

INTERVIEWS

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My Experiences with Interview Research – I

- *Insects, Experts, and the Insecticide Crisis: The Quest for New Pest Management Strategies* (1982)
- Insecticides: why developed? Replacements?
- Design
 - Leading entomologists
 - Archives (US National Archives)
 - Literature (entomology, agronomy, economics, rural sociology)
- Findings
 - Insecticides alone failed
 - Nature philosophy shaped replacements: eradication key
 - IPM & TPM vied to replace Chemical Control Strategy
 - Replacements: political, economic, social, philosophical norms
- Interviews crucial

My Experiences with Interview Research – II

- *Geopolitics and the Green Revolution: Wheat, Genes, and the Cold War* (1997)
- High-yielding agriculture controversial, so why was it developed?
- Design
 - Leading wheat breeders (USA, UK, India); family; farmer
 - Archives (US, UK, India, Rockefeller & Ford Foundations, other)
 - Literature: plant breeding, agronomy, economics
 - Historical & political economic literature (US, UK, India, Mexico)
- Findings
 - Green revolution not product of fertilizer & pesticide industry
 - Each country embraced GR for its own security interests
 - For US & India: Cold War; UK: loss of empire; Mexico: progress
- Interviews useful but not crucial

The Process (aka Design)

- Topic
- Research(able) question
- Framing (what kind of problem is it?)
 - Concepts
 - Theories
- Hypothesis
- Feasibility (access; time; money)
- Interviewees
- Additional sources of data (literature, archives)

Picking Interviewees

- Prepare, prepare, prepare, prepare.....
- Interviews better than survey?
 - Fewer respondents
 - More depth
- Selection of interviewees
 - A more-or-less random group?
 - Key respondents (not random at all)?
- Access
 - Informal
 - Formal

Interview Process

- Prepare, prepare, prepare, prepare....
- Place
- Time & length
- Record?
 - Equipment
 - Skill
- Notes
 - Equipment
 - Skill

The Actual Interview

- Prepare, prepare, prepare, prepare.....
- Questions beforehand?
- Closed- and open-ended questions
 - Did eradication of screw-worm fly in Curaçao influence your decision to try eradication of boll weevil on cotton in the US?
 - Can you tell me how you saw research needs on cotton insects in 1954?
- Shut up and listen!
- Ask interviewee to elaborate

Relationship to Interviewee

- Trust: essential
 - Knowledge
 - Avoid “gotcha’s” (research ≠ investigative journalism)
 - Listening
 - Accuracy
- Friendship
 - Not likely
 - Beware if it comes (con jobs)
- Ethical obligations (human subjects review)
 - Confidentiality?
 - Anonymity?
 - On the record, or not?

Dealing with the Results

- Transcribe?
- Code?
- Cross-checking
 - They tell you what they think you want to hear
 - They tell you what they now wish they had done
 - They tell you what they now think happened then
- Ask interviewee to review?
- Citing interviews
- Publishing
- Keeping records

ENERGY

A Subject for Interviews!

- Problem # 1 = climate change
- Climate change = energy problem
- Old energy economy: disappear
- New energy economy: what?
- Jobs for MES! (some day)

Energy: Not just US problem



Xi'an, China

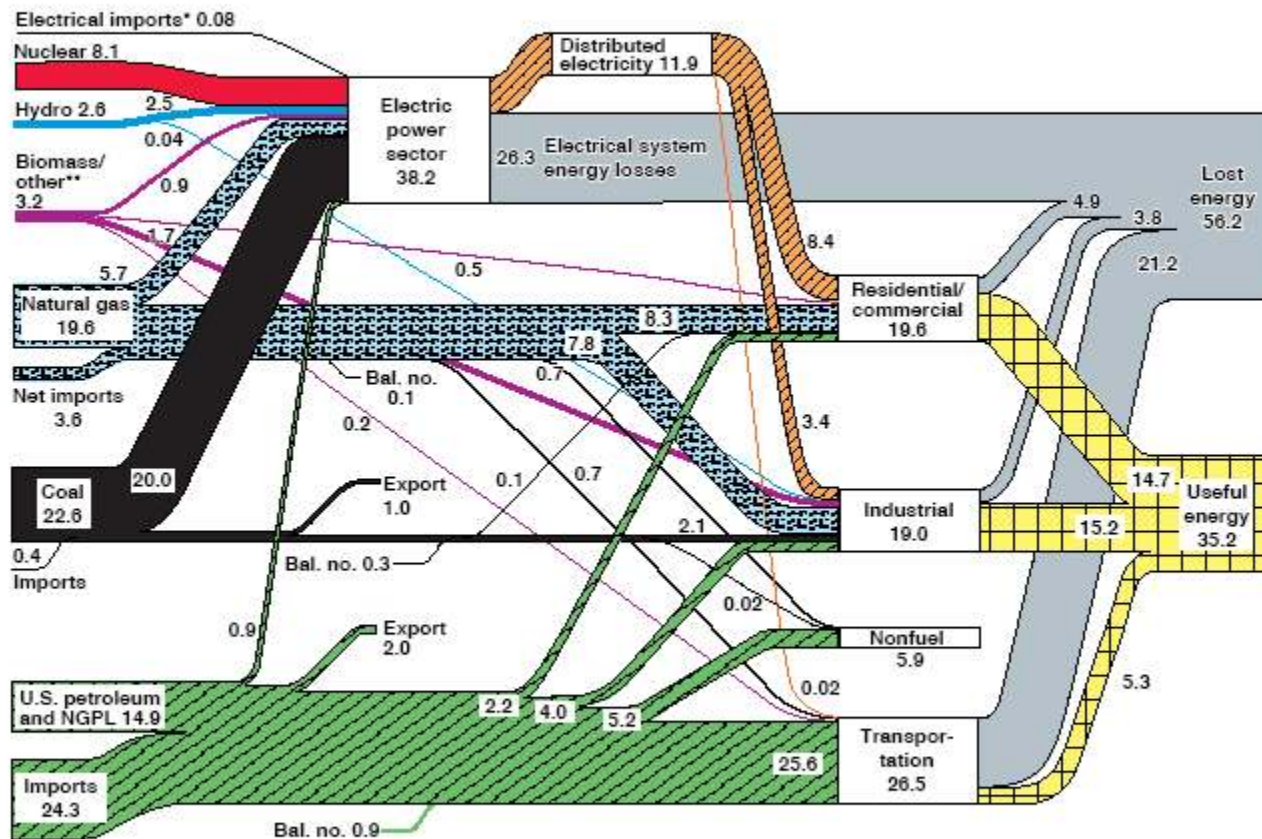
Coal: A Global Problem



Coal-fired power plant in China

U.S. Energy Flow Trends – 2002

Net Primary Resource Consumption ~97 Quads



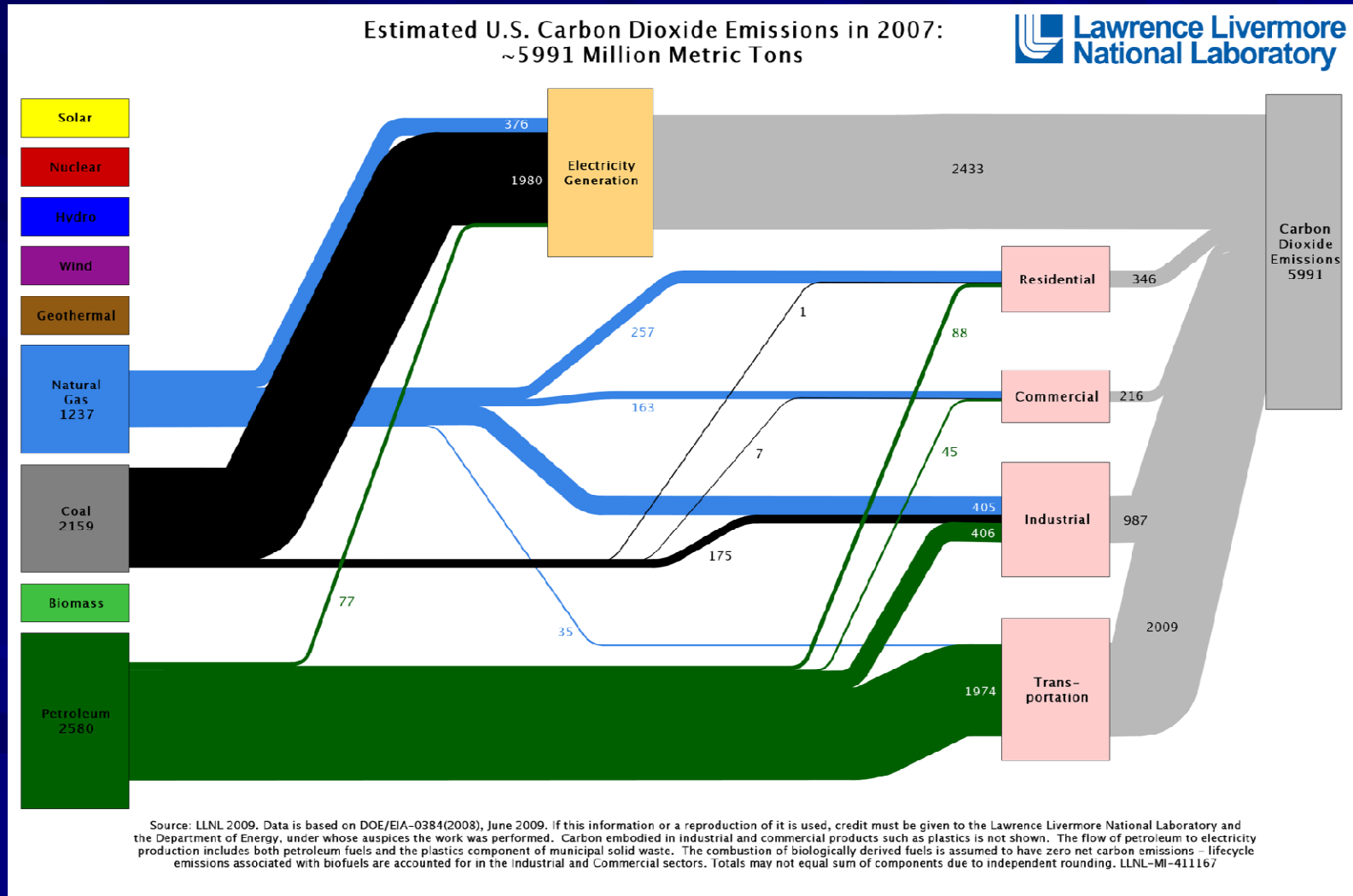
Source: Production and end-use data from Energy Information Administration, *Annual Energy Review 2002*.

*Net fossil-fuel electrical imports.

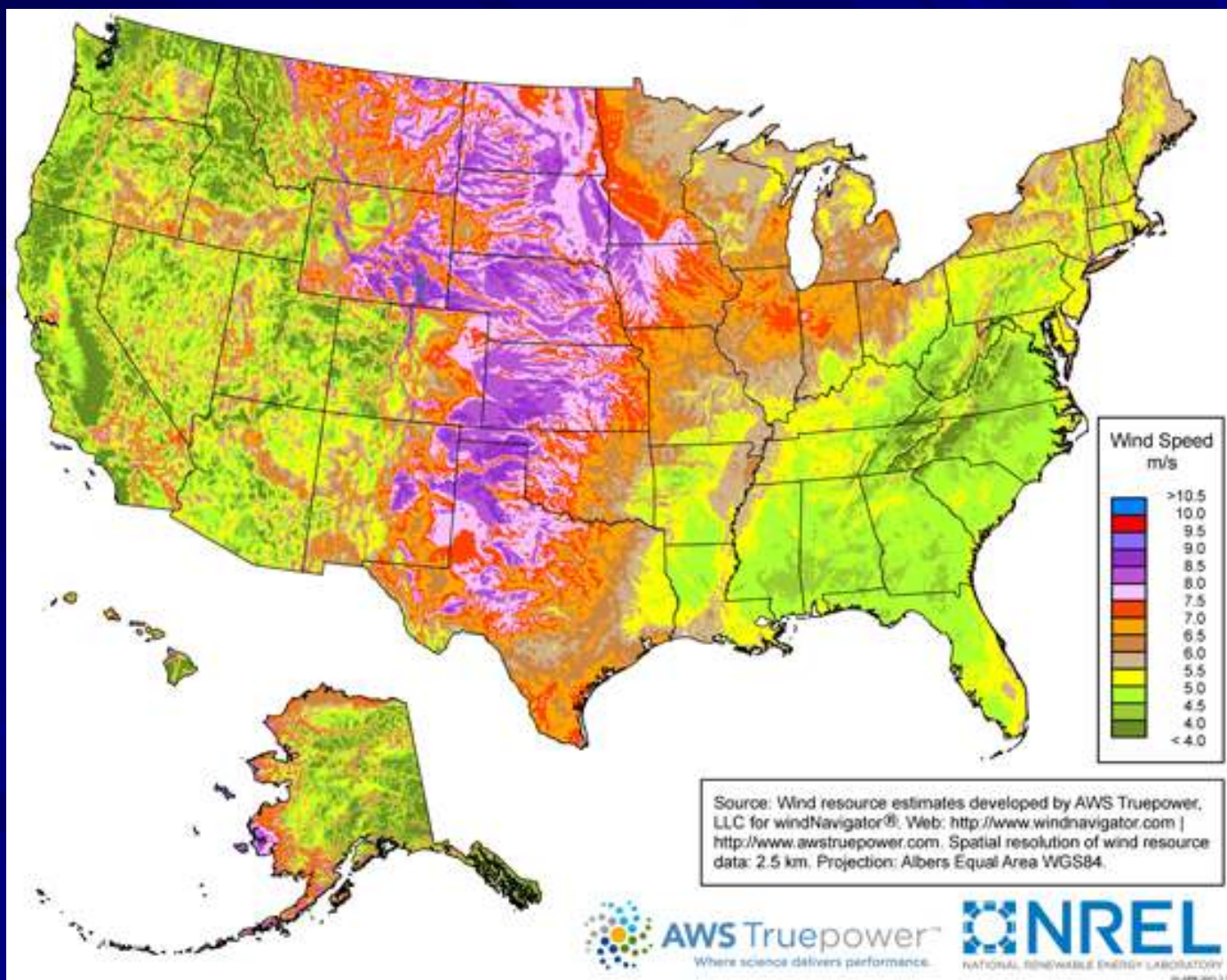
**Biomass/other includes wood, waste, alcohol, geothermal, solar, and wind.

June 2004
Lawrence Livermore
National Laboratory
<http://eed.llnl.gov/flow>

Carbon Dioxide Links Energy to Climate Change

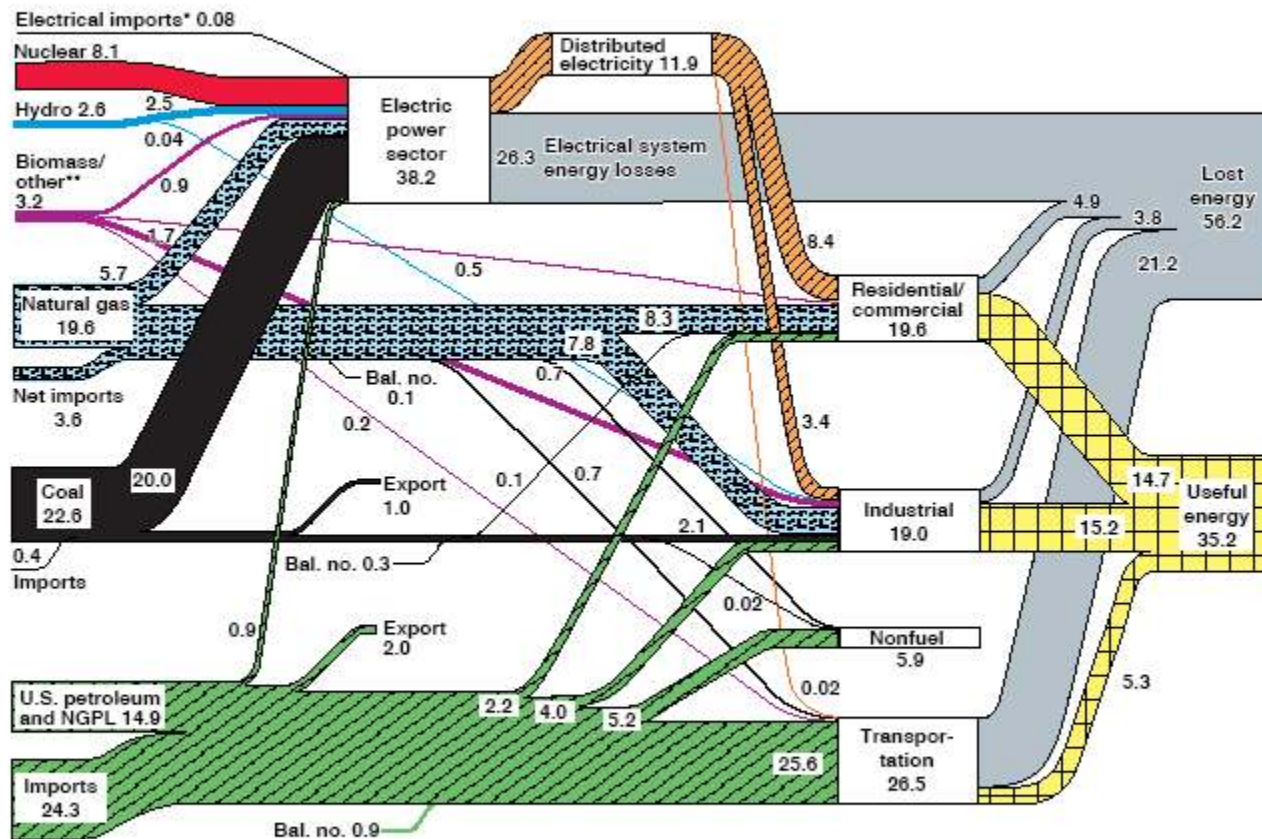


Renewable energy: a kingdom of site-specificity



U.S. Energy Flow Trends – 2002

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Source: Production and end-use data from Energy Information Administration, *Annual Energy Review 2002*.
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Example #1

- Wind energy
- Land use and permitting
- Interview possibilities
 - Local residents: will they accept?
 - Business people: can they benefit?
 - Utilities: what moves investment decisions?
 - Local officials: building community
 - Land managers: paths to multiple use

Example #2

- Solar PV
- Feasibility and costs
- Interview possibilities
 - Legislators: role for public policy?
 - Citizens: can they be enticed?
 - Utilities: what moves investment decisions?
 - Business people: will it cause bankruptcy?
 - Land managers: what about downsides?

Example #3

- Offshore wind, tidal, or waves
- Feasibility, costs, and acceptability
- Interview possibilities
 - Legislators: role for public policy?
 - Land owners: will they accept changes?
 - Utilities: what moves investment decisions?
 - Business people: can they “win?”
 - Shoreline managers: what permitting process?

A reason to work on energy



**GOOD LUCK
(AND HAVE SOME FUN!)**

**Questions
Comments
Thanks!**

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