Title

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Developing a common approach for classifying building stock energy models

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Abstract

Over the past decade, major advancements have been made in building stock energy modeling due to the advent of increased access to computing resources and metered building energy consumption data as well as new data sources on building stock characteristics. Worldwide, buildings contribute 40% of global greenhouse gas emissions, and building stock energy modeling has become an essential tool for the development of technology research and deployment strategies. In addition to the enhanced capabilities of the newer generation of modeling tools, model transferability and sharing has increased. Given the advancements in this field, a new scheme for classifying building stock energy models is needed to facilitate communication of modeling approaches and handling of specific model dimensions such as time dynamics, uncertainty, and geographic and spatial resolution and extent. In this article, we present a new building stock energy model classification framework that leverages international modeling expertise from the participants of the International Energy Agency's Annex 70 on Building Energy Epidemiology. Drawing from existing classification studies, we propose a scheme that is unique from previous approaches in its non-hierarchical organization, coverage of and ability to incorporate emerging modeling techniques, and treatment of modeling sub-layers and additional dimensions. The new classification framework will be complemented by a reporting protocol and online registry of existing models as part of ongoing work in Annex 70 to increase the interpretability and utility of building stock energy models for energy policy making.

Highlights

- Building technology RD&D is needed to achieve deep reductions in global CO_2 emissions.
- Building stock energy models are essential tools for technology RD&D strategy development.
- A new scheme for classifying building stock energy models is introduced.
- The scheme builds from previous classifications while addressing new technical developments.
- The classification facilitates wider use of building stock energy models in energy policy making.

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1. Introduction

Buildings worldwide are responsible for 36% of energy use, emitting 40% of direct and indirect CO_2 emissions. These numbers are expected to rise due to growth in population and building floor area, increased access to energy in developing countries, and growth in energy-consuming devices [41]. Increasing energy efficiency in buildings is an essential strategy for reversing global growth in energy use and associated emissions and to reduce the likelihood of catastrophic climate change. Indeed, the International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that buildings in 2040 could be 40% more energy efficient than today, with savings driven by reduced energy need for space heating, water heating, and cooling [41].

The development of concrete strategies for decreasing building energy use remains a key challenge. Building researchers and policy makers lack cross-country data and methods for understanding how building energy use is expected to change over the next several decades, both of which are essential for identifying the specific efficiency strategies that have the greatest impact on these changes. While access to these data at both a granular spatio-temporal resolution and for the building stock as a whole is improving, gaps in data coverage, consistency, and accessibility across countries must be addressed to support setting effective priorities for building technology research, development, and deployment programs.

To address gaps in building energy use data at large scales, a group of international researchers that includes the authors is collaborating on an International Energy Agency (IEA) Energy in Buildings and Communities (EBC) Annex "Building Energy Epidemiology", or IEA-EBC Annex 70. The concept of energy epidemiology as first defined by Hamilton et al. [37] is the study of energy use in a large population of buildings. The scope of research that falls within the energy epidemiology field is broad, including both modeling of energy use in the building stock under different sets of input conditions, analyses that identify correlations between energy use and influencing variables, and testing of causal hypotheses about the effects of implementing energy efficiency measures across representative portions of a building stock.

The guiding objective of IEA-EBC Annex 70 is to develop realistic transition pathways to dramatic reductions in building energy use and carbon emissions. In support of this objective, we seek to identify and compare models of large-scale building stocks and their energy use that are broadly interpretable across the international buildings research community. Accordingly, this paper proposes a framework for classifying building stock energy model that builds upon existing classification approaches while acknowledging emerging modeling techniques and covering a wide range of important model dimensions. The intent is for the proposed classification to serve as a common framework for quickly comparing and assessing available models of building stock energy models across the scales of cities, regions, and countries.

The scope of the proposed classification scheme is models of the buildings sector that: (a) represent multiple, geographically co-located buildings; (b) produce energy use metrics as an output; and (c) generate out-of-sample predictions. Accordingly, the proposed classification scheme does not pertain to models that: focus on a single building's energy use in isolation; do not yield energy use as a primary output (e.g., focus exclusively on other building performance metrics such as indoor environmental quality or water use); or are purely explanatory or descriptive in nature [85].

We begin by reviewing previous efforts to develop building stock and energy model classifications, identifying critical gaps, these existing classifications, and establishing the need for an updated classification framework. We then introduce a classification scheme that builds upon the strengths of the existing model classifications while addressing their shortcomings in the context of currently available data resources and computational capabilities. New elements of the classification approach are enumerated in detail along with examples from the literature that demonstrate their relevance to the task of building stock energy modeling. The paper concludes by discussing potential applications of the proposed classification scheme, including its use in related IEA Annex 70 efforts to create a registry of building stock energy models and develop a complementary model reporting protocol, as well as limitations to its future use by buildings researchers.

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1.1. Summary of existing classification approaches

To-date there have been multiple efforts to classify building stock-level energy models by technique and purpose. Foremost among these is a 2009 review by Swan and Ugursal [90], which summarizes major energy modeling techniques for residential sector end uses. The Swan and Ugursal classification has gained wide acceptance among building stock modelers, as evidenced by its large number of citations to date in other studies [1]. The designation of "top-down" models, or those that begin with an aggregate view of a system that may subsequently be broken down into constituent sub-systems, and "bottom-up" models, or those that begin with a detailed representation of a system's constituent parts that may be aggregated up to the whole-system level, has long been used for many types of modeling. Swan and Ugursal [90] extended these concepts to the modeling of residential building stock energy use, identifying eight major types of modeling techniques under the general top-down and bottom-up categories (Figure 1).

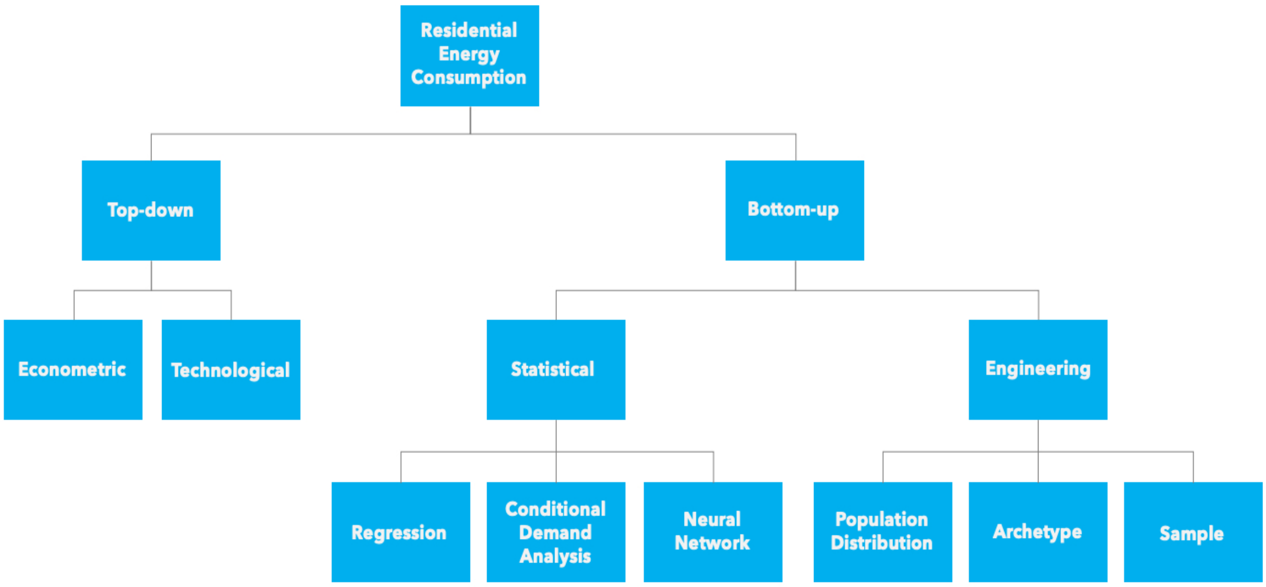

Figure 1: Swan and Ugursal 's 2009 model classification. Models of residential energy use are classified using a hierarchical tree structure that includes two main branches: one for "top-down" models, or those that begin with an aggregate view of a system that may subsequently be broken down into constituent sub-systems, and a second for "bottom-up" models, or those that begin with a detailed representation of a system's constituent parts that may be aggregated up to the whole-system level.

Other classification systems define the building stock energy modeling space more broadly than the Swan and Ugursal classification. For example, Keirstead et al. [43] reviewed all studies on urban energy system models, including other major energy systems such as transportation, and classified each model's purposes and category. Building stock energy modeling is a subclass of "building design" in their schema, but few details are given on the specific techniques used for this model subclass.

Two other review papers discuss classification in the context of appropriateness for building energy policy making. Brøgger and Wittchen [10] adopt the general Swan and Ugursal classification, while discussing the appropriateness and accuracy of each model type in the context of European policy-making. Sousa et al. [87] present a review of building stock energy models specific to the United Kingdom, comparing and contrasting the capabilities for each, utilizing the general bottom-up and top-down divisions provided in Swan and Ugursal.

Few studies have attempted to expand upon the Swan and Ugursal classification of top-down modeling techniques. Li et al. [46] provide a classification tree nearly identical to Swan and Ugursal, adding a few elements to the top-down branch, including "other" and "statistical" top-down sub-branches as well as a statistical modeling

[1] https://scholar.google.com/scholar?rlz=1C5CHFA_enUS846US846&um=1&ie=UTF-8&lr&cites=464700330571940757 (accessed 10/17/2019).

technique that relies on physical input variables. The majority of this review article, however, focuses on bottom-up applications and the new top-down techniques are not explored in detail in the text.

For bottom-up models, the general division between “statistical” (i.e. data-driven/black-box) and “engineering” (i.e. physics-based/white-box) models has endured in multiple works recategorizing models. For example, Nageler et al. [58] utilize the general Swan and Ugursal classification for bottom-up models. Kavgic et al. [42], another heavily-cited paper, directly adopts this simplified Swan and Ugursal bottom-up division, adding in a “hybrid” category that combines data- and physics-driven approaches. Mastrucci et al. [52] also focus on bottom-up models using this general classification, but extend beyond demand modeling to include a multi-level life cycle analysis framework to account for embodied energy. This article also makes a distinction between the energy modeling portion of an assessment and the different stock aggregation methods - something of increasing importance to bottom-up models.

In the bottom-up, engineering sub-class of models of Figure 1, there has been additional publication activity around classification and methods. Reinhart and Davila [75] developed one of the first overview papers specifically on the Urban Building Energy Modeling (UBEM) sub-class of models. The paper compares published models and offers a high-level overview of approaches. Reyna et al. [76] developed an orthogonal classification focused on building interactions (building-building, building-transportation, etc.) and provide cases leveraging the Swan and Ugursal classification. Both reviews reference building stock energy modeling capabilities far beyond those outlined in the original Swan and Ugursal paper. The development of new approaches necessitates renewed evaluation of building stock energy modeling modeling and the advantages and disadvantages of emergent capabilities.

1.2. The need for an updated classification

When the Swan and Ugursal classification was published in 2009, models were limited in number and functionality. Three major developments have increased the capabilities and applications of current building stock energy models: 1) big data-enabled through advances for example in the area of utility energy data access- has increased the amount of empirical evidence that can be integrated into model development and calibration, and 2) computing power has increased the availability and decreased the costs of large-scale simulation through cloud computing and access to supercomputing, and 3) as modelers adapt to increased data and computational capabilities, many models now use multiple modeling techniques to estimate both energy use and its driving variables; such models don’t fit cleanly within a single category and/or include dimensions that are not captured by a high-level classification approach. These issues are detailed further below.

In the past ten years, increasing amounts of data have been collected on both model inputs (e.g., building characteristics, geospatial information for individual buildings, operational schedules, and occupant behavior) and outputs (e.g., energy use); these improved data can inform more accurate models of building stock energy with finer spatio-temporal resolutions. For example, European Energy Performance Certificates [23] and benchmarking mandates in the United States [93] are increasing data collected on building characteristics and energy performance. Moreover, while utilities have long restricted access to account-level energy use data, there is now a growing recognition that these data are essential for decision making for the public good in the face of climate change [3]. In California, for example, universities have been able to obtain account-level energy use data under non-disclosure agreements, and municipalities are also able to access aggregated utility data for their jurisdictions [12]. Access to these data allows linkages to be created through geocoding to building/parcel attributes, thereby revealing the relationships between energy use and building vintage, use-type, square footage, and socio-demographic attributes [71, 29]. A transition to using such granular, empirical energy use data is dramatically improving the spatial resolution and predictive abilities of building stock energy models. Some classification systems for whole (i.e. individual) building modeling and calibration have been extended to cover these advancements (e.g. Fumo [31]), but stock-level energy modeling classification systems have not been extended to cover newer data-driven techniques.

Simultaneously, non-traditional data sources are augmenting available data on buildings. For example, remotely-sensed data such as LiDAR and satellite imagery are being used to determine external characteristics such as building height, geometry, shading, solar irradiance, and even externally-placed building equipment [35, 94, 106, 49, 54]. All generate rich detail on the building stock, but require new modeling techniques to fully utilize. Such techniques include geospatial simulation models [75], which simulate all or a representative subset of individual buildings comprising a stock using whole building energy simulation engines and geospatial data; system dynamics and agent-based models [28, 50], which are able to explore causal effects and interactions across modeled entities (e.g., across individual buildings, or occupants within a building); and machine learning models [2], which leverage big data resources to predict changes in building energy use at scale.

Cloud-based computing has proven to be an important enabling technology for many of these computationally-intensive models, as the cost of cloud computing has decreased and the availability of web-based resources has improved [30]. Geospatial models, for example, dramatically expand upon the single-archetype assumption of previous bottom-up engineering model classifications in their ability to represent every building in a city, region, or country explicitly at a finely grained temporal resolution. Moreover, models utilizing these big data and cloud computing resources often combine multiple techniques that don't fit neatly within the distinct "top-down" or "bottom-up" Swan and Ugursal designations, and such models may also explicitly represent additional variables that influence energy use as part of the model's structure and outputs. Additional classification categories and layers are needed to capture the proliferation of such hybrid modeling techniques for representing both stock-level energy use and its key correlates.

Beyond these gaps in existing classifications' coverage of data-driven and simulation-based modeling techniques and mixed modeling approaches, previous classifications also lack guidance on how to assess the transferability and quality of models along dimensions that are implicit in the high-level classification diagram. In 2009, most models were bespoke and privately stored - standalone models developed to assess a single geographical area by a single group of people for a single purpose. Increasingly, stock models have become designed for wider applicability, allowing core modeling structures to be transferred to other cities or countries by varying model input data. As model transfer is being considered, additional language is needed to appropriately communicate key characteristics of the model such as handling of time dynamics, model and input uncertainty, and the geographic and spatial resolution and extent of models. Accordingly, we see the need to identify and describe such additional dimensions to complement a high-level model classification approach.

2. Overview of proposed classification scheme

The proposed classification scheme (Figure 2) establishes a flexible framework for high-level model classification that: (a) builds from existing classification frameworks while accounting for emerging simulation-based, data-driven, and hybrid modeling techniques; (b) recognizes the potential sub-layers of a building stock energy model; and (c) encourages the description of additional model dimensions that are not readily captured by a high-level classification.

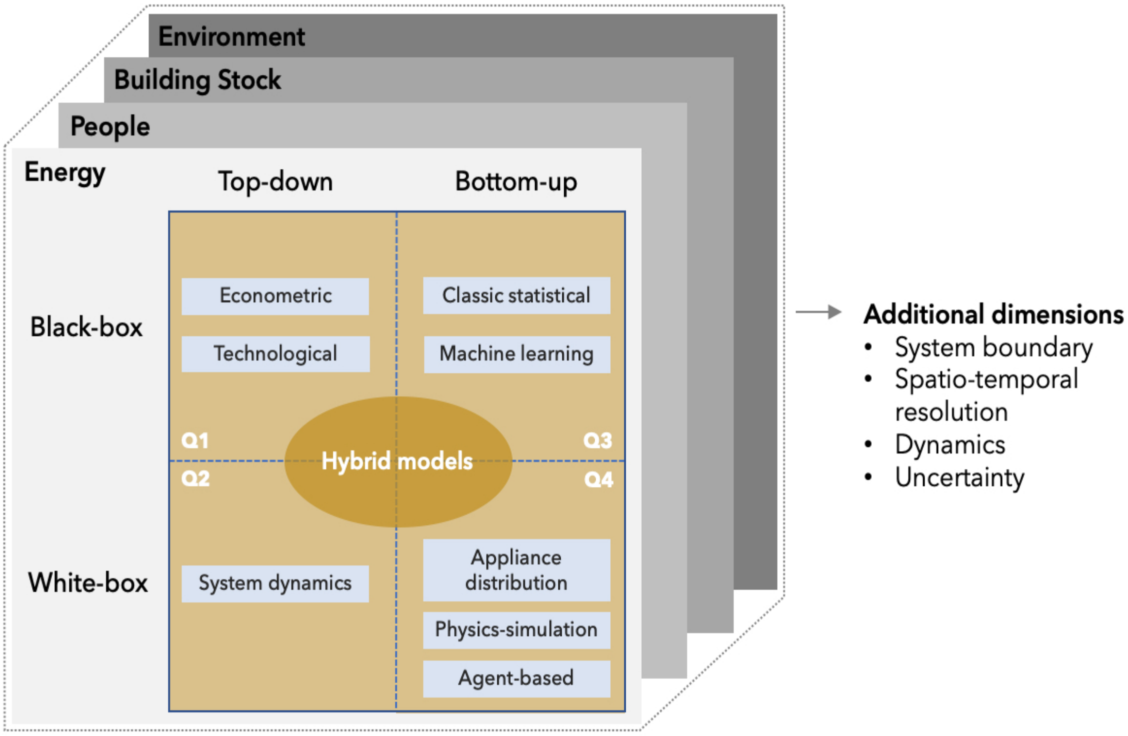

Figure 2: An updated classification scheme for building stock energy models. The scheme builds from existing classification approaches while contributing the following changes: 1) the classification eschews a hierarchical structure in favor of a more flexible organization, grouping models into four quadrants based on whether each is top-down or bottom-up and black-box or white-box; models are tagged by their applicable quadrant(s) (Q1 for top-down/black-box, Q1/Q4 for hybrid, etc.), 2) emerging simulation-based and data-driven approaches are identified (e.g., system dynamics, agent-based models, machine learning) 3) hybrid models are identified that combine modeling techniques across quadrants, 4) sub-layers representing key energy use determinants are represented; modeling approaches for each of these determinants could be mapped to the same four quadrants of the energy layer, and 5) four additional modeling dimensions are identified that should be described in parallel with mapping a model to the high-level classification quadrants.

In place of the hierarchical organization of existing classifications, the classification diagram in Figure 2 groups building stock energy modeling techniques into one of four quadrants: top-down/black box (Q1), top-down/white-box (Q2), bottom-up/black-box (Q3), bottom-up/white-box (Q4). Here, black-box refers to models in which underlying processes leading to outcomes are not directly interpretable, while in white-box models the internal model structure and influencing variables are directly interpretable.

To address the gaps we identified in the coverage of modeling techniques in existing classifications, we include several emerging data-driven and simulation-based energy modeling techniques in the quadrants of Figure 2 (alongside the modeling techniques that have been identified across most previous previous classifications): machine learning (Q4: bottom-up/white-box), system dynamics (Q2: top-down/white-box), agent-based modeling (Q4: bottom-up/white-box), and physics-simulation (Q4). In between each of the four quadrants is an area devoted to hybrid modeling techniques that combine techniques either within or across the quadrants. Details of all modeling techniques covered by the classification are discussed in the next section.

In addition to the energy modeling layer, which is the main focus of this classification, Figure 2 shows three supporting layers that concern the modeling of key energy use determinants: occupants' energy-related behaviors within the building stock of focus, the characteristics of the building stock itself, and environmental conditions (e.g., outdoor temperature, solar intensity). Modeling efforts that directly represent such driving variables are expected to map to the same four quadrants shown for the energy layer, though specific techniques within each quadrant may be unique to the supporting layer. Where these variables are only implicitly addressed in a building stock energy model, this should be made apparent as part of the model's classification.

Finally, Figure 2 identifies four additional modeling dimensions of interest: dynamics, system boundaries, spatio-temporal resolution, and model uncertainty. These dimensions are not readily captured by the high-level classification quadrants and modeling layers; however, their description alongside the high-level classification provides important context about a model that further facilitates its assessment by the research community and comparison with similar building stock energy models.

The following sections expand upon the modeling techniques and additional dimensions shown in the classification diagram of Figure 2, providing an overview of each and examples of their treatment in the recent building stock energy modeling literature.

2.1. Quadrants of the Classification

2.1.1. Q1: Top-down / Black-box

In the new classification, top-down/black-box models remain mostly unchanged from previous classification schemes. This class of models estimates sector-level energy utilizing readily-available, sector-wide historic variables such as demographics or economic indicators. These models typically exclude end-use energy attribution. While the models have the advantage of being easily to develop and may be accurate for representing incremental, near-term changes, they cannot capture transformative sector-wide changes (e.g. wide-spread electric vehicle adoption or major retail energy price changes). Our classification maintains two major categories of top-down/black-box modeling techniques, econometric and technological, consistent with existing classification schemes. Increasingly, top-down/black-box models utilize hybrid econometric - technological approaches. Fazeli et al. [24] give an overview of many existing models of this type, focusing on models that capture the temperature response of building energy demand.

Econometric

Econometric models apply statistics and mathematics based on economic theory to forecast specific outcomes. For building stock energy modeling, commonly used economic indicators include fuel prices, household income, or gross domestic product. Econometric models were originally developed in the 1970s, stemming from the economic field, and particularly useful for exploring high-level trends. For example, Lin and Liu [47] develop an econometric forecast of building energy consumption in China given heavy urbanization trends for three different future scenarios, including an uncertainty assessment on the predictions, and in a related assessment use the models to identify the rebound effect of energy efficiency. Fazeli et al. [24] explore three separate econometric techniques to forecast fuel consumption associated with residential space heating in Nordic countries, a potentially impactful advancement for modeling electrification and fuel switching within the top-down/black box modeling quadrant.

Technological

Technological models are often similar to econometric models, but expand upon inputs based on broad economic and demographic trends to explicitly account for technological characteristics of the building stock such as appliance saturation trends or adherence to building codes. Over the past decade, these models (and technological-econometric hybrid models) have largely supplanted pure econometric approaches. For example, Eom et al. [22] developed an integrated assessment model that utilizes demographic and economic as well as appliance efficiency trends to look at future energy consumption in China. Similarly, the Austrian Institute for Economic Research presents a working paper exploring technology and economic impacts on residential energy demand [44]. The National Energy Modeling System (NEMS) developed by the US Energy Information Administration uses a technological-econometric approach to develop a long-term forecast of growth in the building and technology stock, which is combined with bottom-up modeling techniques [97].

2.1.2. Q2: Top-down/White-box

Previous classification schemes have generally neglected top-down/white-box models, which represent physical causality at the aggregate building and technology stock level. This approach is distinct from the two existing top-down approaches that characterize correlated economic (econometric) or technology (technological) indicators. Our classification adds system dynamics as a top-down/white-box modeling technique that has not been addressed by previous classifications.

System dynamics

Typically, system dynamics models are characterized by: a) a conceptual diagram of the building and technology stock and its aggregate-level feedback loops and b) quantitative models of aggregate-level building and technology stocks and flows. Stocks represent point-in-time quantities of interest (e.g. national residential building stock), while flows represent time-varying additions to or subtractions from stock totals (e.g. annual additions/subtractions to the residential stock from construction/demolition).

There are several examples of system dynamics approaches in the building stock energy modeling literature. Onat et al. [67] develop a system dynamics model of greenhouse gas emissions from the U.S. residential buildings stock to explore the efficacy of different policies in stabilizing the increasing emissions trend. Model variables include carbon footprint and energy intensity of residential buildings, the number of new and existing green buildings, retrofit rate, and employee travel characteristics, gross domestic product and total population. Eker et al. [20] use a system dynamics framework to explore the interactions between the housing, energy and well-being aspects of the United Kingdom's housing stock. Causal loop diagrams are developed to assess as-built performance, retrofit rate dynamics, and the well being of residents. At the urban scale, Feng et al. [25] develop a system dynamics model of energy use and CO_2 emissions trends for Beijing between 2005-2030. Six sub-models comprise socioeconomic, agricultural, industrial, service, residential, and transport parameters, and flows within and between the sub-models are described using regression equations. At the level of policy makers, Motawa and Oladokun [57] model the interrelationship between the buildings, occupants, and the environment (policy, climate, and economy) and simulate the energy use and CO_2 emissions in the UK.

2.1.3. Q3: Bottom-up/Black-box

Bottom-up/black-box models utilize historic information and regression analysis to attribute building energy use to particular end-uses, assuming the conditions underlying the modeling prediction space mirror those of the model training space. From these relationships, building-level end use estimates can be extended to the scale of the entire building stock.

Classical statistical

Classical statistical techniques have traditionally been used to predict energy consumption at either the end-use or whole-building scale. Typically, these techniques develop correlations between input and output parameters for making inferences; classical approaches include both regression and conditional demand analysis as identified in previous classification frameworks.

Classical statistical techniques are still used in building stock energy modeling, though often in tandem with other approaches. Howard et al. [40] develop a regression model for end-use building energy consumption in New York City, specifically linking consumption to spatial locations throughout the city. Similarly, Mastrucci et al. [51] statistically downscale city energy use to the building level for Rotterdam using linear regression. Santin et al. [82] utilize classical statistical techniques to identify the respective importance of building characteristics and occupant behavior to stock-level residential energy consumption in the Netherlands.

Machine learning

Machine learning techniques focus on making predictions, rather than inferences, utilizing a wide range of algorithms to find patterns in rich but large and unwieldy datasets. In the updated classification, we generalize existing identified approaches (such as neural networks) to a broader set of machine learning approaches.

Machine learning models of building stock energy use have seen a large increase in the literature over the last decade. Tso and Yau [95] compare classical statistical regression techniques to decision trees and neural networks to evaluate the accuracy in predicting energy consumption in Hong Kong. The results indicate that all three models are valid for this type of prediction, with the decision tree and neural network performing slightly better in the summer and winter, respectively. Robinson et al. [78] use multiple machine learning methods (linear regression, gradient boosting regression, and random forest regression) to estimate the energy use of the commercial building stock in different U.S. metropolitan areas based on floor area, principal building activity, number of floors, and heating/cooling degree days. Papadopoulos et al. [69] use an unsupervised learning algorithm to cluster buildings in New York City based on their energy use. Papadopoulos and Kontokosta [70] use a gradient tree boosting method to develop a building energy performance grading method; this method has shown improved performance over linear models in predicting hourly and annual building energy use at the urban scale.

2.1.4. Q4: Bottom-up/White-box

Various forms of bottom-up/white-box models have been expanded over the last decade. This class of models simulates the physical relationship of processes at the building or end-use level. In the expanded classification, we note the new advances in this area afforded by high-performance and cloud computing along with simulation-based techniques.

Appliance Distribution

This approach models distributions of appliance ownership and use with standard appliance efficiency ratings to calculate aggregate appliance end-use energy consumption across a regional or national scale, generally without accounting for interactions between end-uses (e.g. interaction between refrigerator use and heating demands). This type of model has the advantage of being relatively easy to assemble (where ownership surveys exist), capable of capturing both future and emerging technologies, computationally inexpensive, and easy to interpret.

In recent years, appliance distribution models have been paired with other methods such as physics-simulation, with the heat-balance methods covering heating and cooling portions of the model and appliance distribution models covering the other appliances. For example, Ghedamsi et al. [34] utilize a hybrid bottom-up model to project future residential energy demand in Algeria. Similarly, Reyna and Chester [77] utilize appliance distribution modeling combined with detailed physics-simulation of the thermal envelope to project residential building demand under different climate change scenarios in southern California. Scout [96, 45], a tool used by the United States government for estimating national-wide building energy efficiency savings, also utilizes appliance distributions to represent disaggregated end use demand, combining this approach with NEMS projections of growth in the building and technology stock, which are generated using a technological-econometric approach.

Agent-based models

Agent-based approaches represent causality at the individual building or district level, constructing aggregate-level outcomes in a bottom-up manner. In many ways, agent-based models (ABM) are the bottom-up analogue to top-down system dynamics models; like system dynamics, ABM is a technique in this classification scheme that is not found in previous classifications. Agent-based models use software representations of individual buildings and/or decision-maker agents that have heterogeneous attributes as well as rules for interacting with other agents and their physical/economic environments. Under an agent-based approach, aggregate stock and energy outcomes emerge from individual-level behaviors – that is, macro-level outcomes are determined by the micromotives of agents with endogenous behavior rules.

ABM has gained popularity in many modeling applications, and there are several notable examples for the buildings sector. Zhao et al. [107] developed the Commercial Buildings Sector Agent-based Model (CoBAM). CoBAM considers U.S. commercial buildings of different types and in different climate zones as adaptive agents that are evolving internally and interacting with energy efficiency regulations, which in turn dictates the evolution of building energy use over time. In another study focused on the residential sector, Moglia et al. [55] use an ABM to model the uptake of low carbon and energy efficient technologies and practices by households, considering both the influence of social networks and the decision rules of several different agent types that extend beyond homeowners. This study adapts the decision-making algorithms of an earlier ABM published by Sopha et al. [86], which was used to model uptake of energy efficient heating in Norway. Azar et al. [4] use an ABM framework to calculate the thermal comfort and energy use of multiple buildings on a campus at Abu Dhabi. Their model consists of three sub-models: people movement, thermal comfort and energy consumption. Abdallah et al. [1] evaluate the impact of a non-intrusive energy messaging intervention on energy use in the Belgian residential sector using an ABM that represents daily energy-related occupant behaviors, peer pressure effects on energy use, and the effects of messaging interventions.

Physics-simulation

Archetype modeling is a well-established approach that simulates energy performance of typical buildings that each represents a segment of the building stock; results can be scaled up to represent total sector energy use in a defined geographic area. Recent advances in computing and data have allowed improvement of the traditional archetype approach to include modeling of hundreds or thousands of representative buildings, sometimes modeling every individual building in a given geographic area. Our new classification merges these two approaches into a single "physics-simulation" category, recognizing that they are both based upon whole-building, physics-based energy simulation. This class of models is sometimes referred to as urban-scale building energy modeling (UBEM) in previous literature[75], although the approach can be applied to other land use types besides urban land uses. Pure archetype (i.e. non-geospatial) approaches are plentiful, including ResStock [61] and the *Tabula* project [5].

The use of building energy simulation in combination with spatial representation and modeling in geographic information systems (GIS) is a rapidly developing physics-modeling approach that holds promise for generating information required for energy and emissions-related policy making and planning by actors such as municipalities and utilities already using GIS-based decision support. For this approach, geodatabases are developed that link building attributes and simulated energy use to common geographical references such as parcels or building footprints. Commonly, archetype-based energy simulation is performed using software such as EnergyPlus for representative buildings. Results are applied to actual buildings corresponding to the archetype in the stock, via the floor area. Often this can be done using actual building geometries. This is the approach used, for example, by SimStock in the UK [98]. Less commonly, buildings are simulated individually.

Two examples of this approach include CityBES from Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) and AutoBEM from Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL). CityBES [39] is an online building energy analysis platform containing simulations for office and retail prototype buildings developed using EnergyPlus and Open Studio as well as cost and energy performance data for several energy conservation measures (ECMs). The building stock is characterized by 3D City Models developed in CityGML and GeoJSON, informed by building stock and GIS data, utility rates and building codes. In AutoBEM [62], LiDAR data and aerial imagery is used to define building footprints and street view imagery creates 3D models and defines facade characteristics across the building stock of interest. API calls and screen scraping tools geo-register buildings and confirm their geometry. Building type characteristics are defined through subject matter expert assumptions and relevant data sources. Millions of building energy models in EnergyPlus and hundreds of variable representations may then be applied to analyzing scenarios of energy demand across the stock.

2.1.5. All Quadrants: Hybrid models

In practice, many models will use mixed approaches that cross the quadrants of Figure 3, and thus fall into the hybrid region shown in between the quadrants. For example, grey-box statistical models pair a partial theoretical representation of the process being modeled (white-box) with variables that represent additional unexplained factors that contribute to observed outcomes (black-box).

Examples of building stock energy models with hybrid elements are prevalent in recent years. The U.S. Energy Information Administration's National Energy Modeling System (NEMS), uses a top-down econometric model to estimate overall rates of new construction while bottom-up appliance distribution models are used to estimate the energy use intensity of all newly added buildings, as well as several existing building stock vintages [104]. In the Canadian CHREM model, a machine learning model is used to predict the highly occupant sensitive domestic hot water and lighting energy use, while an archetype model is used to predict space heating and cooling energy use [91]. Sandberg et al. [81] use a hybrid model to simulate the long-term housing stock energy use in Norway, where a technological (Q1) and system dynamics (Q2) model is used to simulate the development of the stock and an archetype approach (Q4) is used for estimating demand. Colloricchio [15] make another hybrid model by adding an econometric component to Sandberg et al.'s housing stock model. The model applies to a case study of the residential sector in Italy.

2.2. Additional Model Dimensions

Given the increasing sophistication of building stock energy models, the high-level classification quadrants of Figure 2 may preclude the communication of important contextual details about the chosen modeling approach.

Accordingly, we propose that a model's treatment of four additional dimensions should be described in parallel with its mapping to the high-level classification quadrants of Figure 2; these additional dimensions are enumerated below.

2.2.1. System boundaries

In building stock energy modeling, the collection of buildings studied can be conceptualized as a system. This means that a specific scope of study is selected, which is logically coherent and is considered sufficient to study all relevant aspects of the studied object. One of the most critical parts of any type of system modeling is defining the boundaries between systems, of the different parts of the system and by that the system as a whole (Figure 3). Different boundaries will lead to different system models, so choosing the appropriate boundaries for a modeling goal is critical to the interpretability of model outputs.

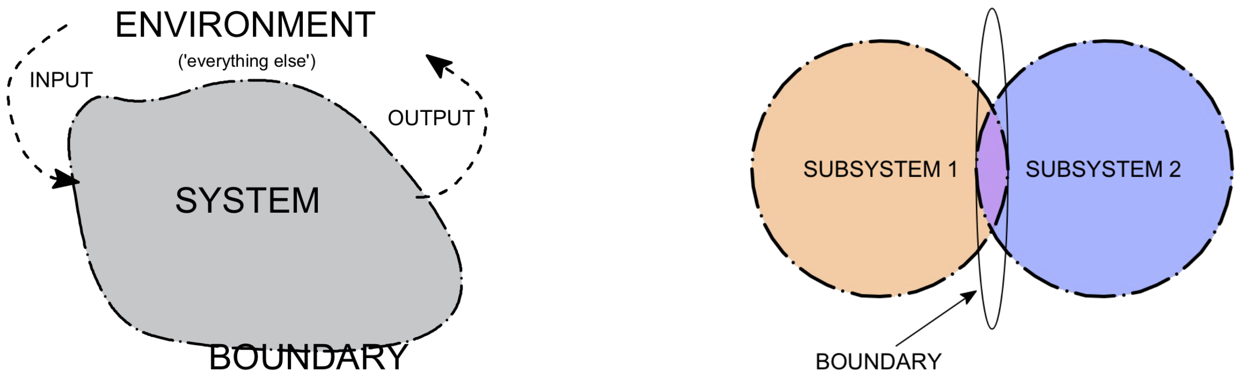

Figure 3: Relationship between the modeled system and its environment. The boundary is represented as a conceptual line which separated both (left). Interrelationship between two subsystems of one big system, the boundary of each subsystem also defines the interface between the two subsystems (right) [79].

The spatial scope of a building stock energy model is defined by the geographical area covered in the study. The spatial scope could be a given neighborhood (e.g. Cuerda et al., Sartori et al. [17, 84]), city (e.g. Ouyang et al. [68]), region (e.g. Galante et al., Reyna and Chester [33, 77], country (e.g. Mata et al., Sandberg et al., Nägeli et al. [53, 81, 59]) or countries (e.g. Urge-Vorsatz et al., Building Performance Institute Europe (BPIE), Vásquez et al., Mata et al. [99, 11, 102, 53].

The temporal scope of a model is defined by the length of the time period under study. Static models commonly describe the energy use in a specific year (e.g. Cuerda et al. [17]), whereas long-term dynamic models may describe the development over long time periods up to 50 or even 100 years (e.g. Sandberg et al., Berardi [80, 7]). Other models serve as an archival repository of historical consumption data and are continually updated [71]. The temporal scope may therefore cover both historical and future development.

Furthermore, the range of choices to be made regarding definition of system boundaries for the case of building stock energy models is, however, much broader than just spatio-temporal extent. The scope is often also limited to a subset of the building stock, e.g. the residential (e.g. Csoknyai et al. [16]) or non-residential building stock (e.g. Lindberg et al. [48]), or the public housing stock (e.g. Gagliano et al. [32]). Depending on the desired outcome, specific energy end uses might be explicitly tracked in the analysis. Some studies focus on operational energy use only (e.g., heating, cooling, domestic hot water), while others adopt a life cycle perspective and therefore include other phases such as manufacturing, transportation, construction and demolition in the analysis.

Beyond the main system boundary, modelers should also describe any subsystems within the model and define each subsystem's boundaries that determine its sphere of influence and control. This scoping of a given subsystem is crucial in determining the nature of its interface with other systems for successful design. Typical subsystems in building energy stock modeling include the physical buildings, energy demand, occupants, and HVAC systems. Outdoor conditions such as weather are usually treated as inputs to the model, although some parts such as detailed solar radiation and local wind pressure modeling are included as separate subsystems. Extended models may include representations of the electric grid, transportation systems, and macro- and micro-economic processes, among others.

2.2.2. Spatio-temporal resolution

A building stock energy model's spatio-temporal resolution is the level of disaggregation within the overall system boundary with which a specific type of model information/results are represented. Resolution suggests the unit of observation in the model (e.g., 'a house' or 'room-based' or 'meter-based,' etc.). While a system boundary represents the highest geographical or temporal aggregation of a model and therefore serves as an upper limit on a model's spatio-temporal resolution, the model's unit of observation is the lower limit of its spatio-temporal resolution.

Many building stock energy models study the energy demand within a given spatial boundary without any details about the location or distribution of the buildings within the geographical area. The spatial resolution is therefore equal to that entire area, even though the unit of observation might be a single dwelling. Other models have a high spatial resolution and model the building stock energy use in relation to the location of the buildings, e.g. by the use of geographical information systems (GIS). The geocoded model results are then commonly presented in maps which adds important additional information about the distribution of the energy use (e.g. Mastrucci et al., Stephan and Athanassiadis, Möller et al. [51, 88, 56]). Where multiple data layers are incorporated, each layer may have a different spatial resolution (e.g., census tract, zip code) and therefore the analytical methods used to map these layers to a common spatial unit is an important model attribute.

The temporal resolution is defined by the time steps of the analysis. In most of the studies previously mentioned, the energy simulations are carried out per year, which is commonly the case in the studies with the longest temporal scope. However, in models with a higher temporal resolution, simulations can be done per minute, hour (e.g. Sartori et al. [84]), week or month.

2.2.3. Dynamics

Treatment of dynamics in building stock energy models can be sub-categorized in terms of the three supporting variable layers of Figure 2: 1) building usage/occupant behavior, 2) building stock, and 3) context/environment. These variables may be tightly connected in the model function (e.g., building stock dynamics are affected by changes in the model context).

Occupants/building use dynamics include the number of occupants (e.g. evolution of family composition, number of visitors on the premises, aging, typical occupant interactions), occupant's energy-related behavior over time (e.g. adjustment of thermostat set points and other controls, movement to and from different spaces) and appliance ownership (e.g., type of HVAC equipment, number of TVs, etc.). For multi-family or commercial buildings with centralized control systems, operator decision-making can also fall into this sub-category.

Building stock dynamics refer to changes in the stock such as building demolition, renovation, and new construction, as well as the effect this has on the building stock composition, installed equipment, and resulting energy and environmental impacts.

As Figure 4 shows, changes to the building stock may be represented using both static and dynamic approaches [52]. Static models assess building stocks at a defined moment in time (e.g., for a single year). Such point-in-time snapshots may be assessed in a *status quo assessment* or a *comparative assessment*, where the latter compares the current state with a hypothetical future state (e.g., after the implementation of certain energy efficiency measures). In contrast, dynamic models capture the evolution of building stocks and their energy use over time by modeling processes such as new construction, demolition, retrofits and replacement of technologies. Such analyses can be focused on historic development (ex-post), on forecasting future development (ex-ante) or a combination of both.

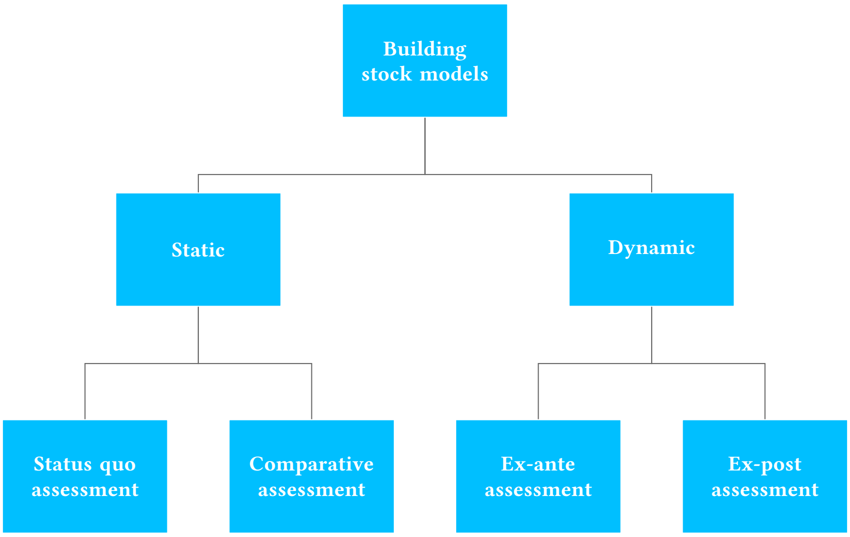

Figure 4: Classification of model dynamics in building stock models

Context/environment dynamics refer to changes in the energy system resulting in altered greenhouse gas emission factors (e.g. changing electric generation mix) or energy prices as well as population growth, structural changes in the economy (e.g. growth of certain economic sectors) or the impact of climate change on building energy demand via changing temperatures, humidity, etc.

Transparent descriptions of how such dynamics are handled in building stock energy models are crucial for assessing the quality of model outputs. For example, as described in Sartori et al. [83], it is often found that policy roadmaps and other studies use rather detailed information on energy and emission intensities, whereas the changes in the building stock itself– in terms of number of buildings or floor area – are modeled using fixed rates for construction, demolition and renovation, which may be overly simplistic. Alternatively, renovation rates may be assumed to increase rapidly in order to reach the energy efficiency goals for the stock. Sandberg et al. [80] demonstrate how unrealistic assumptions about renovation dynamics can result in model outputs that overstate future energy savings potential.

2.2.4. Quality assurance

It essential to understand the limitations of the predictive power of any model. No model can be a perfect representation of the system it aims to emulate and all models inevitably contain uncertainty [73], which should be quantified as part of the model quality assurance process. Uncertainty can be defined as "any deviation from the unachievable ideal of completely deterministic knowledge of the relevant system"[103]. It is to be expected that as the systems being modeled increase in scale and complexity, the uncertainty in the model will also increase. Consequently, it is inevitable that building stock energy models will contain a considerable number of uncertainties. While some applications of building stock energy models, such as in early design, actively seek a range of possible options, it is common to see building stock energy model outputs expressed as a single value [13]. Such point values may yield misleading impressions about the certainty of model insights when used to support energy policy decisions.

In the literature, several different classification schemes for uncertainty have been introduced [8, 66], but a general consensus in terms of classification as well as terminology does not seem to exist [74]. Although there is a lack of agreement on the detailed categorization of sources of uncertainty, a review of 20 existing classification schemes highlighted a broad pattern with sources of uncertainty being grouped according to whether they related to model inputs, the model itself or model outputs. This is summarized in Figure 5.

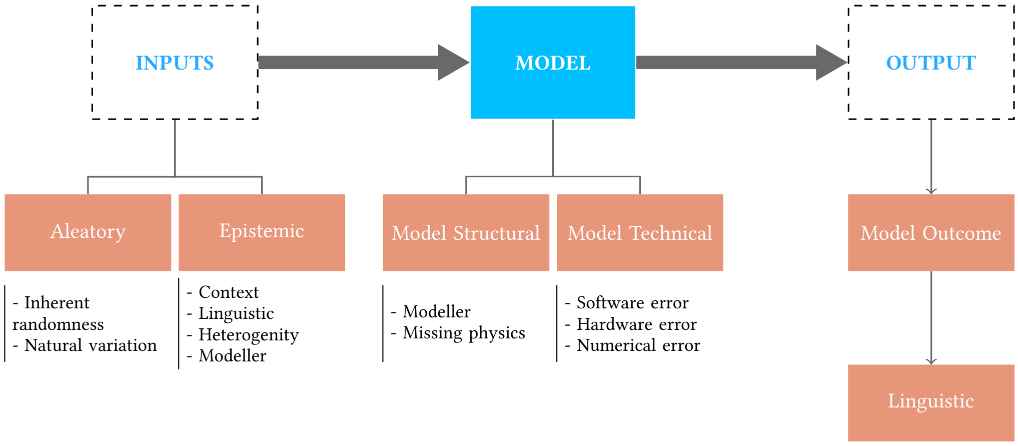

Figure 5: Sources of uncertainty identified in literature (closely related to the scope of large-scale building energy models).

A review of the treatment of uncertainty in the literature relating to large scale building energy models undertaken by Fennell et al. [26] concluded that Uncertainty Analysis (UA) and Sensitivity Analysis (SA) are not common practice in building-stock energy modeling and that if UA and SA are performed, only a few parameters are assessed and that methodologies are not standardized. In addition, although the literature suggests that model uncertainties are likely to be a significant source of uncertainty, the review did not identify any studies which addressed this source of uncertainty.

Annex 70 work is underway to address the lack of evidence in the published literature on the treatment of uncertainty in large scale building energy models. The initial phase of this work is focused on input uncertainty. A wide range of research teams are participating in this work with a diverse range of modeling approaches. Each model will be evaluated stochastically based on shared sets of uncertain inputs. A range of different sensitivity analysis techniques will be applied to each model to explore how model attributes such as geographic scale and degree of aggregation affect the performance of different techniques. Publications on this work and best practice for uncertainty quantification are forthcoming.

Model UA and SA are distinct from model validation, which compares model outputs with measured values for energy consumption. The review undertaken by Reinhart and Davila [75] suggests that when aggregated city-scale building energy use data are used for validation, individual building model errors tend to average out and overall errors are in the range 7% - 21% for heating loads and 1 - 19% for total energy use intensity. However, simulation errors may be much higher for individual buildings in the stock, which is not reflected in the aggregate validation statistics. In addition, Reddy et al. [72] highlight the highlight the high dimensionality of these models, underscoring that small validation error only indicates that a local minimum has been achieved, and that model accuracy is not guaranteed through aggregate validation alone. Validating against multiple external data sources can potentially improve confidence in model accuracy, but this is not always possible. Moreover, for building stock energy models that project out into future years, validation data will not be available at all to compare model outputs against. Complementary uncertainty assessments can address these shortcomings of model validation efforts.

3. Discussion

The building stock energy modeling research area has seen a high degree of recent publication activity; the model classification approach presented in this paper will serve as a formal framework for comprehensively surveying, assessing, and demonstrating use cases for a wide range of these existing and emerging modeling efforts. At a conceptual level, the classification quadrants introduced in Figure 2 encourage quick comparisons of a wide range of building stock energy models, including those that apply to different regions of interest. Such comparisons support stronger international collaborations around building stock energy modeling, which are needed to find pathways for long-term reductions in building energy use and emissions that can contribute substantially to global climate change mitigation efforts. At the same time, this paper's classification scheme provides avenues for communicating richer technical information about a model, by including supporting modeling layers in the high-level classification structure (buildings, people, environment) and encouraging modelers to describe their handling of additional modeling dimensions that are not captured by the high-level structure.

Within Annex 70, the new classification scheme is being used to generate high-level metadata to organize models in an online repository. Models in the Annex 70 repository will be summarized in terms of the following attributes:

- general purpose and application,
- model classification quadrant (top-down/bottom-up, white-box/black-box per Figure 2),
- modeling technique (system dynamics, statistical, machine learning, archetype, etc. per Figure 2),
- inclusion of additional layers (buildings, people, environment)
- treatment of additional dimensions (system boundaries, spatio-temporal resolution, dynamics, and uncertainty), and
- accessibility of the model and supporting data sources.

Table 1 shows examples of how key models from each of the Annex's participating member countries are being described in terms of high-level attributes.

Table 1: Sample mapping of building stock energy models from IEA-EBC Annex 70 member countries to this paper's proposed model classification scheme.

Country	Model Name	Model Use	Model Classification Quadrant	Supporting Reference(s)
Belgium	Delghurst Model	Assessment of the effect of energy saving measures in terms of reducing energy consumption in relation to costs in the residential sector	Q4 (physics-simulation)	Model documentation [18, 19], and application [9]
Canada	The Energy, Emissions and Economy Model for Canada (E3MC)	A macroeconomic model used to develop projections for Canada's National Communication and Biennial Reports to the UNFCCC and Canada's Emissions Trends reports	Hybrid: Q1 (econometric) to simulate macro-economic trends and Q2 (system dynamics) to simulate energy demand.	Model documentation [21] [92] and application [36]
	CityInSight	Assessment of energy, greenhouse gas emissions and financial impacts of changes in land use, building type, building code, fuel mix, equipment, renewables, district energy, and behavior to support municipal energy and emissions planning	Hybrid: Q2 (systems-dynamics) to simulate building stock evolution and Q4 (physics-simulation) to simulate energy demand per unit stock	Model summary [89]
Netherlands	Vesta MAIS spatial energy model	Assessment of the effect of energy saving measures in terms of reducing CO_2 emissions, energy consumption, investment costs and energy costs Assessment of the effect of changes in heat supply and policy instruments including taxes, and subsidies	Q4 (physics-simulation)	Model documentation [27], GitHub repository [101], and application [100]

Table 1 continued from previous page

Country	Model Name	Model Use	Model Classification Quadrant	Supporting Reference(s)
Norway	RE-BUILDS	Assessment of the long-term development of the Norwegian residential building stock, including its stock dynamics and renewal in terms of new construction, renovation and demolition. Assessment of long-term development in energy demand in the stock due to different development paths in various scenarios.	Hybrid: Q1 (technological) to estimate the total dwelling stock size, Q2 (system dynamics) to simulate stock dynamics and Q4 (physics-simulation) to estimate the energy demand per building archetype across the simulated stock.	Model documentation [83, 81], and application [80, 81]
Switzerland	ABBSM	Assessment of the dynamics of national building stocks and its energy- and climate -impact over time. In particular how building owners decisions to retrofit the building envelope and replace heating systems under different policy interventions affects this development.	Hybrid: Q4 (physics-simulation) to simulate energy demand, and Q4 (agent-based) to model building stock dynamics	Model documentation and application [65, 64, 63]
United Kingdom	SimStock	Assessment of the effects of different policy choices on city-level energy consumption including peak demands. Heat exposure can also be evaluated.	Q4 (physics-simulation)	Underlying philosophy [14]
United States	Scout	Assessment of national energy, cost, and CO_2 emissions impacts of U.S. building efficiency to assist in R&D program design	Hybrid: Q1 (econometric) to model technology stock size and dynamics and Q4 (appliance distribution) to model energy use per unit stock	Model documentation [96], GitHub repository [38], and application [45]
	ResStock	Assessment of the impact of energy efficiency measures in the residential sector, providing detailed information on energy time-series, cost-effectiveness, technology, building type, and location.	Q4 (physics-simulation)	Model documentation [61], GitHub repository [60], and application [105]

We acknowledge that this paper's classification scheme does not list or fully characterize all possible techniques for modeling building stock energy use; this was not the aim of our effort. Rather, we provide a general, extensible framework onto which particular techniques or combinations of techniques may be mapped, even if these techniques are not explicitly called out by the classification diagram in Figure 2. Indeed, as the research landscape around building stock energy modeling changes, we anticipate the need to revise our classification diagram accordingly, much as we have adapted the Swan and Urgursal framework developed over a decade ago.

Moreover, while the classification scheme presented herein is intended to facilitate quick model comparison and assessment, it is not designed to yield deeper insights into a model's design and execution that are needed to accurately reproduce its use across the research community. Such insights may concern for example model licensing and usage rights, guidance on running the model, and documentation of a model's input and output datasets. To address this limitation on the classification scheme's application, IEA EBC Annex 70 is developing a complementary reporting protocol for building energy stock modeling. This reporting protocol is distinct from the classification scheme in its stronger emphasis on capturing the technical details needed to fully understand how a model works, but draws upon the classification framework to establish model metadata - much as the Annex model repository is doing. Other fields have successfully deployed reporting protocols – notably health care [6] – and the intention is to have modelers use the protocol to frame any publication that presents a building stock energy model, enabling its effective use outside of the context for which it was developed.

4. Conclusion

This paper introduced a new framework for classifying models of building stock energy use at the urban, regional, and national scales. The classification scheme, which was developed as part of IEA-EBC Annex 70, builds upon previous approaches for classifying building stock energy models, updating these approaches to account for newer modeling techniques, establish a more intuitive and flexible high-level classification structure, and account for additional dimensions that are not captured by a high-level model classification exercise. We reviewed existing literature that demonstrates the need for new elements of the classification framework given the availability of richer datasets on the building stock, expanded computational power, and the advent of modeling techniques that take advantage of these resources. We concluded by discussing the practical utility of the classification scheme in promoting more effective sharing and assessment of models across the international research community, including the use of the scheme to develop an online model registry and reporting protocol for Annex 70.

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Declaration of Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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