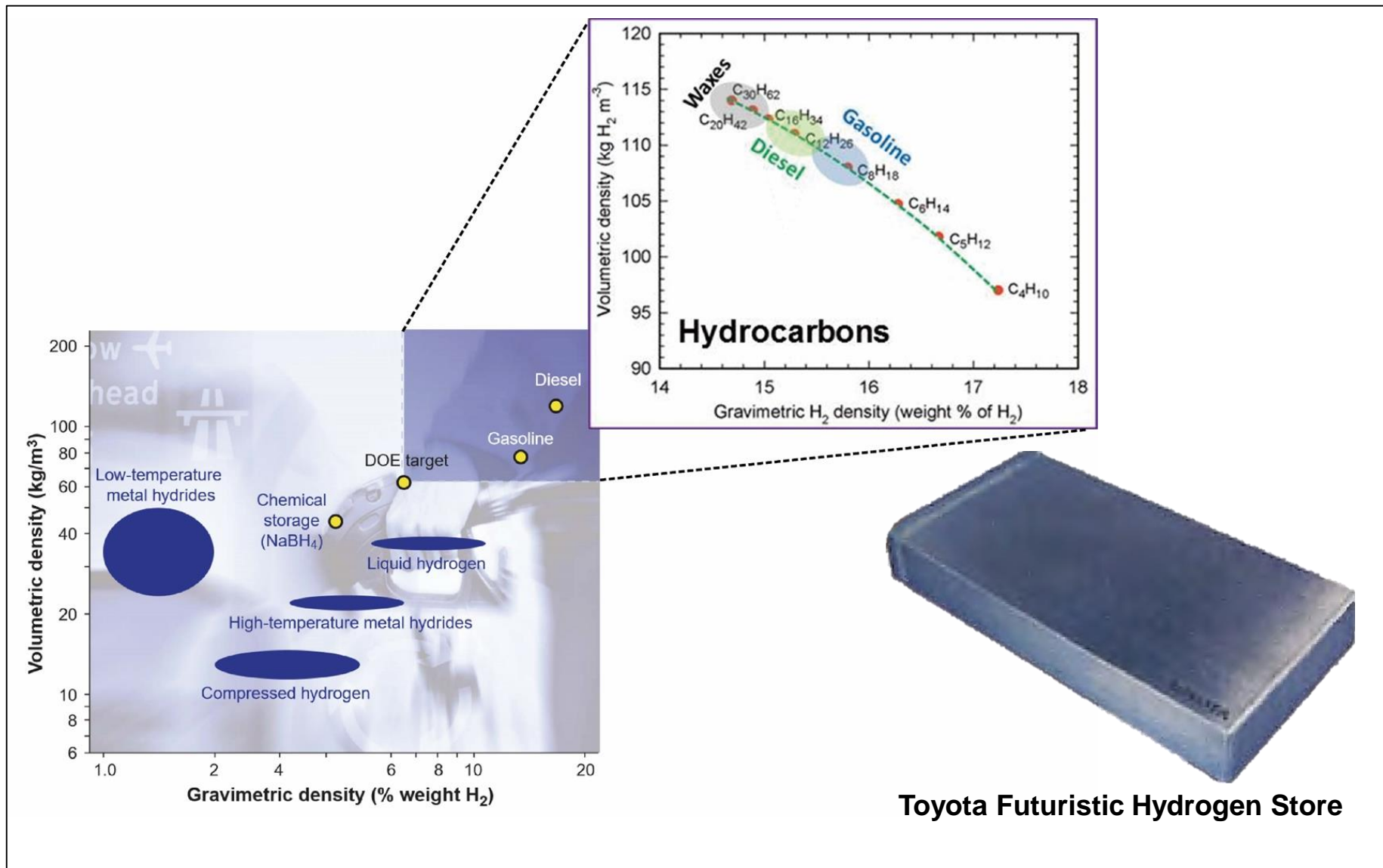
Energy Storage

Energy Use



The Perfect Store ?

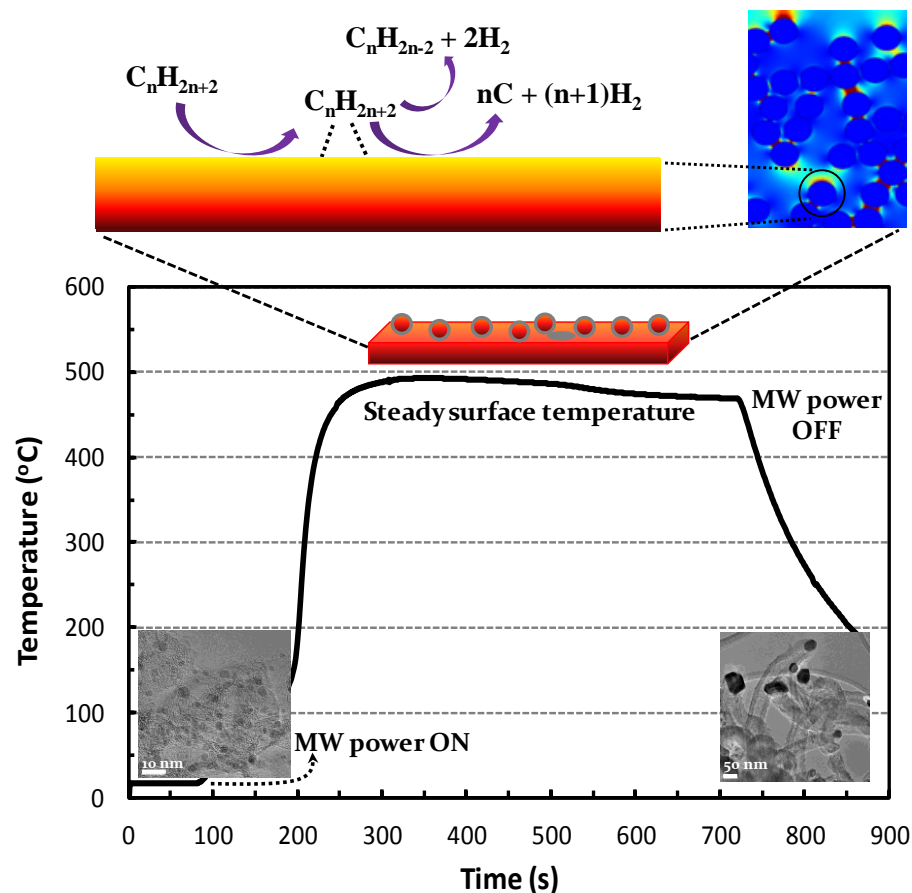
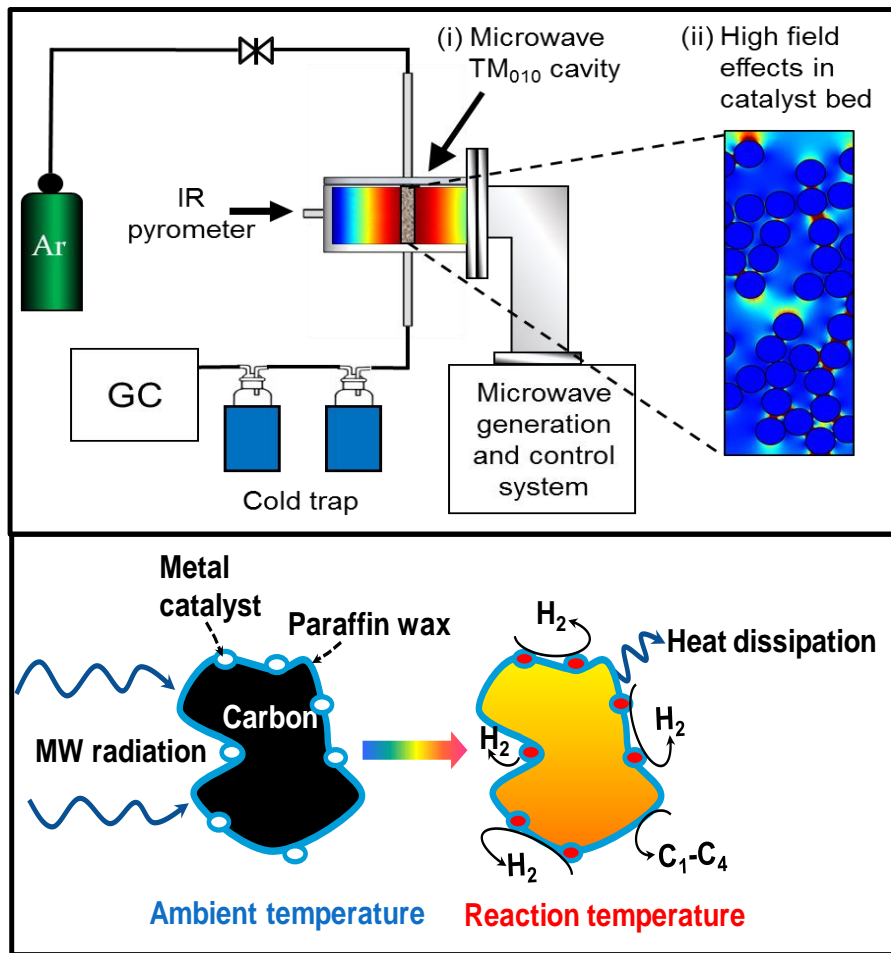
Hydrogen from Fossil Fuels: The Perfect Store?



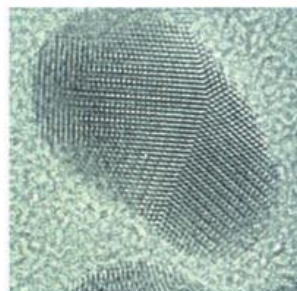
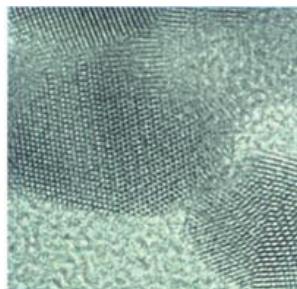
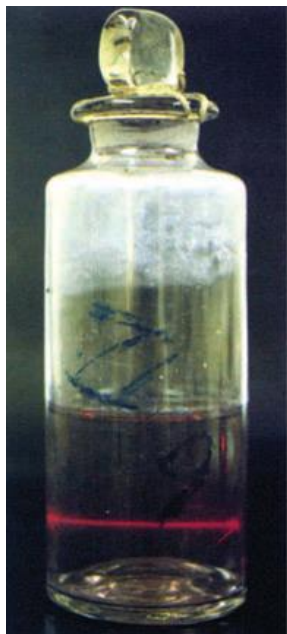
S. Gonzalez-Cortes, *et al.*, *Nature Scientific Reports*, **6**, 35315 (2016)

X. Jie, *et al.*, *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.*, 2017, **56**, 10170-10173

Microwave irradiation and catalytic decomposition of hydrocarbons



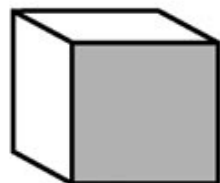
Divided Metals: The Size-Induced Metal-Insulator Transition



Colloidal gold - $10^7\times$

macroscopic

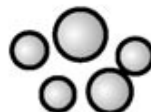
Bulk Metal



Metal

mesoscopic

Metal Colloids and Nanoparticles



Size-Induced Metal-Insulator Transition

microscopic

Atoms and Molecules



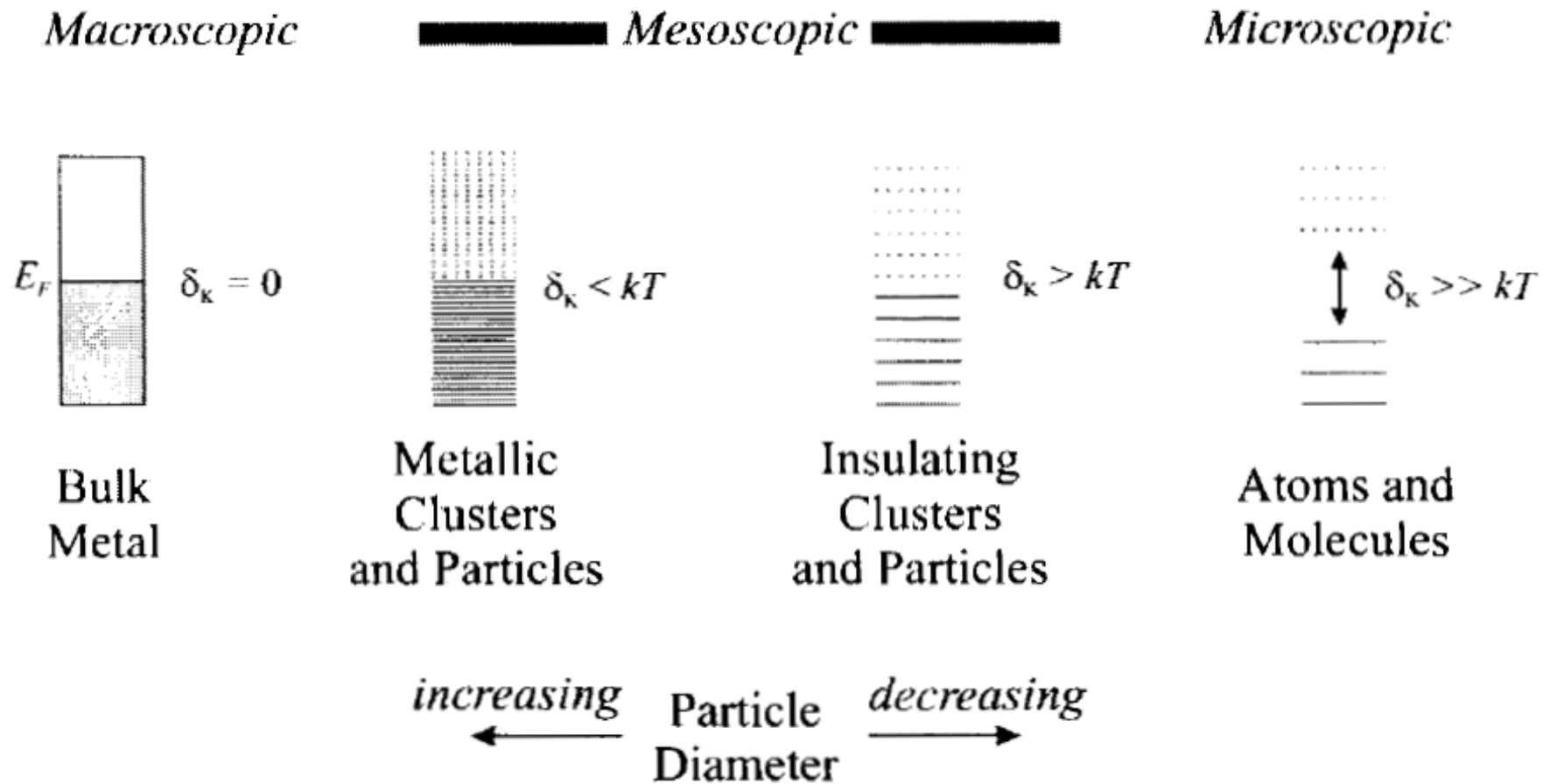
Insulator

P. P. Edwards and J. M. Thomas, *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* 2007, 46, 5480-5486

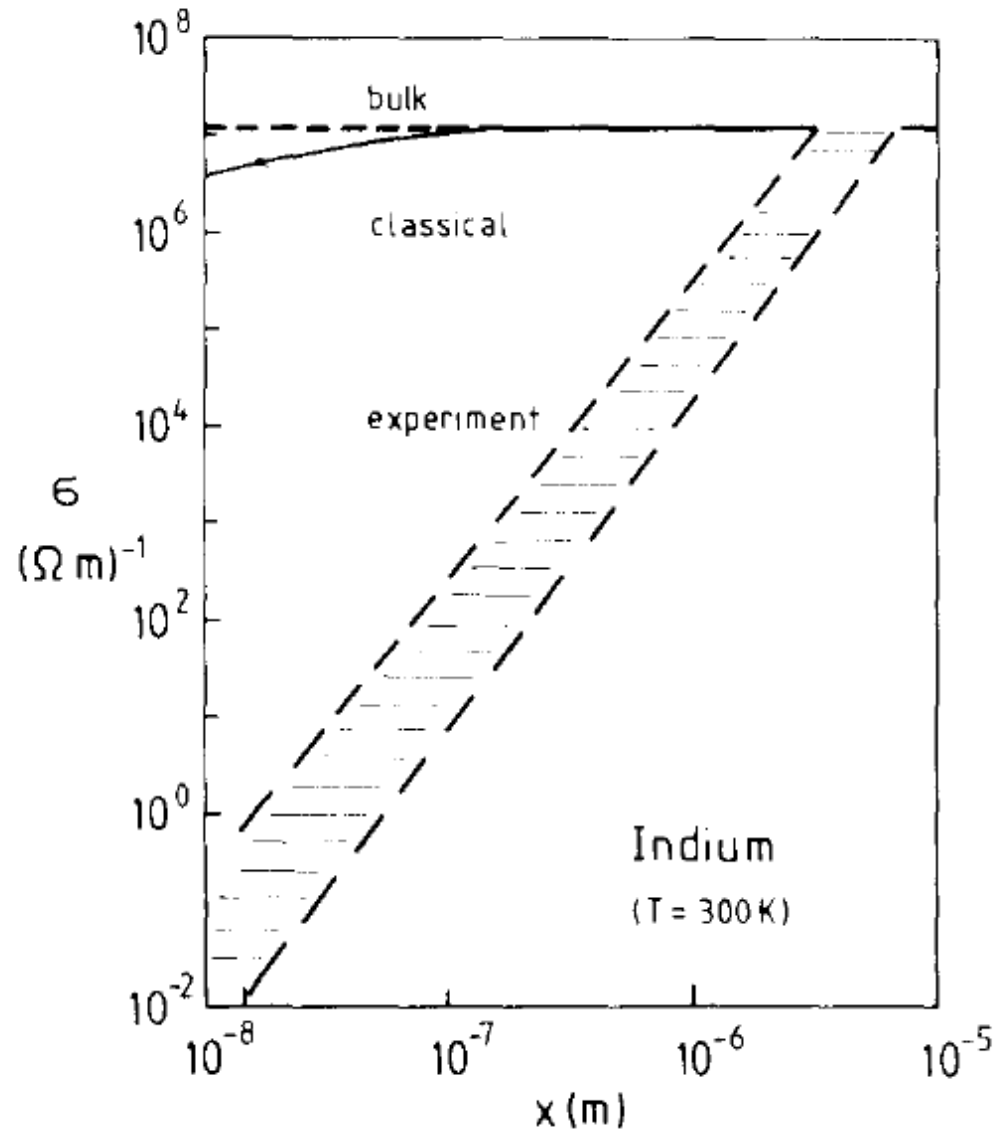


M. Faraday, *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. London*, 1857, 147, 145 -181

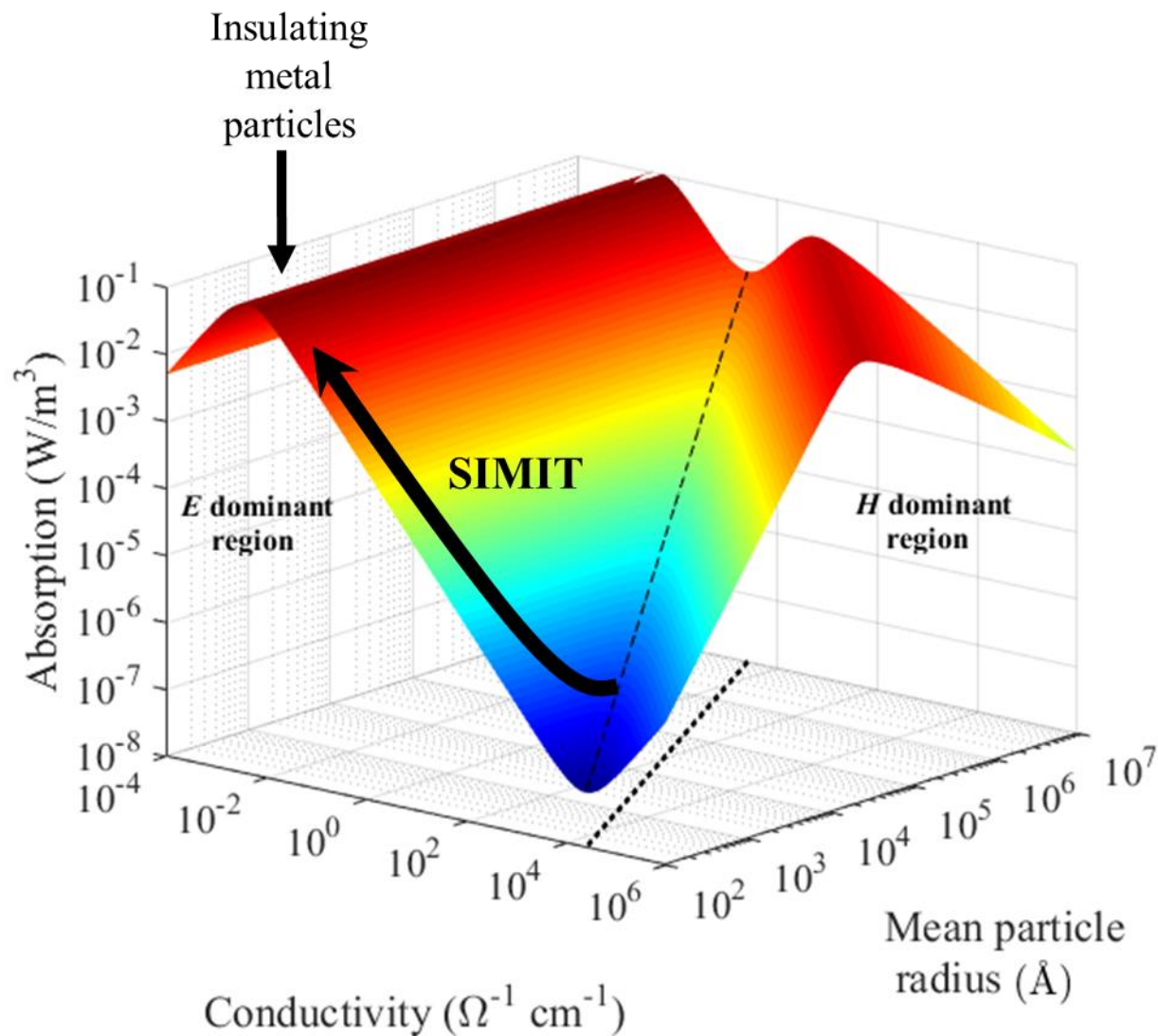
The Size-Induced Metal-Insulator Transition: Evolution of the Kubo Gap



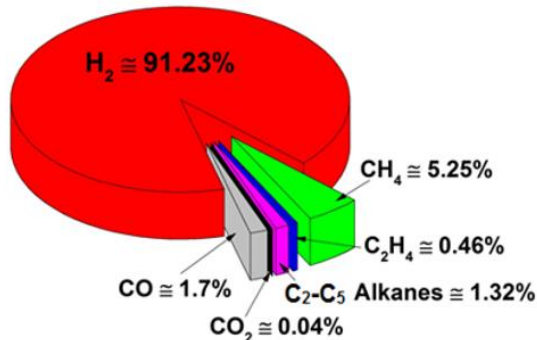
The Size-Induced Metal-Insulator Transition in Indium Metal



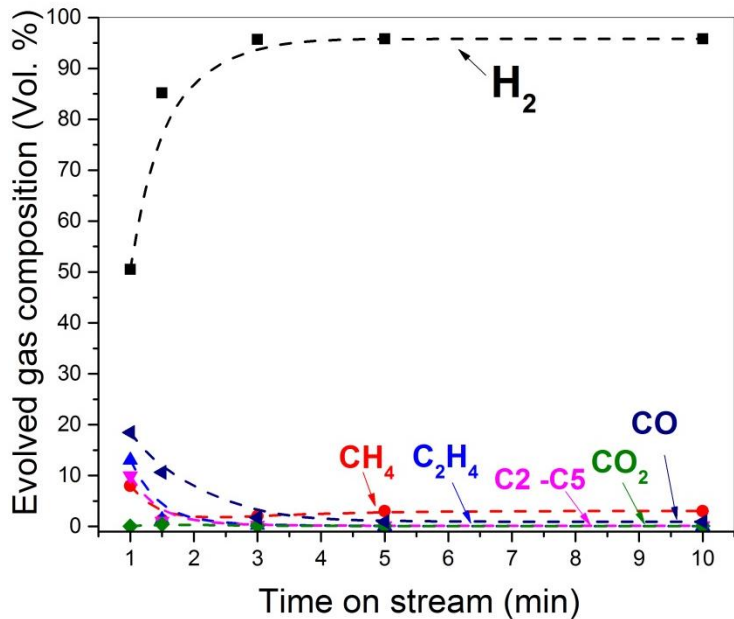
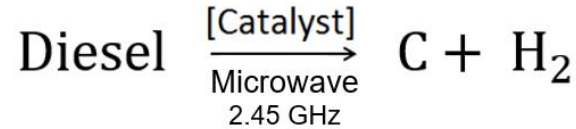
The Size-Induced Metal-Insulator Transition: Electromagnetic Absorption



Decarbonizing Diesel

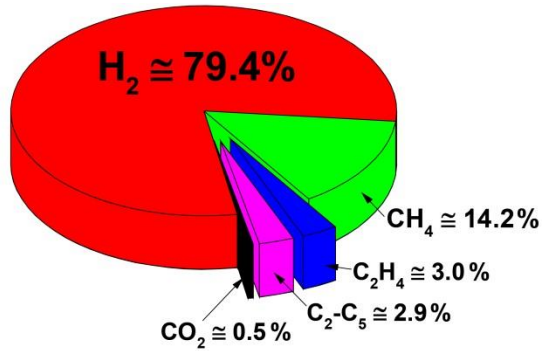


Evolved gas composition of Diesel @ Fe/SiC sample

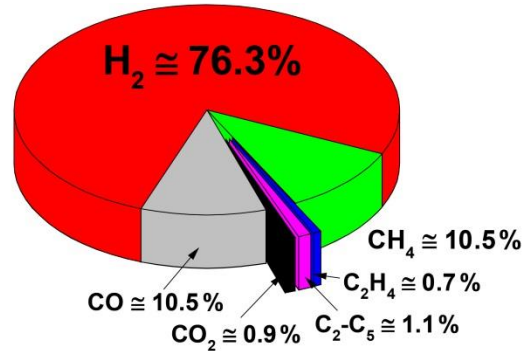


Catalysts	Gravimetric Density (kg-H ₂ /kg)	Volumetric Density (kg-H ₂ /m ³)
DoE target	7.5	70
Fe/SiC	8.59	71.45
Ni/SiC	9.04	75.22
FeNi/SiC	8.10	67.40

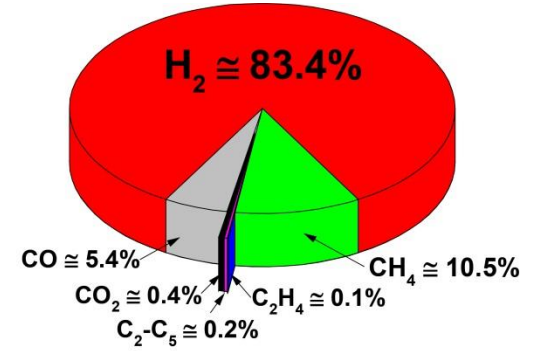
Hydrogen Energy from Fossil Fuels



Extraheavy Crude Oil @ Fe/AC



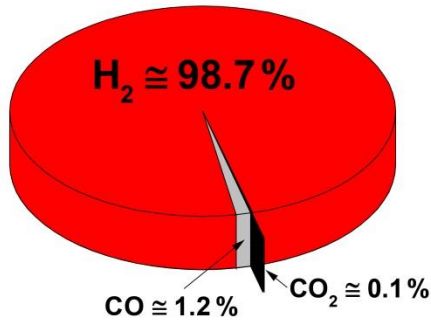
Crude Oil @ Fe/AC



Diesel @ Fe/AC

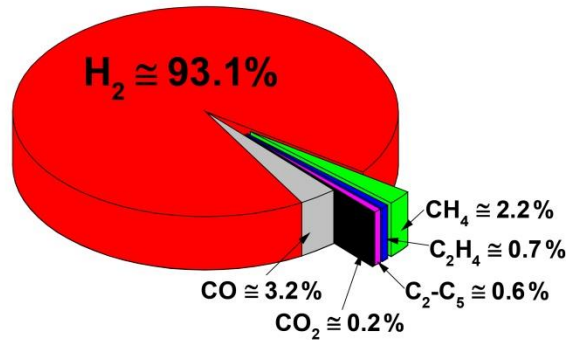


Methane @ Fe/SiC



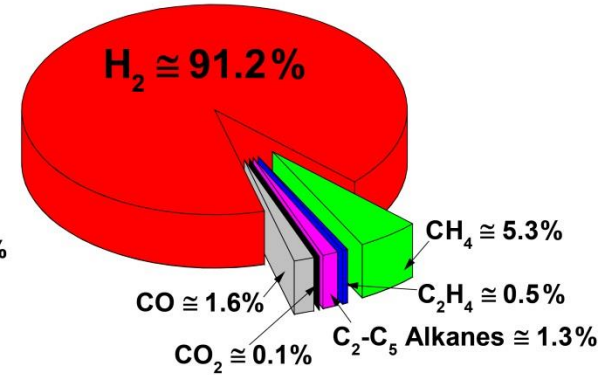
(Conversion: 88.8 %)

Hexadecane @ Fe/SiC



(Conversion: 61.1 %)

Diesel @ Fe/SiC





Earth, Mankind and Energy

Carlo Rubbia

Life long Member of the Senate of the Italian Republic

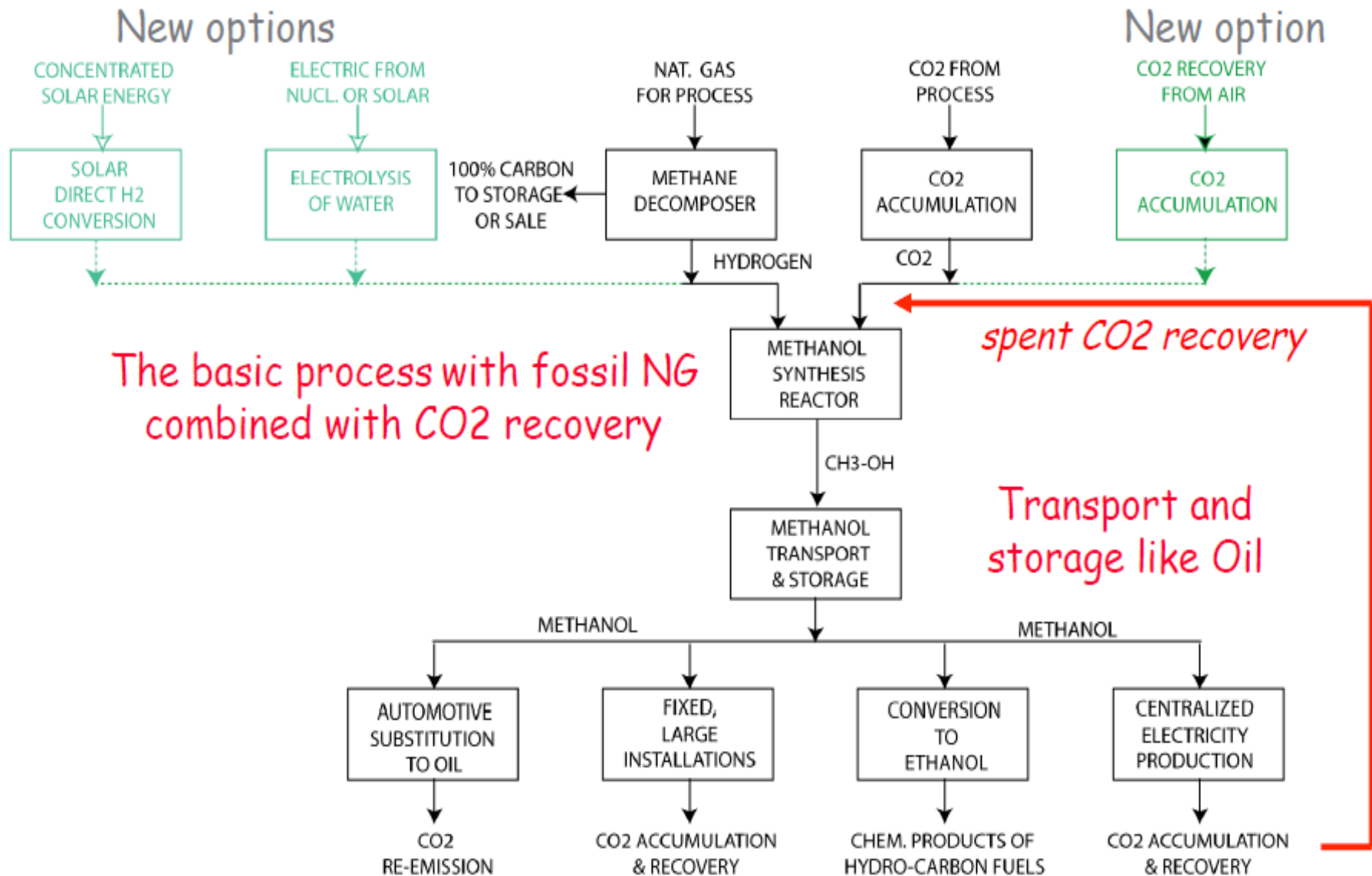
GSSI, Gran Sasso Science Institute, L'Aquila, Italy

Foreign Member of the Royal Society

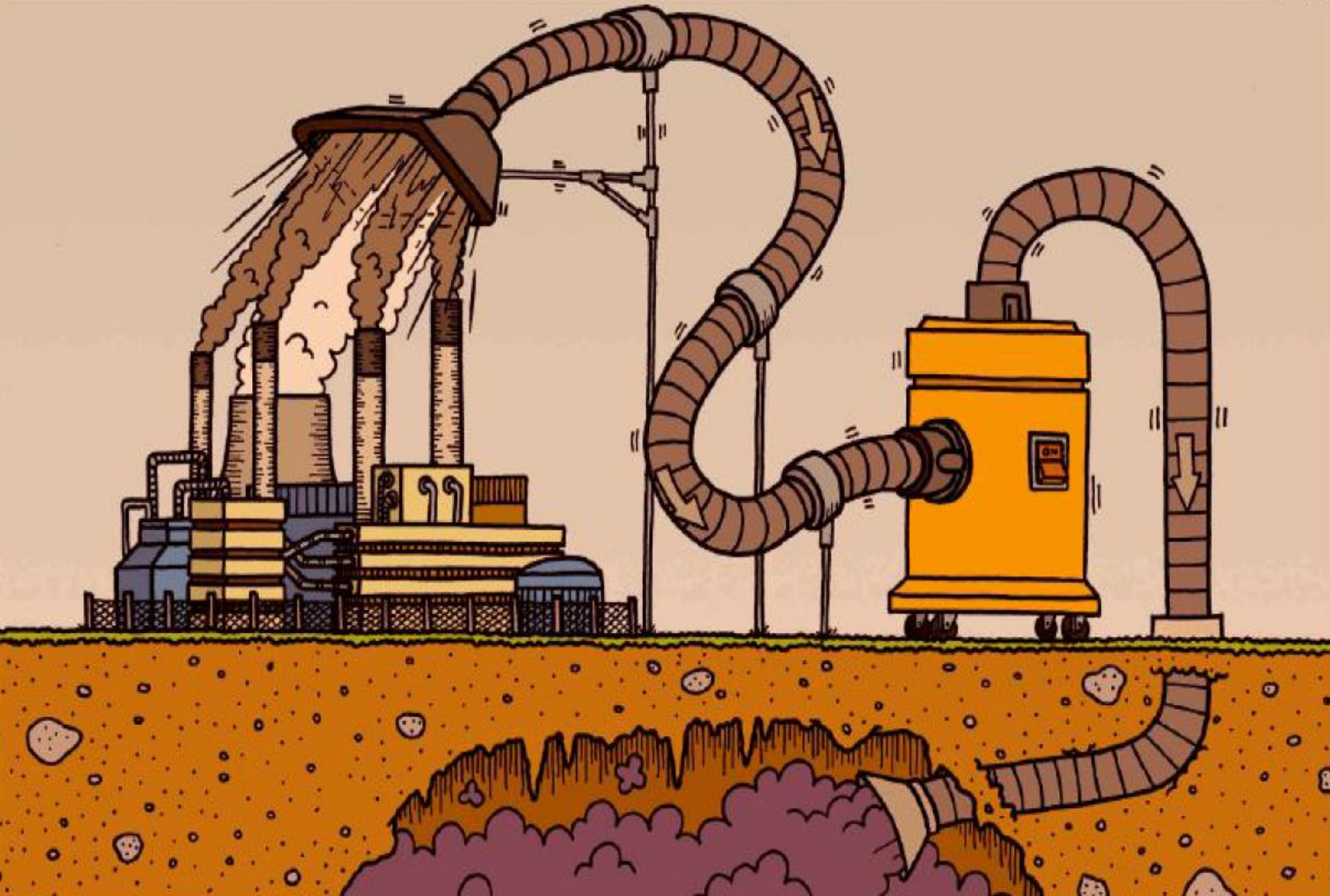
Conclusions...

- In addition to the progress with Renewables, the continued production of energy from fossils is mandatory.
- According to an old saying, "The end of stone age did not occur because of the lack of stones". Likewise, in my view, at the end of the Coal exploitation era, there will be still huge amounts of Coal left.
- Methane decarburation (TDM, $\text{CH}_4 \rightarrow 2\text{H}_2 + \text{C}$) in association with NG may become a valid alternative to Renewable Energies since having removed the CO_2 , it has the capability of becoming another safe primary energy source adequate for centuries.
- Both as a H_2 gas or a liquid with Methanol and already "spent CO_2 " it can be made environmentally acceptable with a minimal footprint and without costly new infrastructures.
- *Provided the emissions of CO_2 can be economically removed with black carbon and our simple method, why should it not be vastly used in the future without environmental drawbacks?*

Transforming CO₂ from a liability to an asset



Miracle Machine or White Elephant?





BURIED TROUBLE

Protesters saying “no to CO₂” are just one roadblock facing carbon sequestration — a strategy that could help prevent dangerous climate change. **Richard Van Noorden** investigates.

The Carbon Dioxide Economy: CO₂ as a new feedstock

The Top 10 emerging technologies for 2012

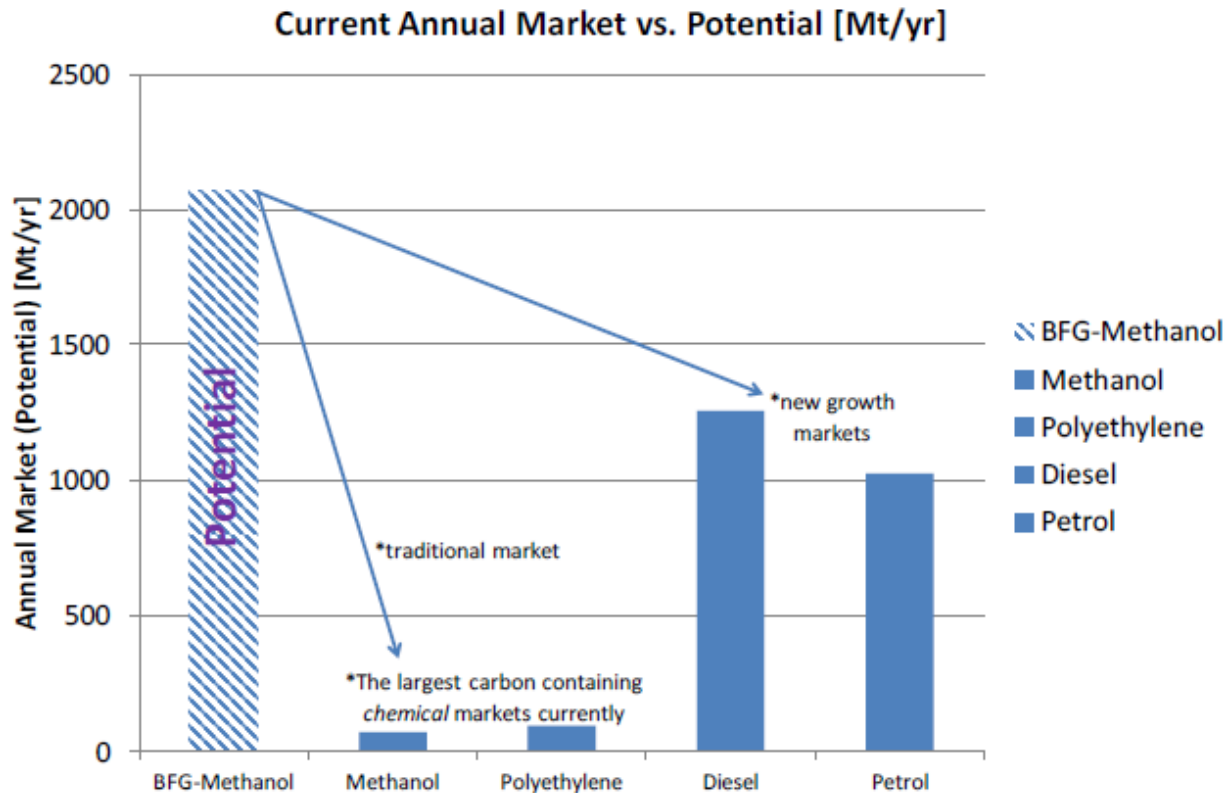


6. *Utilisation* of carbon dioxide as a resource

World Economic Forum (2011) Abu Dhabi

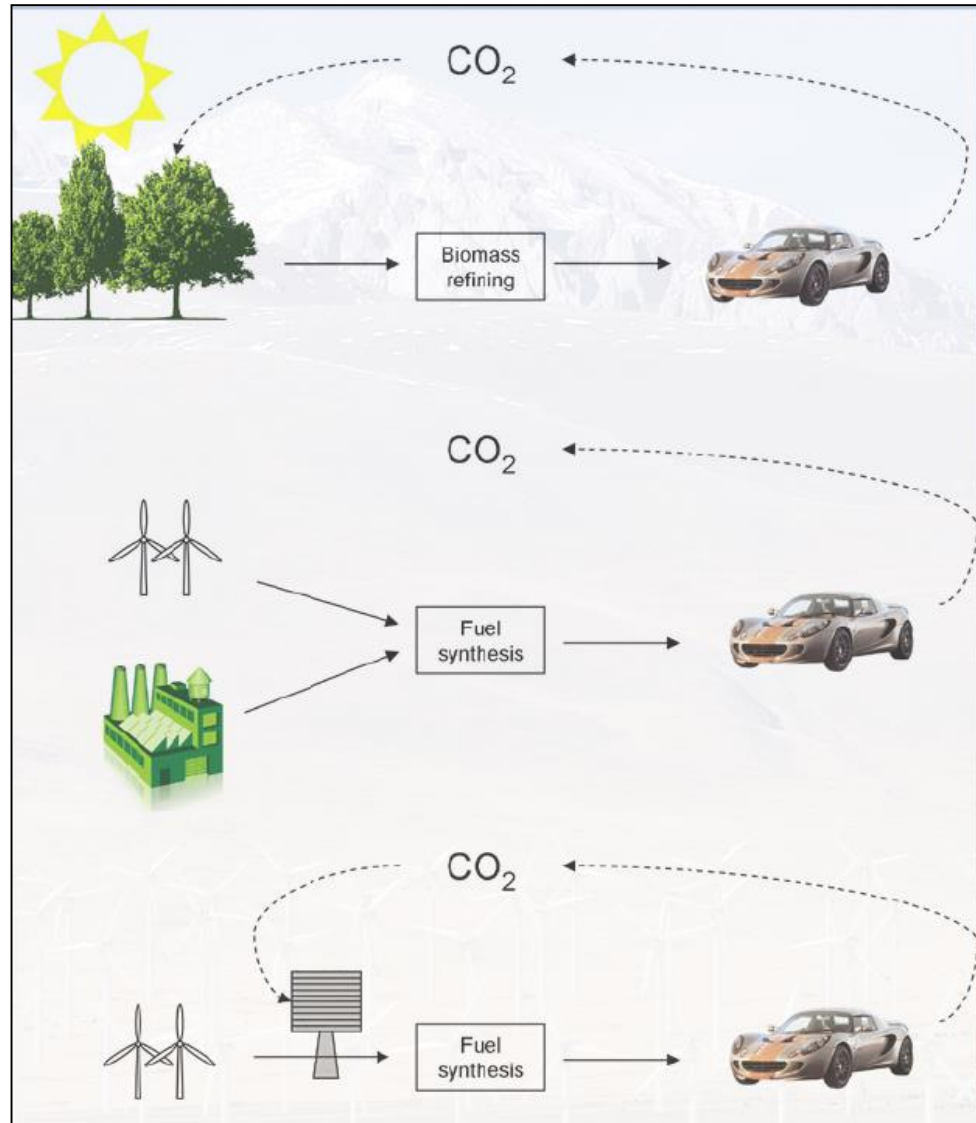
CO₂ re-use: which product?

- Annual global CO₂-production in steel industry vs current annual markets



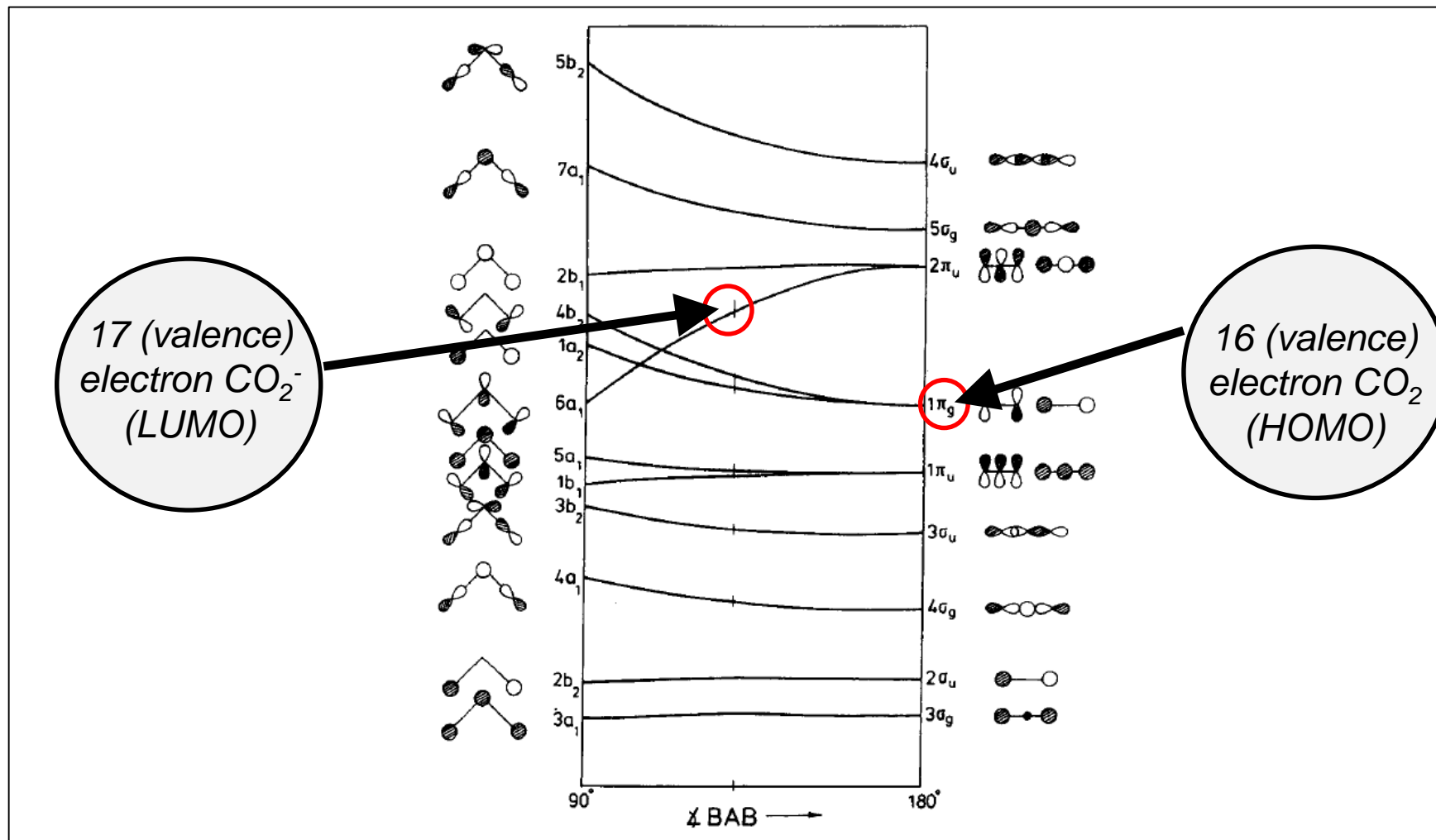
Fuel market as growth market

Carbon-neutral fuels



Bonding and the activation/reduction of CO₂

Walsh diagram of CO₂ orbital energies



Electron transfer into CO₂ LUMO is the key to CO₂ activation and utilisation

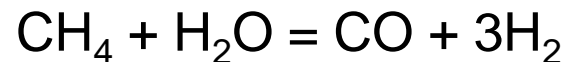
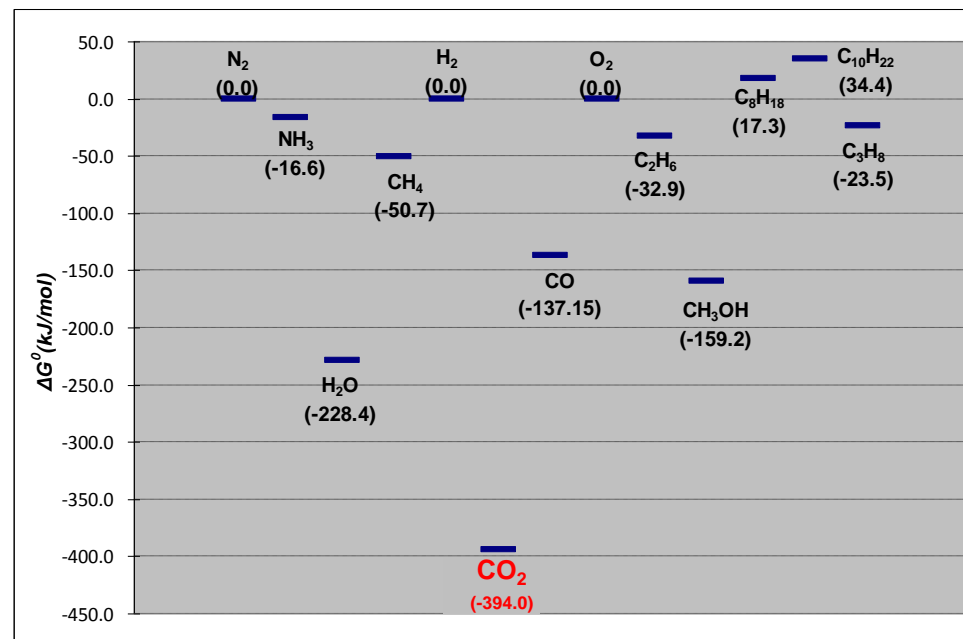
“Chemical” reduction of CO₂

Thermodynamics of CO₂ conversion: *Lessons I*

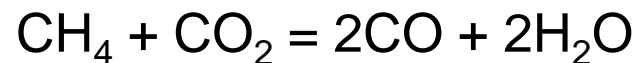
- ❑ CO₂ is a stable molecule
- ❑ Conversion of CO₂ involves endothermic, reduction reactions

BUT

- ❑ All chemical reactions are driven by *differences* in Gibbs Free Energy between products and reactants
- ❑ Many large-scale industrial processes are based on endothermic reactions.
- ❑ Endothermic reactions set the target and the scale for Solar Thermal Energy Processes



$$\Delta H = +206 \text{ kJ/mol CO}_2$$

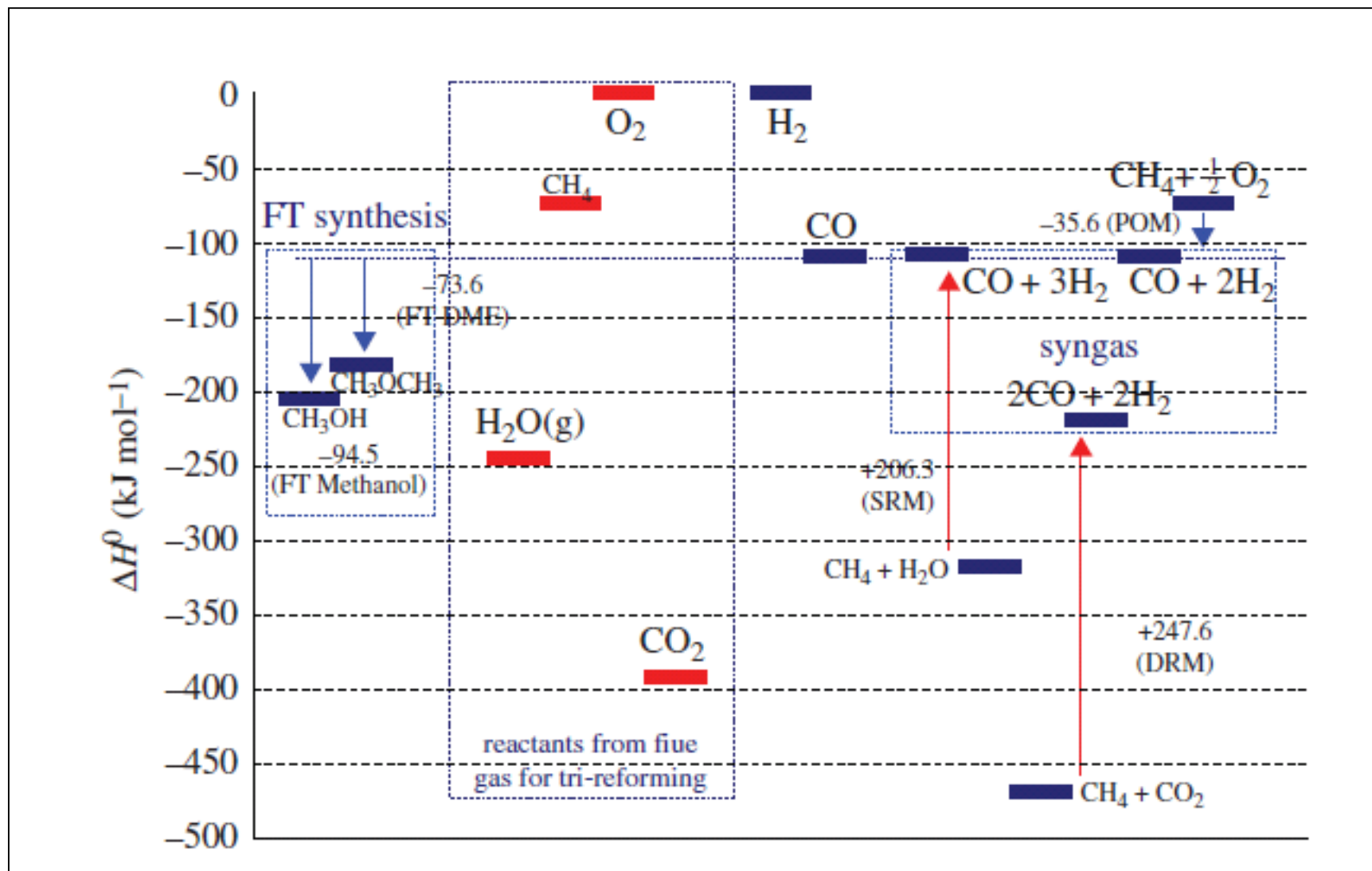


$$\Delta H = +247 \text{ kJ/mol CO}_2$$

Dry reforming puts CO₂ to work



The Tri-Reforming Process



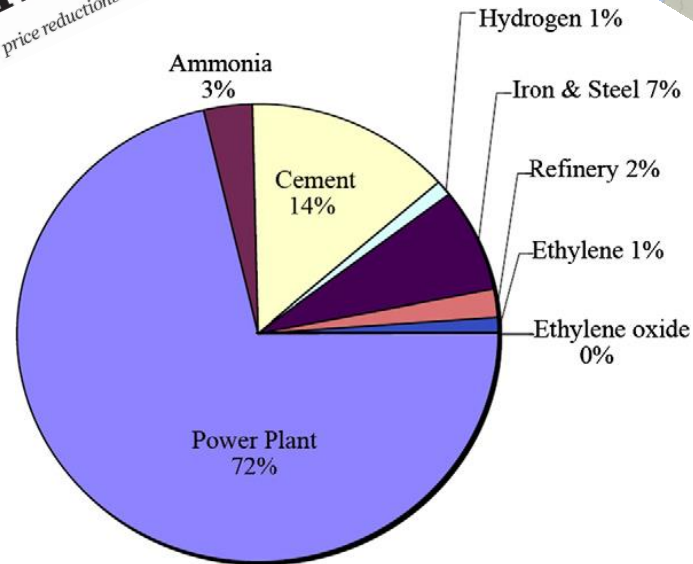
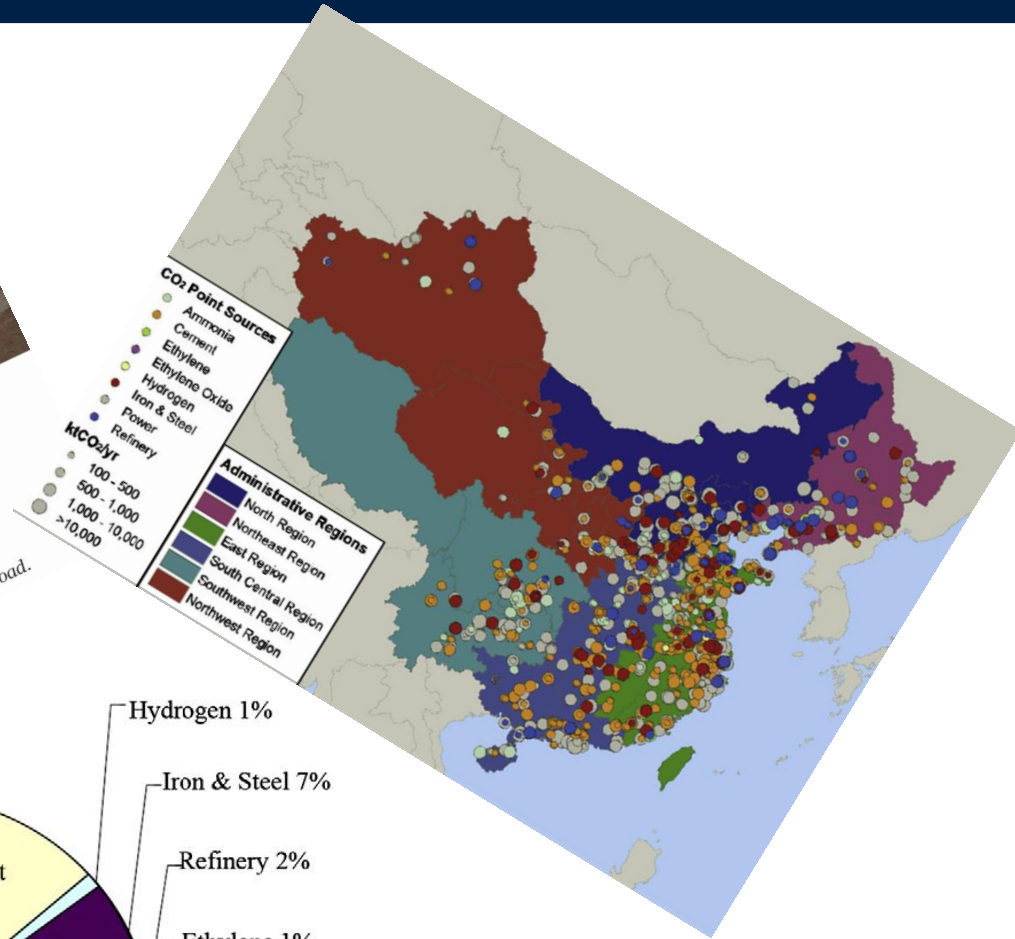
Potential for Flue Gas Reforming



CO₂ Capture, Storage and Utilisation in China

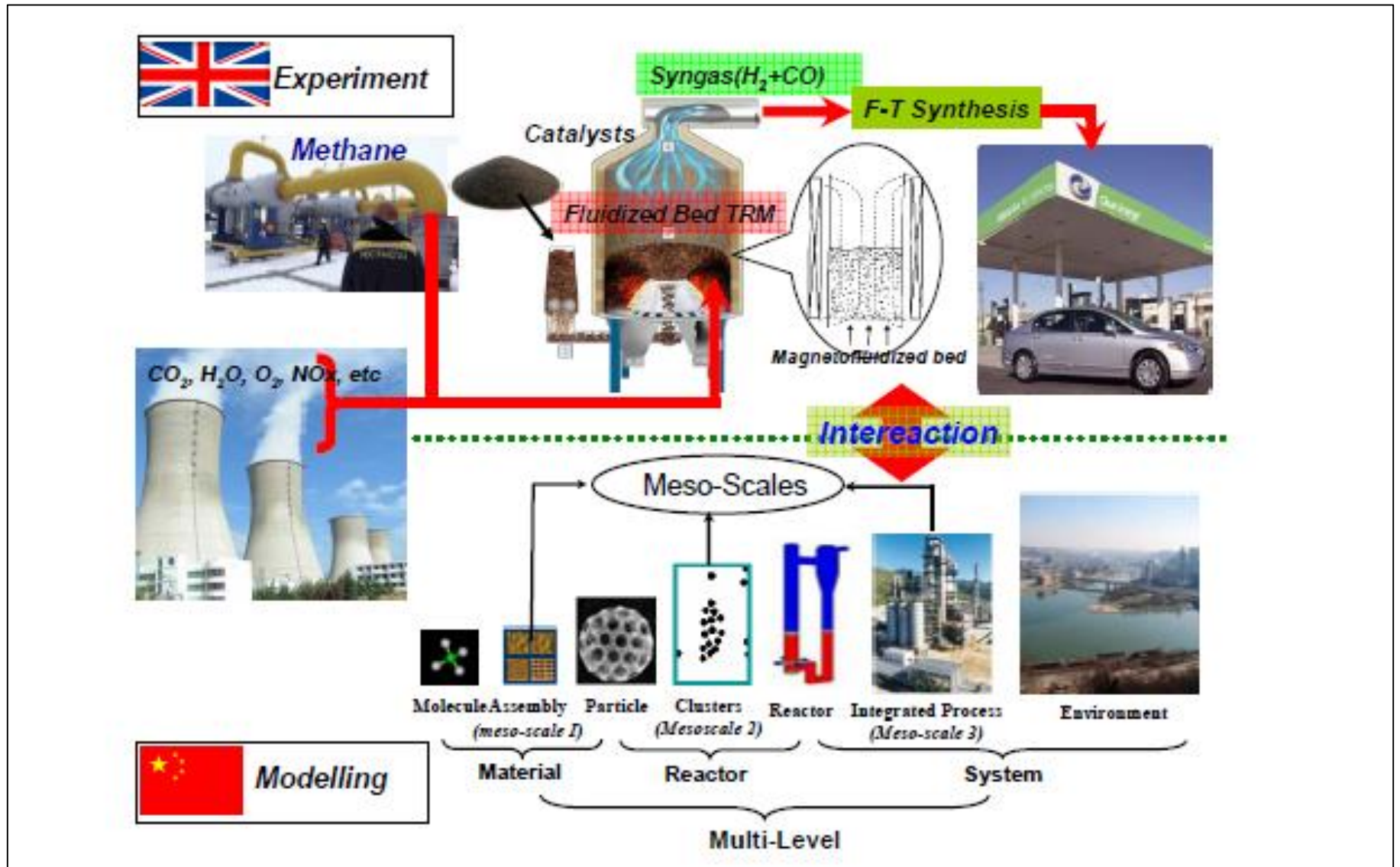


Low-cost carbon-capture project sparks interest
 Consortium to determine whether price reductions seen in China can be applied abroad.

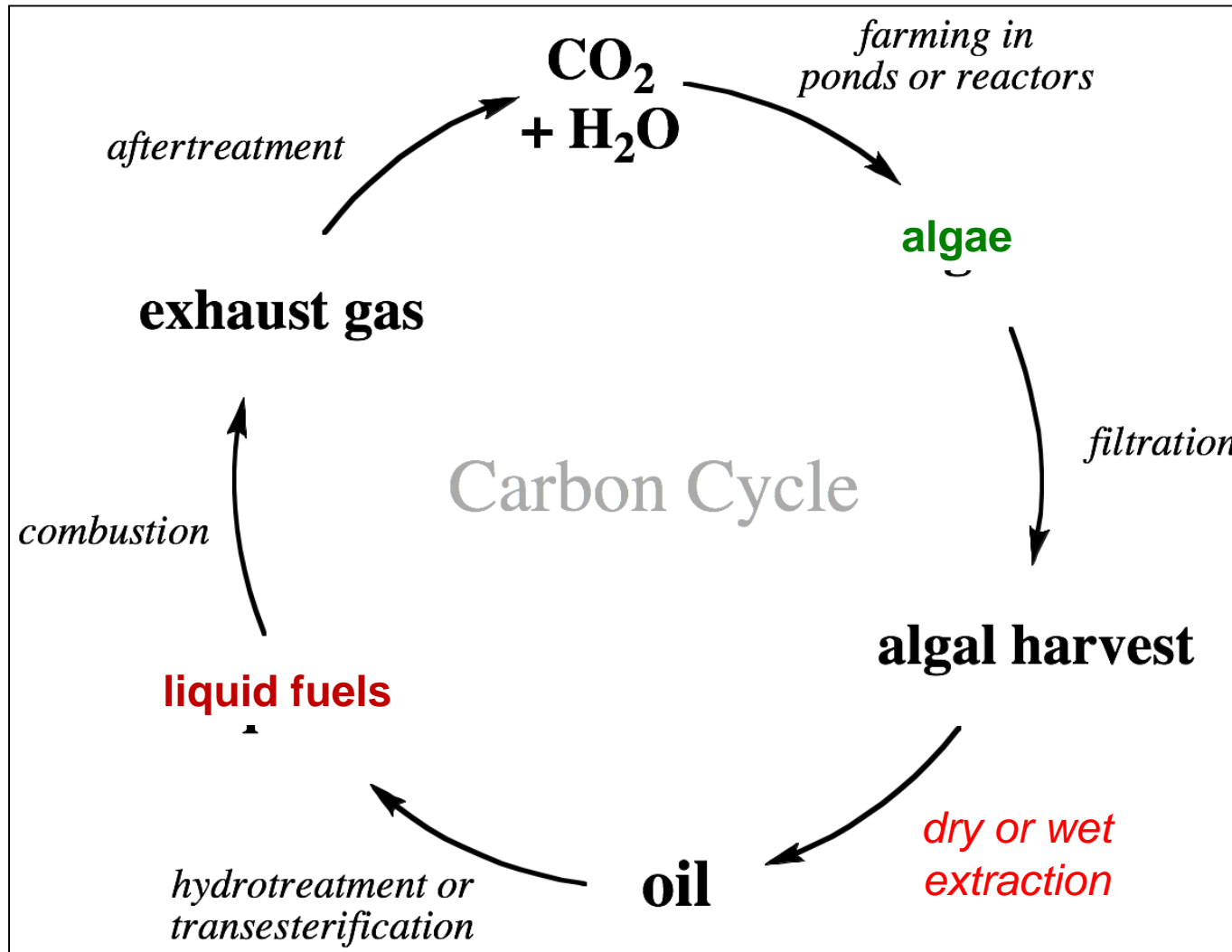


Scenarios: The critical role of the meso-scale

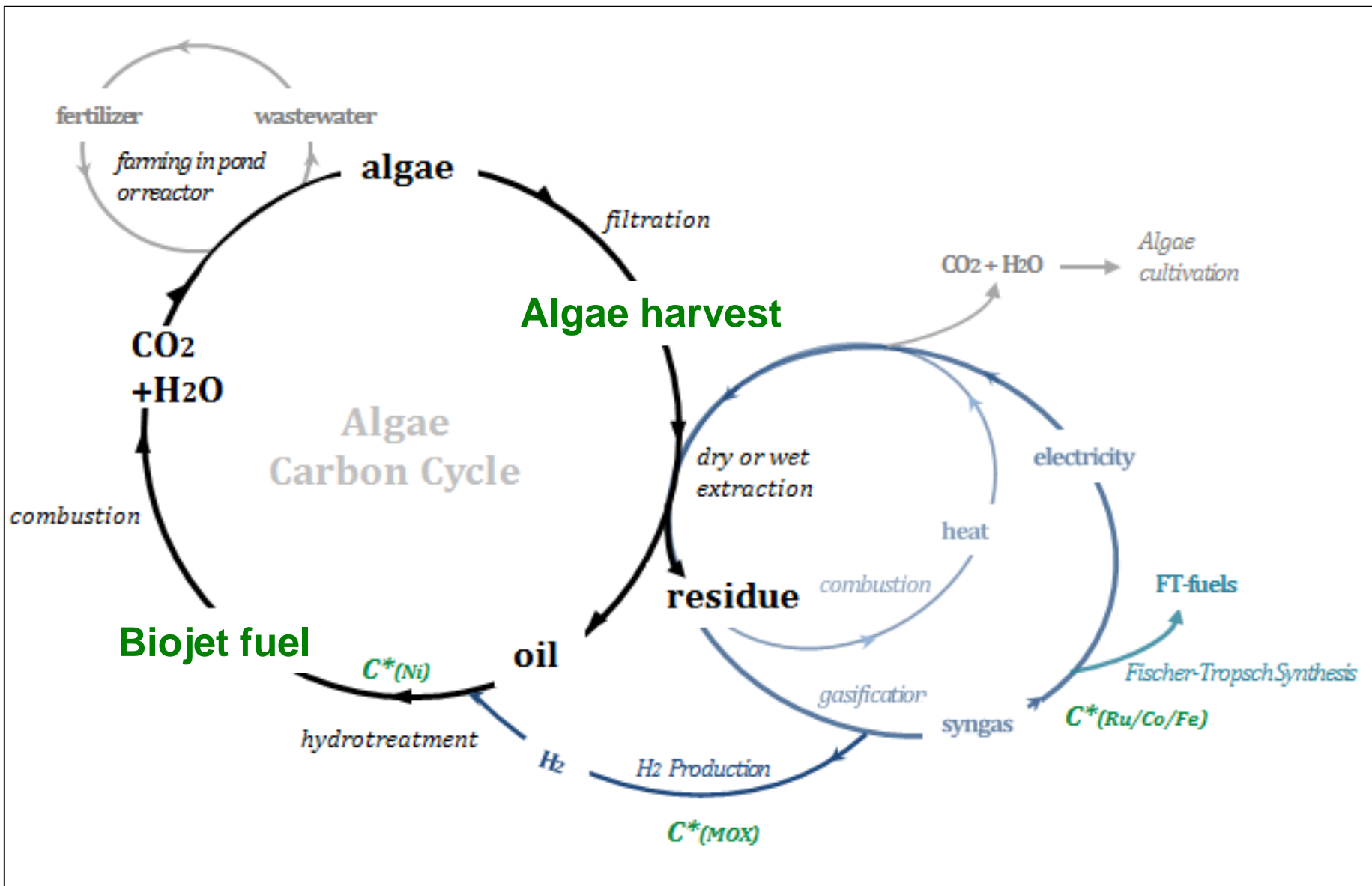
From chemistry to chemical engineering



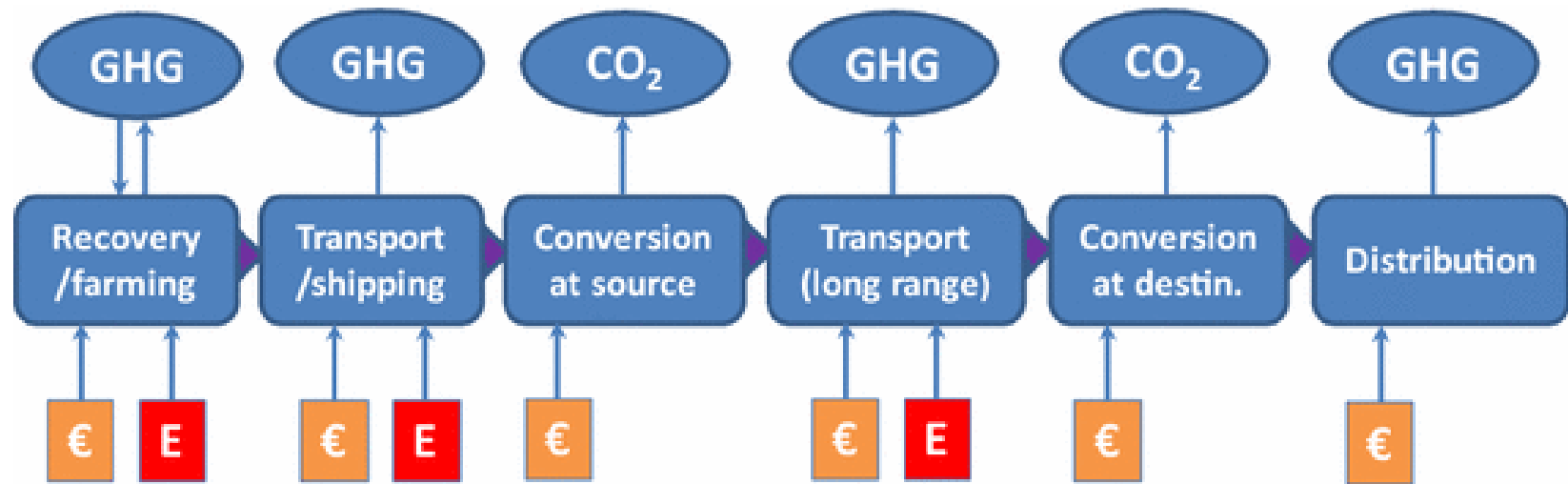
Linking Catalyst Performance to Carbon Footprints: Life Cycle Analysis: Carbon Cycle: Algae-to-Biodiesel



The importance of Catalysis for the Algae Fuel Carbon Cycle

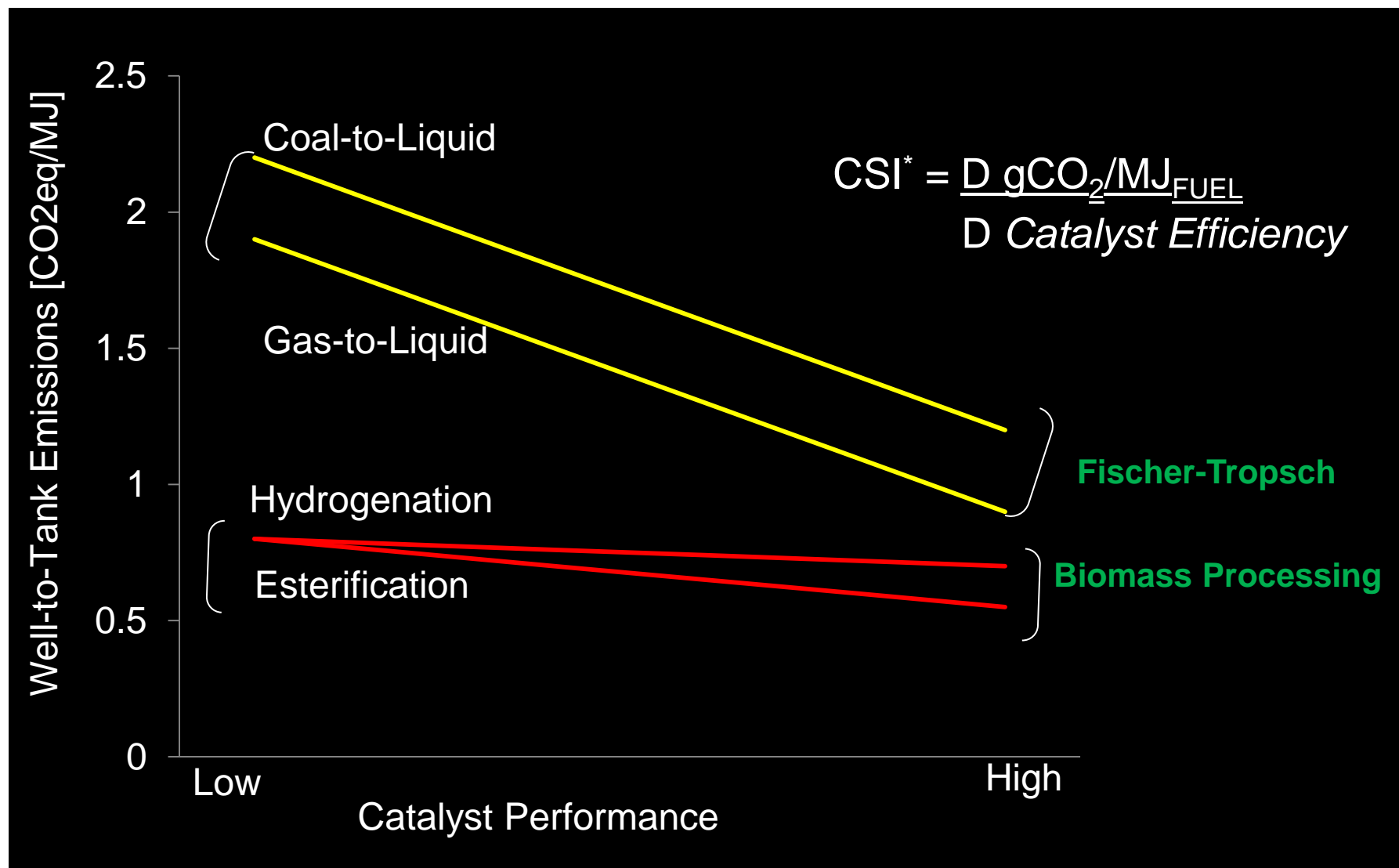


Life Cycle Analysis of a complete energy process

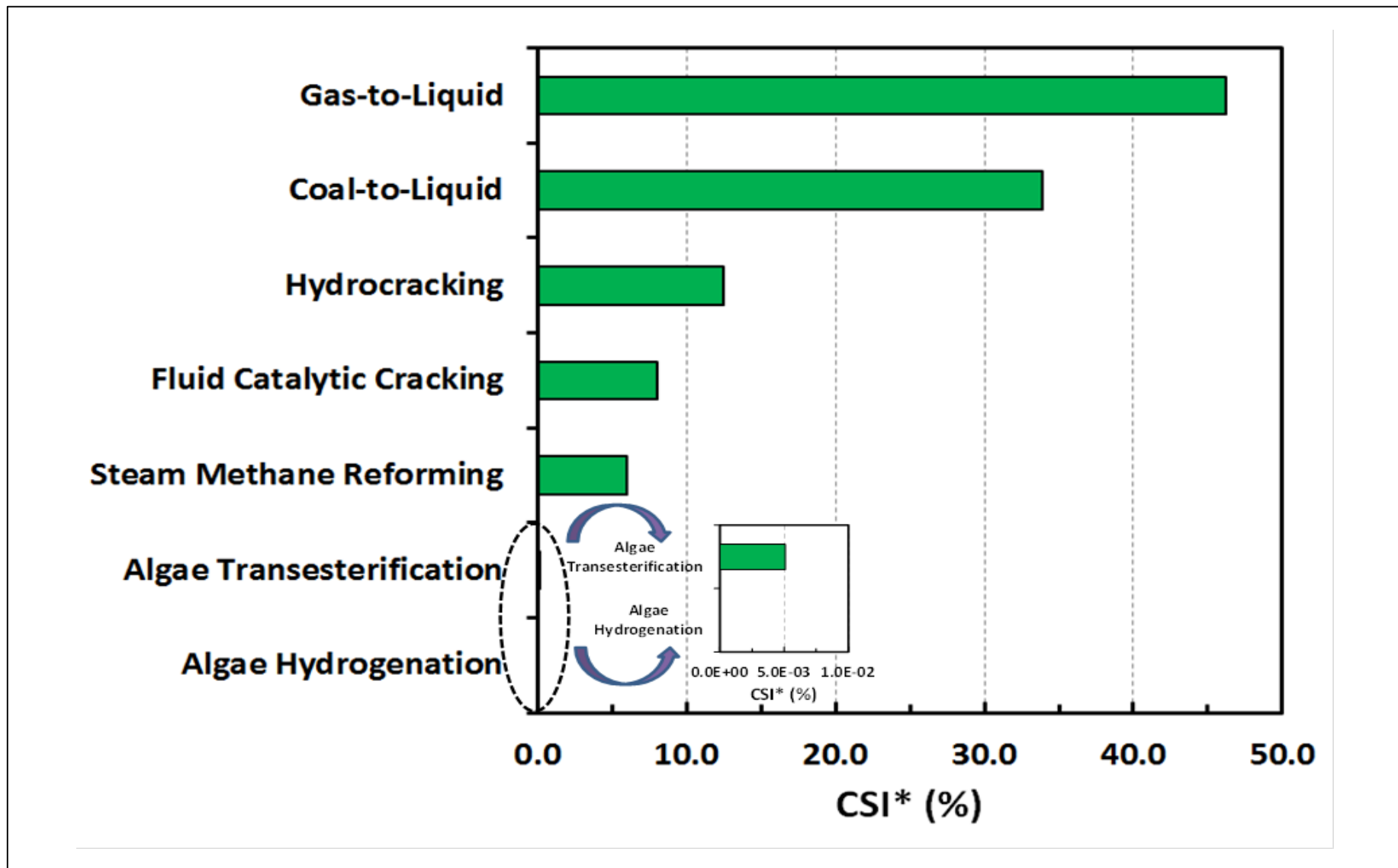


E = fossil energy; € = Money

The Catalyst Sensitivity Index: Quantifying the Sensitivity of the Carbon Footprint of any Process on Catalyst Efficiency



The Catalyst Sensitivity Index: Various catalytic processes involving fuel production and conversion



► Humanity faces a choice between two futures: doing nothing to curb emissions (which poses huge climate risks) and bringing them under control (which has costs but also benefits).

A Plan to Keep Carbon in Check

Getting a grip on greenhouse gases is daunting but doable. The technologies already exist. But there is no time to lose
BY ROBERT H. SOCOLOW AND STEPHEN W. PACALA

OVERVIEW

□ Humanity can emit only so much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere before the climate enters a state unknown in recent geologic history and goes haywire. Climate scientists typically see the risks growing rapidly as CO₂ levels approach a doubling of their pre-18th-century value.

□ To make the problem manageable, the required reduction in emissions can be broken down into "wedges"—an incremental reduction of a size that matches available technology.

Retreating glaciers, stronger hurricanes, hotter summers, thinner polar bears: the ominous harbingers of global warming are driving companies and governments to work toward an unprecedented change in the historical pattern of fossil-fuel use. Faster and faster, year after year for two centuries, human beings have been transferring carbon to the atmosphere from below the surface of the earth. Today the world's coal, oil and natural gas industries dig up and pump out about seven billion tons of carbon a year, and society burns nearly all of it, releasing carbon dioxide (CO₂). Ever more people are convinced that prudence dictates a reversal of the present course of rising CO₂ emissions.

The boundary separating the truly dangerous consequences of emissions from the merely unwise is probably located near (but below) a doubling of the concentration of CO₂ that was in the atmosphere in the 18th century, before the Industrial Revolution began. Every increase in concentration carries new risks, but avoiding that danger zone would reduce the likelihood of triggering major, irreversible climate changes, such as the disappear-

ance of the Greenland ice cap. Two years ago the two of us provided a simple framework to relate future CO₂ emissions to this goal.

We contrasted two 50-year futures. In one future, the emissions rate continues to grow at the pace of the past 30 years for the next 50 years, reaching 14 billion tons of carbon a year in 2056. (Higher or lower rates are, of course, plausible.) At that point, a tripling of preindustrial carbon concentrations would be very difficult to avoid, even with concerted efforts to decarbonize the world's energy systems over the following 100 years. In the other future, emissions are frozen at the present value of seven billion tons a year for the next 50 years and then reduced by about half over the following 50 years. In this way, a doubling of CO₂ levels can be avoided. The difference between these 50-year emission paths—one ramping up and one flattening out—we called the stabilization triangle [see box on page 52].

To hold global emissions constant while the world's economy continues to grow is a daunting task. Over the past 30 years, as the gross world

KEN BROWN





Prof Hamid Almegren



Dr Tiancun Xiao



Dr Prince Turki Bin
Saud Bin Muhammad



Sir John Meurig Thomas



Sir David King



Zhaoxi Zhang



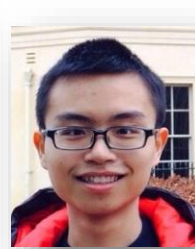
Dan Slocombe



Afrah Aldawsari



Benzhen Yao



Jiale Wang



Xian Du



Bonan Liu



Himanshu
Jain



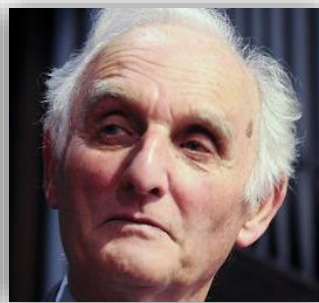
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Pearson



Sergio
Gonzalez-Cortes



Prof Jinghai Li



Sir John Houghton



Prof Jon Dilworth



Michael Jie



Dr Jamie
Turner