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WORKING TITLE: TOWARDS A HOLISTIC INTEGRATION OF ENERGY SYSTEM
ENGINEERING AND ENERGY JUSTICE

BY

SAMUEL G. DOTSON

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Urbana, Illinois

Doctoral Committee:

Research Scientist Madicken Munk, Chair
Professor James F. Stubbins
Professor Clifford Singer
Assistant Professor McKenzie F. Johnson
Research Scientist, Denia Djokić

For the kids like me who got ADHD
— Joyner Lucas, “Isis”

Table of contents

List of Abbreviations	iv
Chapter 1 Motivation and Introduction	1
Chapter 2 Literature Review	2
2.1 Characterizing the Problem of Climate Change	2
2.2 Climate and Energy Systems	6
2.2.1 Technical Solutions to Energy Decarbonization	7
2.2.2 If nuclear energy can solve climate change, where are all the reactors?	8
2.2.3 If renewable energy can solve climate change, why build anything else?	8
2.3 Energy Justice	9
2.3.1 Boundaries of Energy Systems	10
2.4 Modeling Energy Systems	11
2.4.1 Economic Dispatch and Social Welfare	12
2.4.2 Accounting for Uncertainty	15
2.5 Multi-objective optimization	16
2.5.1 Energy System Applications	19
2.6 Modeling and Quantifying Energy Justice	20
2.6.1 Enabling Procedural Justice Through Energy Models	21
2.6.2 Participatory value evaluation	22
Chapter 3 Methods and Data	24
3.1 Open source multi-objective energy system framework	24
3.2 Economic Dispatch	25
3.3 Genetic Algorithms	26
3.3.1 Specific genetic algorithms	27
3.3.2 Hyperparameter Tuning	28
3.3.3 Convergence	28
3.3.4 Pymoo and DEAP	29
3.4 Objectives	29
3.4.1 Per-unit-capacity	29
3.4.2 Per-unit-energy	30
3.4.3 Reliability and Predictability	30
3.4.4 User-defined Objectives	31
3.4.5 Constraints	32
3.5 Temoa and PyGenesys	33
3.5.1 Modeling-to-Generate-Alternatives	33
3.6 MGA with multi-objective optimization	34
3.7 Model Data	35
Chapter 4 Benchmark Results	38
4.1 Exercise 0: Deciding Among Evolutionary Algorithms	38
4.2 Exercise 1: Exploring objective space	38
4.3 Exercise 2: Four Simultaneous Objectives	41
References	43

List of Abbreviations

ESOM energy system optimization model	2
LP linear programming	12
EROI energy return on investment	9
MILP mixed-integer linear programming	11
Osier Open source multi-objective energy system framework	20
Temoa Tools for Energy Model Optimization and Analysis	22
PyGenesys Python for Generating Energy Systems	22
Pymoo Multi-Objective Optimization in Python	17
HSJ Hop-Skip-Jump algorithm	33
MGA Modeling-to-Generate-Alternatives	15
MOO multi-objective optimization	11
GHG greenhouse gas	5
SP stochastic programming	15
MC Monte Carlo	15

PA parametric analysis	15
NSGA-II Non-Dominated Sorting Genetic Algorithm-II	18
NSGA-III Non-Dominated Sorting Genetic Algorithm-III	27
UNSGA-III Unified Non-Dominated Sorting Genetic Algorithm	27
GA genetic algorithm	18
WS weighted-sum	17
EC ϵ -constraint	17
IPCC International Panel on Climate Change	2
VRE variable renewable energy	7
NRC Nuclear Regulatory Commission	7
CCS carbon capture and storage	5
PVE participatory value evaluation	22
IPCC International Panel on Climate Change	2
UN United Nations	5
GVA gross value added	20
GDP gross domestic product	20
WTP willingness to pay	22

WPE weighted permutation entropy	31
IGD+ inverted generational distance plus	29
DEAP Deep Evolutionary Algorithms in Python	29
UIUC University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	36
PCP parallel coordinate plot	41
NIMBY not-in-my-backyard	9
NIMBYism not-in-my-backyard	

Chapter 1

Motivation and Introduction

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Every year, world leaders meet to discuss plans to address climate change at the COP summit (cite). In 1995, world leaders established a set of targets with the Kyoto Protocol (cite) and again with the 2016 Paris Climate Agreement. Every few years, the United Nations releases a report from the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assessing the current impacts of climate change and forecasting future scenarios. Most of the world understands that anthropogenic climate change is an existential threat to society. Indeed, many studies in the energy system optimization model (ESOM) literature begin with a statement about the urgency of climate change. This chapter reviews the extant literature for both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the problem considered in this thesis – primarily bridging the gap between feasibility or planning studies to address the climate crisis and the current pattern of missed targets and growing carbon emissions. First, I draw from the risk assessment literature to characterize and situate the problem of climate change and demonstrate the necessity of a holistic analysis. Second, I build upon the central issue of disproportionality of climate change risk by reviewing the energy and environmental justice literature. Third, I develop an encompassing definition of an “energy system” using technical and social perspectives. Finally, I review the energy system literature for gaps in conventional modeling practices and identify previous attempts to incorporate social science and justice concepts into energy system models.

2.1 Characterizing the Problem of Climate Change

Risk is generally understood as the “potential for adverse consequences” [1]. However, due to the complexity of climate change, the IPCC developed a three-tenet framework to discuss risk [1]: hazard, exposure, and vulnerability. *Hazards* are mediated by physical features, such as climate and topography [2], [3]. Climate change is already producing more significant hazards, like forest fires, hurricanes, storms, floods, droughts, and heat waves [4]–[6]. *Exposure* refers to the scale and duration of the subjection of people, infrastructure, and social wealth to a particular hazard [1], [3], [7]. *Vulnerability* is the ability of a system to cope, recover, and adapt after exposure to a hazard. Although climate change is a worldwide phenomenon, vulnerabilities to its hazards are not uniformly distributed. On the contrary, the people and communities most likely to be harmed by climate change are already harmed by social inequities [8]. For example, low-income communities have fewer resources to respond to natural hazards, such as hurricanes, floods, or fires, and therefore take longer to recover, compared to a communities with relatively greater wealth. Recent work from Simpson et al. [3] expanded on this definition of risk by including *responses* to risk as itself a driver of risk. This framework is



Figure 2.1: A framework for decomposing risk into its parts: hazard, exposure, vulnerability, and response, using risk to infrastructure as an illustrative example. Reproduced from Simpson et al. (2021) [3].

illustrated in Figure 2.1 using infrastructure risk as an instructive example. Considering the actions taken (or not) in response to climate change is vital for a holistic understanding of risk because it encompasses benefits and mitigating outcomes, not just negative, inflammatory ones. Additionally, heterogeneous stakeholders perceive the costs and benefits of (in)action differently. Therefore, including response as a driver of risk is essential for making choices more transparent and actionable within decision-making structures [3]. Responses to climate change risk come in myriad forms, and at multiple scales, from individual choices (e.g., demand response) [9]–[11] to community responses [12], [13], national level policies [14], [15], and levels in between. Paterson and Charles [12] developed a descriptive typology for community-based hazard responses that also applies to national and global scales. The five response categories making up this typology are: [12]

1. individual and material well-being, which seek to meet individuals' basic needs such as food, water, and shelter, as well as livelihood and health.
2. relational well-being emphasizes community and support networks and could include evacuation or relocation.
3. awareness involves monitoring and stock-taking of potential hazards.
4. governance relates to decision-making structures around human-hazard interactions.
5. infrastructure refers to the physical defense against hazards using engineered tools or ecological characteristics.

Figure 2.2 shows the breakdown of the categories. Although this framework could help assess policies to mitigate climate change, these response categories are related to specific climatic hazards rather than climate change mitigation.

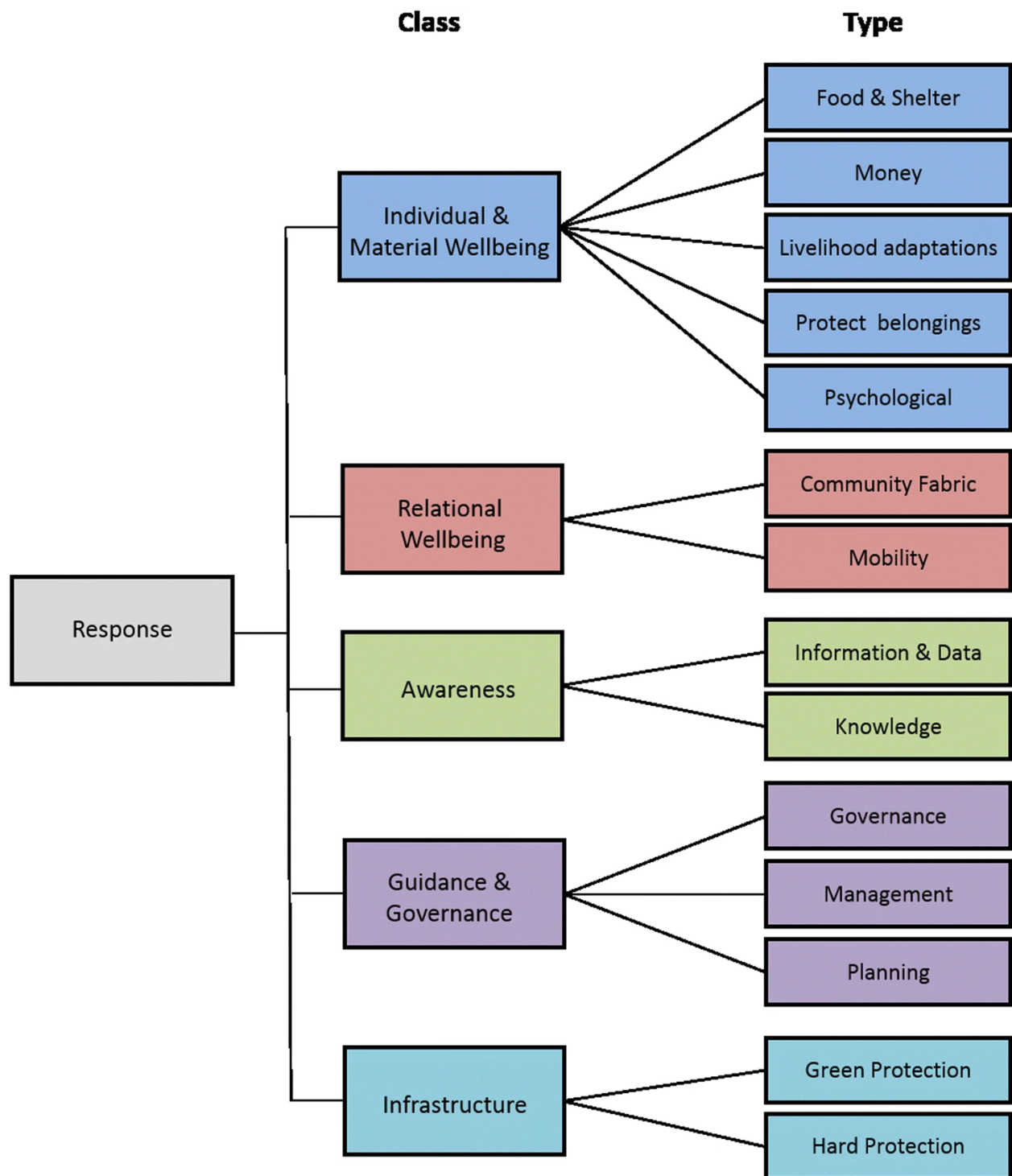


Figure 2.2: A categorization schema for various responses to climate risks. Reproduced from Paterson et al. (2019) [12].

Based on the net-zero carbon emissions target set by the 2016 Paris Agreement, myriad countries, states, and companies have set climate policies covering two-thirds of the global economy [16]. Reducing CO₂ (or CO_{2eq} in some cases) emissions is the primary focus for most of these policies [14]–[16], which includes the following broad strategies [15]:

1. Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by transitioning from fossil-fueled to clean energy.
2. Removing CO₂ from the atmosphere using carbon capture and storage (CCS) and other sequestration techniques.
3. Altering the Earth’s energy balance by increasing its albedo and other geoengineering concepts.

Despite this, only around five percent of these policies are consistent with the United Nations (UN) “Race to Zero” campaign [16]. Further, even the full implementation of national climate policies leaves approximately a 28 GtCO_{2eq} gap in GHG emissions [14] (with the implicit goal of zero emissions). This gap and the fundamental assumptions about carbon sequestration from the 2016 Paris Agreement suggest that the world is on track to overshoot these emissions targets [14], [17]. Carley et al. (2018) developed a quantitative framework for assessing the vulnerabilities associated with energy policies or responses [18].

Risk analysis is the first step to a more encompassing understanding of the climate crisis. The literature on disproportionality further distinguishes *risks* and *impacts* [2]. Consistent with previous work, a risk is the aggregate of hazards, exposures, vulnerabilities, and responses. Impacts, then, are the realizations of risk in terms of loss and damages. This distinction is essential. Responses to *impacts* are always made *ex post facto*. Differences in vulnerability to a hazard, often arbitrated by socio-economic status, manifest as differential impacts. Access to resources conditions an individual’s or community’s ability to respond to the impacts of a hazard. Since losses from impacts disproportionately affect those with the fewest resources, their vulnerability to future hazards increases in a “vicious cycle” [2], [8]. In purely economic terms, studies estimate the loss of ecosystem services from land use change associated with climate change and other human activities at \$4 - \$20 trillion per year (in 2011 \$US) globally, [19] and the poorest third of U.S. counties will experience financial damages between 2 and 20 percent of their annual income [20]. However, impacts also have cultural and psychological dimensions [2] that cannot be captured by accounting for “externalities.”

Dorkenoo et al. [2] establish *burdens*, injustices arising from social, political, or economic power imbalances, as a third theme paramount for a holistic understanding of disproportionality. Burdens influence all aspects of risk and affect access to resources which condition impacts. Dorkenoo et al. wrote, “[p]rocesses of marginalization and exclusion influenced by power struggles [...] influence the distribution of burdens and consequently responsibilities, in addition to the different dimensions of climate risk (hazard, exposure, vulnerability [, response])” [2]. Figure 2.3 demonstrates the mutually reinforcing relationships among risks, impacts, and burdens. A particularly relevant example of burden is the persistence of energy burden, where low-income households pay the highest percentage of their income on energy bills relative to other income groups [21], [22]. Energy burden interferes with electricity access, thereby increasing vulnerability to extreme heat events [22], [23]. The risk assessment literature and the energy system modeling literature typically adopt an apolitical framing of vulnerabilities. That is to say, these literature to analyze their respective systems independent of any sociopolitical context. However, inequities do not arise in a vacuum but through processes of marginalization and exclusion [24]. Often the distribution of burdens falls along class, race, and gendered lines [24], [25]. Research on siting patterns of polluting facilities indicates these projects frequently developed in areas with people of color and low-income populations [25]. Pollution from these facilities creates

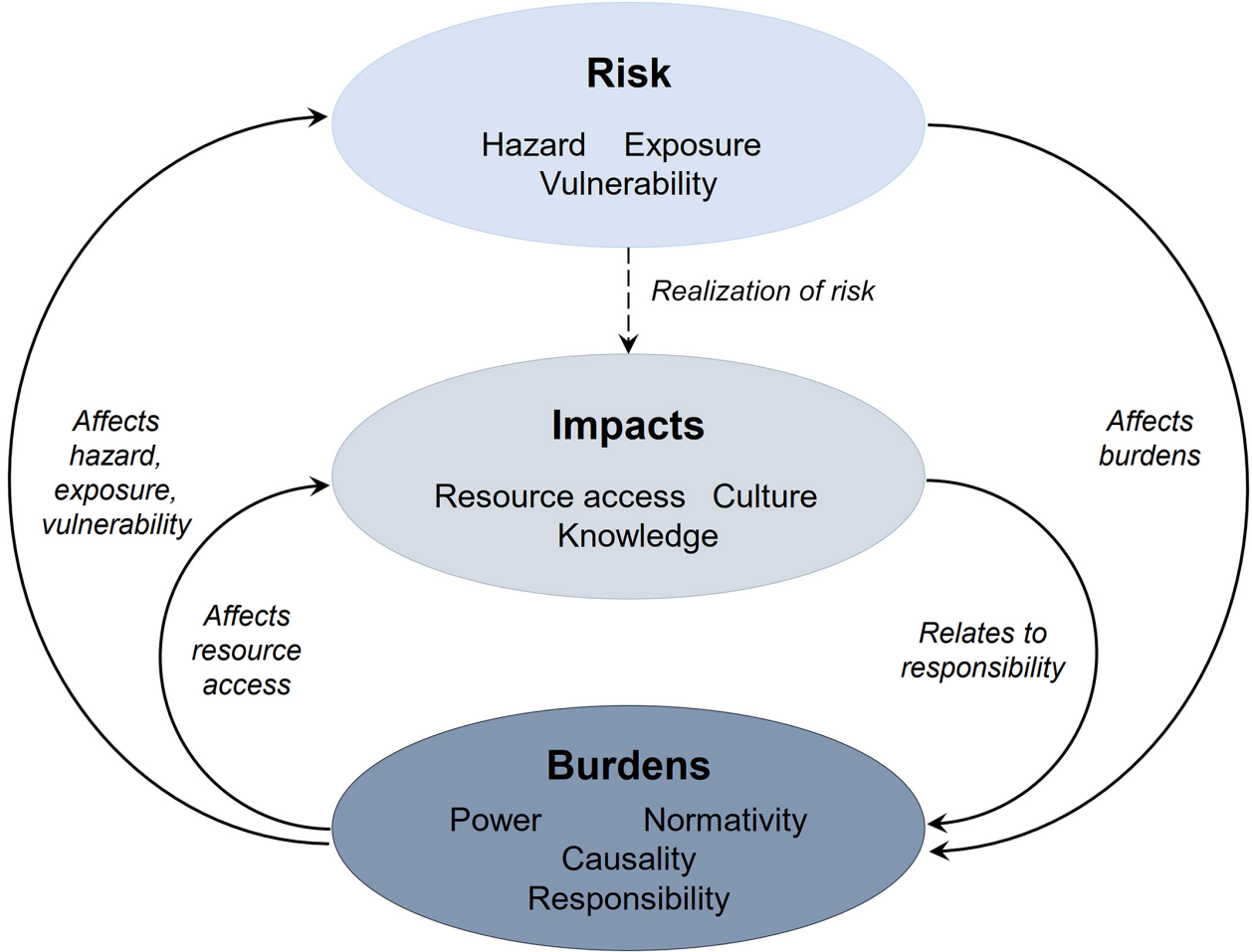


Figure 2.3: The relationships among risks, impacts, and burdens. Reproduced from Dorkenoo et al. (2022) [2].

additional burdens for nearby communities. The energy justice and environmental justice literature offer insights to contrast this neutral framing and facilitate normative questions about alternative distributions [2], [24].

2.2 Climate and Energy Systems

Climate change is driven by the buildup of additional GHGs in our atmosphere from human activities. GHGs are a significant byproduct of the infrastructure that creates, delivers, and consumes energy (i.e., energy infrastructure). The total decarbonization of the global economy will lead to greater electricity demand, even when accounting for efficiency improvements [26], [27], decarbonizing our electricity production is one of the most critical issues to resolving climate change. Therefore, producing electricity with zero GHGs will initiate a cascade of deeper decarbonization throughout the economy. However, this will require expanded electrical infrastructure to accommodate new energy technologies. Since, energy production contributes significantly to climate change, and new energy infrastructure is required to reduce carbon emissions in other sectors (e.g. heat and transportation), accelerating the adoption of clean energy technology (i.e. technologies that do not release GHGs to the atmosphere) is essential for achieving a stable climate [14], [17]. The next section

discusses the range of technical solutions for accomplishing the goals established above.

2.2.1 Technical Solutions to Energy Decarbonization

Many studies show that global and local economies can be supported by 100% variable renewable energy (VRE), such as wind, hydro, solar power, and storage [28]–[40]. Yet some countries that transition to majority VRE observe higher carbon emissions or a slower-than-expected reduction due to greater dependence on natural gas brought on by the relative unpredictability of natural energy sources [41]. Other studies demonstrate that firm baseload power, such as nuclear power, is necessary for the deep decarbonization of our energy systems [41]–[53]. While some countries are building new nuclear reactors, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) just licensed the design of the first small modular reactor design from NuScale [54], other places are shutting down their operating nuclear plants [55]. Further, the only examples of highly decarbonized electrical grids are places with a high penetration of hydro or nuclear power and the former is widely considered exhausted. There is nearly universal agreement that decarbonizing electricity requires phasing out fossil-fueled power plants and a significant expansion of clean electricity generators. Although many studies show the *feasibility* of a variety of energy mixes, the following is strongly debated in the literature.

1. Whether energy systems should be 100% renewable or if nuclear power and CCS should be included [13], [30], [50], [56].
2. What the role of distributed and decentralized energy sources in expanding our energy infrastructure should be [10], [57]–[63].

The strength of the technical arguments on both sides of these discussions combined with the distinct lack of sufficient policy agendas pursuing any of them [14], [16], suggests the existence of poorly articulated trade-offs and that technical solutions cannot be assessed from an engineering perspective, alone. Some researchers and policymakers disagree on technical grounds, while others disagree on the basis of institutional or systemic injustices. There are also differences in values. Indeed, the cultural theory of risk argues that our social constructions, rather than risks themselves, dictate what threats are recognized and their corresponding liabilities and benefits [64], [65]. Clean technologies like nuclear power and renewables, such as solar or wind power, are not only different in how they produce electricity but also in the values and paradigms they represent. Sometimes, communication fails because the question being discussed is not agreed upon either. Often, feasibility studies address the positivist question, “what is the least-cost pathway to the energy transition,” while others consider more normative questions, such as “how should we proceed equitably?” Normative questions are qualitative and, therefore, inherently challenging to answer and require the application of ethics. Indeed there are many more normative questions than positive ones. Is perfect the enemy of good? How do we balance stakeholder preferences, upstream and downstream effects, and the necessity to respond quickly to climate change? Will this mix of influences lead to paralysis or inaction? Engineers typically do not possess the training nor the expertise to answer these questions thoroughly. Therefore, given climate change’s complex, interacting, and disproportionate nature, engineering alone is ill-equipped to resolve the problem. Ideas from the environmental and energy justice literature offer a social perspective for addressing the risks and impacts of climate change hazards. The next section introduces the concept of energy justice and how this area of scholarship understands challenges related to climate change and energy systems.

2.2.2 If nuclear energy can solve climate change, where are all the reactors?

1. What do proponents of nuclear energy say about nuclear power?

- Nuclear engineers generally understand that discomfort and fear around nuclear power come from fears about nuclear weapons and fears about radiation. As such, they view these fears as irrational and placatable by "educating" and ignorant public.
- Some general benefits of nuclear energy (high energy density, low material requirements, low carbon footprint, "safe," low land requirements, reliable, "resilient").

2. What are the objections to nuclear?

- Nuclear accidents
- Waste (high level waste is a tremendous issue.)
- Ethical issues around mining (what historical harms have been done to mining communities? What about sourcing uranium from places like Kazakhstan (allied to Russia) and directly funding the invasion of Ukraine? What reparations have been made to those harmed? How will future harms be prevented?)
- Nuclear weapons proliferation (discuss the relationship between nuclear energy and nuclear power. Additionally, although nuclear power doesn't necessarily lead to weapons programs, the need to keep careful track of nuclear materials and prevent its release into the biosphere, malicious or otherwise, presents a profound responsibility with some intergenerational inequities).

3. Why are engineering solutions insufficient?

- Case study on yucca mountain + sweden + finland
- Are advanced reactors actually being designed in a way that incorporates people's preferences. Perhaps preferences toward nuclear energy are not so dependent on the probability of an accident, but on the trust between reactor owners and host communities. Non-experts don't have the expertise to assess the importance of neutron spectra, fuel form, or other technical design parameters are important for safety. Asserting a low accident probability does not inspire trust. If the reactor is so safe, why not put your money where your mouth is (so-to-speak) and engage in profit sharing with the community? "Communities are not the final arbiters of safety, determining safety is the purview of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission."

Should I include a question about the benefit of profit-sharing in human-subjects interviews? What are their concerns with energy? Are they focused only on the production of energy or also the lifecycle (extraction + disposal) as well?

2.2.3 If renewable energy can solve climate change, why build anything else?

1. What do proponents of renewable energy say about solar and wind?

- By virtue of being renewable, the "fuel" source is practically infinite. Solar energy will never run out on the timescale of human civilization, and wind energy (as a product of wind energy plus the Earth's rotation) will similarly never run out.

- Since renewable energy, specifically solar and wind, lend themselves more naturally to distribution, they are more democratic sources of energy (cite).
2. What are the technical objections to fully renewable energy grids?
 - Wind and solar are variable and intermittent energy sources.
 - Renewable energy sources (including non-intermittent sources like hydroelectric dams and biomass) have a much lower energy return on investment (EROI) than fossil fuel sources [66], [67]. However, recent harmonization studies belie this assertion by demonstrating that renewable sources have similar, if not greater, EROI than coal or natural gas [68].
 - Although the “fuel” for solar and wind resources is infinite, the materials required to extract energy from these sources is finite.
 3. What drives the opposition for renewable energy projects (specifically wind and solar)?
 - Due to the sprawling nature of energy sources like solar and wind, these projects are frequently subject to public opposition in proposed areas.
 - The not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) movement, or NIMBYism, is frequently cited as the cause of opposition. NIMBYism describes people that do not support the execution of a specific project (energy-related or otherwise) due to the project’s proximity to a certain location (typically residences), but would otherwise support a project if it were further away. Thus, “not-in-my-backyard.”

2.3 Energy Justice

Energy justice is a conceptual and analytical tool regarding the ethical or normative dimensions of energy systems and addresses the systemic causes of burdens, and inequities [69].

There are many conceptions of justice; however, the most popular framework for understanding justice is a three-faceted approach originating from David Schlosberg: distributional, recognition, and procedural justice [70]. Distributional justice relates to the fair distribution of resources, burdens, and responsibilities. Studies on distributional justice seek to address the normative question: how should a just society distribute the benefits it produces and *the burdens required to maintain it* [71]. Additionally, distributional justice considers *how* poor distributions are created [70]. Procedural (in)justice is defined as the presence of (un)fair and (in)equitable institutional processes of the state [70]. In other words, how decisions of societal import are made and who is involved in those decisions. Sovacool and Dworkin (2015) outline four elements of procedural justice: transparency, meaningful participation, impartiality, and avenues for redress [69]. Justice of recognition is the vaguest of the three tenets of justice and is frequently reduced to a component of either distribution or procedural justice [70], [72]. A common argument for this consolidation is that recognition is a precondition for achieving distributional justice or that achieving procedural justice necessarily includes recognition [70]. However, recognition is unique from distributive and procedural justices because it is concerned with a different family of injustice, namely, *misrecognition* [72]. van Uffelen (2022) suggests a nuanced definition of recognition justice as “the adequate recognition of all actors through love, law, and the status order” [72]. Sovacool and Dworkin (2015) offer a framework for assessing energy policies from a justice perspective. Table 2.1 map the relationships between justice-as-a-decision-making-tool from Sovacool & Dworkin, Paterson’s hazard response characterization, and Schlosberg’s triumvirate of justice.

Table 2.1: Different ways to operationalize justice concepts.

Schlosberg [70]	Sovacool & Dworkin [69]	Paterson et al. [12]
Distribution	Intragenerational Equity Intergenerational Equity Responsibility	Material Well-being Infrastructure
Procedure	Due Process Good Governance	Awareness Governance
Recognition	Availability ¹ Affordability ¹ Sustainability ¹	Relational Well-being

¹ van Uffelen [72] argues for this categorization.

Although Sovacool & Dworkin do not explicitly discuss recognition justice, it is a unique aspect of justice that can still be useful for contextualizing their recommendations. For example, due to the psychological pressures introduced by a lack of access to energy, either due to infrastructure or cost, interrupts relational well-being and is an injustice [72]. Further, (un)sustainable policies may be considered a misrecognition of the humanity of future generations.

Next, I examine the specific ways the social science literature understands how energy systems and their infrastructure (artifacts) contribute to the distribution of burdens.

2.3.1 Boundaries of Energy Systems

Previous work defined energy systems in purely technical terms as spatially, temporally, and topologically complex machines that coordinate the supply and demand of energy, especially electricity [43]. However, this definition neglects the ways energy systems may be used to construct and maintain power relations that contribute to inequitable distributions of burdens. Energy access is necessary to support complex modern economies and therefore possesses political power [73], [74]. The literature on the political economy of energy infrastructure locates this political influence in five distinct ways [74]. First, energy infrastructure affects competition and collaboration among nation-states in the geo-political sphere. The current situation in Ukraine makes this especially salient [75].

The second subset of the literature focuses on the process of energy infrastructure development and how these processes create social inequities. For example, energy policies that subsidize residential solar panels have not led to more equitable adoption of solar energy, with greater adoption in areas with higher income, among other social indicators [76]. Other popular arguments in favor of renewable energy assert that these energy sources are necessarily more egalitarian because the Sun and the wind cannot be (or have not yet been) privatized. Another is the urgency of climate change. Although these arguments have merit, they ignore or minimize the potential environmental and social consequences of energy planning that does not consider energy justice [73]. Large-scale energy projects in the Global South have already led to the dispossession of nearby indigenous communities and other key actors [77], [78].

Third, the development of energy infrastructure is not simply conducted via policy measures, but also in the manner governments activate the public imagination in favor of these policies [74], [79]. Jasanoff and Kim (2009) articulate this concept as ‘socio-technical imaginaries,’ which are simultaneously descriptive and prescriptive of possible energy futures established by governments in the national zeitgeist [79]. This concept

is demonstrated by the discourse surrounding nuclear energy in the United States and South Korea [79] as well as in Japan [80]. Governments can employ ‘grand narratives’ related to national security, climate change, or modernization to enhance public support while minimizing genuine participation [74].

Fourth, the political power of energy infrastructure can be traced further to the cultural values and policy choices embedded in the design and operation of seemingly technical systems [74]. In other words, the design and implementation of energy infrastructure may be used as a vehicle for apparently unrelated agendas, a form of “policy-making by other means” [74], [81]. Edwards and Hecht (2010) refer to the co-constitution of technological and political order as ‘*technopolitics*,’ demonstrating the tangible material and political outcomes of technological systems [82].

Finally, energy systems and their infrastructure possess a unifying quality through which new political identities may evolve [74].

From these various perspectives, we can observe that confining an energy system to its technical characteristics is woefully incomplete. I propose that an energy system is a spatially, temporally, and topologically complex machine that coordinates the supply and demand of energy and resources and acts as an important mediator of burdens that influence risks (such as risks from climate change). This thesis takes the important step of analyzing energy system planning and policy with this expanded definition.

The next section reviews current attempts to model energy systems and identifies gaps in conventional methods.

2.4 Modeling Energy Systems

ESOMs have broad utility, including forecasting future quantities, generating insight for policy development, or energy system planning for scheduling and acquisition [83], [84]. However, analyses using currently available ESOMs seldom consider the role of energy systems in creating and maintaining inequitable distributions of burdens. ESOMs vary significantly by the energy sectors they choose to model, the degree of physical detail, uncertainty quantification, and forecasting capabilities. Table 2.2 summarizes the capabilities for a comprehensive list of energy system analysis tools. These tools are approximately sorted by mathematical formulation, e.g. explicit optimization or simulation. The “mixed-integer linear programming (MILP)” column indicates whether the framework uses a linear-programming approach to optimize an objective function. The “objective” column specifies the nature of the objective function if one exists. “Cost” objectives minimize total or annual energy costs, while “welfare” maximizes social welfare. Some entries have more than one objective listed. This means users may choose which objective to optimize. None of the tools in Table 2.2 are designed to handle simultaneous optimization (i.e., multi-objective optimization (MOO)). For those modeling frameworks that have an “objective” in Table 2.2, virtually all of them optimize system costs. EnergyScope is the only exception to this, which allows users to optimize GHG emissions [85]. The “uncertainty” column indicates a feature to algorithmically generate model runs for testing either parametric or structural uncertainties. For example, EnergyScope is *suitalbe* for uncertainty analysis (i.e., many runs are computationally tractable) but does not have any built-in capabilities [85]. Some tools, such as NEMS [86], incorporate uncertainty into their calculations via learning curves. However, these learning curves require assumptions about learning factors and technological “optimism” – which are themselves uncertain [86]. Table 2.2 also indicates whether the tool is a “public code.” This simply means users can download and inspect the source code. Other considerations for openness, such as licensing and development, vary among the listed frameworks. The other columns simply indicate the existence of particular features rather than the

relative maturity or sophistication of each feature.

Frameworks, such as MEDEAS [87], and MultiMod [88], are general equilibrium models which embed energy systems within the macro-economy and facilitate the modeling of strategic behavior. The latter formulates a non-linear problem with the Karush-Kuhn-Tucker optimality condition [88], as opposed to more traditional linear programming methods. Models of this type are helpful for analyzing the economy-wide influence of policies but lack sufficient operational detail to be prescriptive for energy system planning.

Agent-based models are useful for modeling the market behaviors of different actors, such as firms (which produce power), transmission operators, and consumers. The latter category is typically aggregated for tractability. Modeled behaviors include technology preferences [89], [90], risk aversion [89], financial characteristics [89], [91], and information asymmetry among agents [89], [91]. Due to agent heterogeneity, agent-based models are considered useful for capturing social phenomena [84], [92].

A further set of tools focus on simulating power flow and demand fluctuations. CAPOW [93] generates synthetic data with statistical methods to explore uncertainties in energy dispatch and extreme demand events, but does not include any investment optimization based on these uncertainties. CESAR-P, SAM, Demod, and DESSTinEE focus on modeling demand profiles [94]–[96]. CESAR-P models individual building demand for energy based on the physical parameters of the building. However, it has no dispatch or investment optimization capabilities. Other tools such as Pandapower, GridCal, and SciGRID power model the infrastructure aspects of electricity systems – transmission and distribution – rather than the optimal dispatch of electricity producers [97]–[99].

There is an overwhelming number of models with varying levels sophistication and capabilities. However, the inability to optimize any objective besides cost presents a significant gap in the existing space of energy modeling tools. Further, since none of these tools allow for multiple objectives, true trade off analysis is rendered impossible.

2.4.1 Economic Dispatch and Social Welfare

Linear programming (LP) or MILP are the dominant optimization approaches among the frameworks in Table 2.2. Economic dispatch models optimize the power output of *dispatchable* generators in a model system [40], [154]. They all share the same fundamental formulation.

Minimize

$$F(x) = \sum_i C_i x_i \tag{2.1}$$

subject to,

$$\begin{aligned} g(x, p) &\leq 0. \\ x &\in \vec{X} \end{aligned}$$

Table 2.2: Summary of ESOM frameworks.

Model	Citation	math model type	MILP	Objective	Transmission	Heat	Sector Electric	Transport	Investment Optimization	Physical Models	Forecasting	Agent Based	Uncertainty Analysis	Public Code
AnyMOD	[100]	Optimization	✓	Cost		✓	✓		✓					✓
Backbone	[101]	Optimization	✓	Cost	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		SP	✓
Balmorel	[102]	Optimization	✓	Cost	✓		✓		✓					✓
Calliope	[103]	Optimization	✓	Cost		✓	✓	✓	✓					✓
CapacityExpansion	[104]	Optimization	✓	Cost	✓		✓		✓					✓
DIETER	[105]	Optimization	✓	Cost		✓	✓		✓					✓
Dispa-SET	[106]	Optimization	✓	Cost	✓		✓		✓					✓
ELMOD	[107]	Optimization	✓	Welfare	✓		✓		✓					✓
ELTRAMOD	[108]	Optimization	✓	Cost			✓		✓					✓
EMMA	[109]	Optimization	✓	Cost			✓		✓					✓
EOLES elec	[110]	Optimization	✓	Cost			✓		✓					✓
ESME	[111]	Optimization	✓	Cost		✓	✓	✓	✓				MC	✓
ESO-X	[112]	Optimization	✓	Cost			✓		✓					✓
EnergyRt	[113]	Optimization	✓	Cost			✓		✓					✓
EnergyScope	[85]	Optimization	✓	Cost, GHG		✓	✓	✓	✓					✓
Ficus	[114]	Optimization	✓	Cost			✓		✓					✓
FlexiGIS	[115]	Optimization	✓	Cost		✓	✓	✓						✓
GAMAMOD-DE	[116]	Optimization	✓	Cost			✓		✓					✓
GenX	[117]	Optimization	✓	Cost	✓		✓		✓				MGA	✓
GRIMSEL-FLEX	[10]	Optimization	✓	Cost		✓	✓		✓	✓				✓
HighRES	[118]	Optimization	✓	Cost		✓	✓		✓					✓
MARKAL	[119]	Optimization	✓	Cost		✓	✓	✓	✓				MC, SP	✓
METIS	[120]	Optimization	✓	Cost	✓	✓	✓		✓				MC	✓
Medea	[121]	Optimization	✓	Cost			✓		✓					✓
Oemof	[122]	Optimization	✓	Cost		✓	✓	✓	✓					✓
OPERA	[123]	Optimization	✓	Cost	✓		✓		✓					✓
OSeMOSYS	[124]	Optimization	✓	Cost		✓	✓	✓	✓					✓
OnSSET	[125]	Optimization	✓	Cost	✓		✓		✓					✓
PLEXOS	[126]	Optimization	✓	Cost			✓		✓				MC	✓
POLES	[127]	Optimization	✓	Cost			✓		✓					✓
POMATO	[128]	Optimization	✓	Cost	✓	✓	✓							✓
PRIMES	[129]	Optimization	✓	Cost	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓
PyPSA	[130]	Optimization	✓	Cost	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			MGA	✓
REMix	[131]	Optimization	✓	Cost	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓
REopt	[132]	Optimization	✓	Cost		✓	✓		✓					✓
SELMOD	[133]	Optimization	✓	Cost	✓		✓		✓					✓
Switch	[134]	Optimization	✓	Cost	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓
TIMES	[135]	Optimization	✓	Cost, Welfare		✓	✓		✓				SP	✓
Temoa	[136]	Optimization	✓	Cost		✓	✓	✓	✓				MGA, MC, SP	✓
TransiEnt	[137]	Simulation	✓	Cost	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓
URBS	[138]	Optimization	✓	Cost	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓
Genesys	[29]	Optimization and Simulation		Cost			✓		✓					✓
OpenTUMFlex	[90]	Optimization and Simulation	✓	Cost		✓	✓	✓			✓			✓
PowNet	[139]	Optimization and Simulation	✓	Cost	✓		✓			✓				✓
Renpass	[140]	Optimization and Simulation		Cost			✓			✓				✓
SimSEE	[141]	Optimization and Simulation		Cost			✓			✓				✓
MEDEAS	[87]	Other				✓	✓	✓		✓			MC	✓
MultiMod	[88]	Other		Welfare	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓
NEMS	[86]	Other	✓	Cost	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
Breakthrough Energy Model	[142]	Simulation			✓		✓		✓					✓
CAPOW	[93]	Simulation	✓	Cost	✓		✓				✓		✓	✓
CESAR-P	[94]	Simulation					✓			✓	✓			✓
DESSTinEE	[95]	Simulation	✓	Cost	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓
Demod	[96]	Simulation				✓	✓			✓	✓		MC	✓
EMLab-Generation	[143]	Simulation		Cost		✓	✓		✓				MC	✓
EnergyPLAN	[144]	Simulation		Cost	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓
Energy Transition Model	[145]	Simulation					✓							✓
GridCal	[98]	Simulation			✓		✓			✓				✓
LoadProfileGenerator	[146]	Simulation				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
Pandapower	[97]	Simulation			✓		✓			✓				✓
Pvlib	[147]	Simulation				✓	✓			✓	✓			✓
PyLESA	[148]	Simulation		Cost	✓		✓	✓		✓			PA	✓
SAM	[149]	Simulation					✓			✓	✓			✓
SciGRID power	[99]	Simulation			✓		✓			✓				✓
SimSES	[150]	Simulation					✓			✓				✓
AMIRIS	[91]	Simulation and Agent-based					✓		✓			✓		✓
ASAM	[151]	Simulation and Agent-based			✓		✓					✓		✓
EMIS-AS	[89]	Simulation and Agent-based	✓	Welfare	✓		✓					✓	✓	✓
Lemlab	[152]	Simulation and Agent-based	✓	Welfare			✓					✓		✓
MOCES	[153]	Simulation and Agent-based		Cost			✓			✓		✓		✓

where

- \vec{X} is the set of decision variables,
- C_i is the i -th cost,
- g is some linear inequality constraint,
- p is some arbitrary parameter.

The exact formulation of Equation 2.1 may vary slightly across models, but the objective for most economic dispatch models is to minimize total cost. The near universality of a cost-based objective function comes from the concept of *social welfare maximization*. This concept is illustrated in Figure 2.4.



Figure 2.4: Demonstration of “social welfare maximization.” Plot a) shows the total surplus when the price is at equilibrium. Plot b) shows the total surplus when the price is artificially depressed.

In microeconomics, social welfare is identical to the sum of consumer and producer surplus. Therefore social welfare is maximized when the sum of these two quantities is maximized. Figure 2.4 shows this case on the left panel. However, suppose an economic policy capped the price of some product at a price lower than the equilibrium price. In that case, the consumer surplus expands, and the producer surplus contracts, as shown in the right panel of Figure 2.4. Nobody receives the “lost surplus” because suppliers do not produce more despite unmet demand for the product because the price is capped. Typically, modeling tools consolidate the demand curve to a single value. In this case, social welfare maximization is approximated by minimizing the total cost of energy [143]. This simplification is valid because demand for energy is highly inelastic [112], [155]–[157]. Figure 2.5 shows the impact of highly inelastic demand.

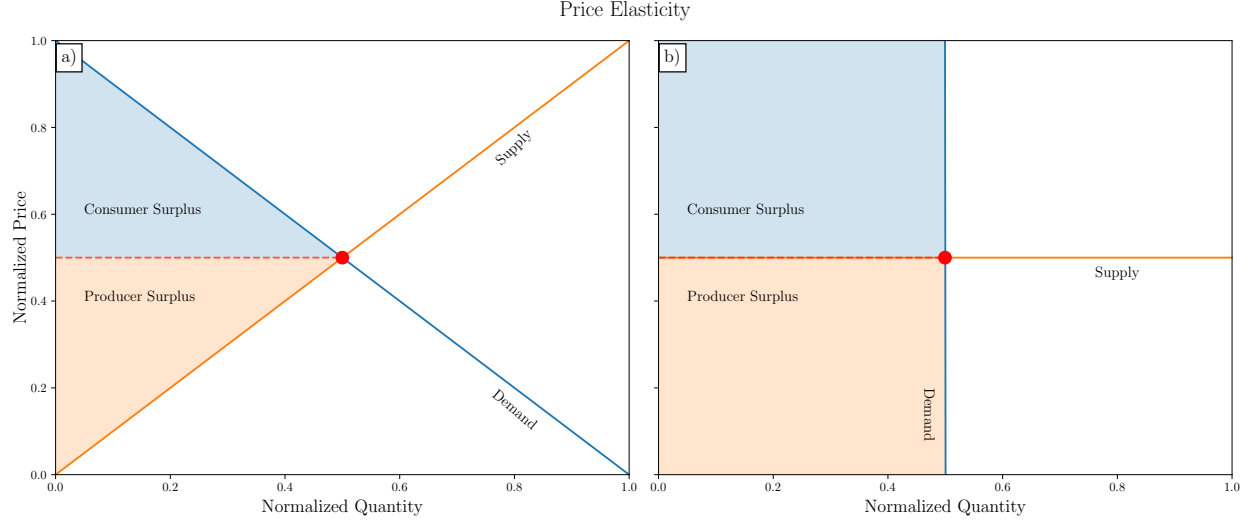


Figure 2.5: Demonstration of “price elasticity.” Plot a) shows a typical supply-demand curve where changes in price lead to proportional changes in demand. Plot b) shows an inelastic demand where consumption does not change proportionally with price.

For an elastic good supply and demand are in proportion with each other. An increase in the supply leads to a proportional increase in demand via a reduced price, eventually returning to an equilibrium price (shown in Figure 2.5a). However, as Figure 2.5b demonstrates, an inelastic demand does not respond proportionally to changes in price, such that consumers become “price-takers,” paying the price set by producers. Importantly, in the latter case consumer surplus is infinite and minimizing the energy cost through policy mechanisms does not create a lost surplus as shown in Figure 2.4b. Since electricity demand is highly inelastic, economic dispatch models minimize the cost of generating electricity. Although optimizing welfare, rather than the total cost, is useful for disaggregating multiple demands for the same commodity [107], this thesis adopts the former, simplified, approach to economic dispatch.

2.4.2 Accounting for Uncertainty

Due to the complexity of our energy system, handling uncertainty is one of the most important features for ESOMs [83], [84]. There are broadly two types of uncertainties: parametric and structural. The former refers to uncertainty around the value of some empirical quantity (e.g. price of fuel or the discount rate). In many cases, these quantities are better represented by *distributions* which may be sampled using formal methods like Monte Carlo (MC) or parametric analysis (PA) [84], [158]. Deterministic codes such as TEMOA, TIMES, or ESME use these techniques to generate many model runs. Another method for handling parametric uncertainty is stochastic programming (SP), where parameters are replaced with non-linear risk functions [84], [159]. Although parametric uncertainty is important the analysis of uncertain values is not a focus of this thesis.

Structural uncertainty relates to *unmodeled objectives* [83], [84], [160]. There are few formal methods to address structural uncertainty due to its qualitative nature. The most common approach to handling this type of uncertainty is using Modeling-to-Generate-Alternatives (MGA) to probe the near-optimal decision space [40], [83], [117], [158], [161]. DeCarolis wrote, “[p]olicy-makers often have strong concerns outside the scope of most models (e.g., political feasibility, permitting and regulation, and timing of action), which implies that

feasible, sub-optimal solutions may be preferable for reasons that are difficult to quantify in energy economy optimization models” [83]. Therefore, an “optimal solution” may lie in the model’s inferior space [83]. Section 3.5.1 details the implementation of MGA. However, this approach still requires an objective function, and the sub-optimal space is still within some tolerance of the optimal value of the defined optimization space. Further, the solutions generated by MGA still admit bias from policy-makers and does not require users to consider the equity implications of these alternative solutions.

Another strategy to handle structural uncertainty is optimizing multiple objectives simultaneously. However, some researchers dismissed this approach for the following reasons [83]:

1. structural uncertainty will always exist, regardless of the number of modeled objectives;
2. traditional MOO enables the exploration of a set of non-dominated solutions (i.e., the Pareto-front), but not the near-optimal space;
3. analyzing tradeoffs for problems with many objectives is tedious.

These critiques may explain the distinct lack of frameworks that apply MOO for energy system problems. However, there are important benefits to MOO (primarily the opportunity to analyze tradeoffs), and the lack of an energy system *framework* to apply this technique is one of the gaps this thesis fulfills.

2.5 Multi-objective optimization

A multi-objective problem may be formulated as

$$\min\{F_1(x), F_2(x), \dots, F_i(x)\}, \quad (2.2)$$

subject to:

$$\begin{aligned} g(x, p) &\leq 0. \\ x &\in \vec{X} \end{aligned}$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} F_i &\text{ is an arbitrary objective function,} \\ g &\text{ is a constraint,} \\ p &\text{ is an arbitrary parameter of } g, \\ \vec{X} &\text{ is the set of decision variables.} \end{aligned} \quad (2.3)$$

Where Equation 2.1 had a single objective $F(x)$ to minimize, Equation 2.2 has a *set* of objectives, $\{F_i(x)\}$. Rather than identifying a global minimum point, the solution to Equation 2.2 is a *set* of non-dominated points called a Pareto-front. Each point on this frontier cannot improve one objective without making another objective worse, hence “non-dominated.” Generally, for competing objectives, there will be an infeasible space that is not attainable by the given combination of objectives. For a minimization problem, the space above the Pareto-front is the sub-optimal feasible space. This is the space that MGA promises to search for a

corresponding single-objective problem. Figure 2.6 illustrates a set of solutions along a Pareto-front for an example problem from Multi-Objective Optimization in Python ([Pymoo](#)) [162], [163].

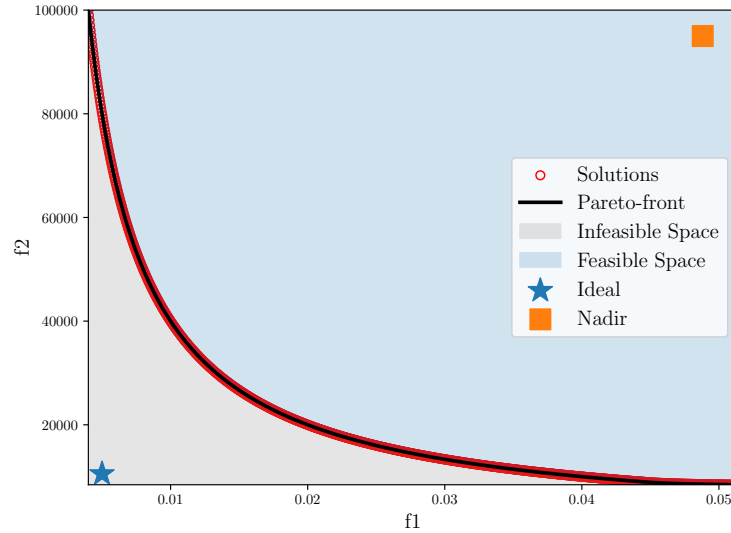


Figure 2.6: An example *convex* Pareto-front from [Pymoo](#) [162], [163].

There are broadly two classes of MOO algorithms for solving Equation 2.2, *scalarization* and *population-based* [164], [165]. Scalarization approaches map the multi-objective problem onto a set of single-objective problems using variation of parameters. In the weighted-sum (WS) algorithm, the objectives are assigned weights, w_i , and the aggregated objective becomes

$$\min J(x) = \sum_i w_i F_i(x) \quad (2.4)$$

subject to:

$$\begin{aligned} g(x, p) &\leq 0 \\ x &\in \vec{X} \end{aligned}$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} F_i &\text{ is an arbitrary objective function,} \\ w_i &\text{ is the weight for objective function } F_i \quad J \text{ is the aggregated objective,} \\ g &\text{ is a constraint,} \\ p &\text{ is an arbitrary parameter of } g, \\ \vec{X} &\text{ is the set of decision variables.} \end{aligned} \quad (2.5)$$

These weights are varied in order to sample points along the Pareto-front.

Alternatively, the ϵ -constraint (EC) algorithm for scalarization chooses one objective from $\{F_n\}$ to solve and converts the others into constraints, whose bounds are denoted by ϵ . These bounds are varied until the

desired number of points on the Pareto-front is reached [164], [165]. This problem can be written as

$$\min F_j(x), \quad (2.6)$$

subject to:

$$\begin{aligned} F_2(x) - \epsilon_j &\leq 0 \\ \vdots \\ F_i(x) - \epsilon_j &\leq 0 \\ g(x, p) &\leq 0, \\ x &\in \vec{X}. \end{aligned}$$

The sub-problem, Equation 2.6, must be repeated for each $F_j(x)$ and corresponding ϵ_j in $\{F_n\}$.

Scalarization is attractive due to its simplicity. However, this approach is sensitive to problem convexity. **WS** will never be able to sample points in a concave region of the Pareto-front, and **EC** will have poorly spaced samples along a concave region. Further, these algorithms can only sample points on the frontier, not the sub-optimal feasible space. Thus supporting the critique of using **MOO** for handling structural uncertainty [83].

Fortunately, population-based algorithms, also called *genetic algorithm (GA)* or *evolutionary algorithms*, resolve some of these issues by solving Equation 2.2 directly. GAs are based on the principle of natural selection. In a **GA**, such as Non-Dominated Sorting Genetic Algorithm-II (**NSGA-II**), an initial population is randomly generated using the problem’s decision variables, the ‘fitness’ of this population (i.e., performance on each objective) is calculated, then a new population is selected from the ‘fittest’ (most optimal) individuals. This process continues until a convergence criterion is reached. The advantages of this method are

1. a guaranteed solution, regardless of convexity,
2. no prior knowledge is required to initialize the problem, as with **EC**,
3. greater diversity of solutions (i.e., spacing of points along the Pareto-front),
4. the sub-optimal space is sampled through the iterative process (though not uniformly).

Specifically, point four address one of the primary criticisms of using **MOO** to reduce structural uncertainty by obtaining points in the inferior region [166]–[168]. An additional advantage of GAs is the ability to incorporate more physics and simulations into the optimization procedure than **LP**, **MILP**, or scalarization allow [166] because **MOOs** can incorporate data from external models.

Previous work handled structural uncertainty using **MGA** which samples unique solutions from the sub-optimal space in a neighborhood around the global minimum for a single objective [83]. Researchers argue that this approach is valid because there will always be structural uncertainty and sampling the inferior region may offer insight for decision-makers. **While structural uncertainty may persist it is not irreducible.** By increasing the number of modeled objectives **MOO** reduces structural uncertainty. Further, ideas from **MGA** can be applied to **MOO** by efficiently sampling the near-optimal space [166]–[169]. The goal of **MGA** is to find a *reduced* set of maximally different alternatives to provide insight, where analyzing the full set of alternatives

would be overwhelming [83], [169]. Figure 2.7 shows the near-optimal space around the Pareto-front from Figure 2.6.

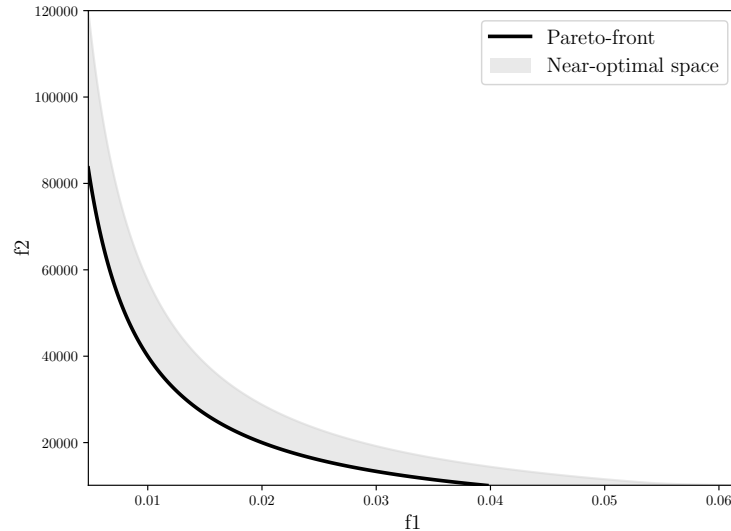


Figure 2.7: The near-optimal space around the Pareto-front.

For these reasons, this thesis explores energy systems optimization and the handling of structural uncertainty through MOO and GAs. Section 3.3 reviews the details of the GA used in this thesis.

2.5.1 Energy System Applications

It is well understood that engineering and policy problems, which include energy systems optimization, often require satisfying multiple antagonistic objectives [166]–[168], [170]. However, the application of MOO to energy systems in the literature is limited. Table 2.3 summarizes the current body of work. As before, the “public code” column only indicates if the source code is accessible. Additionally, the “sector” columns only indicate the presence of a feature, not the relative maturity or sophistication of the modeling. There are six “objective columns,” indicating which objectives are considered the in the model or study. A “technology” objective might optimize a specific technology or set of technologies. For example, maximizing the percentage of renewable energy in a system. The “reliability” metric varies among studies, but generally refers to the potential for load loss. For all of the studies in Table 2.3, the “environmental” objective refers to GHG or “global warming potential” [171]. Although it could refer to other environmental impacts such as land use, water use, or thermal pollution.

Most of the studies in Table 2.3 used NSGA-II to identify the Pareto-front with a few using scalarization. Consistent with the trend shown in Table 2.2, every study in Table 2.3 uses some economic or “cost” metric as one of the objectives. Also consistent, is that none of these studies identified a metric to optimize over social concerns. Laha et al. [173] used fatalities per GWh and employment per GWh as criteria for social sustainability, but these were not objectives in their model, rather they were calculated *ex post facto* with scenario analysis. Riou et al. [172] investigated the tradeoffs among renewable share, reliability, and total cost. Their findings were consistent with single objective scenario analysis [48], that greater renewable penetration leads to greater costs and less reliable energy with a 100% renewable energy system being the least reliable or incurring the greatest costs [172].

Table 2.3: MOO used with energy systems.

Citation	Model	Algorithm	Objectives						Sector			
			Economic	Social	Environment	Reliability	Technology	User-defined	Heat	Electricity	Transport	Public Code
[172]	Oemof-moea	NSGA-II	✓			✓	✓			✓		
[173]		NSGA-II	✓				✓			✓		
[174]		NSGA-II	✓						✓	✓		
[175]		NSGA-II	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
[176]		GAToolbox	✓			✓				✓		
[177]	SIREN	NSGA-II	✓		✓				✓	✓		
[178]		WS	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	
[63]		NSGA-II	✓		✓				✓	✓		
[179]		NSGA-II	✓		✓				✓	✓		
[180]		WS	✓		✓	✓				✓		✓
[171]		EC	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓		
[181]		NSGA-II	✓			✓				✓		
[182]		NSGA-II	✓			✓				✓		
[183]		NSGA-II	✓		✓				✓	✓		
[184]		EC	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	
[185]		NSGA-II	✓		✓					✓		

Although previous work demonstrated the applicability of MOO to energy systems optimization, there are significant limitations.

- There are at most three modeled objectives [171], [172], [184].
- Where traditional ESOMs have many mature frameworks (as shown in Table 2.2, there are no frameworks that use MOO. Simultaneously, none of the studies in Table 2.3 developed a framework. Prina et al. developed a bespoke and unlicensed model called “Oemof-moea,” however this does not constitute a framework.
- None of the studies in Table 2.3 allow arbitrary user-defined objectives.
- None of the studies incorporate social metrics into the modeled objectives.

This thesis develops, Open source multi-objective energy system framework (**Osier**), a novel energy systems framework using MOO that fills these gaps by using GAs that allows for efficient modeling of many objectives, enabling user-defined objectives, providing the option to make metrics of interest either objectives or constraints, and incorporating ideas from MGA to provide insight from the sub-optimal objective space.

The next section outlines attempts to incorporate social justice concerns with energy system models.

2.6 Modeling and Quantifying Energy Justice

The dearth of studies that incorporate energy justice into ESOMs highlights the challenge of combining these techniques. The literature on energy justice and socio-technical transitions tend to derogate modeling efforts as cold and calculating [69], [186], and most models do not account for energy justice in either equations or analysis. However, there have been some notable attempts to bridge this gap. The following studies by Patrizio et al. (2020) [53] and Neumann & Brown (2021) [40] explicitly use ESOMs in their analyses. Although the works by Chapman et al. (2018) [187] and Mayfield et al. (2019) [188] do not use ESOMs as described in Section 2.4, these contributions quantify some features of their respective energy systems and how they relate to notions of energy justice and equity.

Patrizio et al. (2020) conducted a technology-agnostic ‘social equity’ scenario that maximized the gross value added (GVA) of several countries’ energy systems rather than minimizing the total cost [53]. GVA is also distinct from social welfare because it measures contributions to gross domestic product (GDP)

from individual producers rather than maximizing surplus. This metric enables sector-specific analysis of the impacts of energy infrastructure on employment and sales. Equity, in this context, is identical to socioeconomic development as measured by [GDP](#). Using this definition of equity, the researchers looked at a socio-technical transition for three countries: Spain, the United Kingdom, and Poland. They found that a 100% renewable energy system would reduce labor compensation by 50-60% in the UK and Poland but could increase benefits in Spain. They argue this is due to the outsourcing of manufacturing and mining jobs in the former cases, while Spain has enough domestic resources to accommodate the transition. The researchers did not analyze possible shifts in power dynamics related to the energy systems, but they did identify that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to achieving net-zero carbon emissions.

Neumann & Brown (2021) performed a detailed analysis of the European energy system considering the expansion of transmission networks and energy producers for a 100% renewable energy system under cost minimization [\[40\]](#). They also used a novel formulation of [MGA](#) to identify the boundaries of the feasible space for each technology within different levels of tolerance. This study uses Lorenz curves and Gini coefficients to measure the uniformity of the distribution of energy production and consumption. In other words, the most equitable distribution of energy resources would accord with energy consumption [\[40\]](#). The researchers conclude that wind power and greater transmission capacity are associated with less regional equity, while solar power and storage technologies lead to a more even distribution of the power supply. This is useful for measuring the distribution of energy benefits from the energy system but does not consider the distribution of costs nor consider regional preferences.

Chapman et al. (2018) looked at the energy justice implications of transitioning coal plants to renewable energy projects for the nearby communities [\[187\]](#). They measure distributional justice with “relative equity” and “policy burden.” Relative equity accounts for factors such as [GHG](#) reduction, employment, electricity cost, and health impacts. Policy burden is a weighted value according to the income level of each community. These two quantities were plotted together to identify a retirement schedule that maximizes equity outcomes and ensures that burdens are borne by the most capable communities [\[187\]](#). Additionally, the researchers argue that by using equity measures to inform policy choices, those policy decisions are more procedurally just. However, this neglects meaningful participation and may or may not address decision-making transparency [\[69\]](#). Further, this study does not consider how replacing dispatchable suppliers with [VRE](#) will affect the availability and affordability of electricity [\[69\]](#). This latter challenge could be addressed by incorporating methods from the [ESOM](#) literature. The former issue of decision-making transparency is one of the motivations for this thesis.

Mayfield et al. (2019) quantified the social equity implications for the expansion of natural gas infrastructure in Appalachia using spatial and temporal metrics such as job-years generated by greater gas development, premature deaths caused by air pollution, changes in poverty and income, and the distribution of these various benefits along regional, racial, and economic lines. Additionally, they identified some of the intergenerational equity impacts of climate change and expanded gas infrastructure.

2.6.1 Enabling Procedural Justice Through Energy Models

Traditionally, ESOMs are used to inform policy-makers [\[189\]](#) in order to infuse policy choices with an appearance of objectivity. Indeed, some of the studies reviewed in the previous section argue that this infusion will lead to greater procedural and recognition justice outcomes as long as the policies maximize some measure of energy justice [\[187\]](#), [\[190\]](#). However, these types of detailed analyses may also be used to dismiss concerns or opposition from the public due to insufficient ‘technical expertise’ [\[191\]](#). Further,

without meaningful participation from the affected public, this approach is further entrenches procedural injustices. To credit the energy modeling community, there is significant awareness of the importance of transparency and repeatability in the space [122], [158], [192]–[194]. Yet these two goals are challenged by the computational resources required to run the more complex and detailed models, as well as the learning curve necessary to understand and modify the model inputs themselves. There has been some effort to reduce this learning curve and make modeling itself more accessible. Frameworks such as METIS, EnergyRT, and Python for Generating Energy Systems ([PyGenesys](#)) all emphasize reproducibility, user-friendliness, and a shallower learning curve [113], [120], [195]. The creators of METIS state their goal is to “close the gap between modelers and policy-makers, enabling policy-makers to become modelers” [120]. However, these frameworks do not offer computational resources to run their models. The Tools for Energy Model Optimization and Analysis ([Temoa](#)) project offers limited cloud computing capabilities, free of charge [196]. However, the responsibility for creating an input file still falls to the user, which can be overwhelming even for experienced modelers. Finally, it’s not clear that perfectly accessible and transparent modeling tools will translate to more procedurally just policy-making. The next section outlines one method used to address this challenge.

2.6.2 Participatory value evaluation

Even if the public could use modeling tools, their testimony may still be dismissed due to a ‘lack of expertise.’ However, the public has preferences that should be incorporated into decision-making. Additionally, community members are frequently able to assess trade-offs when presented with them. Participatory value evaluation ([PVE](#)) is one method for translating community preferences into just policy outcomes. Researchers in the Netherlands developed this method to enhance democratic participation and infuse policies with genuine feedback from constituents [197]. They observed that a common method of assessing social impacts is willingness to pay ([WTP](#)), which is the maximum price an individual is willing to pay for a good or service, yet individual purchasing habits do not necessarily reflect their views on public policy due to the relative salience of moral considerations [197]. With [PVE](#), participants can allocate a specific amount of the public budget for certain policies, including levying or reducing taxes for greater or lesser government spending [197]. Researchers applied [PVE](#) in three different settings, mobility and transportation [198], flood risk projects (i.e., a climate hazard *infrastructure* response) [199], and with a phaseout of natural gas [200]. Importantly, the studies also measured the impact of these interventions and found that [PVE](#) enables participation from people that do not typically participate (recognition), the results were useful for decision-making and participation was meaningful for the majority of subjects [200]. Although previous applications of [PVE](#) focused on economic policy levers, this approach offers a promising pathway toward identifying equitable and just energy mixes for the future.

In summary, climate change is a multi-dimensional existential threat to society. Transitioning to a zero-carbon economy by decarbonizing our energy systems may prevent the worst outcomes of climate change. However, energy systems do not only transport electrons and gas but also mediate socio-political power. Therefore this transition must be done equitably in order to avoid entrenching further injustices. The existing energy system modeling tools and literature routinely ignore the social dimensions of these systems and forego true trade-off analysis. Additionally, it’s unclear whether improving these modeling practices will correspond to just energy policy outcomes. This thesis attempts to bridge the gap between energy system modeling and energy justice by developing a novel framework that allows multiple, and perhaps non-economic, objectives and is designed for transparency and usability by non-modelers to inform energy policy decisions. A framework such as the one developed in this thesis may be used in conjunction with a policy process like

PVE to fully enclose the triumvirate of energy justice tenets: distribution, procedure, and recognition.

Chapter 3

Methods and Data

This chapter is split into two broad sections, which describe the technical and qualitative methods used in this thesis. The first section covers the technical details of [Osier](#), the novel framework developed by this thesis, and discusses the capacity expansion model [Temoa](#) used as a benchmark for [Osier](#). Second, the qualitative section discusses the interview questions and the analysis methods.

3.1 Open source multi-objective energy system framework

Open source multi-objective energy system framework ([Osier](#)) is a novel open-source energy system modeling framework for multi-objective optimization. There are currently no ESOMs that enable MOO and [Osier](#) fills that gap. Figure 3.1 illustrates the flow of data into and within [Osier](#).

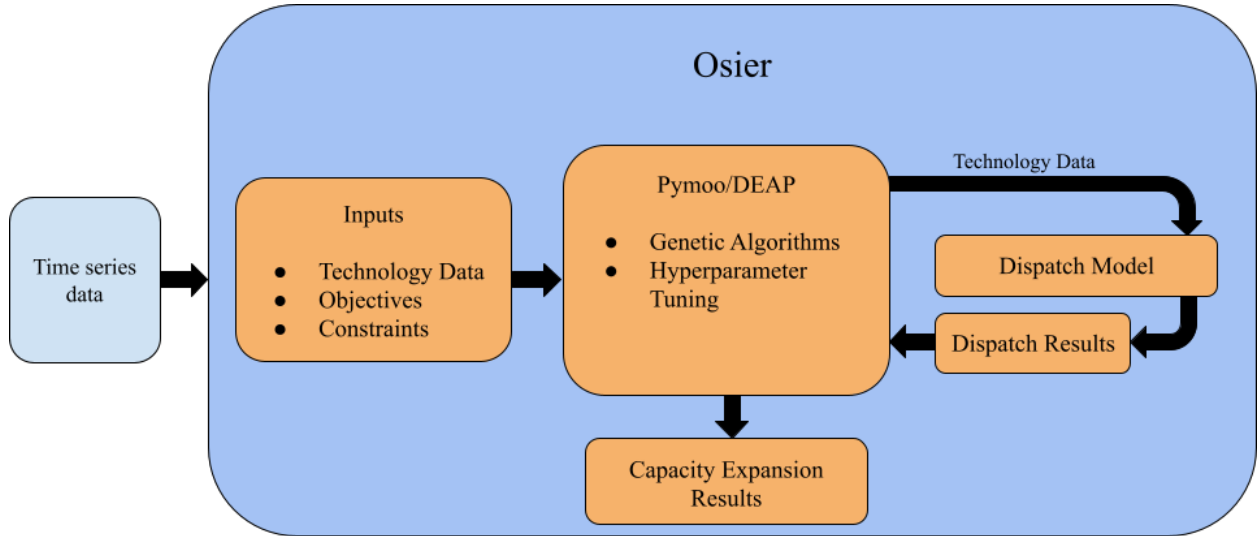


Figure 3.1: The flow of data into and within [Osier](#)

Technology data, objectives, constraints, and a dispatch model are all features within [Osier](#), while [Pymoo](#) drives the optimization of these objectives. The dispatch model is independently executable for inspecting specific test cases and mapping solutions from other solvers onto [Osier](#)'s objective space. The next section elaborates on the dispatch model's formulation.

3.2 Economic Dispatch

The economic dispatch model minimizes the generation cost subject to physical constraints but does not optimize capacity investments. The complete set of equations for the model is detailed below.

Minimize:

$$\left(\sum_t^T \sum_g^G \left[C_{g,t}^{fuel} + C_{g,t}^{vom} \right] x_{g,t} \right) + \left(\sum_t^T \sum_g^S x_{g,t} c_{g,t} \pi \right) \quad (3.1)$$

such that,

1. The generation meets demand, less the amount of energy stored or curtailed, within a user-specified tolerance (undersupply and oversupply),

$$\left[\sum_g^G x_{g,t} - \sum_g^S c_{g,t} \right] \geq (1 - \text{undersupply}) D_t \quad \forall \quad t \in T, S, \quad (3.2)$$

$$\left[\sum_g^G x_{g,t} - \sum_g^S c_{g,t} \right] \leq (1 + \text{oversupply}) D_t \quad \forall \quad t \in T, S, \quad (3.3)$$

2. A generator's production, x_g does not exceed its capacity at any time, t

$$x_{g,t} \leq \mathbf{CAP}_g \Delta \tau \quad \forall \quad g, t \in G, T \quad (3.4)$$

3. A generator's ramping rate is never exceeded,

$$\frac{x_{r,t} - x_{r,t-1}}{\Delta \tau} = \Delta P_{r,t} \leq \rho_g^{up} \mathbf{CAP}_g \Delta \tau \quad \forall \quad r, t \in R, T, \quad (3.5)$$

$$\frac{x_{r,t} - x_{r,t-1}}{\Delta \tau} = \Delta P_{r,t} \leq -\rho_g^{down} \mathbf{CAP}_g \Delta \tau \quad \forall \quad r, t \in R, T, \quad (3.6)$$

4. Storage capacity for each storage technology is never exceeded

$$\mathbf{SOC}_{s,t} \leq \mathbf{CAP}_s^S \quad \forall \quad s, t \in S, T, \quad (3.7)$$

5. Storage discharge cannot exceed stored energy.

$$x_{s,t} \leq \mathbf{SOC}_{s,t} \quad \forall \quad s, t \in S, T, \quad (3.8)$$

6. Storage charge rate cannot exceed unit capacity

$$c_{s,t} \leq \mathbf{CAP}_s \Delta \tau \quad \forall \quad s, t \in S, T. \quad (3.9)$$

Where,

- G = the set of all generating technologies,
- R = the set of all ramping technologies, $R \subset G$,
- S = the set of all storage technologies, $S \subset G$,
- T = the set of all time periods in the model,
- D_t = the demand at each time period, t ,
- \mathbf{CAP}_g = the capacity of the g -th technology $[MW]$,
- \mathbf{CAP}_g^S = the storage capacity of the g -th technology $[MWh]$,
- $\mathbf{SOC}_{s,t}$ = the state of charge of the g -th technology at time t $[MWh]$,
- $\Delta\tau = t_{i+1} - t_i \quad \forall \quad t_i \in T \quad [h]$,
- $x_{g,t}$ = the energy produced by generator, g , at time, t $[MWh]$,
- $c_{s,t}$ = the energy stored by storage technology, s , at time, t $[MWh]$,
- ρ_g = the up/down ramp rate for technology, g $[-]$,
- π = A small penalty for simultaneous charging and discharging.

The second term in the objective function, Equation 3.1, represents a minor penalty to prevent the unphysical behavior of simultaneous charging and discharging from storage technologies. I used this approach because constraining this behavior requires a binary variable that makes the problem non-convex and therefore requires a more sophisticated solver. A small but sufficiently large π will always nullify the penalty term. This dispatch model reflects the minimum physical constraints for an energy system without considering fine-scale operational details such as frequency control. Equation 3.1 assumes that the retail cost for generating electricity is identical to the marginal cost of producing electricity.

3.3 Genetic Algorithms

Rather than rely on LP to model future capacity requirements, in this thesis, GAs assume the role of investment optimizer. GAs share a fundamental algorithmic structure, which is [162]

1. **Initialize** a starting population of N_p individuals, where each individual has a set of “genes” that are randomly chosen from the bounds of the decision variables.
2. Each individual in the population is **evaluated** for “fitness.”
3. The **fittest**, N_f individuals “survive” and persist in the next generation.
4. A “selection” operator **chooses** among the surviving individuals to mate.
5. The parents are **combined** using a “crossover” operator, thereby filling the remaining $N_p - N_f$ individuals for the next generation.
6. The offspring are finally **mutated** with some probability, μ , to improve genetic diversity.

Figure 3.2 illustrates the flow of these steps applied to an energy systems model.

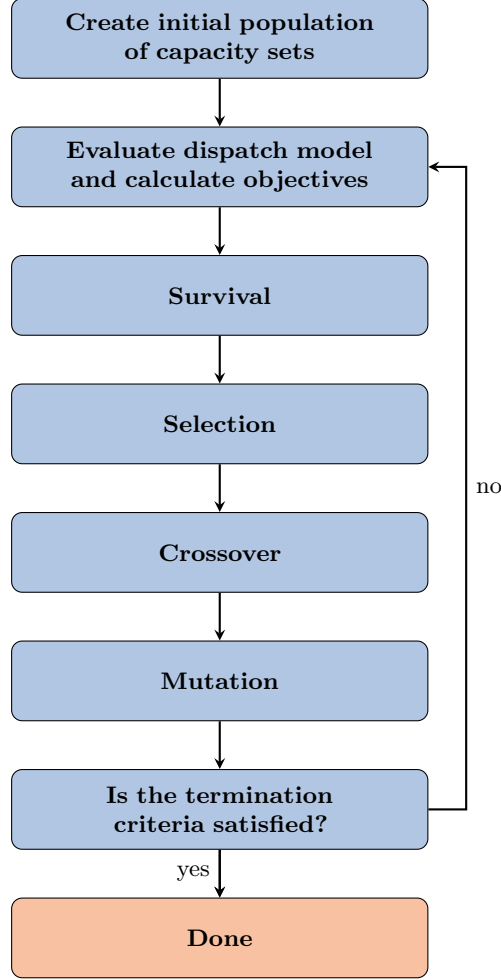


Figure 3.2: The basic flow of the GA used in this thesis.

3.3.1 Specific genetic algorithms

The variety of GAs comes from different types of operators being applied to the selection, crossover, and mutation steps. Section 2.5 showed that [NSGA-II](#) is a popular genetic algorithm choice. However, this algorithm performs poorly with greater than three objectives [201], [202]. In this thesis, I use a more modern algorithm, Unified Non-Dominated Sorting Genetic Algorithm ([UNSGA-III](#)). [UNSGA-III](#) builds on its predecessors [NSGA-II](#) and Non-Dominated Sorting Genetic Algorithm-III ([NSGA-III](#)) by unifying efficient solutions of mono-, multi-, and many-objective problems in a single algorithm.

[NSGA-II](#) improves on the basic GA by introducing a more sophisticated mating and selection algorithms. Instead of random selection, the individuals are sorted by rank (i.e. fitness) and crowding distance in binary tournament mating selection. The crowding distance is simply the Manhattan distance between individuals. A greater crowding distance is desirable to preserve diversity and since the extreme points are maximally diverse they should always persist and are therefore assigned a crowding distance of infinity [201].

The successor to [NSGA-II](#), [NSGA-III](#), enhances the many-objective capabilities of the former by introducing reference directions. Reference directions are used for initialization and the survival steps. In addition to fitness, individuals are chosen based on their proximity to a reference line, thus ensuring population diversity

which greatly important for many-objective problems. Since diversity is handled by reference directions, individuals are selected randomly for mating. References directions are rays passing through uniformly spaced points on the unit simplex [202], [203]. In this thesis, I use the Riesz s- Energy method described by Blank et al. to calculate these points for a problem with an arbitrary number of objectives [203]. Figure 3.3 illustrates a set of initialized reference directions.

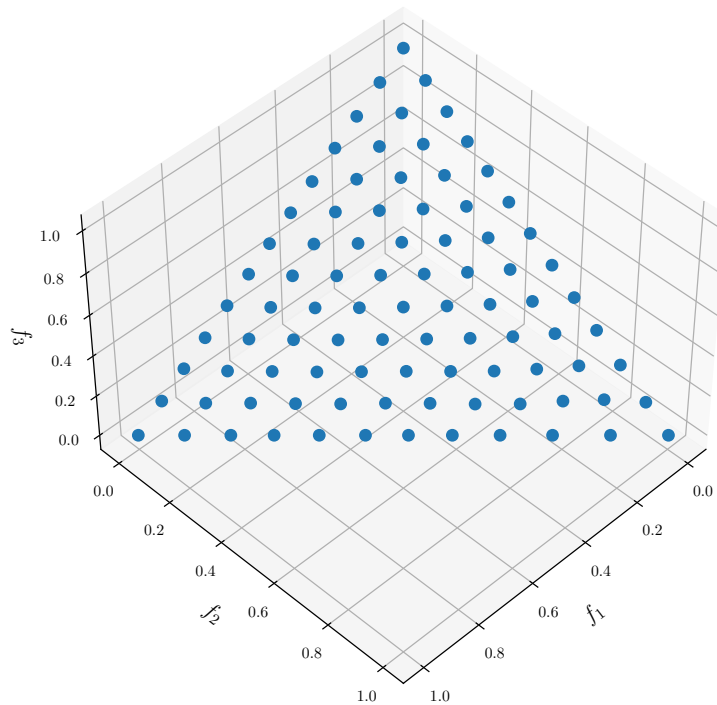


Figure 3.3: A set of reference directions for a three-objective problem.

[NSGA-II](#) is useful for mono- and multi-objective functions while [NSGA-III](#) is better for many-objective problems. [UNSGA-III](#) can handle any number of objectives by introducing the binary tournament from [NSGA-II](#) and reducing to the most efficient algorithm for the problem at hand [202]. Chapter 4 demonstrates these three algorithms in

3.3.2 Hyperparameter Tuning

Similar to other machine learning models, GAs have several hyperparameters that must be tuned for optimal behavior. These hyperparameters include probabilities for mutation, crossover, and selection, as well as the number of parents, number of offspring, and population size. Determining ideal hyperparameters is often performed using either a grid search or random sampling [204]. This thesis adopts the approach from Blank and Deb [162] using a genetic algorithm to identify the ideal hyperparameters. A problem is converted into a single objective problem using the desired algorithm, then a second genetic algorithm drives the problem where the decision variables are hyperparameters of the desired algorithm.

3.3.3 Convergence

There are several ways to stop a simulation in [Pymoo](#). A simulation may end after reaching

1. a specified end time (e.g., 100 minutes),
2. a specified number of evaluations or iterations (e.g., 500 individual evaluations or 20 generations),
3. a tolerance value in the design space,
4. a tolerance value in the objective space.

It is possible that criteria 3 and 4 will never be met; therefore, they are often combined with either of the first two criteria. The fourth convergence criterion is the most interesting due to the challenge of calculating an appropriate metric. This thesis uses the weakly Pareto-compliant algorithm inverted generational distance plus (IGD+) over the more common hypervolume calculation due to its reduced computational requirements [205].

3.3.4 Pymoo and DEAP

The ESOM framework developed in this thesis is built on top of Pymoo and Deep Evolutionary Algorithms in Python (DEAP). Pymoo is an open-source library for GAs developed by the creators of NSGA-II and UNSGA-III [162]. This package implements several GAs out-of-the-box and offers a set of visualization tools and hyperparameter tuning. DEAP is another open-source library offering a toolkit for constructing GAs and therefore has fewer prepackaged algorithms than Pymoo. There are robust reasons to use both libraries, so Osier facilitates both.

3.4 Objectives

There are many possible objectives to optimize. This section summarizes a few of them and how they may be calculated in Osier. Due to Pymoo's structure, all objectives are minimized. Therefore, if users wish to maximize some quantity, it must be negated first.

3.4.1 Per-unit-capacity

Some quantities of interest depend on the *capacity* of each technology. For example, land use of different energy producers is often reported as a power density MW/km². A general power density may be MW/unit. The objective function for these quantities reads

$$\mathcal{K} = \sum_g^G \mathbf{CAP}_g \kappa_g, \quad (3.10)$$

Where

$$\kappa = \text{the power density of the } g\text{-th technology} \quad \left[\frac{-}{MW} \right]. \quad (3.11)$$

Table 3.1 lists some example objectives could be minimized or maximized.

Table 3.1: Example objectives on a per-unit-capacity basis.

Quantity	Units (per MW)
Land Use	[km ²]
Employment	[jobs]
Capital Cost	[\$]
Fixed O&M Cost	[\$ / year]

3.4.2 Per-unit-energy

Some quantities of interest depend on the *amount of energy produced* by each technology. For example, carbon emissions only occur when a coal or natural gas plant burns fuel. A general energy density may be in MWh/unit. The objective function for these quantities reads

$$\mathcal{E} = \sum_g^G \xi_g \sum_t^T x_{g,t}, \quad (3.12)$$

where

$$\xi_g = \text{the energy density of the } g\text{-th technology} \quad \left[\frac{-}{MWh} \right]. \quad (3.13)$$

Table 3.2: Example objectives on a per-unit-energy basis.

Quantity	Units (per MWh)
GHG Emissions	[kg]
Water Use	[L]
“Safety”	[deaths]
Fuel Cost	[\$]
Variable O&M Cost	[\$]

3.4.3 Reliability and Predictability

Reliability has many definitions in the literature and it also depends heavily on the dispatch method. A hierarchical flow, which dispatches energy based on a set of rules (as opposed to true cost minimization), may simply report the fraction of hours when electricity demand was not met by the model [172], [176], [181], [182]. In an **LP** or **MILP** problem, electricity demand must be satisfied at all times. Thus reliability may be translated into a cost by determining consumers’ **WTP** for electricity [206], [207]. However, this thesis relates system reliability to price volatility and net demand predictability. Since the price of electricity is determined by matching supply and demand, the price will spike when supply and demand are out of phase. For instance, geopolitics may cause the supply of natural gas to drop, increasing the spot price of electricity. Or, more commonly, the availability of solar and wind resources may fall unexpectedly, leading to a greater demand for backup energy. Both of those examples are difficult to predict; otherwise, fuel reserves could be deployed, avoiding the price shock. Thus, I propose that measuring the predictability and volatility of an energy system is an appropriate proxy for reliability. Additionally, minimal price volatility is considered an aspect of energy justice [69], [72].

In this thesis, I measure the predictability of hourly electricity prices and net demand using a measure from complexity science, weighted permutation entropy (**WPE**) [208]. Permutation entropy, the precursor to **WPE**, is essentially the Shannon entropy for particular sequences of values called ‘motifs’ [209]. **WPE** expands on this concept by weighting each instance of a motif by its variance [208], [210]. **WPE** is defined as

$$H_w(m) = - \sum_{\pi \in \Pi} P_w(\pi) \log_2(P_w(\pi)) \quad (3.14)$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} \pi &= \text{a particular motif,} \\ P_w &= \text{the probability of a given motif, } \pi, \\ &= \frac{\sum_{j \leq N} w(x_j^{(m, \tau)}) \cdot \delta(\phi(x_j^{(m, \tau)}), \pi_i)}{\sum_{j \leq N} w(x_j^{(m, \tau)})} \end{aligned} \quad (3.15)$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} w(x_j^{(m, \tau)}) &= \text{the weight of a particular vector} \\ &= \frac{1}{m} \sum_j^m (x_j^{(m, \tau)} - \bar{x})^2, \end{aligned} \quad (3.16)$$

$\phi(\cdot)$ = the ordinal pattern of a vector,

$\delta(\cdot)$ = Kronecker delta,

m = the embedding dimension,

τ = the time delay.

There are other reliability metrics in the literature, frequently employing some variation on the “spread” of data through standard deviation or mean squared error [211]–[213]. However, these metrics are unbounded and do not contain any information about the underlying dynamics that produce a certain distribution. Whereas **WPE** can indicate a theoretical ceiling on predictability [210]. Importantly, **WPE** works for systems where the underlying dynamics are unknown. The Hurst exponent is another measure of predictability, but it too has drawbacks, such as computational expense and a stationarity requirement [214], [215]. This thesis uses the **WPE** implementation I contributed to the open source package **PyEntropy** [216].

3.4.4 User-defined Objectives

A key feature of **Osier** is the ability for users to define their own objectives and make it relatively easy to do so. This feature is required because modelers cannot know *a priori* every objective that users might be interested in optimizing. While **Osier** ships with some standard objective functions, allowing users to create their own objectives makes every model bespoke. *Any quantitative metric may be used as an objective in Osier*. Every objective function has at least two arguments, the list of technologies used in the model and the

solved dispatch model. Users will never have to pass these arguments manually since **Osier** will automatically call the function during a simulation. One example of a user-defined objective might be technology readiness. This objective is independent from the energy produced and could be weighted by the capacity but is not a per-unit-capacity objective. The values of the readiness parameter must be passed to each **Technology** object, which can be accessed at run-time. Code listing 1 shows the basic approach to creating a new objective. Appendix ?? lists the default accessible attributes for the technology list and the solved dispatch model.

```

1
2 nuclear.readiness = 9
3 fusion.readiness = 3
4
5 technology_list = [nuclear, fusion]
6
7 def osier_objective(technology_list, solved_dispatch_model):
8     """
9         Calculate the capacity-weighted technology readiness
10        score for this energy mix.
11    """
12
13    total_capacity = np.array([t.capacity for t in technology_list]).sum()
14    objective_value =
15        np.array([t.readiness*t.capacity for t in
16                technology_list]).sum()
17
18    return objective_value / total_capacity

```

Listing 1: The fundamental way to create a novel objective in **Osier**.

Importantly, because all technologies in **Osier** are Python objects, users can add attributes at will. Such as the technology readiness level as shown in Code listing 1.

3.4.5 Constraints

Besides the physical constraints defined in Section 3.2, **Osier** does not have any default constraints. This is because each additional constraint corresponds to an additional assumption and will affect the trade-off analysis that makes **MOO** so powerful. However, there are some circumstances where the *optimal* solutions are still *infeasible*. For instance, if a community wants to determine the best energy mix according to their unique objectives, this community might not have the budget for even a least-cost solution because the capital requirements are too high. Therefore, they must constrain the capital cost for their modeling problem. Thus, **Osier** enables the following:

1. Users may define their own constraints.
2. Any objective function may be transformed into a constraint.

This feature makes **Osier** absolutely unique among ESOMs. Single-objective ESOMs can never account for unique situations such as the one suggested above, nor any other bespoke considerations. In the case above, the capital cost may constrain the problem while still minimizing the total cost. The solutions under these conditions will have a higher total cost but could be achievable in the near term due to meeting capital cost requirements.

3.5 Temoa and PyGenesys

This thesis uses the tools [Temoa](#) and [PyGenesys](#) to establish benchmark results for a typical [ESOM](#). [Temoa](#) is an open-source [ESOM](#) developed at North Carolina State University that uses [MILP](#) to develop capacity-expansion scenarios [217]. The key benefits of [Temoa](#) are its open-source code, open data, and built-in uncertainty analysis capabilities. These features address the need for greater transparency in [ESOM](#) modeling and robust assessment of future uncertainties [92], [136]. [PyGenesys](#) is another open-source code that facilitates rapid development of [Temoa](#) models and enables sensitivity analyses using a templated approach [43], [195]. These features of [PyGenesys](#) reduce the learning curve and the cost of producing unique models in [Temoa](#) [43].

A single [Temoa](#) run minimizes total system cost [217],

$$C_{total} = C_{loans} + C_{fixed} + C_{variable} \quad (3.17)$$

where

C_{loans} = the sum of all investment loan costs,

C_{fixed} = the sum of all fixed operating costs,

$C_{variable}$ = the sum of all variable operating costs.

Each of these terms is amortized over the model time horizon. The decision variables include the generation from each technology at time, t , and the capacity of each technology in year, y . The dispatch model deviates slightly from the model described in Section 3.2 by making the initial storage level for energy storage technologies a decision variable, whereas the dispatch model used in this thesis does not optimize initial storage and assumes energy storage starts at zero. The detailed formulation of [Temoa](#)'s constraints and equations are available online [217] ([maybe in an appendix?](#)).

3.5.1 Modeling-to-Generate-Alternatives

[Temoa](#)'s built-in method for uncertainty analysis is the Hop-Skip-Jump algorithm ([HSJ](#)) formulation of [MGA](#). This algorithm is designed to handle *structural* uncertainty, which presumes to account for unmodeled objectives. The steps for [HSJ](#) are [43], [83]:

1. obtain an optimal solution by any method,
2. add a user-specified amount of slack to the objective function value from the first step,
3. use the adjusted objective function value as an upper bound constraint,
4. generate a new objective function that minimizes the sum of all decision variables,
5. iterate the procedure,
6. stop the [MGA](#) when no significant changes are observed.

The mathematical formulation of this algorithm is

Minimize:

$$p = \sum_{k \in K} x_k, \quad (3.18)$$

Subject to:

$$f_j(\vec{x}) \leq T_j \quad \forall \quad j, \quad (3.19)$$

$$\vec{x} \in X, \quad (3.20)$$

where

p = the new objective function,

x_k = the k^{th} decision variable with a nonzero value in previous solutions,

$f_j(\vec{x})$ = the j^{th} original objective function,

T_j = the slack-adjusted target value,

X = the set of all feasible solutions.

This procedure results in a small set of maximally different solutions for modelers to interpret. In this way, **MGA** efficiently proposes alternatives that may capture unmodeled objectives, such as political expediency or social acceptance. However, this method depends on a single objective function which does not guarantee that these alternative solutions will be close to any other measurable objective.

3.6 **MGA** with multi-objective optimization

This thesis applies some ideas from **MGA** to the analysis of the sub-optimal space from a multi-objective optimization problem. Due to their iterative process, GAs naturally generate many samples in a problem's feasible space. However, this does not lead to a "limited set" of solutions but rather a potentially infinite set. Some literature developed GAs that directly use **MGA** in the iterative process [167], [168]. However, existing Python libraries such as **Pymoo** and **DEAP** do not implement these methods, and the challenge is not an inability to sample the sub-optimal space, but rather to provide a comprehensible subset of solutions. The algorithm I developed in this thesis to search the near-feasible space is the following:

1. Identify a slack value (e.g., 10% or 0.1).
2. Create a "near-feasible front" where the coordinates of each point are multiplied by unity plus the slack value.
3. Every individual is checked if all of its coordinates are
 - below all of the coordinates for at least one point on the near-feasible front and
 - above all of the coordinates for at least one point on the Pareto front.
4. Lastly, a subset of points may be randomly sampled from the interior points for analysis.

Figure 3.4 and Figure 3.5 demonstrate this algorithm with 10 percent slack for a 2-D and 3-D Pareto front, respectively. Figure 3.4 shows clearly that only points within the near-optimal space (gray) are considered. Illustrating this behavior in three dimensions (and above) is considerably more difficult. The 3-D interior points should be covered by both surfaces, obstructing their view. Figure 3.5 shows that this is the case in three panels. First, a top view of an opaque Pareto front (green) where no interior points can be observed. Second, the same view with a translucent Pareto front, revealing interior points and the near-optimal front (blue). Finally, the view from underneath the near-optimal front once again obscures the interior points, except for two near the edges of the sub-optimal space. The tested points are omitted for clarity.

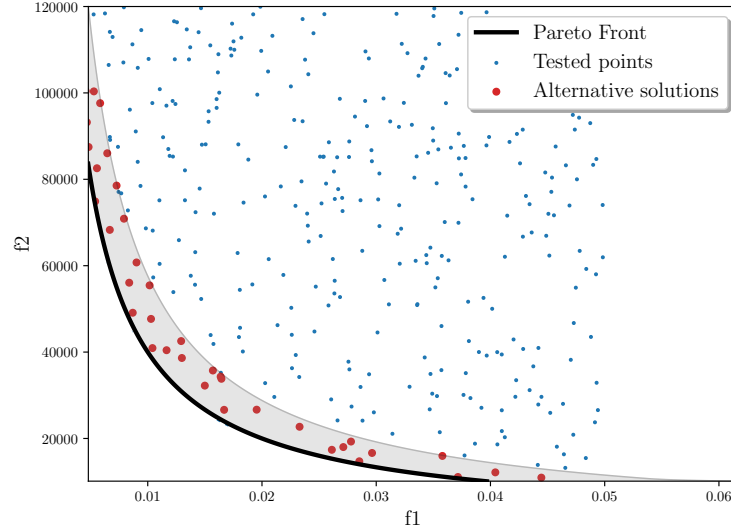


Figure 3.4: All of the alternative points inside the near-feasible space selected using the algorithm described in Section 3.6.

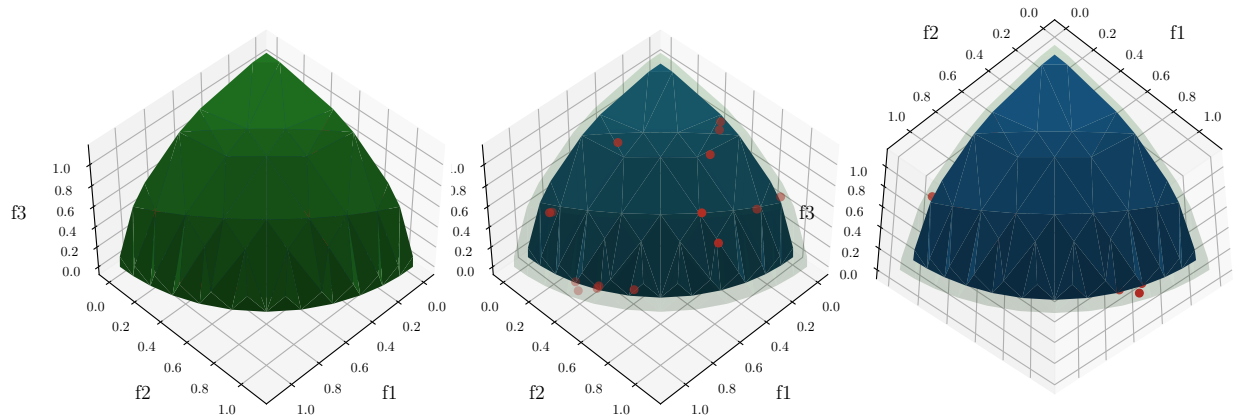


Figure 3.5: From left to right: An opaque Pareto front; a translucent Pareto front showing the interior points above a sub-optimal front; and the sub-optimal front hiding the interior points from a different angle.

3.7 Model Data

Chapter 4 demonstrates [Osier](#) on a series of problems. The basic inputs for [Osier](#) are

1. Demand time series data,
2. VRE time series data (e.g., solar or wind),
3. and technology data.

The time series data for electricity demand, wind energy, and solar energy, come from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). All of the time series are averaged across several years to simulate a “typical” year. I re-scaled the demand data by the total energy demand for Illinois in order for the hourly demand to be on the same scale as the default power units (MW) for Osier technologies. However, this choice is somewhat arbitrary. Osier automatically normalizes the VRE time series because VRE capacity is a decision variable. Figure 3.6 shows the normalized demand and load duration curves.

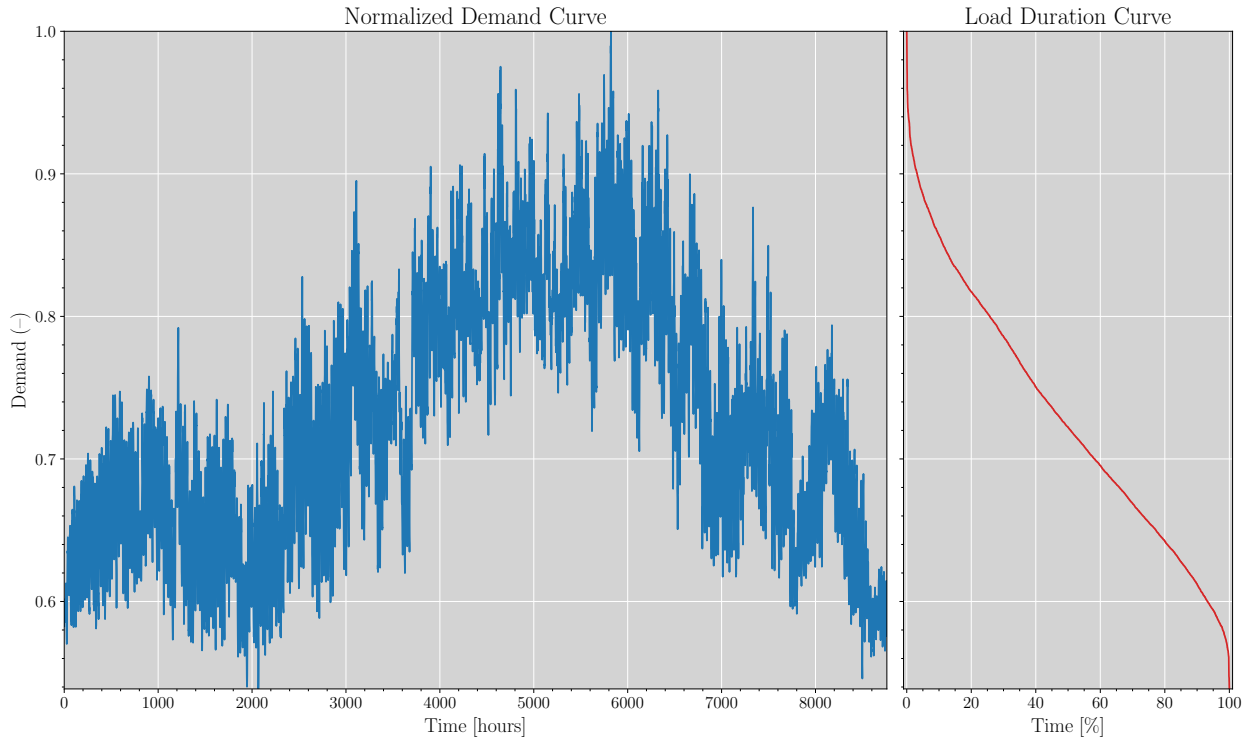


Figure 3.6: The normalized demand and load duration curves that are used in this thesis.

Another feature of Osier is automatically exporting technology data to a `pandas` dataframe or a `LATEX` table. Table 3.3 summarizes the technology data used in this thesis and was generated by Osier.

Table 3.3: Summary of Technologies and Parameters available in [Osier](#).

technology_name	Battery	Biomass	Coal_Conv	Coal_Adv	NaturalGas_Conv	NaturalGas_Adv	Nuclear	Nuclear	Nuclear_Adv	SolarPanel	WindTurbine
technology_category	base	thermal	thermal	thermal	thermal	thermal	thermal	thermal	thermal	base	base
technology_type	storage	production	production	production	production	production	production	production	production	production	production
dispatchable	True	True	True	True	True	True	True	True	True	False	False
renewable	False	True	False	False	False	False	False	False	True	True	True
fuel_type	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	solar	wind	wind
lifetime	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
capacity (MW)	815	0	0	0	8.38e+03	0	1.86e+04	0	2.81e+03	0	0
capacity_factor	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
capacity_credit	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0.19	0.35	0.35
efficiency	0.85	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
capital_cost (1/kW)	0.000613	0.00344	0.001	0.00492	0.00096	0.00189	5e-05	0.00492	0.000673	0.00118	0.00118
om_cost_fixed (1/kW)	1.53e-05	0.000123	4.07e-05	5.82e-05	1.12e-05	2.7e-05	0.000178	0.000119	8.05e-06	3.31e-05	3.31e-05
om_cost_variable (1/(MW*hr))	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
fuel_cost (1/(MW*hr))	0	4.7e-05	2.14e-05	3.66e-05	2.24e-05	2.75e-05	5.81e-06	9.16e-06	0	0	0
co2_rate (megatonnes/(MW*hr))	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
lifecycle_co2_rate (megatonnes/(GW*hr))	2.32e-05	0.00023	0.00082	0.00022	0.00049	4.9e-05	1.2e-05	1.2e-05	4.8e-05	1.1e-05	1.1e-05
land_intensity (km/MW**2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
storage_duration (hr)	4	nan	nan	nan	nan	nan	nan	nan	nan	nan	nan
initial_storage (MW*hr)	0	nan	nan	nan	nan	nan	nan	nan	nan	nan	nan
land_use (km**2/GW)	0.006	0.006	0.0051	0.0051	0.0032	0.0032	0.0044	0.0044	4.4	12.3	12.3
ramp_up_rate (1/hr)	nan	1	0.5	0.5	1	1	0	0.25	nan	nan	nan
ramp_down_rate (1/hr)	nan	1	0.5	0.5	1	1	0	0.25	nan	nan	nan
heat_rate	nan	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	nan	nan	nan

Chapter 4

Benchmark Results

This chapter first illustrates some of the differences among three evolutionary algorithms: [NSGA-II](#), [NSGA-III](#), and [UNSGA-III](#). Second, this chapter shows that solutions calculated by [Osier](#) agree with a more established [ESOM](#), [Temoa](#). Lastly, this chapter demonstrates some of [Osier](#)'s advanced features, such as many-objective objective problems and combining [MOO](#) with [MGA](#).

4.1 Exercise 0: Deciding Among Evolutionary Algorithms

[This section shows the two-objective problem]

4.2 Exercise 1: Exploring objective space

In the first benchmark exercise, I used [Temoa](#) to calculate the least-cost solution. Then I generated 30 alternative solutions with [MGA](#) as described in Section 3.5.1 with a 10% slack variable added to [Temoa](#)'s objective function. Figure 4.1 shows the points from [Temoa](#) in red and [Osier](#)'s Pareto-front for the same problem in blue. The red- and blue-shaded regions are the sub-optimal spaces (i.e., within 10% of any objective) for [Temoa](#) and [Osier](#), respectively.

First, [Temoa](#)'s least-cost solution is slightly better (within 0.5%) than [Osier](#)'s in terms of both cost and emissions. This happens because [Temoa](#) optimizes energy dispatch slightly differently than [Osier](#). In particular, the initial storage value for energy storage technologies is a decision variable in [Temoa](#) and not in [Osier](#). A second reason for this discrepancy has to do with convergence. [Osier](#)'s Pareto-front could likely be improved with a lower convergence tolerance, but this would use additional computational resources.

Next, the sub-optimal spaces partially overlap, indicating that [Temoa](#) could find a solution with lower carbon emissions after sufficient iterations. However, none of [Temoa](#)'s [MGA](#) solutions fall within [Osier](#)'s sub-optimal space. This point highlights the necessity for multi-objective optimization. The objective of [MGA](#) is to produce a *diverse subset* of points in the sub-optimal region. [MGA](#) may capture appealing alternatives for some unmodeled objective in the original problem, but it cannot guarantee that those solutions will be an improvement along any other objective axis. This is especially apparent here, where the least-cost solution happens also to be the lowest carbon solution. Even though [MOO](#) reduces structural uncertainty, it will always exist, as discussed in Section 2.4.2. Therefore, identifying alternative solutions by sampling points

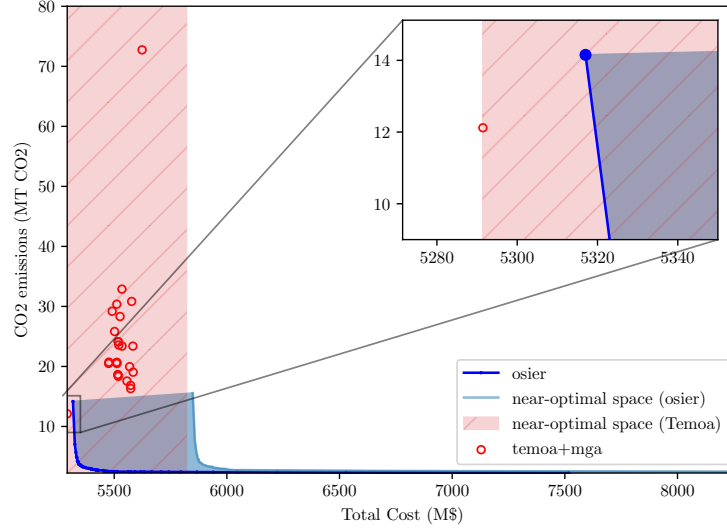


Figure 4.1: Compares the least-cost solutions between **Temoa** and **Osier** as well as their sub-optimal spaces. The least-cost solutions for **Osier** and **Temoa** are within 0.5% of each other.

in the inferior region is still useful. Figure 4.2 shows a set of solutions in **Osier**'s inferior region and some randomly selected points.

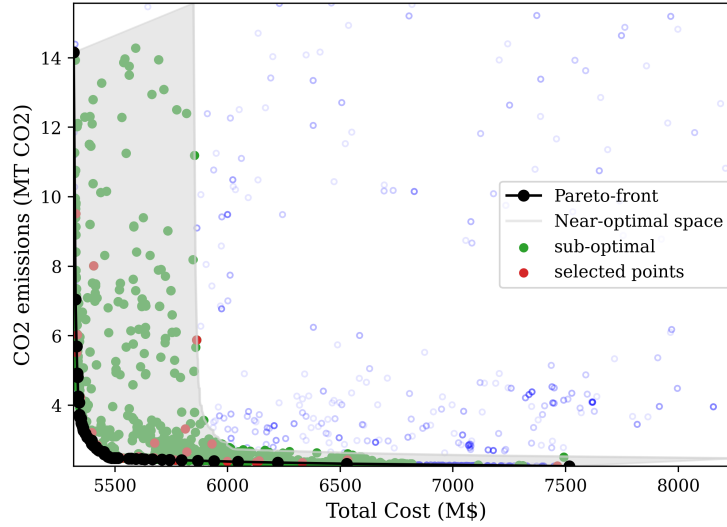


Figure 4.2: Points within **Osier**'s sub-optimal space.

Natural gas with **CCS** shows up in the randomly selected points in **Osier**'s sub-optimal region. A geo-political locus for energy infrastructure, described in Section 2.3.1 offers one possible explanation for this technology since states with significant natural gas resources might seek to maintain their influence by developing low-carbon technology that still uses natural gas.

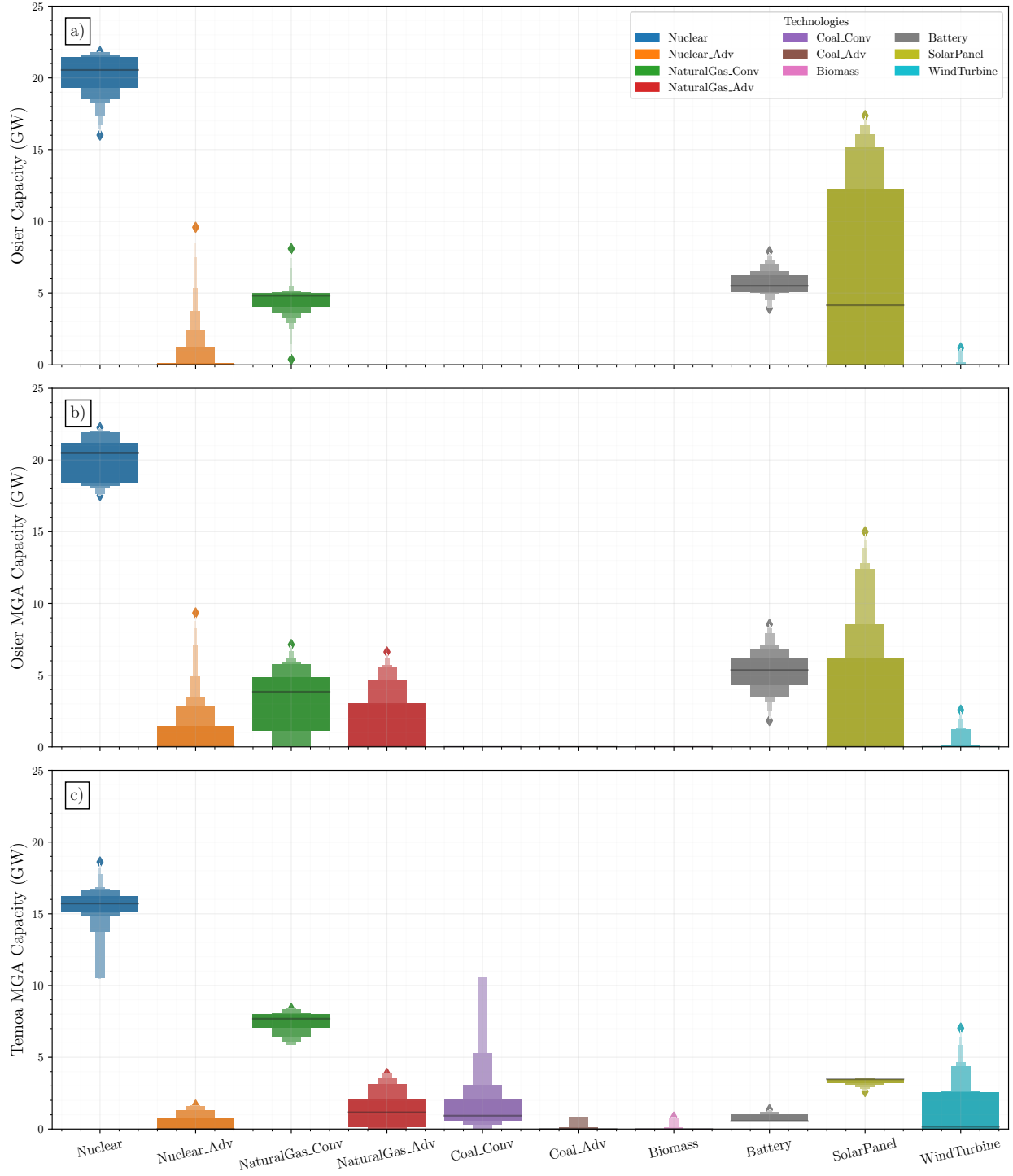


Figure 4.3: The design spaces for a) points on the Pareto-front in Figure 4.1, b) selected points in **Osier**'s sub-optimal space, identified in Figure 4.2, and c) points generated by **Temoa**'s MGA algorithm shown in Figure 4.1.

4.3 Exercise 2: Four Simultaneous Objectives

This exercise minimized four objectives simultaneously: total system cost, lifecycle carbon emissions, land-use change, and percentage of total energy from non-renewable energy sources. Renewable energy sources include solar, wind, and biomass. Although batteries are often used in conjunction with VREs, they are not considered “renewable” (nor are they a true energy “source” since they store energy from other sources rather than producing their own).

Reading Parallel coordinate plots: Visualizing the Pareto front for this problem presents a challenge due to its high dimensionality. Therefore, I present the results with a novel plot, called a parallel coordinate plot (PCP). This plot is helpful for highlighting differences among a small set of solutions with a potentially large number of dimensions. Figure 4.4 and Figure 4.5 are both PCPs. Although PCPs show continuous lines, they do not show a “trend”. That is, for a given solution, each objective takes on a single value that is plotted on its respective vertical axis. The lines connecting these points simply emphasize that these points belong to the same solution. Additionally, each objective axis has its own upper and lower bound because each objective is scaled differently. The MGA solutions presented in Figure 4.6 using a “letter-value” plot due to the larger number of solutions included in MGA.

Figure 4.4 shows the Pareto front for this 4-dimensional problem.

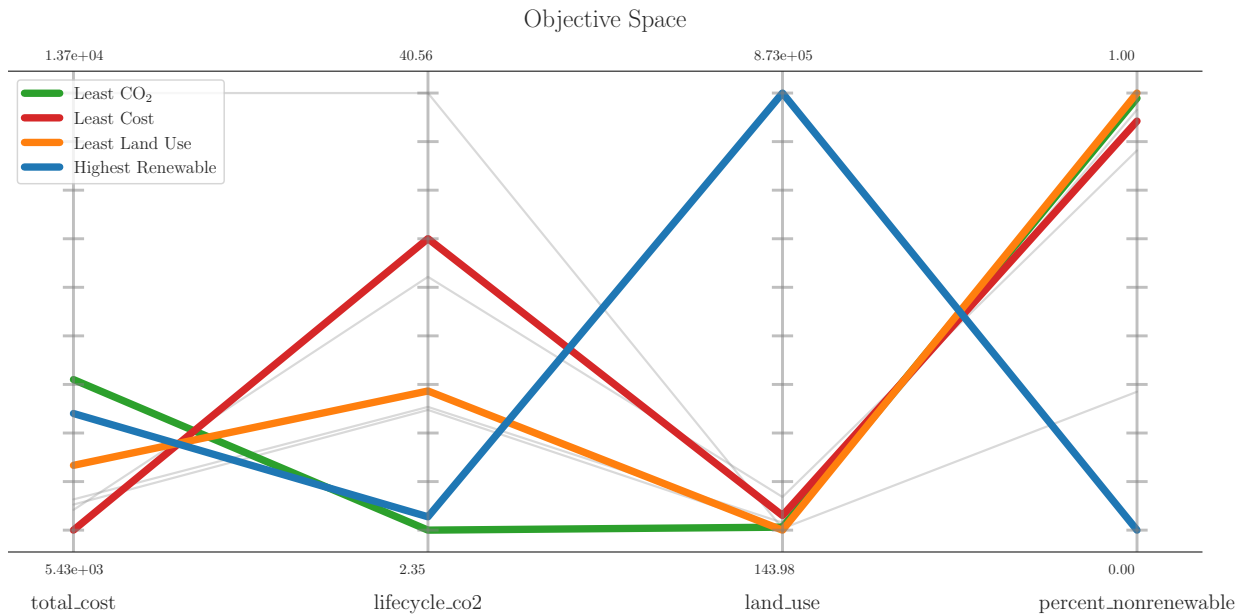


Figure 4.4: The Pareto front for a four objective problem. Extreme values for each objective are colored. The gray lines represent solutions on the Pareto front that are not extremum.

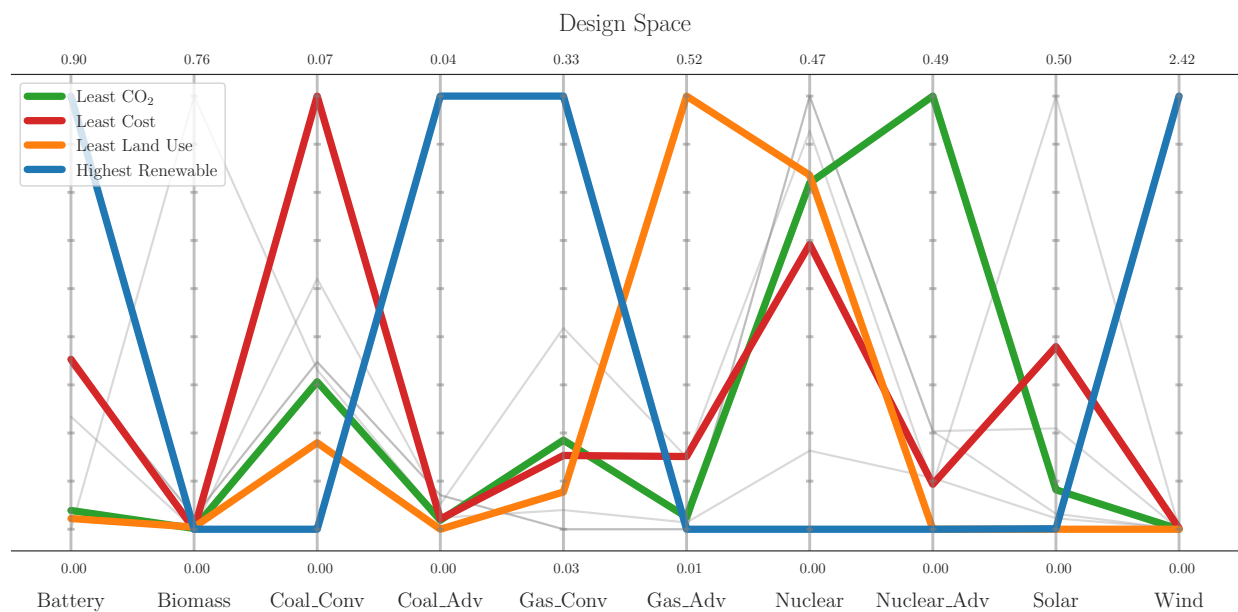


Figure 4.5: The design space for a four objective problem.

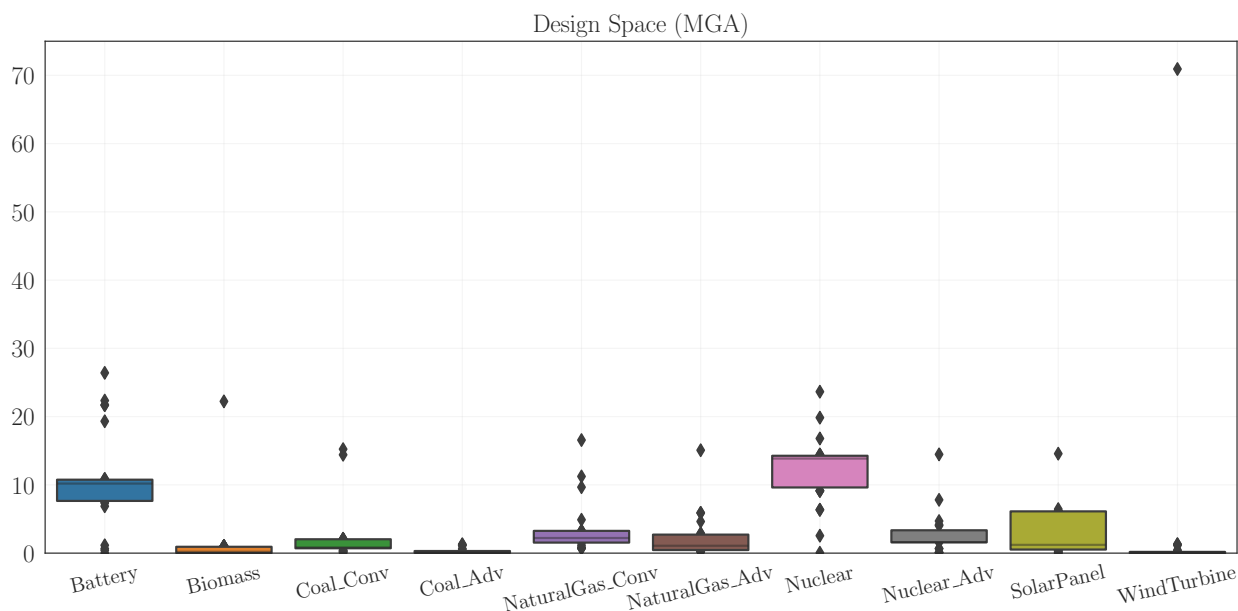


Figure 4.6: The design space for a four objective problem including alternative solutions suggested by MGA.

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