

# ML for Power & Energy Systems

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Climate Change AI Summer School

July 14, 2023

# Session goals: ML for Power & Energy Systems

- Describe mitigation, adaptation, and sustainable development strategies
- Describe how electric power systems work
- Share opportunities and considerations for ML in power & energy systems
- Provide concrete examples of ML use cases
- Provide insight on responsibly framing & scoping projects
- Share potential entry points and next steps

# Outline: ML for Power & Energy Systems

1. Importance of power and energy systems
2. Strategies for mitigation, adaptation, and sustainable development
3. How electric power systems work
4. Overview of ML applications
5. Selected case studies
6. Next steps and opportunities for involvement

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# Energy supply sector

“[A]ll the infrastructure and equipment used to extract, transform, transport, transmit, and convert energy to provide energy services” (IPCC AR6 WG3)

- Electric power systems
- Fuel supply systems (e.g., natural gas networks, provision of cooking fuels)
- Heating and cooling networks

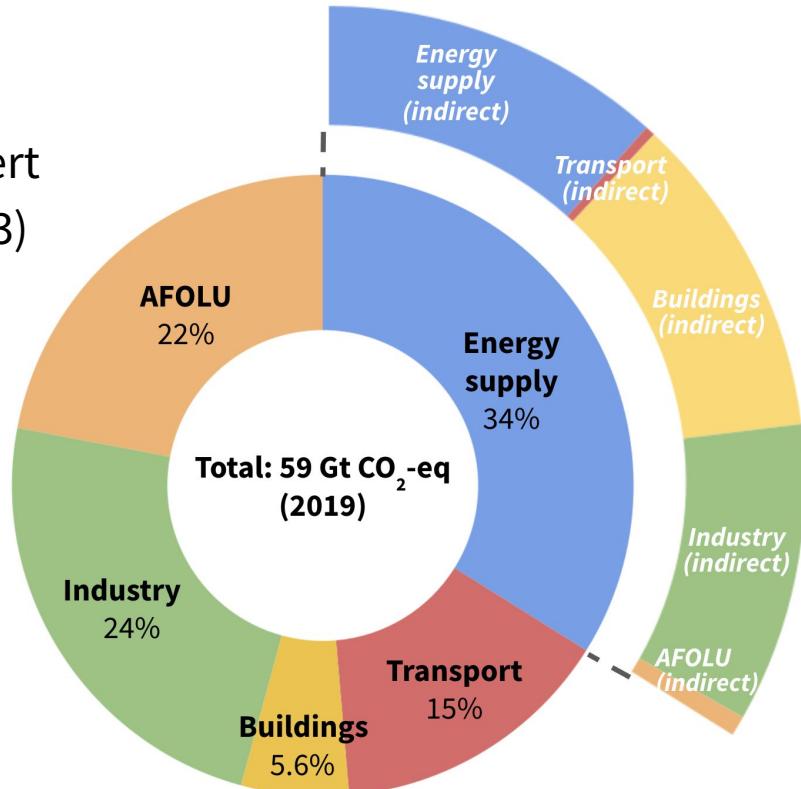


Figure data based on [IPCC2022]. Percentages shown do not add to exactly 100% due to rounding to two significant figures.

# Global energy sector emissions continue to rise

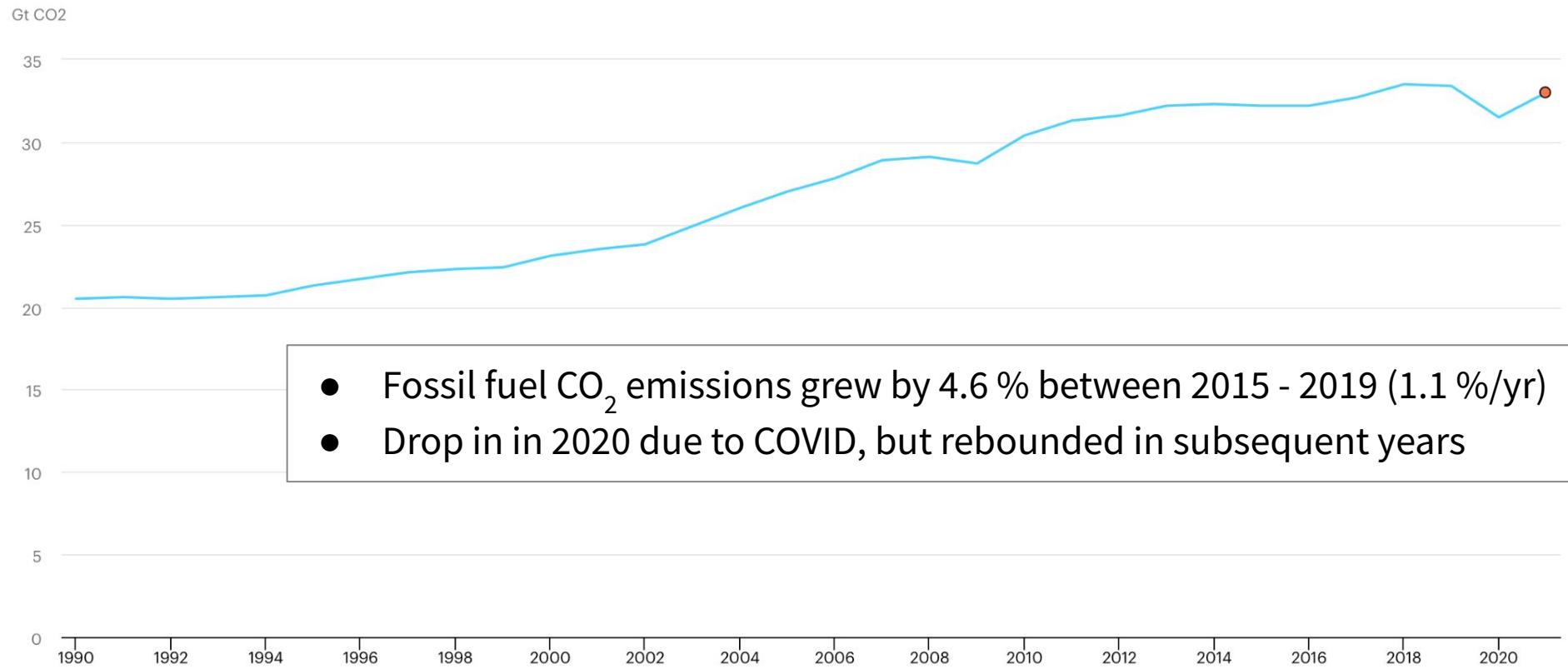
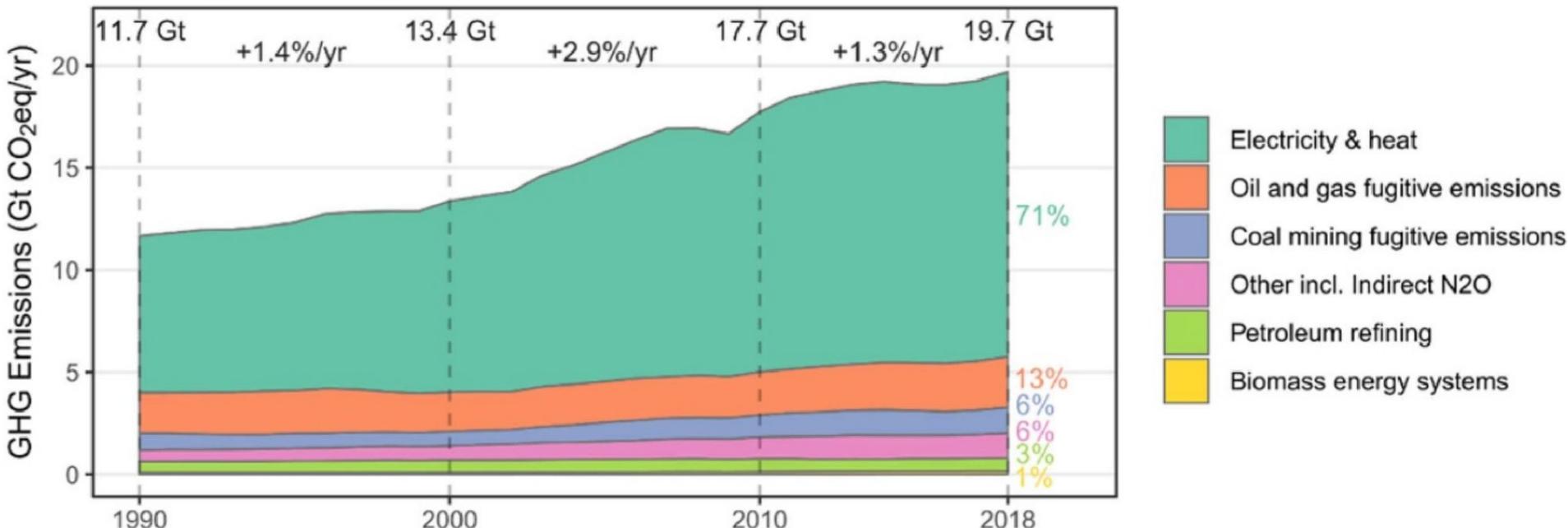


Figure source: [IEA2021]

# Sectoral contributions to GHG emissions

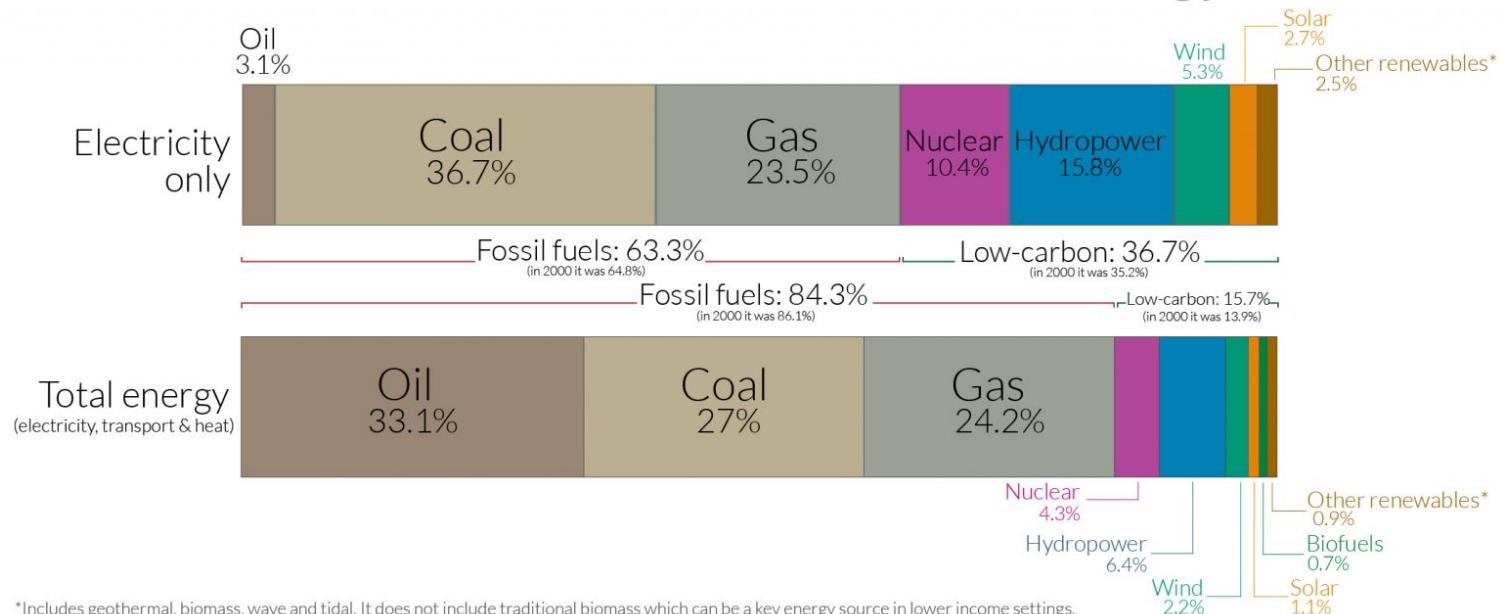
a. Energy systems global GHG emissions trends



# Low-carbon sources are still in the minority

More than one-third of global electricity comes from low-carbon sources; but a lot less of total energy does

Our World  
in Data



\*Includes geothermal, biomass, wave and tidal. It does not include traditional biomass which can be a key energy source in lower income settings.

[OurWorldInData.org](http://OurWorldInData.org) – Research and data to make progress against the world's largest problems.

Source: Our World in Data based on BP Statistical Review of World Energy (2020). Based on the primary energy and electricity mix in 2019.

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# **Importance of climate adaptation in energy systems**

## **Increasing pressure from climate change**

- Increasing number, intensity, and variability of events
- Large proportion of energy systems are exposed to climate-related events
- Shifting demand patterns (e.g. for HVAC) in response to climate changes

## **Transitioning energy system**

- Shift towards low-carbon sources with different climate-related vulnerabilities

## **Expansion of energy infrastructure**

- Growing global population
- Infrastructure expansions especially in places with high climate risks

# Energy systems are necessary for development

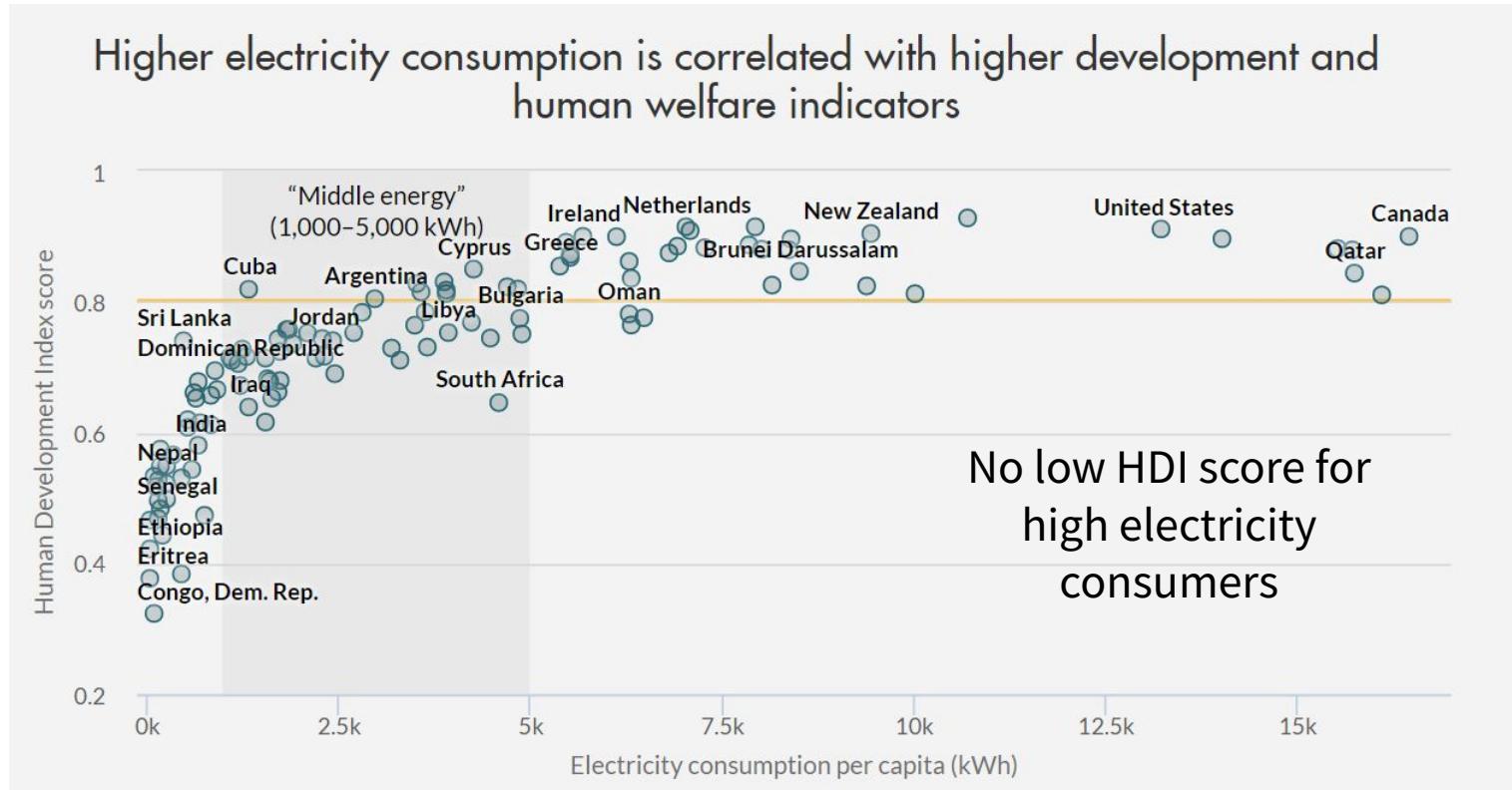
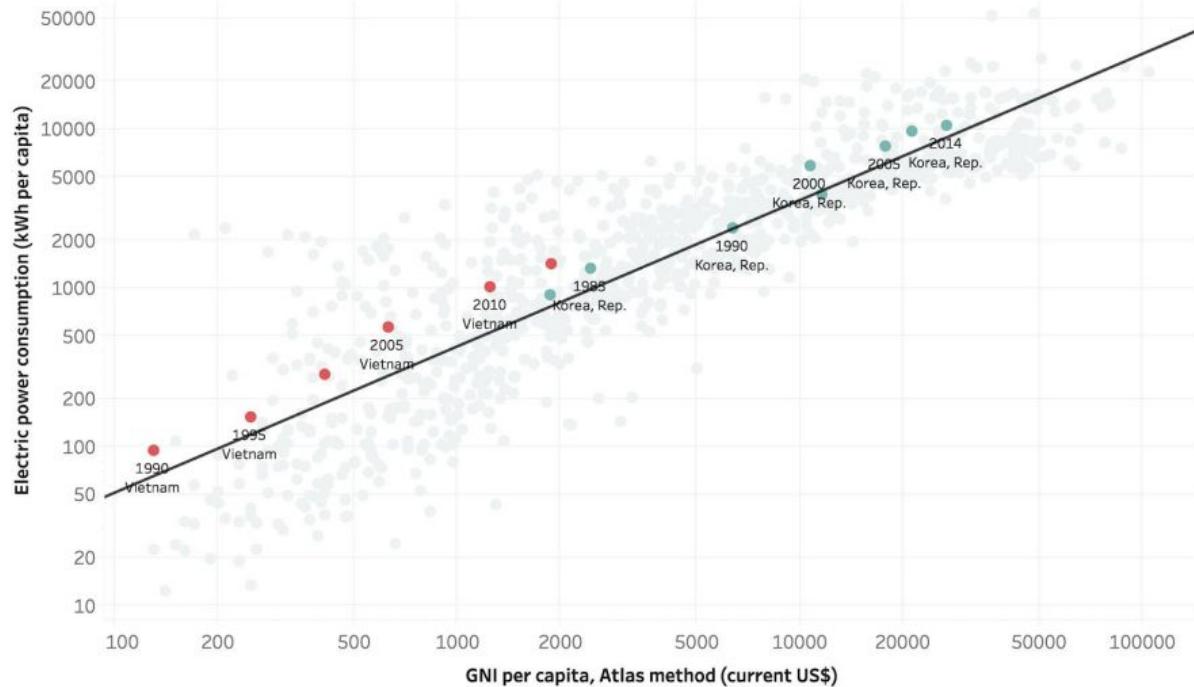


Figure source: [CGD]

# Energy systems are necessary for development

FIGURE 2: Income vs. Electricity Consumption, 1980-2014



Income growth is tied to  
growth in electricity  
usage

# Sustainable development in light of climate change

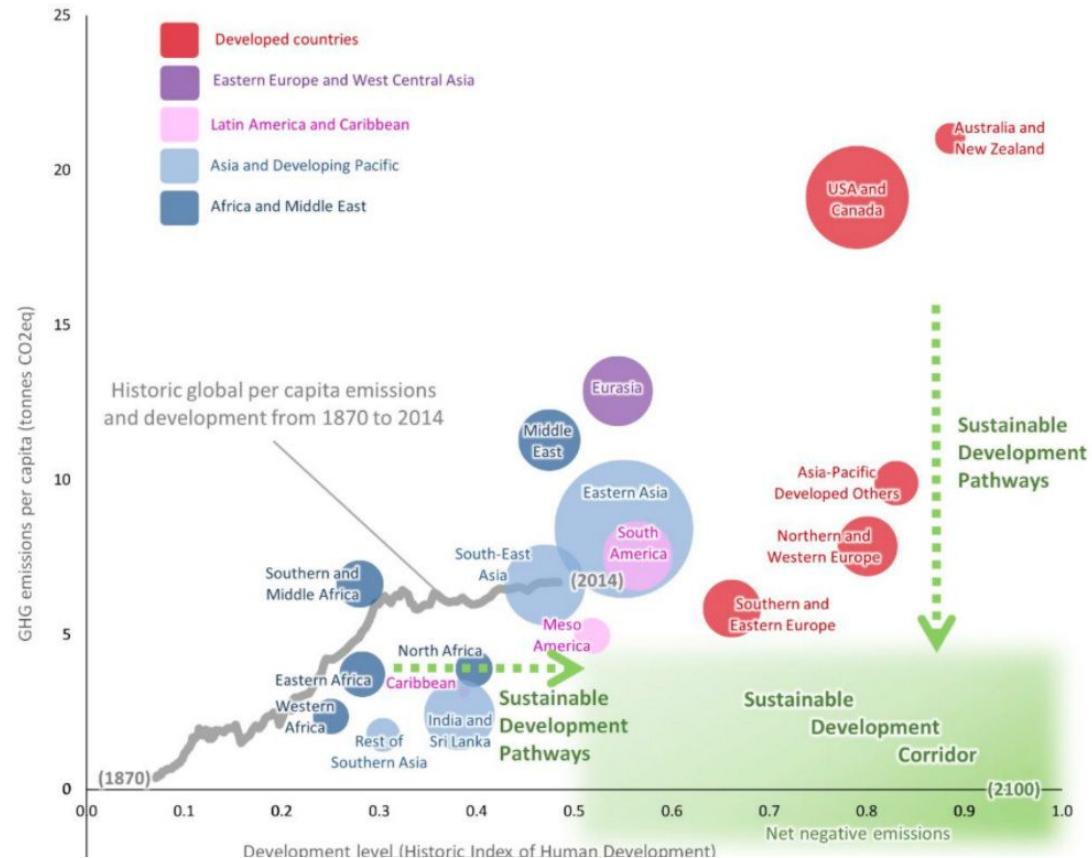
Global responsibility towards sustainable development

## Industrialized economies

- Reduce GHG emissions while maintaining development levels

## Emerging economies

- Increase development levels while maintaining or reducing GHG emissions



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 **Submit in Poll** 

What are some strategies to decarbonize  
energy systems?

# Strategies to decarbonize energy systems

“Net Zero energy systems will share common characteristics, but the approach in every country will depend on national circumstances.” [IPCC AR6 WG3, 2022]

Conceptual framework based on **Kaya identity**:

$$\text{GHG emissions} = \text{population} \times \frac{\text{service}}{\text{population}} \times \frac{\text{energy}}{\text{service}} \times \frac{\text{GHG emissions}}{\text{energy}}$$

*Reducing consumption*                                    *Switching to clean energy*  
    *Improving efficiency*

Connects supply side & demand sides (e.g., transport, buildings, industry)

# Strategies to decarbonize energy systems

“Net Zero energy systems will share common characteristics, but the approach in every country will depend on national circumstances.” [IPCC AR6 WG3, 2022]

Common characteristics:

- **Electricity systems** producing net-negative or net-zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
  - Via shift to low-carbon and renewable electricity
- **Electrification of end uses** (e.g., transport, space heating, cooking)
- Substantially **lower fossil fuel** use
- Use of **low-carbon alternative fuels** for hard-to-electrify loads
- Improved **efficiency** of energy use
- Greater **integration** of energy systems (across regions, across components)
- Use of **CO<sub>2</sub> removal** to offset residual emissions

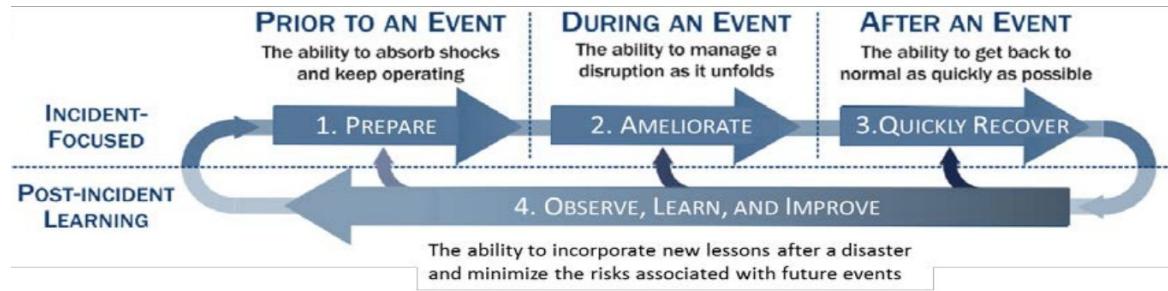
 **Submit in Poll** 

What are some strategies to adapt energy systems to climate change?

# Climate change adaptation & energy systems

## Extreme events: Fostering robustness & resilience

- Accommodating correlated failures due to extreme heat/cold or drought
- Enabling quick repair after large storms & hurricanes



**Accommodating changing energy supply/demand patterns:** Changes in weather impact energy production (e.g. solar/wind) and consumption (e.g. heating/cooling)

**Building adaptive capacity:** Energy access and reliability are strong drivers of economic development, and thus of capacity to adapt to climate change

# **Sustainable development & energy systems**

## **Enable universal access to modern energy**

- Improved energy (connectivity, reliability, amount) given supply & demand
- Increased reliance on clean fuels
- Expand infrastructure & upgrade technology

## **Increase share of renewable & low-carbon energy in global energy mix**

- Increasing capacity for on & off-grid

## **Improvements in energy efficiency**

- Decreased energy intensity

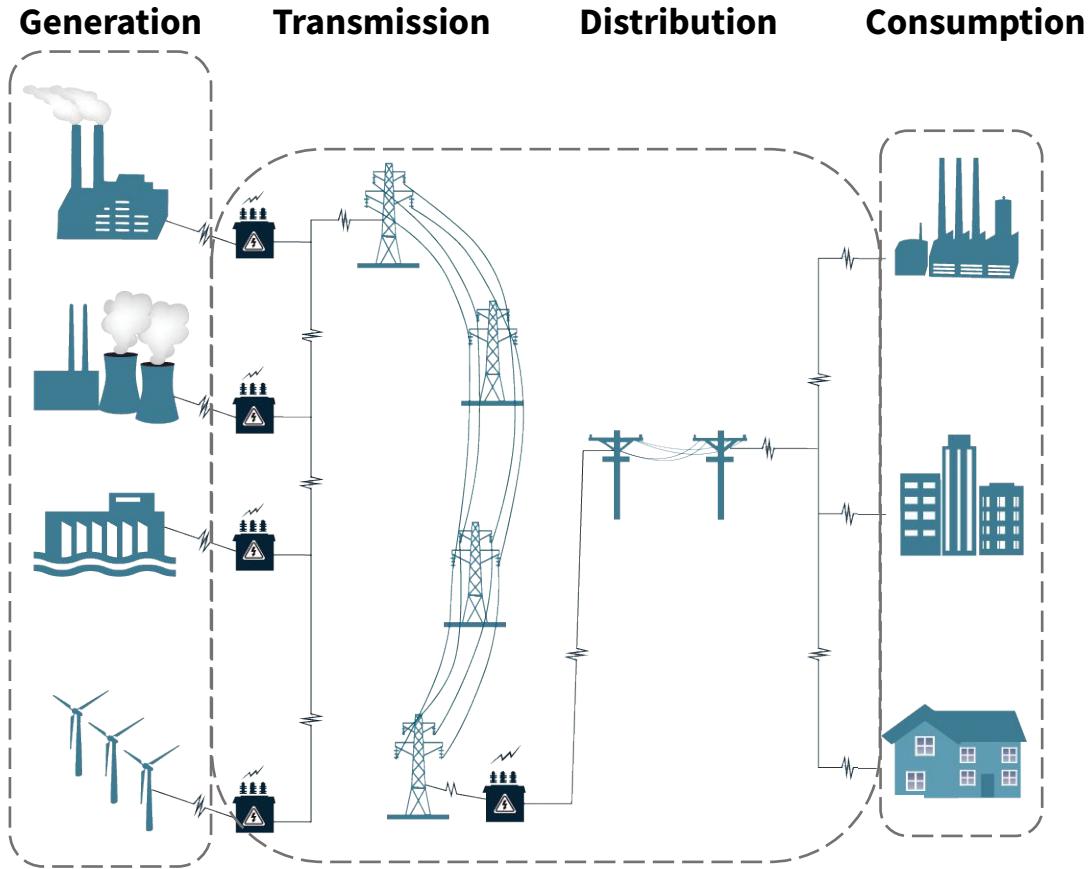
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What is an electric power system?

# Introduction to electric power systems



# Increasingly bi-directional, non-centralized system

## Bi-directional power flows

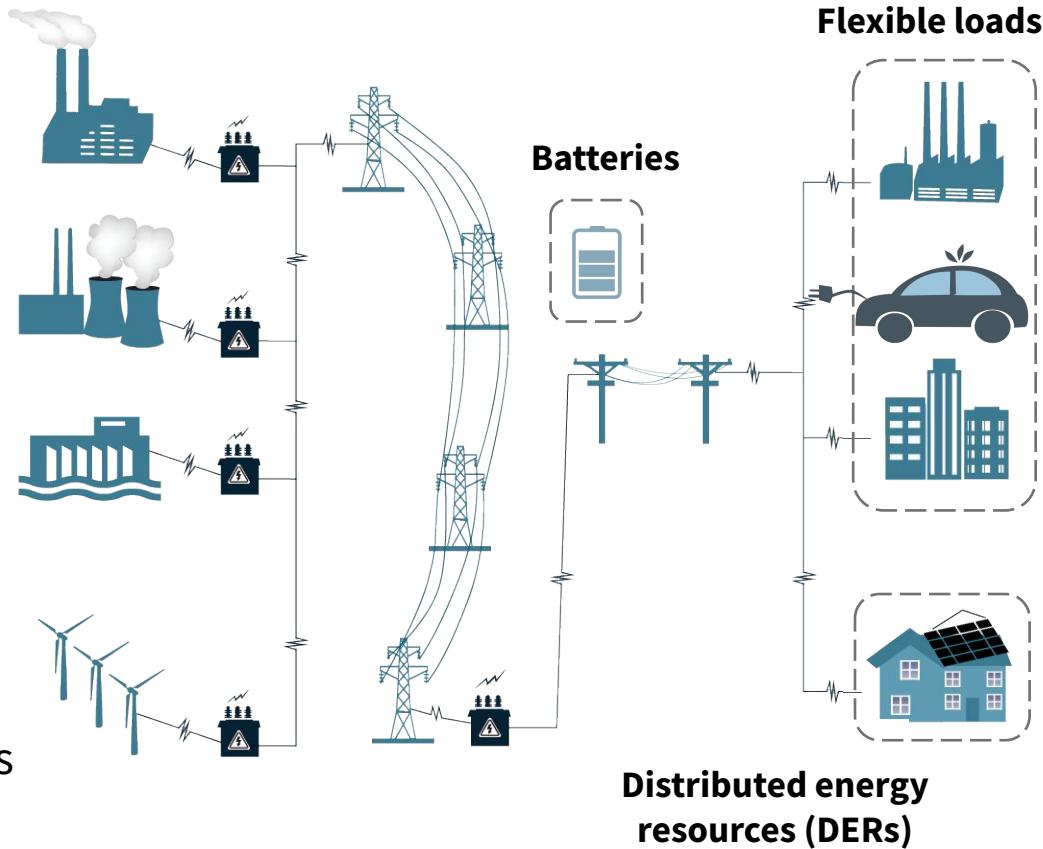
- Distributed energy resources (DERs) - rooftop solar, batteries

## Non-centralized control

- Demand response
- Distributed vs. decentralized

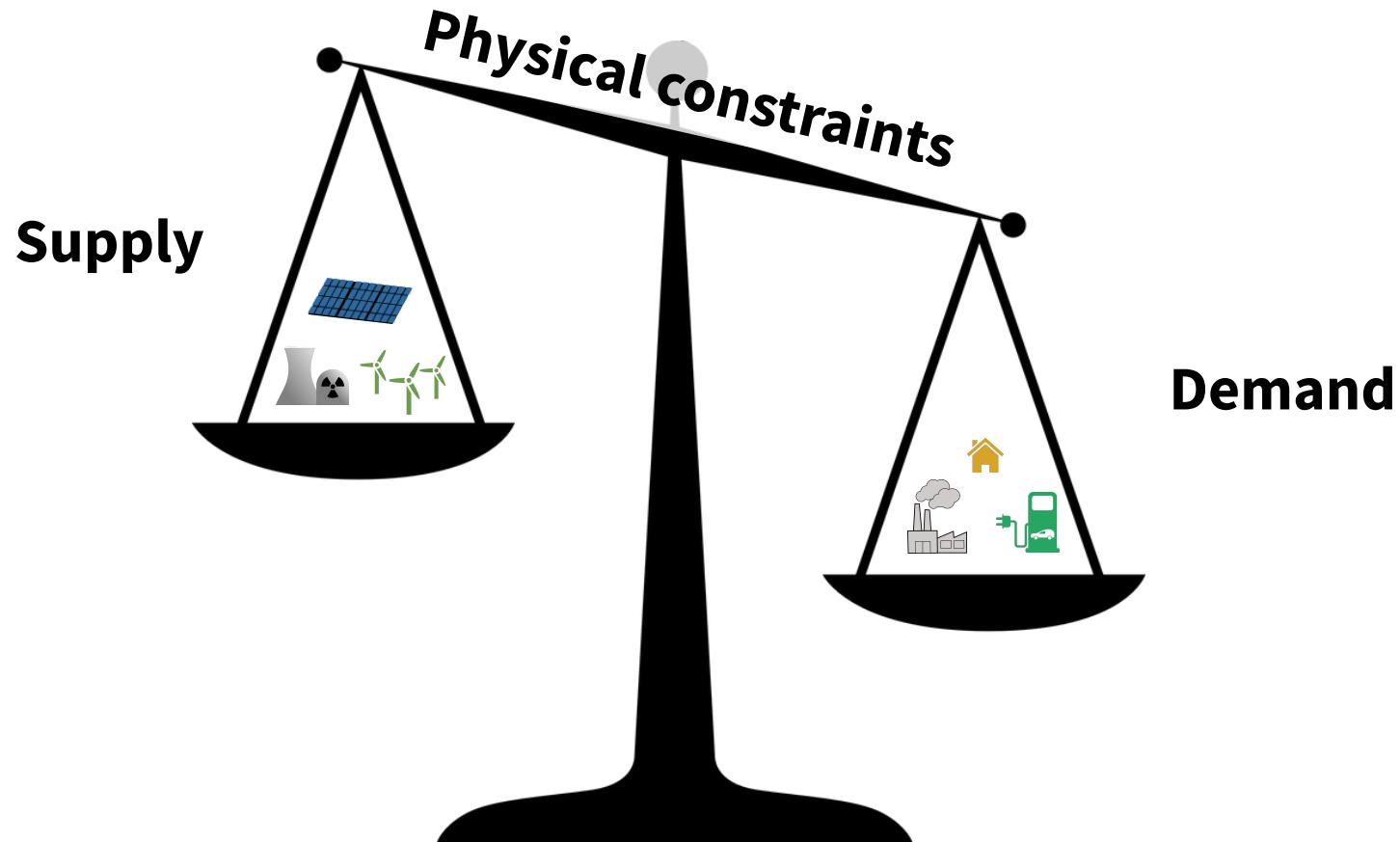
## On- vs. off-grid for diverse regions

- Islands
- Rural areas
- Homes w/ personal power sources



**Distributed energy resources (DERs)**

# Operational constraints on electric power systems



# Idealized power system operation: AC optimal power flow (ACOPF)

**Goal:** System operator sets power and voltages at all controllable power generators to

- Meet power consumption (true consumption minus distributed generation)
- Minimize power costs (based on generator bids)
- Satisfy grid and operational constraints

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{minimize} && f_c(p_g) \\ z := & [p_g^T, q_g^T, |v|^T, \delta^T]^T \end{aligned}$$

subject to  $Az = b$

$$Gz \leq h$$

$$(p_g - p_d) + (q_g - q_d)j = \text{diag}(v)\bar{Y}\bar{v}$$

(objective: minimize cost of power gen)

(various linear equality constraints,  
e.g., quantity conversions)

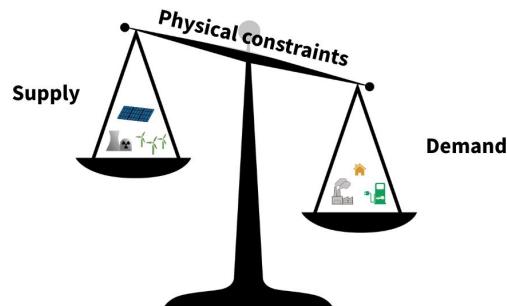
(various linear inequality constraints,  
e.g., device limits)

(power flow constraint over complex  
powers, voltages, and admittances)

$\lambda$  (prices) are dual variables

## ⚡ Submit in Poll ⚡

What are some ways in which operating a power system might be more complicated?



### AC optimal power flow (ACOPF)

$$\text{minimize}_{\mathbf{z}} \quad f_{\text{c}}(\mathbf{p}_g)$$
$$\mathbf{z} := [\mathbf{p}_g^T, \mathbf{q}_g^T, |\mathbf{v}|^T, \delta^T]^T$$

$$\text{subject to } \mathbf{A}\mathbf{z} = \mathbf{b}$$

$$\mathbf{G}\mathbf{z} \leq \mathbf{h}$$

$$(\mathbf{p}_g - \mathbf{p}_d) + (\mathbf{q}_g - \mathbf{q}_d)\mathbf{j} = \text{diag}(\mathbf{v})\bar{\mathbf{Y}}\bar{\mathbf{v}}$$

# Reality is more complicated

**Proxy procedures:** ACOPF is expensive → cheap approx. (DCOPF, economic dispatch)

**Multiple time steps:** Need to decide ahead of time which generators to turn on/off *and* how much power they should produce (*unit commitment with ramp rates*)

**System uncertainties:** Electricity demand and variable power generation are not perfectly predictable - requires (e.g.) *automatic generation control*

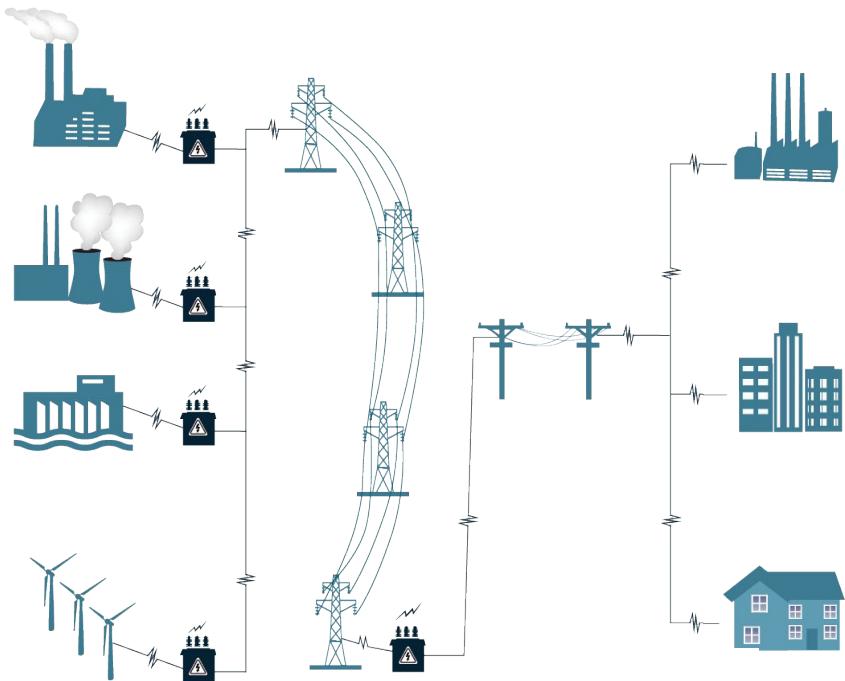
**Accounting for outages & maintenance:** *Security-constrained optimal power flow*

**Accounting for dynamic stability,** rather than only static/steady-state operation

**Power pricing:** Most consumers don't face real-time wholesale prices

- Lots of power procured through *power purchase agreements*
- Out-of-market payments, e.g., *uplift payments* and *capacity markets*
- Highly subsidized retail prices (less than wholesale) in some regions

# Stakeholders and regulatory considerations



Grids are “natural monopolies”

- Management by public or tightly-regulated private entities

Stakeholders:

- Regulatory commissions
- System operators
- Utilities
- Suppliers, demand aggregators
- Consumers, prosumers

Considerations:

- Differing assumptions on 24/7 reliable power
- Regulated rate of return

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# Overview of ML applications

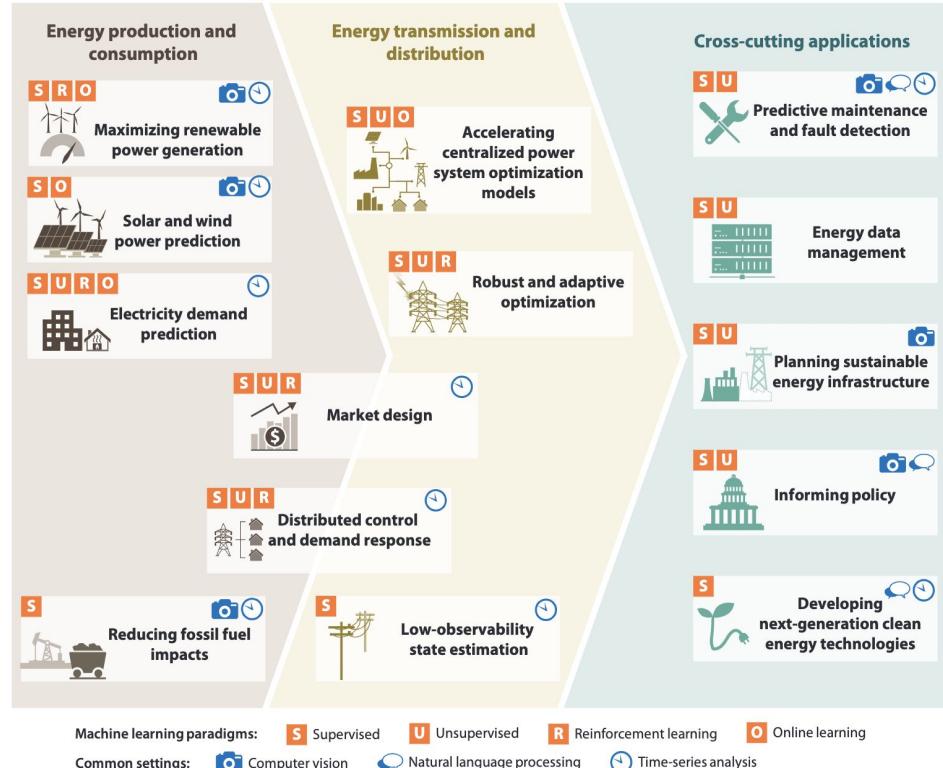
## Operations

- Situational awareness
- Centralized optimization
- Distributed control & demand response
- Predictive maintenance & efficiency improvement

## Planning

**Innovation** (next-generation clean technologies)

## Policy & Markets



# Overview of ML applications

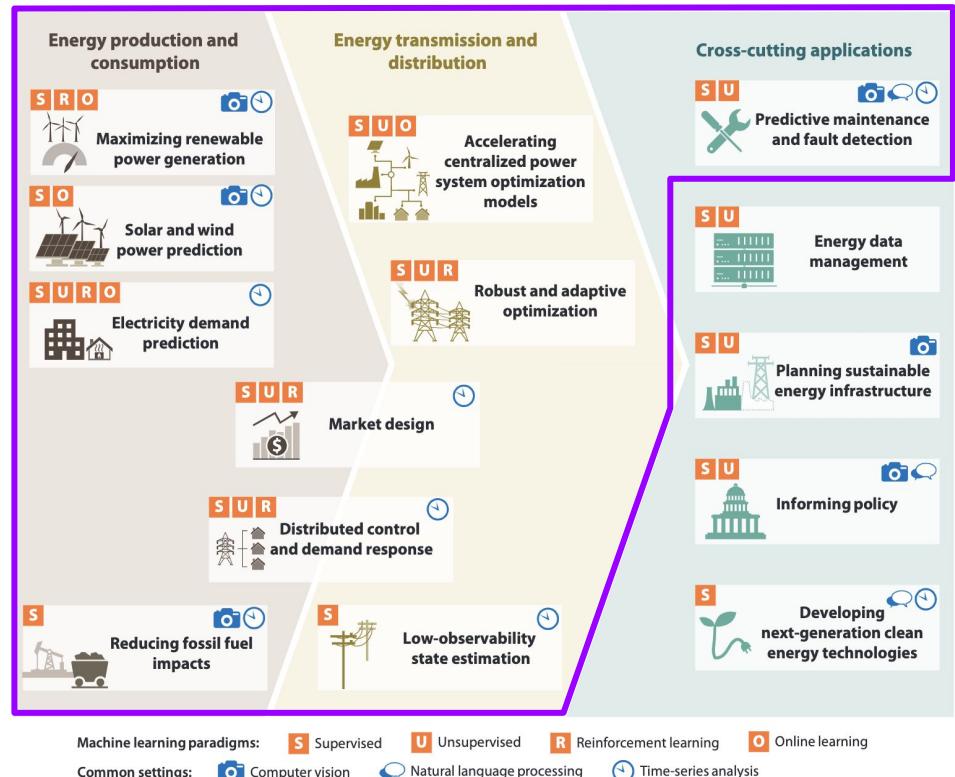
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# Operations >> Situational Awareness

Assessing the state of the power system

- Current state: State estimation (voltages), topology estimation, outages
- Future state: Forecasting of supply, demand, emissions

**Approaches:** Rule-based, physics-based, optimization, statistics, ML

**ML pros:** Fast, can use multimodal data, powerful near-term predictions

**ML cons:** Need consistent data, struggles with long-term trends, interpretability(?)

**ML example:** Nowcasting (Open Climate Fix & National Grid ESO)

- **Demand:** Used Temporal Fusion Transformer to reduce error by 2-3x for 30-min- and 48-hr-ahead national demand forecasts [CRDK+2021]
- **Solar PV:** Used time series data, satellite data, and numerical weather predictions to reduce error by ~3x of 2-hr-ahead forecasts [K2022]

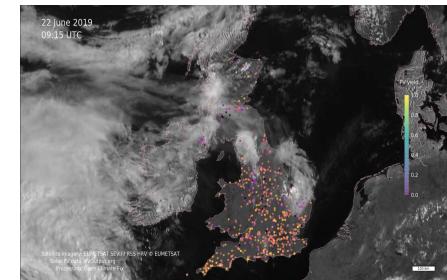


Image from [OCF2019]

# Operations >> Centralized Optimization

Dispatching controllable power generation (recall: ACOPF)

- Goal: Integrate time-varying renewables, improve robustness, reduce waste
- Challenge: Need to increase speed, scale, and fidelity of existing methods

**Approaches:** Optimization (incl. relaxation), ML

**ML examples:**

- Speeding up ACOPF (active constraint prediction, warm start points, full approx.)
- Reinforcement learning for topology switching and redispatch [L2RPN2022]



Image from: [L2RPN2022]

# Operations >> Distributed Control & Demand Response

Control of distributed resources (e.g., solar inverters, batteries, flexible loads)

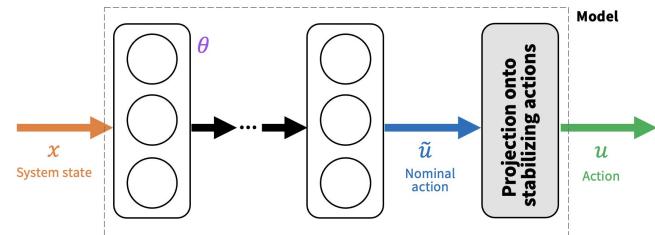
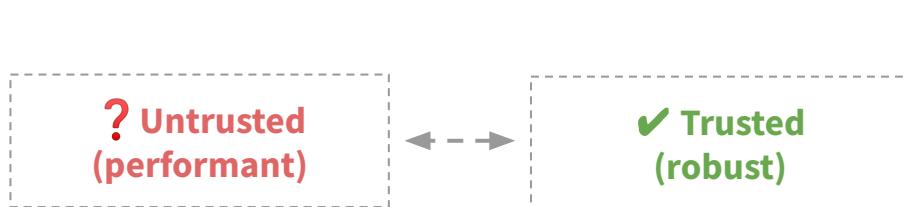
- Goal: Integrate renewables, improve robustness/resilience/reliability, reduce waste
- Need: Control strategies that are fast, flexible, scalable, robust, physically feasible

**Approaches:** Control theory, ML (reinforcement learning)

**ML pros:** Expressive and complex policies (well-performing)

**ML cons:** Generally don't ensure robustness

**Example:** Merging reinforcement learning and robust control [CJZ2022, DRK2021, RCMW2022]



# Operations >> Predictive Maintenance & Efficiency Improvement

Detect inefficiencies or outages preemptively and/or in real time

**Approaches:** Manual inspection, signal processing, ML

**ML pros/cons:** [Similar to “situational awareness”]

**Example ML applications:**

- Detecting methane leaks in natural gas infrastructure [WJR+2022]
- Detecting anomalies in solar panels, wind turbines, batteries [AH2021]
- Detecting non-technical losses (e.g., theft, meter tampering)

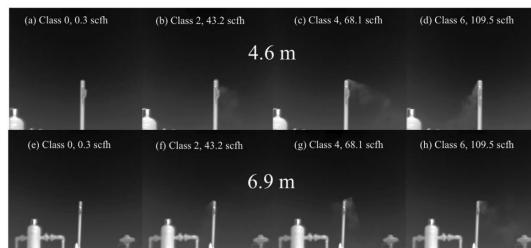


Image from: [WJR+2022]

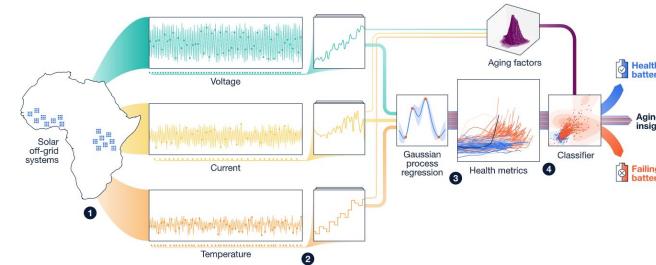
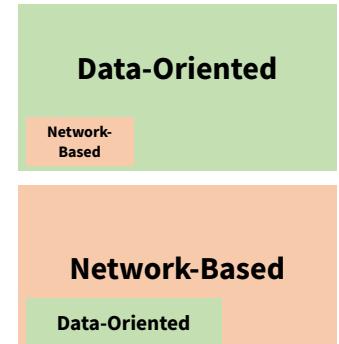


Figure from: [AH2021]



# Preliminary Recap: Overview of ML applications

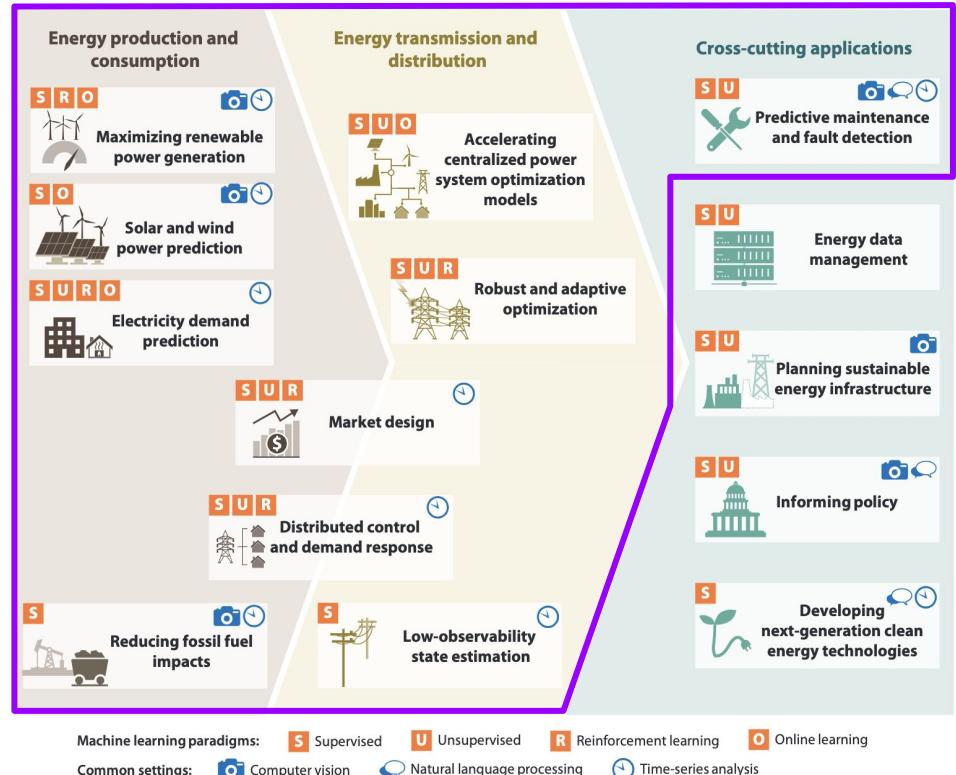
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**Innovation** (next-generation clean technologies)

## Policy & Markets



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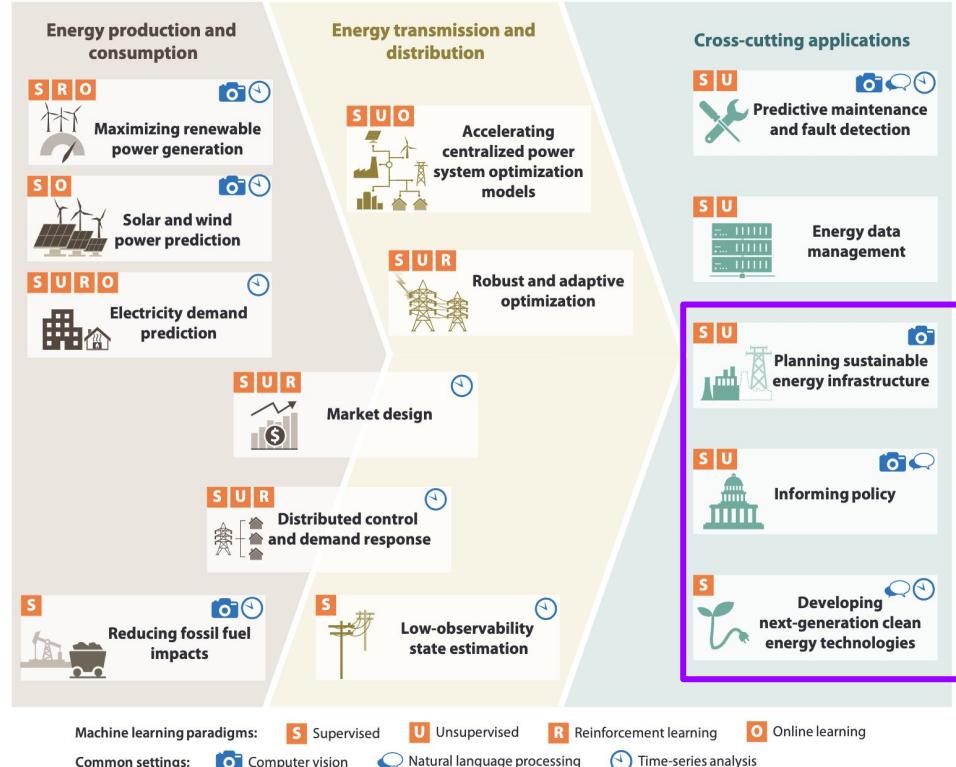
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# Planning

Design/construction of new components, reinforced infrastructure, and/or new systems

- Goal: Build low-carbon sources, strengthen connections, improve access/reliability

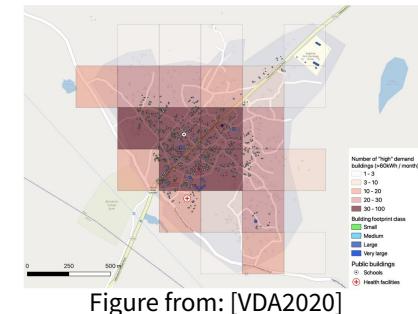
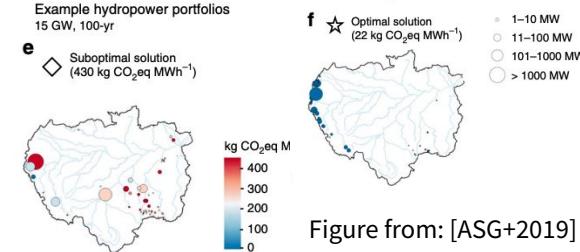
**Approaches:** Physical simulation, multi-objective optimization, manual surveying, stakeholder consensus building, ML

## ML examples:

- Mapping power lines, solar & wind infrastructure [DS2018, GRL2019, ONM2022]
- Multi-objective optimization of hydropower dam placement [ASG+2019, WGS+2018]
- Predicting long-term demand for new customers [AWDJ2021, FMWMT2022]



Image from: [DS2018]



# Innovation

Develop new technologies to more effectively produce low carbon energy, improve energy storage, or improve sequestration of emissions

**Approaches:** Human-guided experiments (potentially assisted by ML)

## ML examples:

- Accelerated battery design: Aionics used physics-constrained ML to suggest promising experiments, leading to 10x reduction in # of experiments [CRDK+2021]
- Nuclear fusion: Spatio-temporal deep learning to predict disruptions [KST2019]

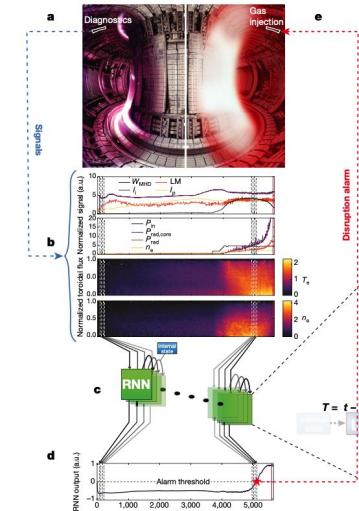
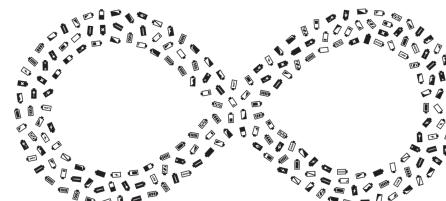


Figure from: [KST2019]

# Policy & Markets

Provide input to the design and monitoring of policy, regulation, and markets

**Approaches:** Policy analysis, market & mechanism design (supplemented by ML)

## ML examples:

- Reinforcement learning for setting energy market prices [DL2019]
- Analyzing trends in solar power patents [VR2015]
- Generating power system scenario forecasts, based on historical data [CWZ2018]

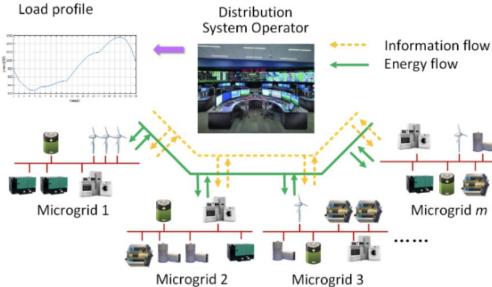


Figure from: [DL2019]

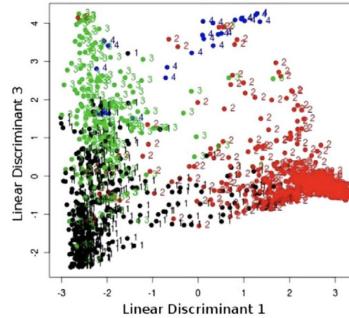


Figure from: [VR2015]

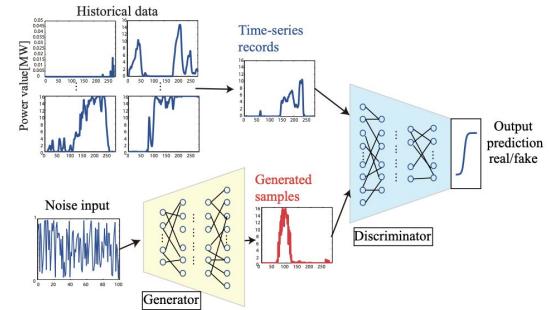


Figure from: [CWZ2018]

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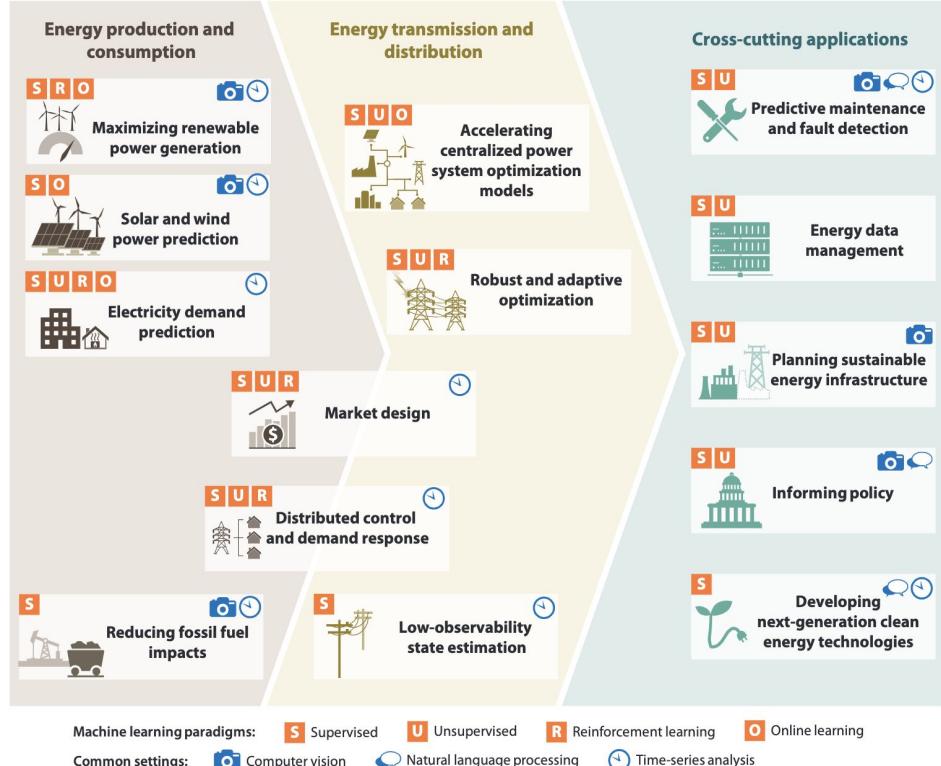
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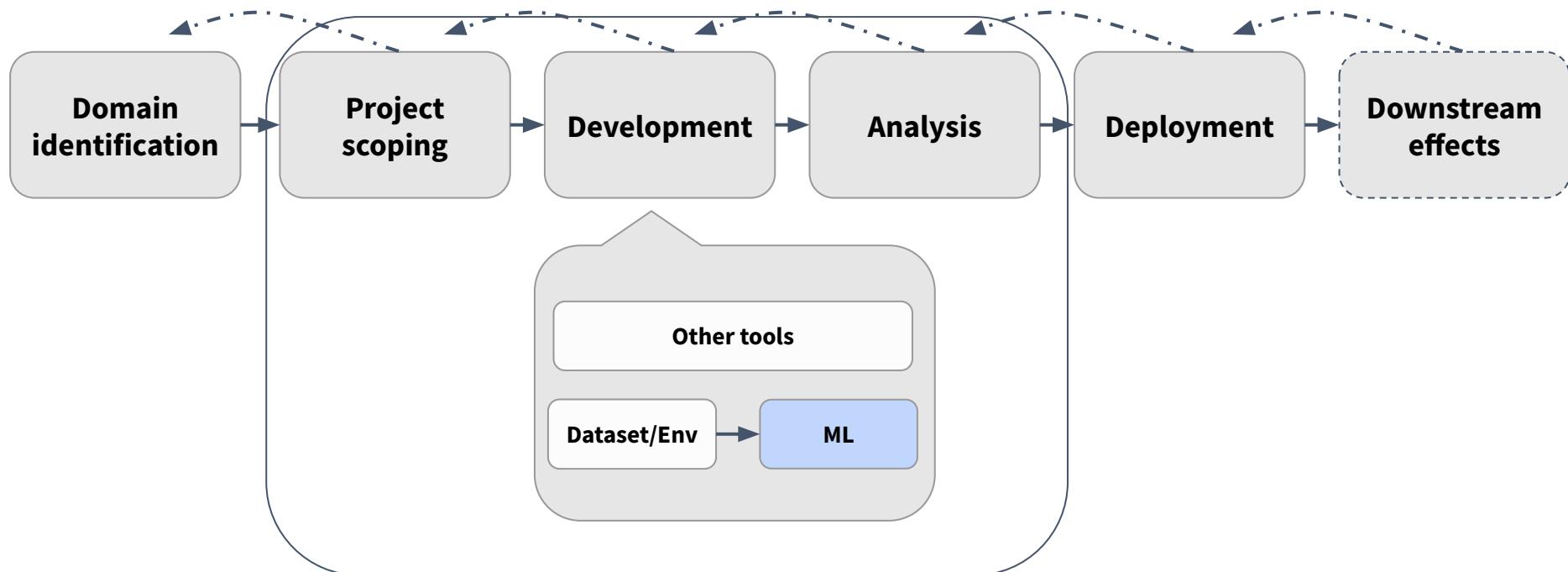
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What are important considerations to keep in mind when using ML for energy systems?

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# ML-for-climate: Pathway to impact



# Case Study: Mapping utility scale solar in India [1/3]

## Background

- 500 GW renewable energy capacity by 2030
- Net zero emissions by 2070

**Problem:** Lack of updated & accurate geo-spatial information on utility scale solar projects

**Possible approaches (feasibility & value):** Collating information from utilities, survey, OSM , detection using satellite imagery

## Pathway to impact

- Support transmission infrastructure development & grid integration
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Quantify the impact of RE on land-use & socioeconomic development

**Stakeholders:** Energy planners, policy makers, communities

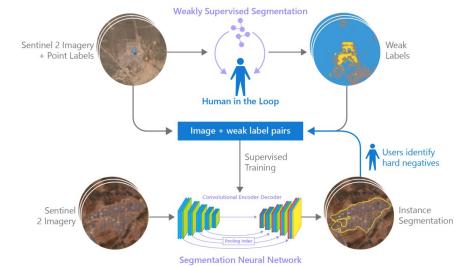


Figure source: [ONM+2022]

# Case Study: Mapping utility scale solar in India [2/3]

## Datasets, Simulators, & Tools

- **Dataset:** small set of solar PV farms point labels, 12 of out 13 Sentinel 2 spectral bands, land cover and land use datasets

## ML approach

- **Human-Machine approach for semantic label generations:** Pixel clustering with human feedback for weak semantic label generation.
- **Supervised semantic segmentation:** Train model to segment solar pv farms using Hard Negative Mining for improved detection.

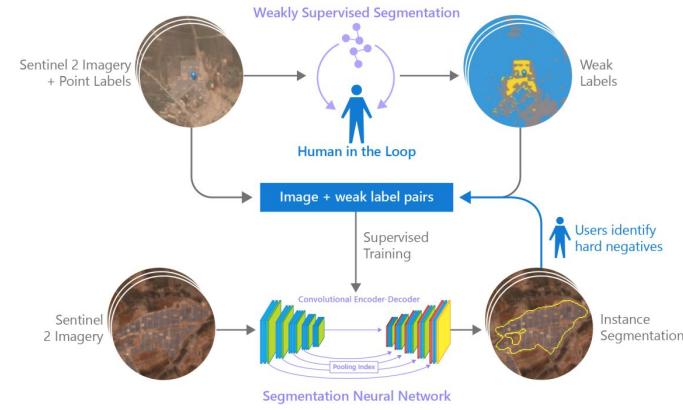


Figure source: [ONM+2022]

# Case Study: Mapping utility scale solar in India [3/3]

## Metrics

- **Model performance:** Mean Intersection over Union (mIOU), precision and recall
- **Decision making:** PV locations and size, timing of deployment, changes in land-use and land-cover

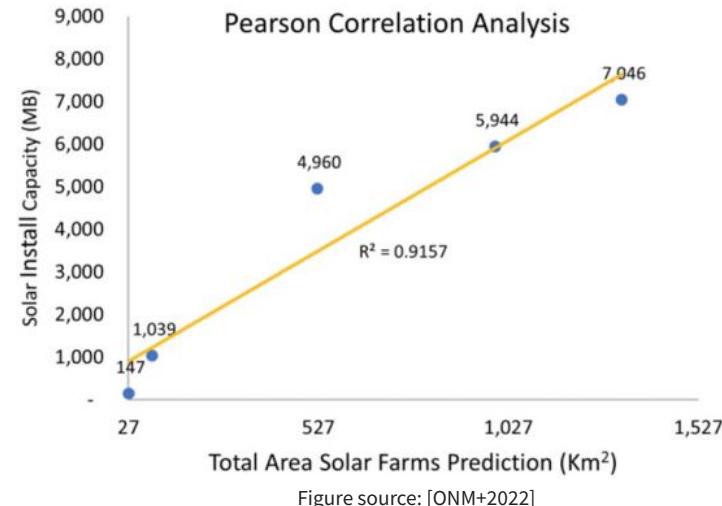
## Boundaries of methodology:

- Focus on PV footprint over power related metrics

## Deployment considerations:

- **Generalization:** Regional differences, panel sizes, validation

## Downstream effects: Implications for infrastructure detection



# Case Study: Downscaling Solar Irradiance from Climate Model Projections [1/3]

**Background:** In system planning, need to account for how changing climate will affect renewable energy production

**Problem:** Lack of downscaled climate scenarios reflecting how exactly renewable energy production may change

**Possible approaches (feasibility & value):** Use of historical data, generative approaches, finer-grained climate modeling, statistical downscaling

**Pathway to impact:** Use for power systems planning (e.g., siting new renewable energy sources)

**Stakeholders:** System planners, policy analysts, utilities

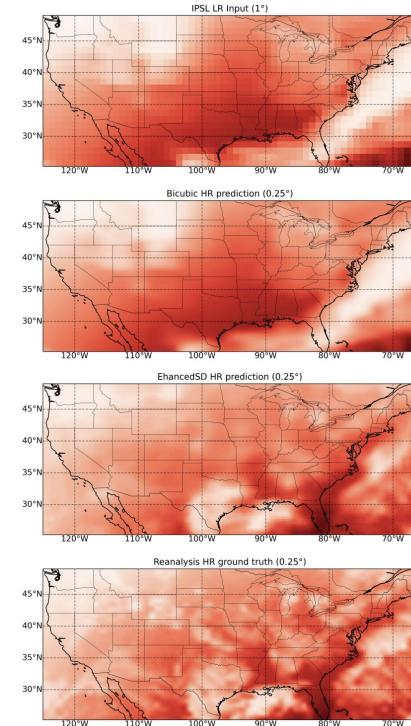


Figure from: [HHMS2022]

# Case Study: Downscaling Solar Irradiance from Climate Model Projections [2/3]

## Datasets, Simulators, & Tools

- **Dataset:** Coarse-scale climate model outputs of solar irradiance, from IPSL-CM6A
- **Dataset:** Fine-grained reanalysis for solar irradiance, from ERA5 (“ground truth”)

**ML approach:** End-to-end super-resolution deep learning model, using Residual-in-Residual Dense Blocks (RRDBs) and sub-pixel convolution

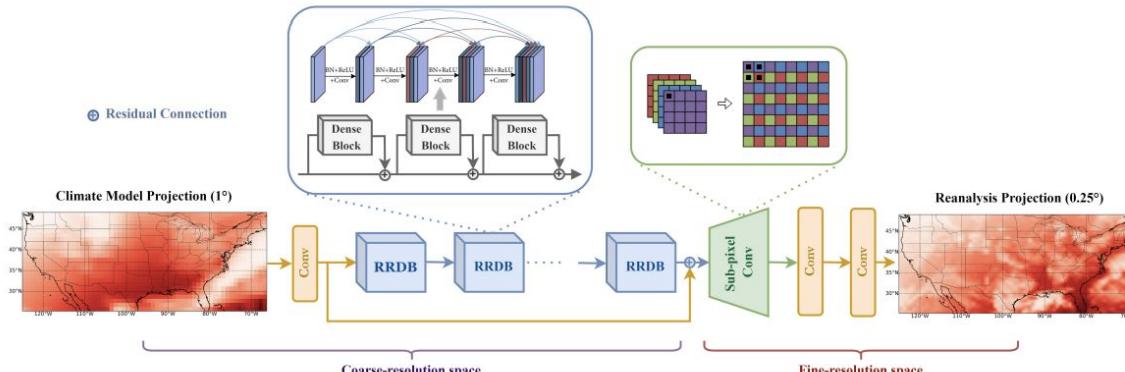


Figure from: [HHMS2022]

# Case Study: Downscaling Solar Irradiance from Climate Model Projections [3/3]

## Metrics:

- Relative error on ground truth [ $\text{RMSE} \div \text{Capacity}$ ]
- Structural Similarity Index Measure (SSIM) between climate model projection and ground truth

## Boundaries of methodology:

- Generalization (data-rich to data-poor, past to future)
- Planning must also consider grid constraints (e.g., congestion)

**Deployment considerations:** Will the desired end users be able to actually access, discover, and use the data/insights?

**Downstream effects:** Implications of insights' accessibility to different stakeholders

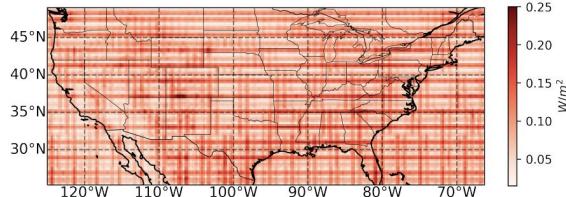


Figure 3: RMSE computed at each location using EnhancedSD with deconvolutions over test-period, showing the checkerboard error pattern [16].

Figure from: [HHMS2022]

# Case Study: RL for topology switching [1/3]

**Background:** Need to increase renewables and adapt to extremes

**Problem:**

- Existing power system optimization methods are not sufficiently dynamic, adaptive, robust, or fast
- Lack of infrastructure for validation and deployment

**Possible approaches (feasibility & value):**

- Methods: Optimization, control theory, data-driven
- Enabling infrastructure: Simulators/testbeds, digital twins

**Pathway to impact:** Use by power system operator, either autonomously or human-in-the-loop

**Stakeholders:** System operators, software providers?



Image from: [L2RPN2022]

# Case Study: RL for topology switching [2/3]

**Project:** Learning to Run a Power Network Challenge (L2RPN), run by RTE France, Electric Power Research Institute, and additional (academic & non-academic) stakeholders

## Datasets, Simulators, & Tools

- **Simulator:** Grid2Op platform (OpenAI Gym compatible)
- **Datasets:** Topology and demand datasets, both synthetic and reflecting RTE system

## ML approach

- A variety of reinforcement learning (RL) methods combining data, heuristics, and physical knowledge



Image from: [L2RPN2022]

# Case Study: RL for topology switching [3/3]

## Metrics:

- **Dispatch costs:** Cost/price associated with solution
- **Physical robustness:** Does the grid stay up?
- **Speed:** Computation within operational time window

**Boundaries of methodology:** Still reflecting synthetic/small environment, not testing “human-in-the-loop” capability

**Deployment considerations:** How different system operators' control rooms work, different centralized vs. decentralized modes of grid operation

**Downstream effects:** Implications for pricing, trust, jobs of system operators, switch to different market structures, making fossil generator use more efficient



Image from: [L2RPN2022]

# Case Study: Data matching (Catalyst Coop.) [1/3]

**Background:** Collation of energy data from different sources is crucial for policy-making and climate advocacy

**Problem:** Lack of shared identifiers (e.g., for specific generators, power plants, or utilities) that can be used to easily merge data - e.g. FERC 1 and EIA data in the US

**Possible approaches (feasibility & value):** Manual merging, heuristic-based matching, similarity metrics, ML

**Pathway to impact:** Public data release, to enable est. of, e.g., marginal electricity costs & fossil fuel assets for retirement

**Stakeholders:** Policy analysis, market designers, nonprofits

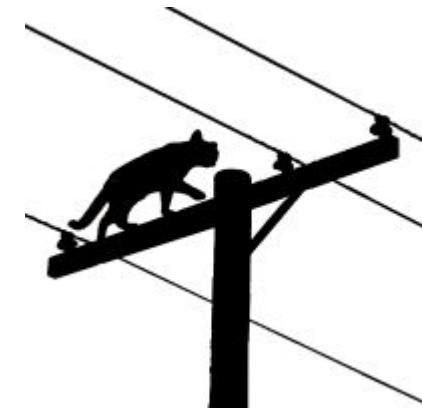


Image from: [C2022]

# Case Study: Data matching (Catalyst Coop.) [2/3]

## Datasets, Simulators, & Tools

- **Raw dataset:** FERC Form 1 (data on power plants)
- **Raw dataset:** EIA data (data on generators)
- **ML dataset:** Human-labeled dataset mapping aggregated EIA records to FERC Form 1 data

**ML approach:** Logistic regression to identify matches between aggregated EIA records and FERC Form 1 data

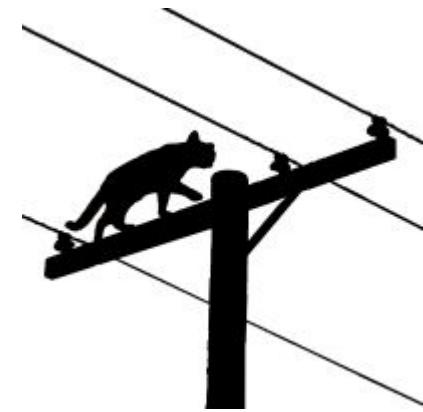


Image from: [C2022]

# Case Study: Data matching (Catalyst Coop.) [3/3]

**Metrics:** Accuracy of data matches

**Boundaries of methodology:** Potentially very specific to particular energy datasets in the US

**Deployment considerations:** Who will actually use the data, and how to make sure they're able and aware?

**Downstream effects:** Improved accessibility for everyone (“good actors” and “bad actors”)

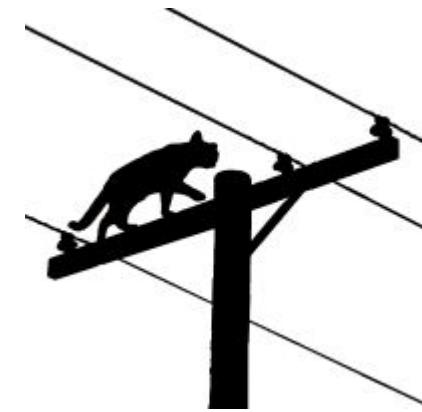


Image from: [C2022]

# Important considerations

## Mitigating biases in data and models

- E.g., Power infrastructure data: Geographic disparities in availability
- E.g., Weather models: Calibration may be optimized for particular regions

## Improving trustworthiness and accountability

- Safety and robustness: Critical in, e.g., power system operations
- Interpretability, auditability, and human-in-the-loop approaches: Critical in, e.g., policymaking contexts

## Centering equity and climate justice

- Centering diverse stakeholders: E.g., in industrialized vs. emerging economies
- Avoiding centralization: Democratized capacity and compute, digital divide
- Avoiding digital colonialism: E.g., smart meters, analysis of remote sensing data

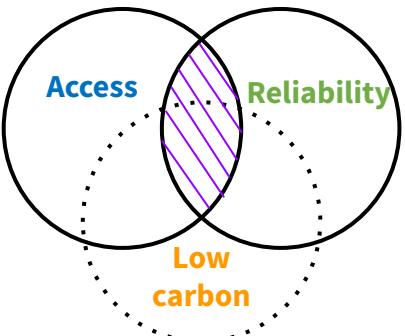
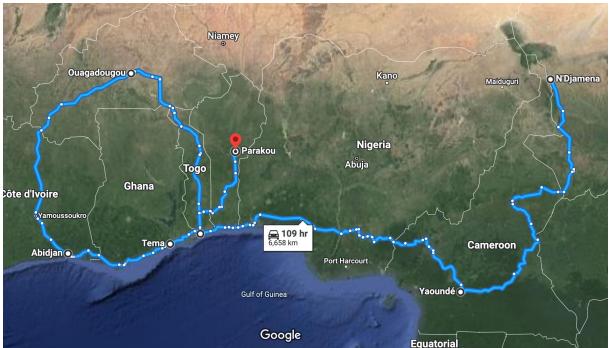
These are not exhaustive - **work with relevant stakeholders!**

# Outline: ML for Power & Energy Systems

1. Importance of power and energy systems
2. Strategies for mitigation, adaptation, and sustainable development
3. How electric power systems work
4. Overview of ML applications
5. Selected case studies
6. **Next steps and opportunities for involvement**

# Nsutezo's journey into ML & power systems

## Formative experiences



## My journey

Quadracci  
**SUSTAINABLE  
ENGINEERING  
LAB.**



**2iE** Institut International  
d'Ingénierie de l'Eau  
et de l'Environnement



International Institute for  
Applied Systems Analysis



PhD @ Columbia  
University

Industrial labs

Interdisciplinary &  
multi-university  
initiatives: eGUIDE,  
IIASA, 2iE

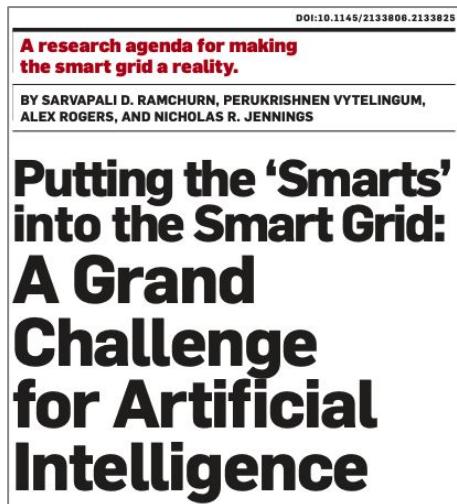
Stakeholders

## Tips:

- Find topics you care about
- Build knowledge & intuitions through internships
- Participate in competitions
- Engage stakeholders in the early stages of the project
- Enjoy the process!

# Priya's journey into ML & power systems

## Formative experiences:



Computational Sustainability Network

## Positions & collaborations:



Watson Fellow



Carnegie  
Mellon  
University  
Computer  
Science  
Department

Carnegie  
Mellon  
University  
Engineering  
& Public Policy



nationalgridESO



Climate Change AI



PhD @ CMU

Internships: NREL,  
National Grid ESO

Co-founded CCAI

Collaborations:  
AI.EPRI, G-PST,  
Catalyst Cooperative

## Top tips:

- Take classes in multiple disciplines
- Explore via internships/secondments
- Attend conferences of multiple communities
- Engage with local organizations
- Reach out to people (& do your “homework”)

# Further resources

## Datasets and simulators:

- See [Electricity Systems page](#) (and subpages) on CCAI Wiki
- A need for development of additional datasets, simulators, toolkits, & libraries
  - See also: [CCAI Dataset Wishlist](#)

## Collaborations, readings, & further discussion:

- See listing of communities on CCAI Wiki
- [Power and Energy Systems space](#) on CCAI Community Platform
- [Power & Energy] tag in [CCAI Newsletter](#)

 **Submit in Poll** 

What will be your next step in your ML +  
climate/energy journey?

# Session recap: ML for Power & Energy Systems

- Framework for mitigation, adaptation, and sustainable development
- Overview of how electric power systems work
- Opportunities and considerations for ML in power systems
- Tips for responsibly framing & scoping projects
- Potential entry points and next steps

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