

# Exploring Human Labour in times of low carbon and no growth economies

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September, Leipzig 2014

Degrowth Conference

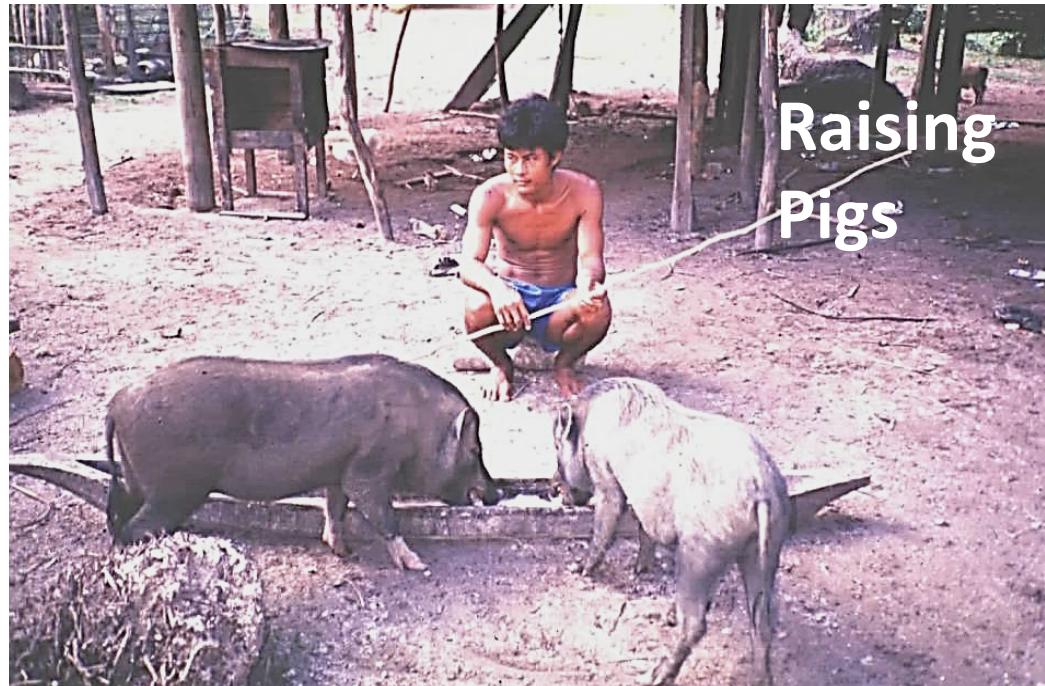
# Prolog

- Sooner or later societies need to exit the fossil fuel regime and to engage themselves in *low-carbon-pathways*.
- “Green Jobs” as strategy to create new jobs, reduce environmental pressures and promote growth is too narrow to explore the future of labour.
- A systematic view on the entire economy is needed. And: At least physical “no” growth seems to be a pre-condition for *low-carbon-pathways*.
- What does this mean for labour? Quantitatively and qualitatively?
- How are energy regimes and labour related? What can we learn from the past? What speculations can we develop for the future of labour?

# What you can expect

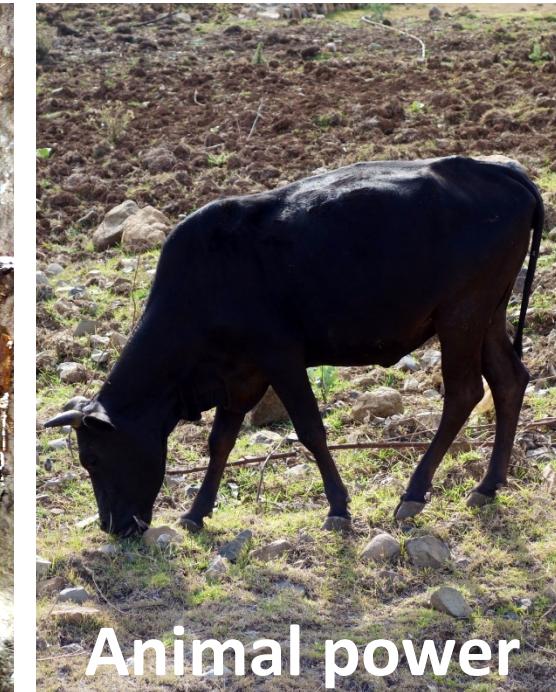
- Three regimes across history
  - Energy consumption
  - Labour quantitatively (hours)
- From agrarian to industrial society
  - Labour qualitatively and potential for productivity gains
  - Relationships between labour hours + energy
- What's next

# Hunter and Gatherer society



Labour means extracting from nature what's already there

# Agrarian society



Labour means colonizing nature and extracting with tools and animals

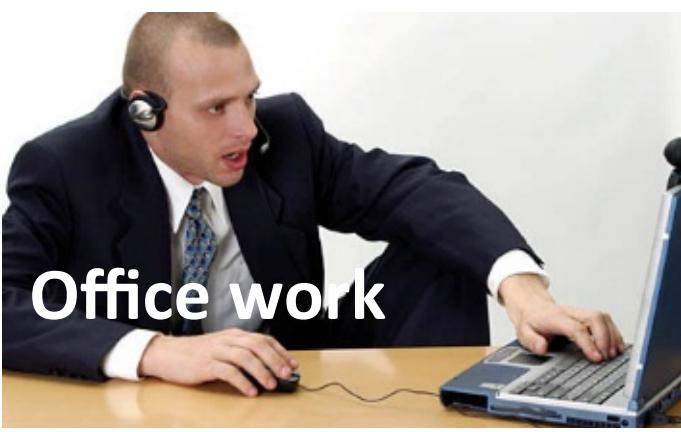
# Industrial society



Farming



Factory work



Office work



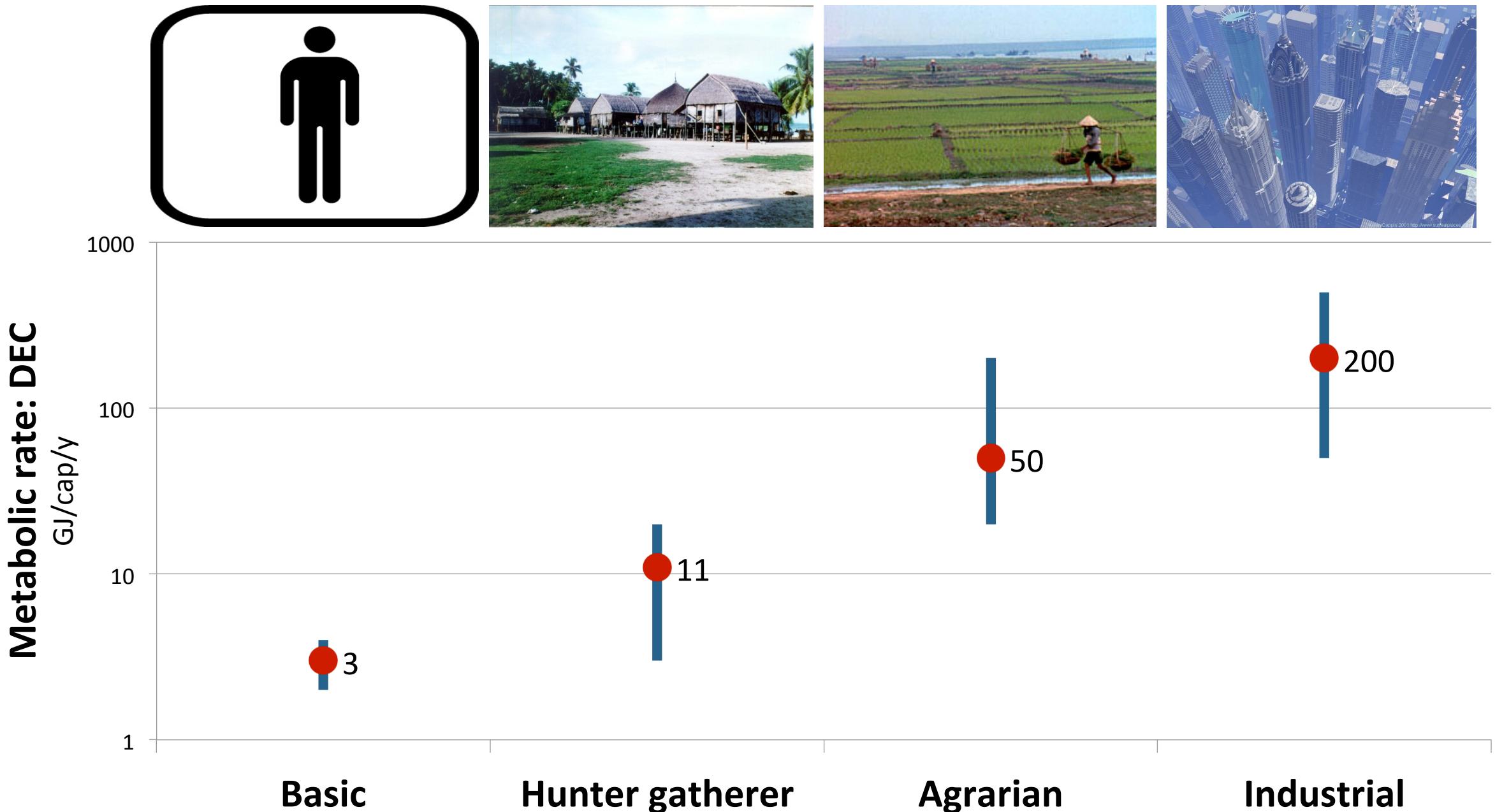
Trade



Construction

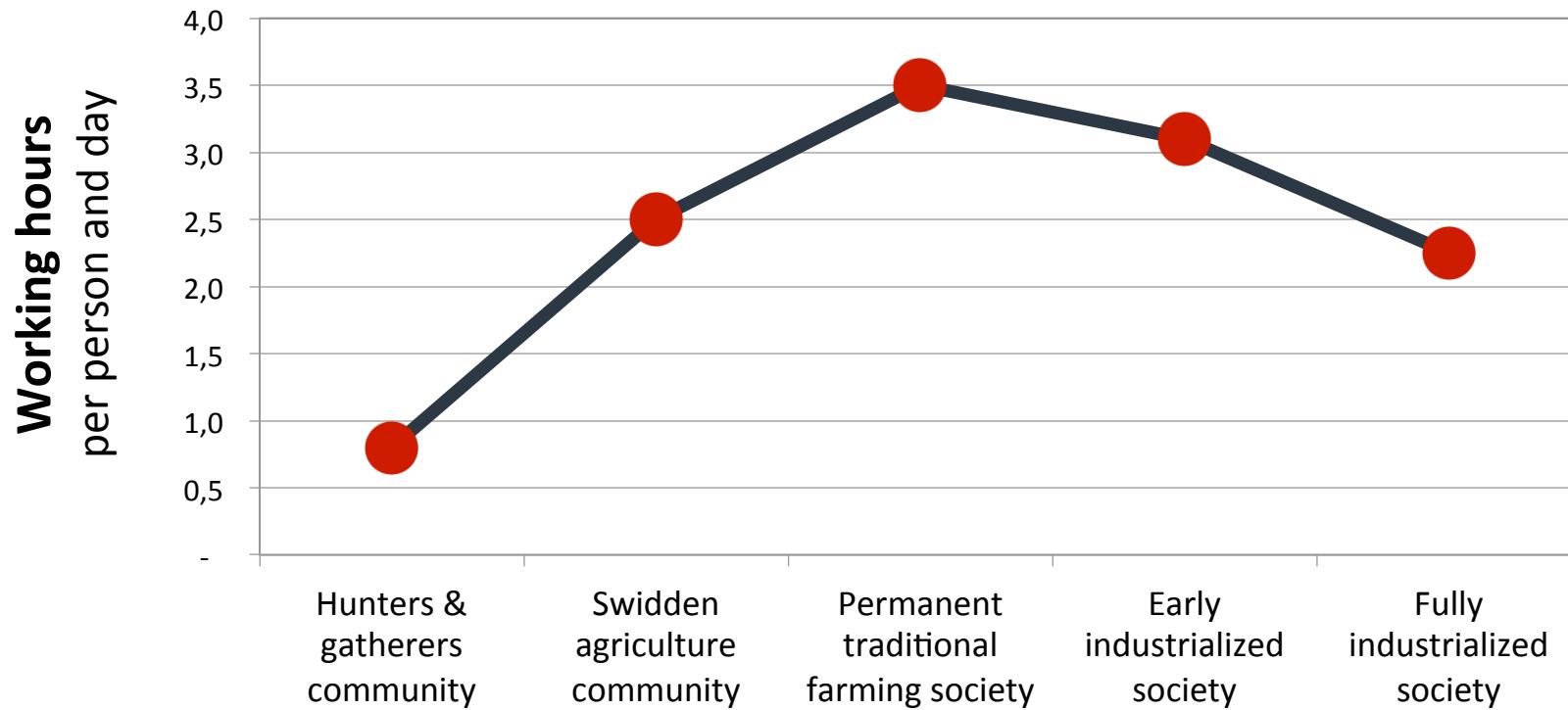
Labour means highly diversified tasks in specialised settings – mainly based on fossil fuels

# Energy regimes across history (GJ/cap/y)



# Quantitative development of labour across history

**Labour time:** Societal time spent for production of goods and services as income generation and/or for subsistence divided by total population.



(Based on the following cases and sources: Trinket (hunters & gatherers), Campo Bello (swidden agriculture) and Nalang (permanent farming, traditional): Fischer-Kowalski et al. 2011; France 1998/1999, Netherlands 2000, UK 2000/2001: European Commission 2003, Eurostat database 2013; Germany 2001/2002: Statistisches Bundesamt 2006, Eurostat database 2013)

# Qualitative characterization of human labour

**Muscular strength** facilitates physical labour as molding of objects:

- Human body: Input of 6.2 – 9.6 MJ/day -> output of 2 MJ over 8 hours (20% eff.)
- Steam machine: for 2 MJ -> Input of 1 kg coal = 20 MJ is needed (10% efficiency)  
Diesel machine: for 2 MJ -> Input of 0.125 litres = 5 MJ (efficiency 40%)
- Maximum performance of humans: an athlete can deliver 1 kW for a few seconds  
(Smil 2008, p.138)

**Rationality/Knowledge** is the intellectual ability, enables learning and communication

- Brains consume a sixth of the basic energetic metabolism
- Development and maintenance of brain capacity requires time (life long learning)

**Empathy** is the ability to anticipate and mirror emotions of others (Rizzolatti et al. 2006, p.54-61), is closely linked with cultural aspects

- Important for communication and care tasks

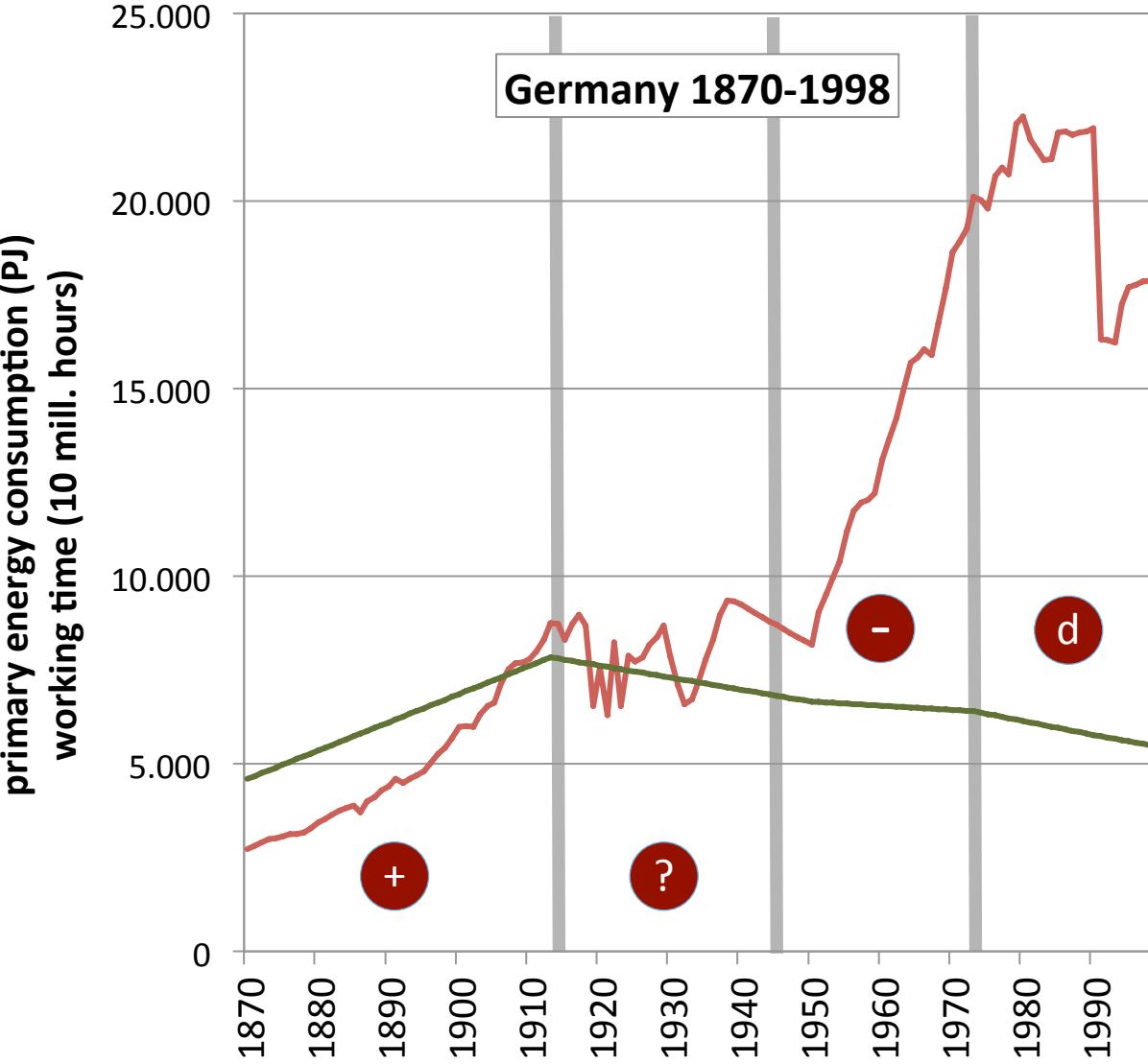
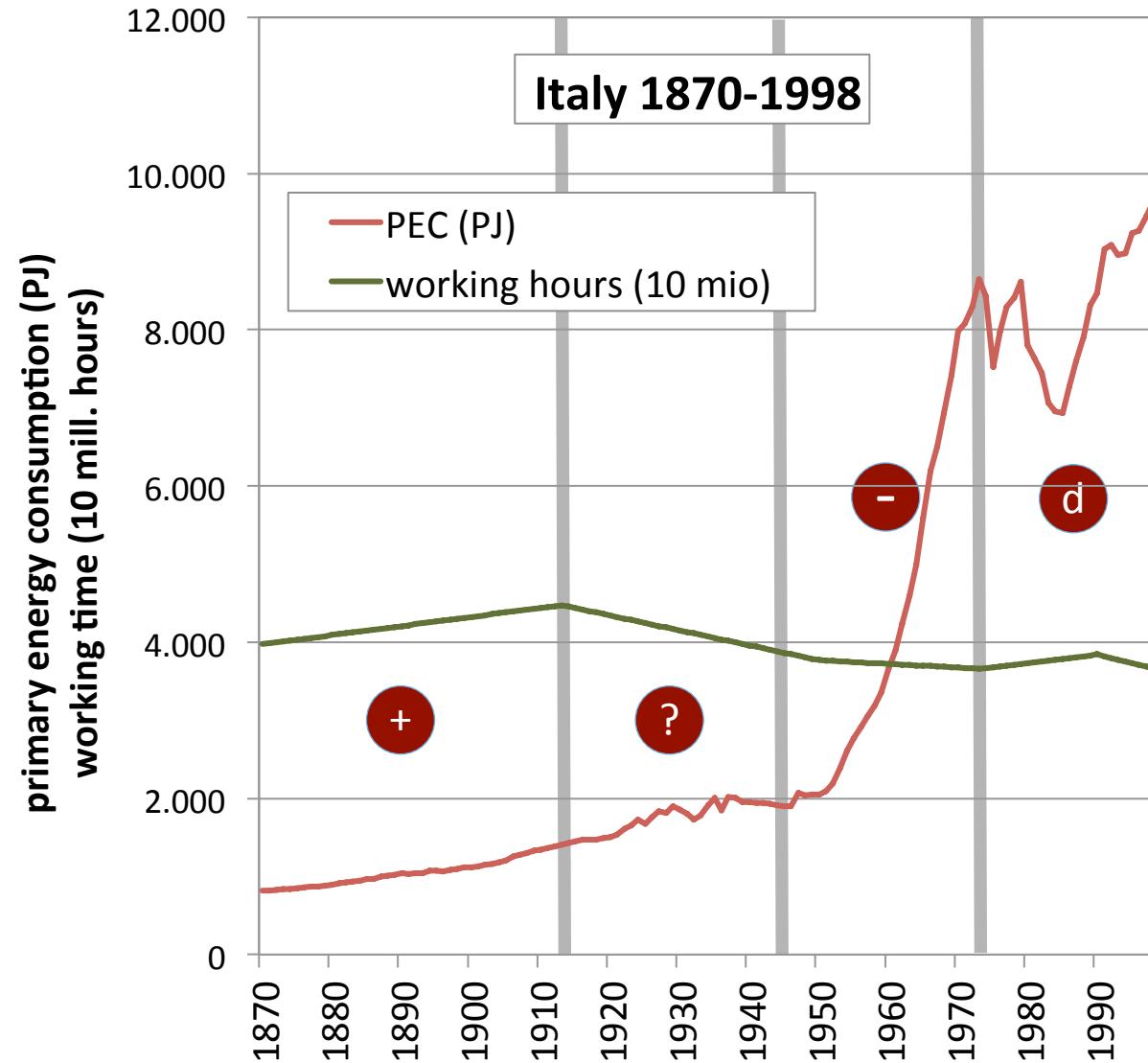
Big through machines and technical energy

Big through IT and electricity

Low since social

Potential for productivity gains

# In transition: Societal labour time, primary energy and their relation



Energy regime	Coal	WW I+II	Oil	Stable
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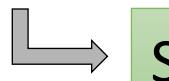
Coal	WW I+II	Oil	Stable
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(Sources: Maddison 2001; Maddison 2008: online data base, Cleveland 2011, SEC-Database 2011)

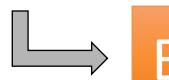
# Some observations, some conclusions

Since the 70s there are new opportunities – which were not used

- Standard of living was sufficient
- Infrastructure to a large extent was satisfactory
- Since then supply of society with food and energy needed little labour input

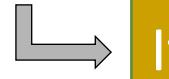


So we could ask: What should we do with our surplus time?



But: Growth imperative has demanded labour productivity to steadily increase

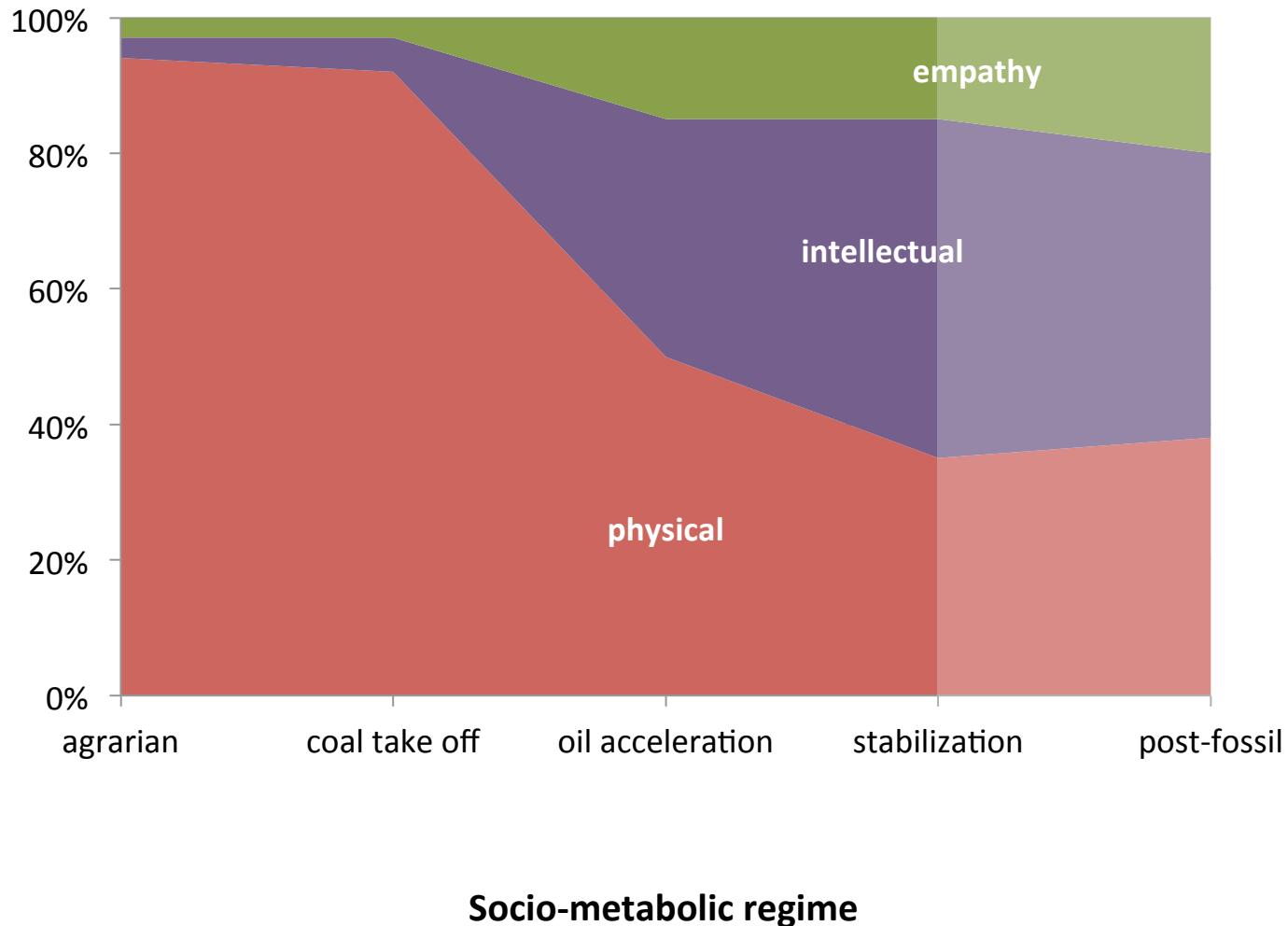
However: Labour is more than an economic factor that needs to be economically optimized, it provides meaning, identity, ....



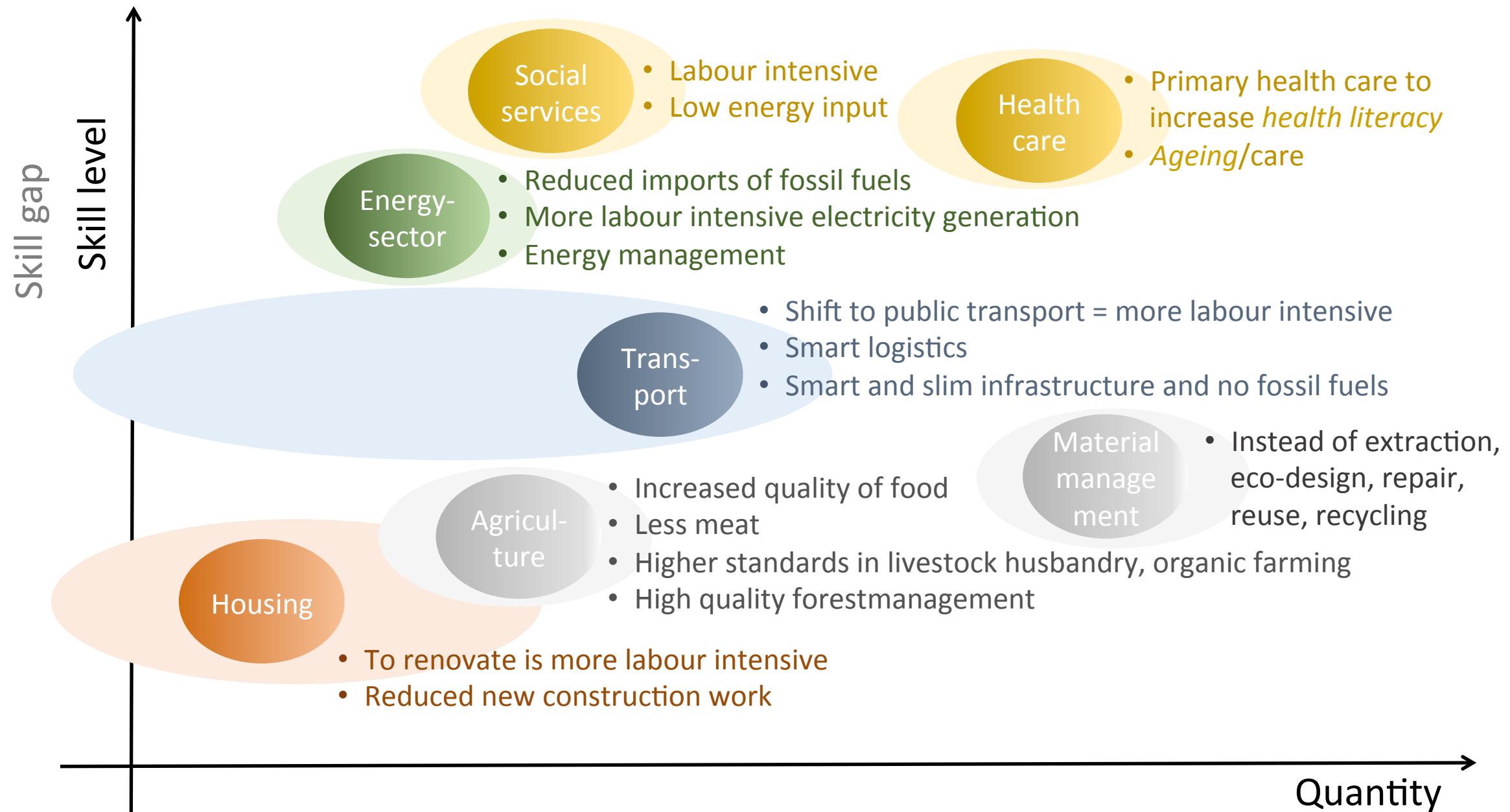
- If the future of labour is shaped by societal needs instead of economic demands
  - Labour productivity could shrink (a challenging task for the economy)
  - Daily activities could become more diverse
  - And even a shrinking economy would not run short of labour

# Past and future of labour

## Quality of work



# More and more skilled labour with less energy



A new approach to labour productivity could lead to a new type of innovation



Looking forward to your comments

# Arbeit: Zukunft

Win-Win Veränderungen in Europa	Konsequenzen für Arbeit	Changes in			
		quantity	physical	intellectual	empathy
<b>Energiesektor</b>		↗	↗	↗	→
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anteil elektrischer Energie an der Endenergie steigt</li> <li>• Wind, Sonnen, Gezeiten- und Wasserkraftwerke, Geothermie</li> <li>• Reduzierte Importe fossiler Energieträger</li> <li>• Nachfrageseitiges Energiemanagement steigt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mehr Arbeitskraft um Gesellschaft zu versorgen</li> <li>• Höhere Qualifikationen erforderlich</li> <li>• Steigende Anforderung an KonsumentInnen Energie zu managen (Menge und Zeit)</li> </ul>				
<b>Land-, Forstwirtschaft und Fischerei</b>		↗	↗	↗	↗
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gesteigerte Lebensmittelqualität (gesunde Ernährung)</li> <li>• Mehr organ. Landbau, mehr Gemüseanbau</li> <li>• Weniger "rotes" Fleisch</li> <li>• Hohe Standards in der Tierhaltung</li> <li>• Krise bei Wildfisch-Produkten erfordert Investments, Kontrollen und Management; <i>Aquaculture</i> wird mehr</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steigender Arbeitskräftebedarf für organ. Landbau mit hohen Qualitätsanforderungen</li> <li>• Stabiler Bedarf für Viehhaltung (weniger Tiere aber aufwändiger Haltung)</li> <li>• Zunahme des <i>precision farming</i> als Antwort auf steigende Rohstoffpreise und Umweltstandards</li> <li>• Mehr Arbeitskräftebedarf zur Sicherung der <i>Ecosystem-Services</i> (Forst, Fischerei)</li> </ul>				

# Arbeit: Zukunft

Win-Win Veränderungen in Europa	Konsequenzen für Arbeit	Changes in			
		quantity	physical	intellectual	empathy
<b>Transport</b>		↙	↗	↗	➡
<b>Personen</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anwachsen urbaner Räume und schrumpfen des ländlichen Raumes (im Arbeitskräfte für Flächen- und Punktressourcen)</li> <li>Öffentlicher Transport zwischen urbanen Zentren (Schiene)</li> <li>Reduzierter motorisierter Individualverkehr in Städten / öffentlich, gehen, Fahrrad fahren</li> <li>Begünstigt Infrastruktur mit geringen Erhaltungsaufwand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beschäftigung wandert von Automobilindustrie zu Transportdienstleistungen (positive Beschäftigungseffekt)</li> <li>Fahrrad- und Öffi-freundliche Policies in urbanen Räumen stimulieren Beschäftigung – mehr physische Aktivität</li> <li>Geringere Kilometerleistung für Personen und Güter könnte in Summe Beschäftigung senken</li> <li>Logistik ist aufwändiger und erfordert ICT und mehr entsprechende Qualifikationen</li> </ul>				
<b>Güter</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Geringere Transportaufwand da Fossil-Energie weitgehend weggefallen sein wird</li> <li>Stabilisierung der Infrastruktur reduziert Transportaufwand für Baumaterialien</li> <li>Nachfrage in urbanen Zentren effizienter zu befriedigen</li> </ul>					

## Arbeit: Zukunft

Win-Win Veränderungen in Europa	Konsequenzen für Arbeit	Changes in			
		quantity	physical	intellectual	empathy
<b>Bausektor</b>		↗	↗	↔	↔
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stabilisierung der Infrastruktur</li><li>• Renovieren und Umbauen vorhandener Infrastrukturen für höhere Energieeffizienz und geringen Erhaltungsaufwand</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Weniger Arbeit durch geringen Neubau</li><li>• Mehr Arbeit durch arbeitsintensivere Renovierung</li><li>• Mehr handwerkliche und planerische Fähigkeiten</li></ul>				

# Arbeit: Zukunft

Win-Win Veränderungen in Europa	Konsequenzen für Arbeit	Changes in			
		quantity	physical	intellectual	empathy
<b>Körperbezogene Dienstleistungen (Nahrung, Gesundheit, Well/Fitness)</b>		↗	↗	↗	↗
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Auswärts essen; Gesundes Essen, große Bandbreite</li> <li>Gesteigerte <i>health literacy</i> erhöht Nachfrage nach <i>soft services</i></li> <li><i>Aging of society</i> erhöht Nachfrage nach Gesundheits- und Pflegeleistungen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trends setzen sich fort</li> <li>Körperbezogene Dienstleistungen erfordern spezielle Qualifikationen</li> <li>Erhöhter Pflegebedarf erfordert steigende Qualifikationen in Familie und bei Professionellen ( Empathy)</li> </ul>				
<b>Materialbewirtschaftung</b>		↗	↗	↗	→
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mehr Management um Kreislaufwirtschaft zu fördern</li> <li>Smartes Design für höhere Lebensdauern und bessere Reziklierbarkeit</li> <li>Recycling spart Energie</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mehr Logistik-Skills</li> <li>Mehr handling von Materialien und Ersatzteilen</li> <li>Herausfordernde Designaufgaben</li> </ul>				

# Energy regimes across history (share of global energy consumption)

