

# Four System Boundaries for Carbon Accounts

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**12 Abstract**

13 Knowing the carbon emission baseline of a region is a precondition for any mitigation effort, but the baselines  
14 are highly dependent on the system boundaries for which they are calculated. On the basis of sectoral energy  
15 statistics and a nested provincial and global multi-regional input-output model, we calculate and compare four  
16 different system boundaries for China's 30 provinces and major cities. The results demonstrate significant  
17 differences in the level of emissions for the different system boundaries. Moreover, the associated emissions  
18 with each system boundary varies with the regional development level, i.e. richer areas outsource more emissions  
19 to other areas, or in other words boundary 4 emissions are higher than boundary 1 emissions for rich areas and  
20 vice versa for poor areas. Given these significant differences it is important to be aware of the implications the  
21 choice of an accounting system might have on outcomes.

22 **Keywords: Carbon emissions, carbon footprint, Consumption-based emission, multi-regional input-**  
23 **output analysis, Embodied emissions, China**

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## 26 **Introduction**

27 Climate change is an important factor impacting ecosystems in many ways. For example, global warming could  
28 force species to migrate to higher latitudes for survival (Thomas and Lennon, 1999) and lead to increased risk  
29 of extinction for species (Thomas et al., 2004). The IPCC in its fifth assessment report (AR5) affirmed that  
30 greenhouse gases (GHGs), in particular carbon dioxide emissions, from anthropogenic activities has been the  
31 dominant cause of the observed global warming since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (IPCC, 2013 ). Carbon as the basic  
32 element that supports living systems, is critical for the global ecology and human sustainability (Post et al., 1982).  
33 Carbon embodied in both organic and inorganic matter can be affected by natural process as well as  
34 anthropogenic activities, thus understanding the carbon flows within the human-environment nexus will help to  
35 promote human well-being while protecting the earth's living systems (Kyoto Protocol, 2010; Stern et al., 2006),  
36 and proper accounting for carbon becomes key.

37 Given that human induced carbon dioxide emissions are the major contributor to global warming , understanding  
38 regional and urban carbon flows becomes a precondition for the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions Energy  
39 consumption and carbon emission benchmarks are considered as an important step supporting regional carbon  
40 flow studies and carbon emission mitigation policies (Kennedy et al., 2009; Kennedy et al., 2011b). Recently,  
41 numerous low carbon energy development initiatives and emission mitigation actions have been introduced at  
42 regional and city levels in response to a lack of successful international negotiations on carbon emission  
43 mitigations for nations. More than a thousand cities and regions worldwide have pledged to reduce greenhouse  
44 gas (GHG) emissions at the local scale (Betsill and Bulkeley, 2006; International Council of Local  
45 Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), 2008; Lenzen et al., 2004), regional mitigation actions such as “Cities for  
46 Climate Protection” (CCP)(Betsill and Bulkeley, 2004) and the “The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group  
47 (C40)”(Román, 2010) are booming and the literature (Ramaswami et al., 2012) (Sovacool and Brown, 2010) on  
48 regional carbon emissions is growing quickly.

49 However, establishing appropriate and consistent system boundary and calculation processes for the calculation  
50 of carbon emissions remains challenging especially at the regional level. Regions can have varying boundaries

51 of emission accounting depending on definitions and purpose of the analysis. Non-centralized or lacking  
52 statistics and huge discrepancies among economic development levels can lead to uncertainty with regards to  
53 carbon emissions (Sovacool and Brown, 2010). Moreover, regions have intensive interactions across system  
54 boundaries, such as domestic and international transportation, inter-regional electricity transmission and flows  
55 of other goods and services and purchased power supply generated outside the boundary, and those cross  
56 boundary activities can significantly affect the carbon emissions calculations dependent on the extent of  
57 boundary chosen (Liu et al., 2012c). The “carbon footprints” (Hammond, 2007; Hertwich and Peters, 2009;  
58 Minx et al., 2009; Weidema et al., 2008; Wiedmann and Minx, 2008), defined as the direct and indirect carbon  
59 emissions associated with consumption within a certain boundary, could contribute to upstream carbon emissions  
60 outside the boundary. Such “embodied emissions” or “consumption-based emissions” (Davis et al., 2011; Peters  
61 and Hertwich, 2008; Peters et al., 2012) will dramatically affect the regional emission baselines. For example,  
62 without considering the emission embodied in imports, carbon emission decreased in Beijing during 2008-2010,  
63 however Beijing’s carbon footprint calculated by consumption-based emissions shows a fast increase in the  
64 period (Feng et al., 2014b).

65 Initiatives such as the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives  
66 (ICLEI) suggested three different scopes of regional carbon emission: scope 1 emissions are referred to as  
67 territorial emissions (Kennedy et al., 2010; Kennedy et al., 2011b); scope 2 emissions are emissions embodied  
68 in electricity produced and imported or purchased from outside the boundary (International Council of Local  
69 Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), 2008; Kennedy et al., 2010; Kennedy et al., 2011a; Liu et al., 2012c); and  
70 scope 3 emissions refers to emissions embodied in imported products and services (International Council of  
71 Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), 2008; Kennedy et al., 2010; Kennedy et al., 2011a). Together with the  
72 “consumption based accounting” (emissions embodied in imports minus emissions embodied in exports) (Davis  
73 and Caldeira, 2010; Peters, 2008) which has been widely used for estimates of national carbon footprints, we  
74 identified 4 different system boundaries (Table 1 and Table 2) for regional emission accounting :

75 System boundary 1: scope 1 emissions.

76 System boundary 2: scope 1 + 2 emissions.

77 System boundary 3: scope 1 + 3 emissions.

78 System boundary 4: consumption based emission (carbon footprint)

79 Research conducted based on scopes 1, 2, 3 and consumption-based emissions have shown that in a globalized  
80 world, carbon emissions embodied in purchased electricity and imported goods and services could account for  
81 large proportions of carbon footprint of nations or regions, especially for more developed places outsourcing  
82 production and pollution (Davis et al., 2011; Feng et al., 2013; Guan et al., 2014b; Liu et al., 2012c). In addition,  
83 calculation of scope 2, and scope 3 emissions is widely used at the enterprise level and has become an important  
84 indicator for guiding low carbon policies and actions (Downie and Stubbs, 2013; World Resources Institute  
85 (WRI) and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), 2014). There is also a booming  
86 literature using different scopes for regional carbon emission calculation (Hillman and Ramaswami, 2010; Liu  
87 et al., 2011; Minx et al., 2013; Peters, 2010). However, comparison of different regional emission accounting  
88 boundaries based on all the scope 1, 2, 3, and consumption based emissions are rarely conducted. In fact, different  
89 accounting boundaries have been widely used for regional carbon accounts (Kennedy et al., 2011b; Liu et al.,  
90 2012c; Ramaswami et al., 2012), thus the clear definition and comparison is urgent needed.

91 Understanding the effects of different system boundaries on carbon accounting at regional level (provincial level)  
92 is crucial for the carbon emissions mitigation and low carbon development in China, the largest carbon emitter,  
93 with its 2013 carbon emissions being higher than the emissions from the US and the EU together (Global Carbon  
94 Project, 2014). China is now responsible for 50% of global coal consumption and for about 80% of the global  
95 annual increase of carbon emissions from fossil fuel consumption and cement production (Boden, 2013; Liu et  
96 al., 2013b) and thus plays a central role for mitigation of carbon emissions, globally. Regional carbon emissions  
97 baselines are especially important for China for a range of reasons: First, China is a vast country with  
98 significant spatial variations in its regional development, resource endowment and the environment. For example,  
99 the difference of carbon emission intensity (emissions per unit of economic output) among China's provinces is  
100 up to tenfold (Liu et al., 2012b). Secondly, sky-rocketing but differential carbon emission growth in China over

101 the last decade resulted in the fact that carbon emissions in certain provinces could be equivalent to total  
102 emissions in major developed countries; for example, annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Shandong province are about  
103 750 million tons in 2010 (Guan et al., 2012), equivalent to total annual emissions of Germany, the sixth largest  
104 emitter in the world. Finally and most importantly, the Chinese government has set itself the ambitious target of  
105 reducing the carbon intensity (carbon emission per unit of GDP) by 45% by 2020 against the level in 2005, this  
106 intensity targets act as China's central mitigation measures, directly allocated to individual provinces (Liu et al.,  
107 2013a). The research shows that more developed provinces perform better than under-developed provinces for  
108 achieving the intensity reduction targets, however such targets are mainly achieved by "outsourcing"  
109 manufacturing and pollution from developed regions to the underdeveloped regions (Feng et al., 2013), this  
110 could result in higher total emissions. In other words, China's current regional mitigation baselines only consider  
111 the system boundary 1 emissions, neglecting indirect emissions embodied in trade that reduce the regional  
112 system boundary 1 emissions in certain regions but contribute to the nation's total emissions.

113 The character of China's mitigation policy and emission status offers the opportunity to understand the impacts  
114 of different system boundary emissions on emission mitigation policy, by comparing them at the certain regions.  
115 Different system boundaries of carbon accounting leads to different policy strategies. In this study we calculated  
116 four different system boundaries emissions for China's 30 provinces (excluding Tibet and Taiwan) for 2007.

## 117 **2 Methods**

118 Cross-boundary exchange of energy supply, goods and services results in 4 different regional carbon emissions  
119 boundaries (See Table 1 and Table 2 for the definition).

### 120 **Calculation of system boundary 1 emissions**

121 System boundary 1 carbon emissions refer to territorial emissions produced by fossil fuel combustion and  
122 industrial process. These are calculated by multiplying sectoral fossil fuel energy consumption by the associated  
123 emission factors (Guan et al., 2012).

$$124 \text{ Emission} = \sum \sum \sum (\text{Activity data}_{i,j,k} \times \text{Emission factor}_{i,j,k})$$

125 (1)

126 Notes: i: fuel types, j: sectors, k: technology type.

### 127 **Calculation of system boundary 2 emissions**

128 System boundary 2 carbon emissions are system boundary 1 emissions plus the emissions from power generation  
129 of imported electricity. For calculating system boundary 2 emissions, the emission factor for imported electricity  
130 needs to be calculated by considering the corresponding emissions of power generation. For China's power  
131 supply system, the electricity is supplied by regional grids, with current six grids covering 30 mainland provinces,  
132 thus the emission factors of electricity supplied by each grid could be calculated as:

$$133 \text{ Emission factor}(\text{electricity}) = \sum Emission_l \div \sum E_l$$

134 (2)

135 Where  $Emission_l$  represents the emissions of electricity for  $l$  grid,  $Emission_l$  can be calculated by the aggregate  
136 of the emissions from provinces served by the  $l$  state grid.  $E_l$  is the total electricity supply for  $l$  state grid, which  
137 contains the electricity from power plants, renewable energy (including wind, solar, hydro power and bio energy)  
138 and nuclear energy. The data of electricity consumption in 2007 is taken from 2008 Statistics Yearbook for each  
139 province; the calculation of direct emissions from power generation is based on the method for system boundary  
140 1 carbon emissions.

141 Thus, emission embodied in imported electricity can be calculated by using the emission factor multiplied the  
142 import electricity.

### 143 **Calculation of system boundary 3 and 4 emissions**

144 The system boundary 3 emission is the system boundary 1 emission plus the emissions embodied in imported  
145 products and services. The system boundary 4 emission is the system boundary 1 emission plus the emissions  
146 embodied in imports minus emissions embodied in exports. Thus the calculation of emissions embodied in  
147 imports and exports is critical for compiling system boundary 3 and 4 emissions.

148 Environmentally extended multi-region input-output analysis (MRIO) analysis has been frequently adopted for  
 149 calculation of international trade related emissions (Duchin, 1992; Hertwich and Peters, 2009; Peters and  
 150 Hertwich, 2008; Shui and Harriss, 2006). In this study we adopt MRIO to calculate lifecycle (i.e. all upstream)  
 151 emissions embodied in imports and exports.

152 In the MRIO framework, different regions are connected through inter-regional trade,  $T^{rs}$ . The technical  
 153 coefficient sub-matrix  $A^{rs}$  consists of  $\{a_{ij}^{rs}\}$  and is given by  $a_{ij}^{rs} = T_{ij}^{rs}/x_j^s$ , in which  $T_{ij}^{rs}$  is the inter-sector  
 154 monetary flow from sector  $i$  in region  $r$  to sector  $j$  in region  $s$ ;  $x_j^s$  is the total output of sector  $j$  in region  $s$ . The  
 155 final demand matrix is  $(y_i^{rs})$ , where  $y_i^{rs}$  is the region's final demand for goods of sector  $i$  from region  $r$ . Let  
 156  $x = (x_i^s)$ . Using familiar matrix notation and dropping the subscripts, thus

$$157 \quad A = \begin{bmatrix} A^{11} & A^{12} & \dots & A^{1n} \\ A^{21} & A^{22} & \dots & A^{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ A^{n1} & A^{n2} & \dots & A^{nn} \end{bmatrix} \quad ; \quad y = \begin{bmatrix} \sum_s y^{1s} \\ \sum_s y^{2s} \\ \vdots \\ \sum_s y^{ns} \end{bmatrix} \quad ; \quad x = \begin{bmatrix} x^1 \\ x^2 \\ \vdots \\ x^n \end{bmatrix} \quad ;$$

158 (3)

159 The MRIO framework can be written as

$$160 \quad x = Ax + y \quad (4)$$

161 By solving  $x$  we have

$$162 \quad x = (I - A)^{-1}y \quad (5)$$

163 where  $(I - A)^{-1}$  is the Leontief inverse matrix captures the supply chain inputs to satisfy one unit of final demand  
 164 in monetary value;  $I$  is the identity matrix.

165 We extend the MRIO model with a vector of sectoral CO<sub>2</sub> emission coefficients,  $k$ :

$$166 \quad k = [k_1 \quad k_2 \quad \dots \quad k_n]$$

167

168 Therefore, the total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions embodied in goods and services used for final demand for all regions can be

169 calculated by:

$$170 \quad CO_2^{tot} = k(I - A)^{-1}y \quad (6)$$

171 where  $CO_2^{tot}$  is the total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions embodied in goods and services used for final demand ;  $k$  is a vector of  
172 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per unit of economic output for all economic sectors in all regions.

173 While Equation 6 captures well the total life-cycle emissions associated with the final demand of a region, it  
174 may not be able to distinguish the emissions from domestic production and import. To calculate the emissions  
175 embodied in import of region  $s$ , we modify Equation 6 to:

$$176 \quad CO_2^{imp} = k_{\sim s}(I - A)^{-1}y^s \quad (7)$$

177 where  $CO_2^{imp}$  is the total embodied emissions in import of region  $s$ ;  $k_{\sim s}$  is a vector of sectoral CO<sub>2</sub> emission  
178 coefficients for all other regions but with zeros for the emission coefficients of region  $s$ ;  $y^s$  is the final demand  
179 vector of region  $s$ .  
180  
181

$$182 \quad CO_2^{exp} = k_s(I - A)^{-1}y^{s^*} \quad (8)$$

183 where  $CO_2^{exp}$  is the total embodied emissions in export of region  $s$ ;  $k_s$  is a vector of sectoral carbon emission  
184 coefficients for the region  $s$  but with zero for the emission coefficients of other regions;  $y^{s^*}$  is the final demand  
185 vector of total sectoral final demand of other regions but excluding the final demand of region  $s$ .  
186  
187

188 Therefore, system boundary 3 emissions are the boundary 1 emissions plus the total embodied emissions in  
189 import,  $CO_2^{imp}$ . The system boundary 4 emissions are the total consumption-based carbon emissions:  $CO_2^{tot}$ .  
190

## 191 **Data sources**

192 Sectoral fossil fuel energy consumption data were taken from the 2008 Statistics Yearbook (National Bureau of  
193 Statistics of China, 1996-2012) from each province; in this research we consider 20 types of fossil fuels and 44  
194 sectors. The clinker production data used for calculating cement production emission were taken from the  
195 Chinese Statistics Yearbook (National Bureau of Statistics, 2013); emissions of cement production for provinces  
196 are based on our previous emission estimates (Guan et al., 2012). The methodologies for conducting full

197 inventories of China's provincial carbon emissions are consistent with previous research (Chen and Zhang, 2010;  
198 Liu et al., 2012b).

199 We adopted the global multi-regional input-output (MRIO) model from the Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP,  
200 2012) (Peters et al., 2011) which have data for 129 countries and regions with each region comprising 57  
201 economic sectors. China's domestic MRIO comprises 30 sub-regions with 44 sectors for each region; China's  
202 domestic MRIO is compiled by Weidong Liu and coauthors from Chinese Academy of Sciences (Liu et al.,  
203 2012a). We aggregated the sectors and linked China's domestic MRIO with the global MRIO (Feng et al., 2013).

### 204 **3. Results**

#### 205 **Boundary 1-4 emissions of China's regions**

206 Total system boundary 1 emissions of 30 provinces are 7,204Mt CO<sub>2</sub> in 2007. East coast regions have higher  
207 system boundary 1 emissions. Shandong, Hebei, Jiangsu, Guangdong and Henan provinces together account for  
208 about 40% of national total system boundary 1 emissions. Shandong province has the highest boundary 1  
209 emissions (726Mt CO<sub>2</sub>), which would rank as No.7 of global emitters. In terms of economic sectors, across  
210 provinces, power generation and metal/non-metal production take the lion's share (85% on average) of the total  
211 system boundary 1 carbon emissions, other emissions come from services (8%), transportation (6%) agriculture  
212 (2%) and household consumption (4%). (Figure 1).

213 In terms of per capita system boundary 1 emission, less developed provinces such as Inner Mongolia, Shanxi  
214 and Ningxia have even higher per capita system boundary 1 emissions than richer cities such as Beijing and  
215 Shanghai. In addition, the emission intensity (emissions per unit GDP) in Inner Mongolia, Shanxi and Ningxia  
216 is several times of the level of more developed provinces (Municipalities) such as Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin.  
217 Inner Mongolia, Shanxi and Ningxia are the energy and resources bases of China and these provinces produce  
218 carbon intensive inputs for the whole country. Half of the metal and cement and 40% of the electricity produced  
219 in Inner Mongolia are exported to other provinces. One quarter of China's coal is produced in Shanxi, while a  
220 large proportion is sold to other provinces. Moreover, economic growth of these provinces is mainly driven by

221 capital investment in infrastructure (Guan et al., 2014a) contributing significantly to the high carbon intensive  
222 economy in these provinces.

223 In terms of system boundary 2 emissions, there are 11 provinces that import electricity from other regions with  
224 total emissions embodied in imported electricity accounting for 247 Mt CO<sub>2</sub> (i.e. 9% of total emissions from  
225 power generation in China). Thus the system boundary 2 emissions are higher than in system boundary 1  
226 emissions in these 11 provinces. In general the rich regions are major importers of electricity, top five richest  
227 provinces (measured by per capita GDP) together account for 50% of total emissions embodied in cross-regional  
228 electricity transportation. This unbalanced inter-provincial emissions transfer is mainly driven by the geographic  
229 disparity of energy producers and energy consumers in China. China's developed coastal regions cannot achieve  
230 self-sufficiency of electricity, since most of China's primary energy sources, especially coal reserves, are located  
231 in inland western regions; another factor is the associated air pollution that eastern provinces are avoiding  
232 through electricity imports. The "West to East Electricity Transmission" project, which promotes electricity  
233 production in western China to meet the soaring demand of eastern China, has been recognized as China's  
234 national energy development strategy. Inter-provincial transfer of electricity will certainly expand in the future  
235 and their share in the total carbon emissions of China's power sector will also be very much likely to increase,  
236 since many of China's new mega coal power plants are under construction in northwest regions (Zhang and  
237 Anadon, 2014; Zhang et al., 2014).

238 System boundary 3 emissions of 30 provinces account for 9,837 Mt CO<sub>2</sub> in 2007, which is equivalent to about  
239 136% of the total system boundary 1 carbon emissions for the 30 provinces. This is caused by 2,633 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>  
240 that are embodied in imports, of which about 92% are from domestic imports and 8% from international imports.  
241 Among provinces, Shandong has the highest system boundary 3 emissions (876 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>). Again, the five richest  
242 provinces together account for 32% of total scope 3 emissions from 30 provinces.

243 System boundary 4 emissions account for 5,764 Mt CO<sub>2</sub> in 2007, which is 20% less than the system boundary 1  
244 emissions on average (Figure 2). This implies that China's emissions embodied in exports are larger than the  
245 emissions embodied in imports. For provinces, only seven provinces (Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, Zhenjiang,

246 Jiangxi, Chongqing and Jilin) with their system boundary 4 emissions higher than their system boundary 1  
247 emissions, implies these regions are net emission importers. Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin and Zhejiang as the top  
248 four richest regions (measured by per capita GDP) in China are the major importers of these trade embodied  
249 emissions. While the difference between system boundary 1 and system boundary 4 emissions is from the “net”  
250 emission embodied in trade, the four top richest regions (Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin and Zhejiang) contributed  
251 70% of the total difference (1,440 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>) between system boundary 1 and system boundary 4 emissions.  
252 Particularly, system boundary 4 emissions for Beijing (the capital city with per capita GDP listed as the 2<sup>nd</sup>  
253 among 30 regions) could be twice of its system boundary 1 emissions. In contrast the system boundary 4  
254 emissions are less than system boundary 1 emissions in less developed regions such as Yunnan, Guizhou,  
255 Qinghai and Ningxia as they are the net exporters of carbon intensive goods. This illustrates that the highly  
256 developed regions are the major ‘consumers’ of emissions embodied in trade.

257 Figure 3 compares the trends of per capita emissions of system boundary 1-4 emissions and GDP per capita.  
258 Ningxia, Shanxi and Inner Mongolia show every high per capita emission in both system boundary 1-4 emissions  
259 due to their energy intensive economy.

260 To further uncover the relationship between the regional development (measured by per capita GDP) and the  
261 carbon emission from different boundaries (measured by per capita emission), we present regression analysis to  
262 show the relationship between per capita GDP and per capita system boundary 1-4 emissions. The results show  
263 that the correlation with per capita GDP is gradually increasing from per capita system boundary 1 emission to  
264 per capita system boundary 4 emission (Figure 4). This confirms findings from other studies (e.g. (Prell C.,  
265 2014)Peters et al.,2011; Davis and Caldeira, 2010; Feng et al., 2013) showing that rich countries/regions tend to  
266 import more emission intensive but low value added goods from poorer regions, outsourcing their emissions,  
267 which is also reflected in our results with higher per capita GDP in Chinese provinces having higher system  
268 boundary 3 and 4 emissions per capita. In rich regions embedded emissions in imports account for up to 80% of  
269 the total consumption-based emissions of the region (e.g. Beijing and Shanghai)(Feng et al., 2014a).

270 Due to the emissions embodied in imports and exports system boundary 3 emissions (scope 1+3) are higher than

271 system boundary 4 emissions (scope 1+3-emission embodied in exports), system boundary 2 emission (scope  
272 1+2) and system boundary 1 emission (scope 1). The higher the development of a region and dependence on  
273 global supply chains and imports the higher the emissions associated with increasing system boundaries (Figure  
274 3).

### 275 **The impacts of different emission boundaries on China's regional emission targets**

276 Regional emission accounts provide important baselines for mitigation strategies. China allocates emission  
277 intensity targets for each individual province, and examines intensity reduction targets through its 5-Year Plans.  
278 These intensity reduction targets range within 5 percentage points (Table 3). For example, the eastern coast  
279 regions (such as Beijing and Shanghai) have been allocated intensity reduction of 20% in 2005-2010, in contrast  
280 the central and western regions have been allocated intensity reduction of 15%. However, by adopting system  
281 boundaries, the intensity difference of each region could be more than 70% in 2007. For example, the system  
282 boundary 4 emission (footprints) in Inner Mongolia only equals to 40% of its system boundary 1 emissions. In  
283 contrast, the system boundary 4 emissions of Beijing equals to 175% of its system boundary 1 emissions. Thus  
284 the achievements of intensity reduction targets will be considerably different when using system boundary 2,3  
285 or 4 emissions as baselines, instead of using system boundary 1 emissions.

286 As discussed above, the difference of emission system boundaries among rich and poor regions is mainly caused  
287 by emissions embodied in trade, illustrating “out-sourcing” of energy intensive manufacturing from developed  
288 regions to poorer regions but is also a fact of globalization and specialization. On the one hand, the outsourcing  
289 of manufacturing increases the spatial distance of the supply chain, thus further increase the emissions of the  
290 whole systems through moving production to places with lower labor costs and usually less efficient technologies  
291 and through increasing transport related emissions. On the other hand, the decrease of territorial emission from  
292 developed regions are bought at the expense of an increase of upstream emissions.

293 A practical problem is that, in most cases, consumption based emissions are out of control of local government,  
294 because large parts of consumption based emissions take place in other regions. But in order to avoid such  
295 leakages regional mitigation policies have to consider the emissions embodied in trade among regions. For the

296 case of current mitigation policy in China, one supplementary measure could be to introduce the additional  
297 intensity reduction targets based on system boundary 2,3 and 4 emissions, so the mitigation result by final  
298 demand energy saving and control approaches can be encouraged. For example, China issued the project on  
299 compiling the provincial carbon emissions inventories to server as the baseline for domestic cap and trade system,  
300 the emission embodied in import electricity has been considered as well. Comparing with current mitigation  
301 strategy that focuses on boundary 1 emissions, the additional perspective has advantages. First, the boundary 2-  
302 4 accounting allocate more emission quota and associated mitigation responsibilities to the rich regions, where  
303 rich regions in general have more advanced technology and more efficient manufacturing, this could help to  
304 promote the total efficient of whole country. Secondly, considering the consumption (system boundary 2-4) in  
305 addition to the production (system boundary 1) helps to mitigate the carbon emissions along the whole supply  
306 chain, and cost of emission mitigation can be reduced. For example, measured by system boundary 1 emissions,  
307 several provinces implemented electricity blackouts in 2009 in order to achieve the intensity reduction target for  
308 2005-2010, while through the conservation measures of final consumer(for example, energy saving plan for  
309 household and government consumption), such blunt instrument can be avoid. Understanding 2-4 system  
310 boundary emissions is also crucial for highlighting the importance of demand-side efforts for carbon mitigation,  
311 e.g., energy and resources conservation by consumers, recycling and reuse of waste products, and shifting  
312 towards more sustainable lifestyles.

#### 313 **4 Conclusions**

314 In this study, we explored 4 different system boundaries emissions for China's 30 provinces in 2007. The results  
315 show differences among different emissions boundaries. In general, the more developed regions tend to the net  
316 consumer of the emissions that embodied in trade, resulting in higher system boundary 2, 3 and 4 emissions  
317 compared to their system boundary 1 emissions.

318 The different emission boundaries could dramatically affect the achievements of China's current regional  
319 mitigation targets. Our results show that measured by different system boundaries, the emission intensity could  
320 change up to 70% for certain regions, thus the achievement of regional intensity reduction targets under China's

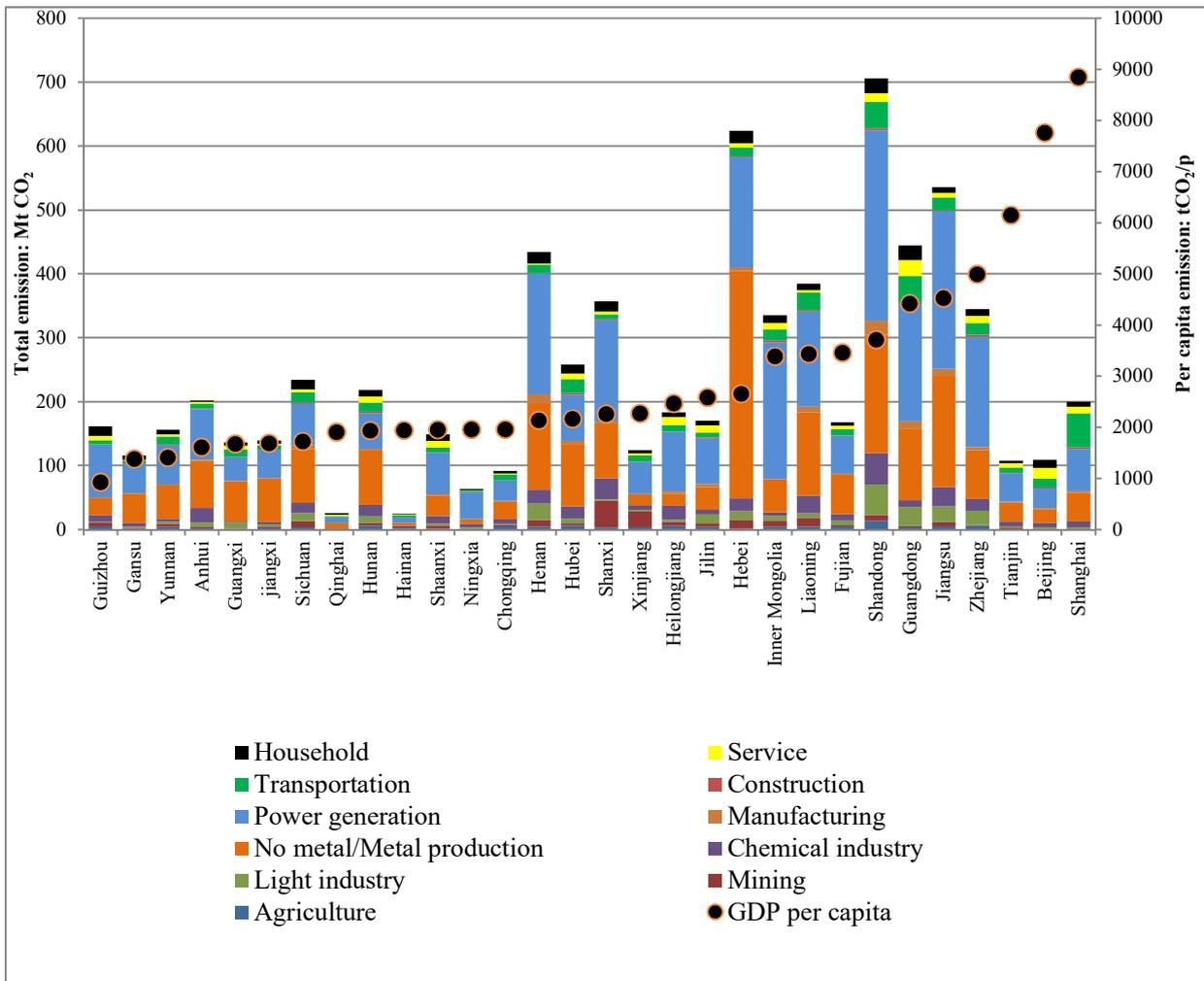
321 mitigation plan can be different. However, current mitigation baseline is based on system boundary 1 emissions  
322 and without considering the other boundaries. Thus, it is important to understand the multi-boundary emissions  
323 as the baselines for addressing mitigation policies.

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331

332 **Figures**



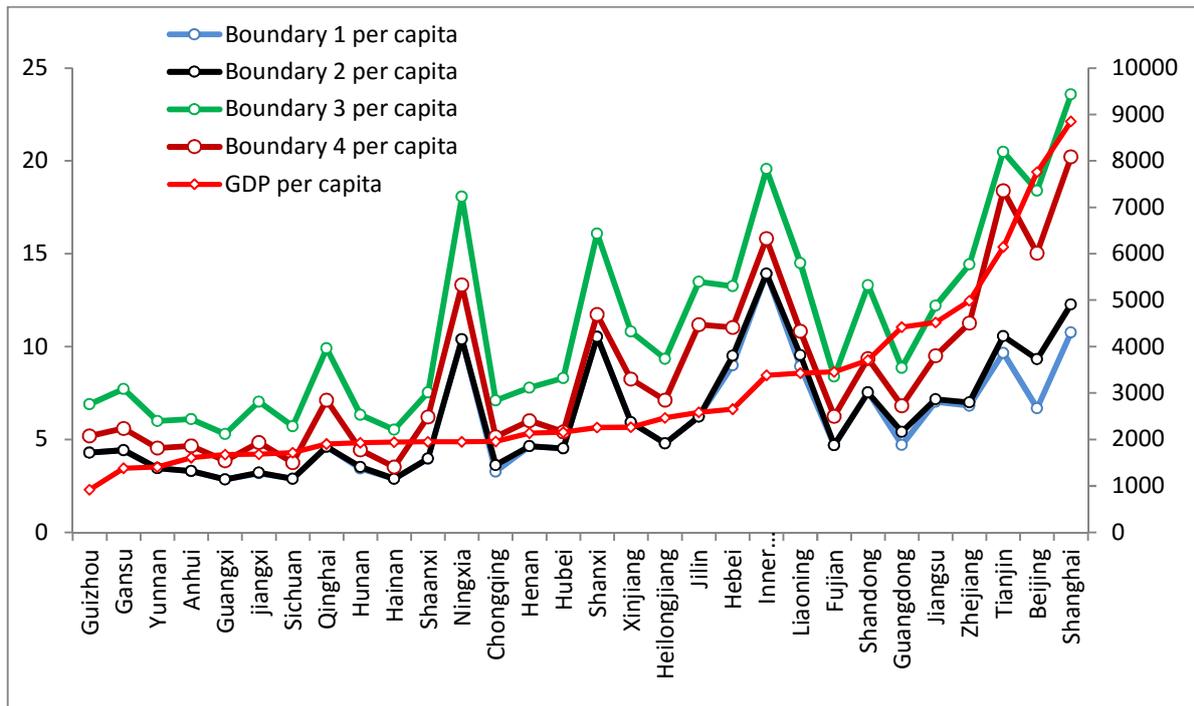
333 **Figure 1 System boundary 1 carbon emissions for China's 30 provinces.**

		Mt CO2		Mt CO2		Mt CO2		US dollar	
	System boundary 1	System boundary 2	System boundary 3	System boundary 4	System boundary 1	System boundary 2	System boundary 3	System boundary 4	per capita GDP
Guizhou	162	162	196	98	922				
Gansu	116	116	146	86	1379				
Yunnan	156	156	205	114	1405				
Anhui	202	202	285	171	1606				
Guangxi	136	136	184	116	1674				
jiangxi	139	141	212	168	1684				
Sichuan	235	235	305	230	1719				
Qinghai	25	25	39	29	1901				
Hunan	219	224	282	184	1932				
Hainan	24	24	30	22	1941				
Shaanxi	149	177	233	134	1948				
Ningxia	63	63	81	47	1953				
Chongqing	92	102	145	108	1955				
Henan	434	434	563	294	2135				
Hubei	258	258	308	215	2161				
Shanxi	357	357	398	189	2259				
Xinjiang	124	124	173	102	2267				
Heilongjiang	183	183	272	174	2464				
Jilin	170	170	305	198	2584				
Hebei	624	660	766	296	2650				
Inner Mongolia	335	335	380	135	3386				
Liaoning	384	410	466	239	3431				
Fujian	168	168	224	133	3454				
Shandong	706	706	876	541	3708				
Guangdong	445	512	644	392	4420				
Jiangsu	536	547	725	394	4524				
Zhejiang	345	354	570	385	4988				
Tianjin	108	118	205	121	6150				
Beijing	109	152	246	191	7761				
Shanghai	200	200	376	238	8849				

Figure 2 Comparison of provincial system boundary 1- 4 carbon emissions

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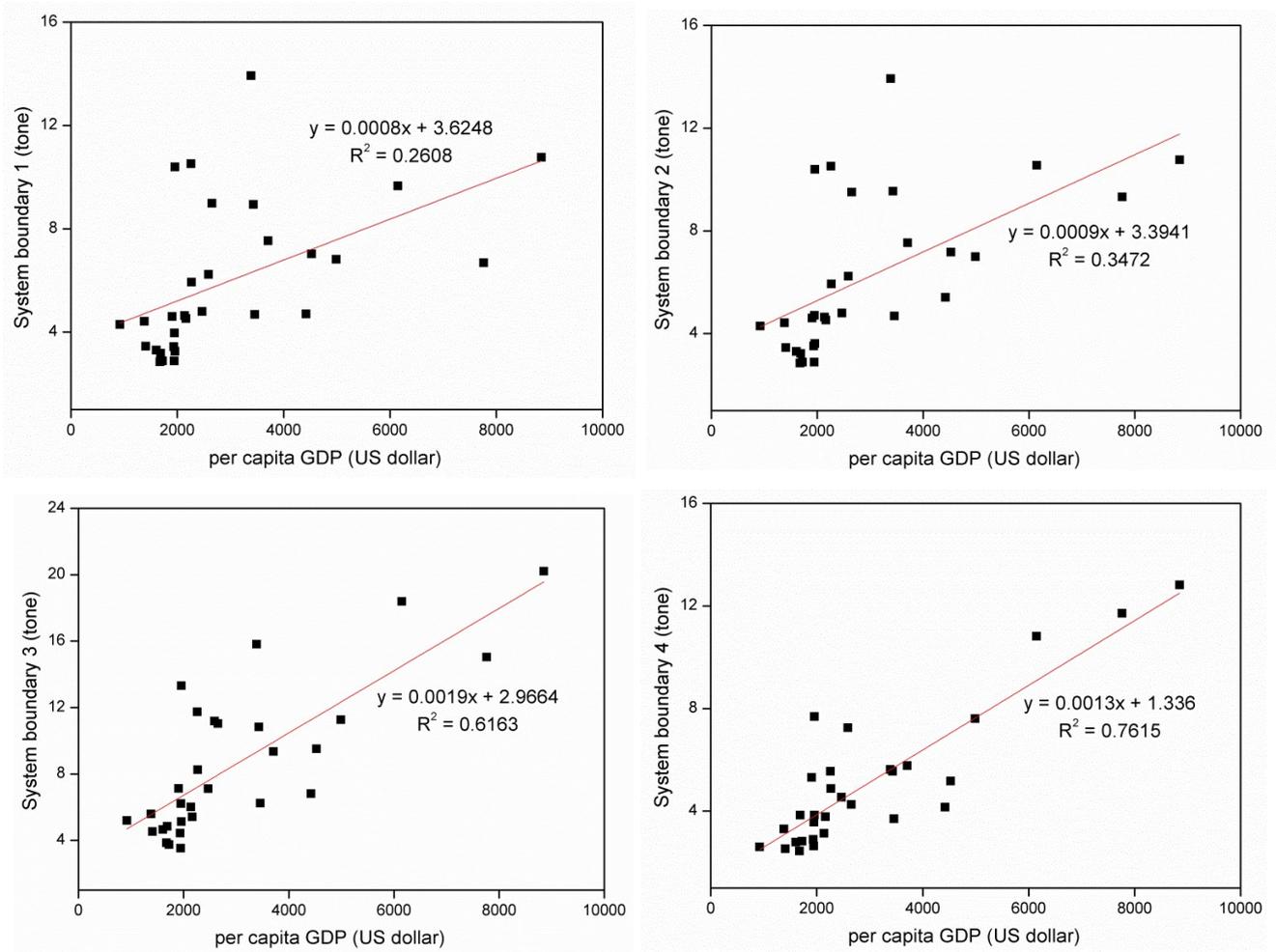
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338 **Figure 3 Per capita emissions of system boundary 1-4 and the per capita GDP for provinces.**

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341  $p < 0.001$

342 **Figure 4: Relationships between per capita GDP and per capita system boundary 1-4 emissions**

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346 **Table 1 Definition of Scope 1-4 footprints**

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<b>Components</b>	Emissions from in-boundary fossil fuel combustion and industrial process	Emissions from producing exports	Emissions from imported electricity	Emissions embodied in imports
<b>Scope 1</b>				
<b>Scope 2</b>				
<b>Scope 3</b>				
<b>Scope 4</b>				

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349 **Table 2 definition of system boundary 1-4**

	<b>Scope 1</b>	<b>Scope 2</b>	<b>Scope 3</b>	<b>Scope 4</b>
<b>System boundary 1</b>				
<b>System boundary 2</b>				
<b>System boundary 3</b>				
<b>System boundary 4</b>				

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352 Table 3 Provincial emission intensity and targets

Province	Intensity reduction goal (2005-2010)	Intensity reduction goal (2010-2015)	Intensity goal achievement (2005-2010)	Intensity System boundary 1 (tCO <sub>2</sub> /1,000 dollar)	Intensity System boundary 4 (tCO <sub>2</sub> /1,000 dollar)	Difference of intensity (%)	GDP/p (US \$ per capita)
Shanghai	20%	18%	20.00%	1.22	1.45	19.14	8848
Beijing	20%	17%	26.59%	0.86	1.51	75.05	7760
Tianjin	20%	18%	21.00%	1.57	1.76	12.03	6149
Zhejiang	20%	18%	20.01%	1.37	1.53	11.67	4988
Jiangsu	20%	18%	20.45%	1.55	1.14	-26.47	4523
Guangdong	16%	18%	16.42%	1.06	0.94	-11.74	4420
Shandong	22%	17%	22.09%	2.03	1.56	-23.33	3707
Fujian	16%	16%	16.45%	1.36	1.07	-20.90	3454
Liaoning	20%	17%	20.01%	2.61	1.62	-37.94	3430
Inner Mongolia	22%	15%	22.62%	4.11	1.66	-59.60	3385
Hebei	20%	17%	20.11%	3.39	1.61	-52.60	2650
Jilin	22%	16%	22.04%	2.41	2.81	16.35	2584
Heilongjiang	20%	16%	20.79%	1.95	1.84	-5.25	2463
Xinjiang	12%	10%	12.00%	2.62	2.15	-17.76	2266
Shanxi	22%	16%	20.66%	4.66	2.46	-47.21	2259
Hubei	20%	16%	21.67%	2.10	1.75	-16.49	2160
Henan	20%	16%	20.12%	2.17	1.47	-32.32	2134
Chongqing	20%	16%	20.95%	1.67	1.97	17.89	1954
Ningxia	20%	15%	20.09%	5.32	3.94	-26.06	1953
Shaanxi	20%	16%	20.25%	2.04	1.83	-10.03	1947
Hainan	12%	10%	12.14%	1.49	1.36	-8.74	1940
Hunan	20%	16%	20.43%	1.78	1.50	-15.65	1932
Qinghai	17%	10%	17.04%	2.42	2.79	15.22	1900
Sichuan	20%	16%	20.31%	1.68	1.64	-2.09	1719
Jiangxi	20%	16%	20.04%	1.89	2.28	21.01	1684
Guangxi	15%	15%	15.22%	1.71	1.46	-14.49	1674
Anhui	20%	16%	20.36%	2.06	1.74	-15.52	1606
Tibet	12%	10%	12.00%	no data	no data	no data	1513
Yunnan	17%	15%	17.41%	2.46	1.80	-26.64	1405
Gansu	20%	15%	20.26%	3.21	2.39	-25.40	1379
Guizhou	20%	15%	20.06%	4.66	2.83	-39.27	922

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