

Rethinking Building Performance during the Operational Phase

Towards increased implementation and adoption of system- and occupant-centric assessments

By Kamilla Heimar Andersen

Ph.D. Defense, BUILD – Department of the Built Environment, Aalborg University

14th of November 2024

Background of the Ph.D. project

- BUILD – Department of the Built Environment, Aalborg University: 2021-2024
- Ph.D. project supported by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme and several partners through the research project "Self-Assessment Towards Optimization of Building Energy" (SATO)
- Main supervisor:
 - Associate Professor Anna Marszal-Pomianowska
- Co-supervisors:
 - Professor Per K. Heiselberg
 - Associate Professor Henrik K. Nielsen

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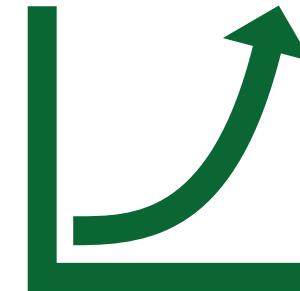
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Why focus on buildings?

A problem



A potential solution



**Buildings in the world:
36 % energy use**

**Increase and access to data:
Unlocking potential to rethink and
perform building performance
assessments**

Building Performance Assessments

Focus of this Ph.D. project

Building performance assessments

- Energy performance
- Indoor environment quality
- Occupant preferences/characteristics

Building design phase

Building operation phase



Building Performance Assessments

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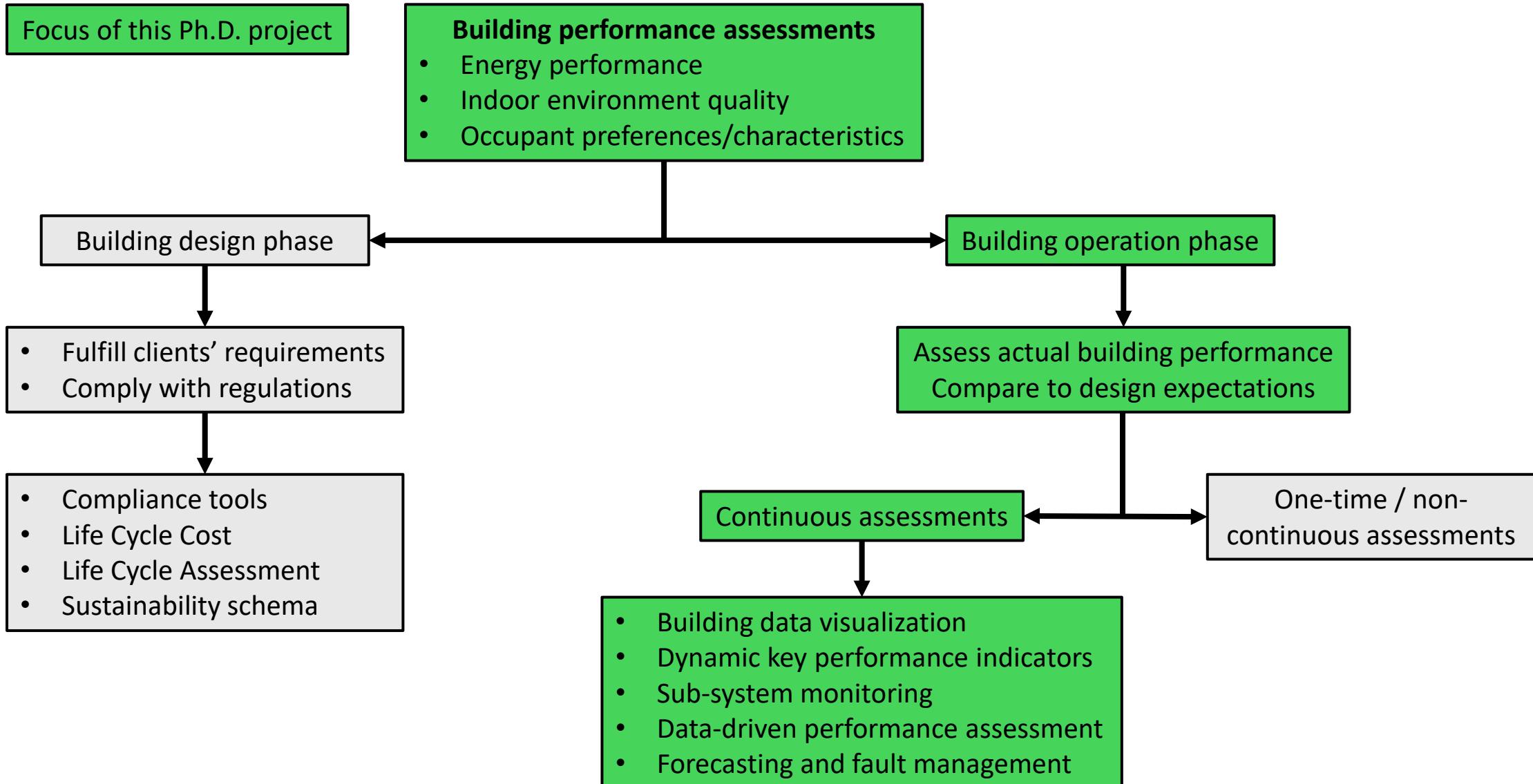
Building design phase

Building operation phase

- Fulfill clients' requirements
- Comply with regulations

- Compliance tools
- Life Cycle Cost
- Life Cycle Assessment
- Sustainability schema

Building Performance Assessments



Actual building performance

Can be influenced by many factors

- Faults in building systems or control, tuning and calibration issues
- Occupant behavior (interaction with systems)
- Outdoor conditions (temperature, precipitation)
- Renovations
- Maintenance practices
- Building not used as intended (design and layout)

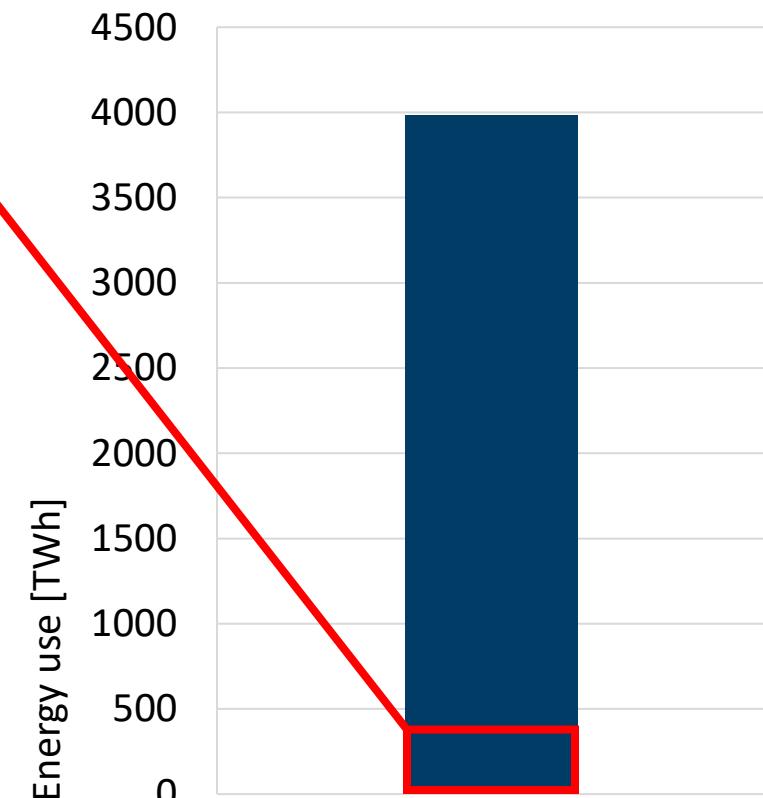
Actual building performance

Can be influenced by many factors

- Faults in building systems or control, tuning and calibration issues
- Occupant behavior (interaction with systems)
- Outdoor conditions (temperature, participation)
- Renovations
- Maintenance practices
- Building not used as intended (design and layout)

Continuous System Assessments

- 12 % of the energy use in commercial buildings in the USA are due to faults
- Tools for Fault Detection and Diagnose (FDD) show great promise for mitigating the latter
- **We still need to figure out**
 - Actual performance of FDD, when implemented and adopted
 - From a research and industry perspective
 - Challenges/barriers and drivers for FDD
 - Documented benefits of FDD

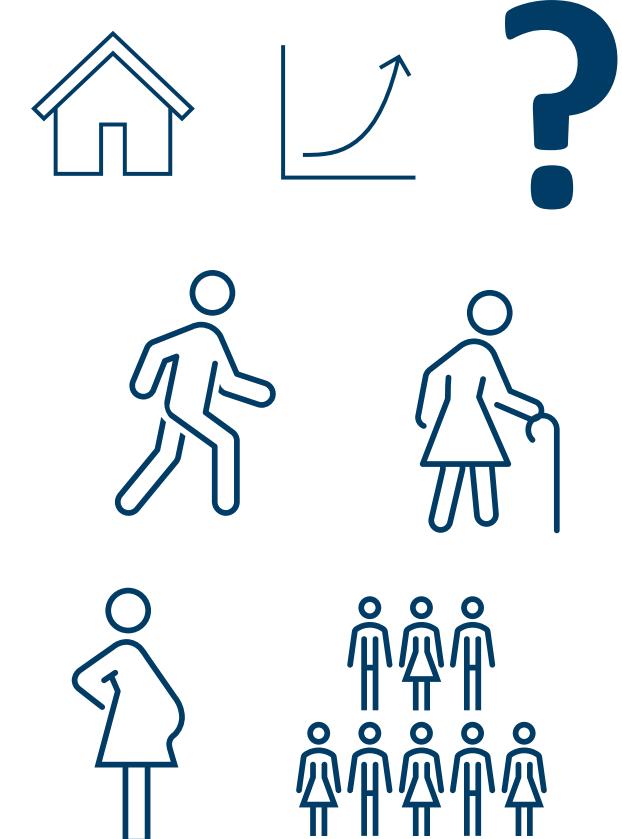


USA's energy use in
commercial buildings

K. Roth et al., 2004

Occupant-Centric Assessments

- Until now in BPAs
 - Solely building and system focus
- But
 - Occupant behavior play a large role in building performance
- **We still need to figure out**
 - Identify which occupant characteristics are practical for BPAs
 - Explore how to integrate this information with energy and IEQ data
 - Consider additional characteristics or practices that could inspire improved management practices



Aim of the Ph.D. project

How can system and occupant-centric assessments contribute to informing decisions that enhance a building's operational efficiency and occupant well-being?

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Main publications

Chapter 3, Part I: System Assessments, papers 1 – 3

Two peer-reviewed journal articles and one conference article

Journal Article 1: Fault Detection and Diagnosis Encyclopedia for Building Systems: A Systematic Review

Journal Article 2: Building Assessment Framework from Whole Building to Components: A Danish Case Study

Journal Article 3: Barriers and drivers for implementation of automatic fault detection and diagnosis

Chapter 4, Part II: Occupant-Centric Assessments, papers 4 – 6

Three peer-reviewed journal articles

Journal Article 4: Increased Understanding of Building Operational Performance Through Occupant-Centric Key Performance Indicators

Journal Article 5: Exploring occupant detection model generalizability for residential buildings using supervised learning with IEQ sensors

Journal Article 6: Behavior and Everyday Practices in Multi-Story Residential Buildings

Research questions

Chapter 3, Part I: System Assessments, papers 1 – 3

How to foster implementation and adoption of fault detection and diagnosis for continuous building system performance assessments?

The introduction is divided into three subsections: Motivation; background and motivation of this study; Definitions and terminology; and Contribution and structure of the article.

1.1. Motivation

The European Union (EU) is committed to cutting greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55 % before 2030 compared to 1990 [1]. As well known, buildings are responsible for about 40 % of total greenhouse gas emissions in the EU, with 70 % of the building stock being deemed energy inefficient [1]. Hence, the building stock is a clear target for energy savings. This approach often leads to many false alarms and unnecessary alerts. The reason is that the building control systems, where fixed boundaries are set by domain experts to trigger alarm limits, are not able to distinguish between real faults and transient faults amidst the numerous alarms. This highlights the need for effective fault detection and diagnosis in buildings. A study conducted in the United States found that 30 % of the faults in buildings detected in commercial buildings accounted for between 4 % and 18 % of energy

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Energy 2022, 13, 4366. <https://doi.org/10.3390/en13124366>

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Chapter 4, Part II: Occupant-Centric Assessments, papers 4 – 6

How can an occupant-centric assessment framework be developed to understand occupants better, thereby enhancing building performance?

24 support building energy efficiency.

25 **Keywords**

26 Occupant behavior; Heating practices; Human-building interaction; Heating use; Residential building; Energy efficiency;

27 Thermal comfort; Indoor environment; Energy feedback

28 **Acronym and corresponding Definition**

Abbreviation	Definition
AHU	Air Handling Unit
CAV	Constant Air Ventilation
DMI	Danish Meteorological Institute
EROB	Energy-Related Occupant Behavior
GSHP	Ground Source Heat Pump
HDD	Heating Degree Days
HVAC	Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
OC-KPIs	Occupant-Centric Key Performance Indicator
OB	Occupant Behavior

Received: 28 May 2024; Revised: 24 August 2024; Accepted: 0578-7786 © 2024 The Author(s). Published by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC-BY license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/enb

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Energy & Buildings

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/enb

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Building and Environment

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ben

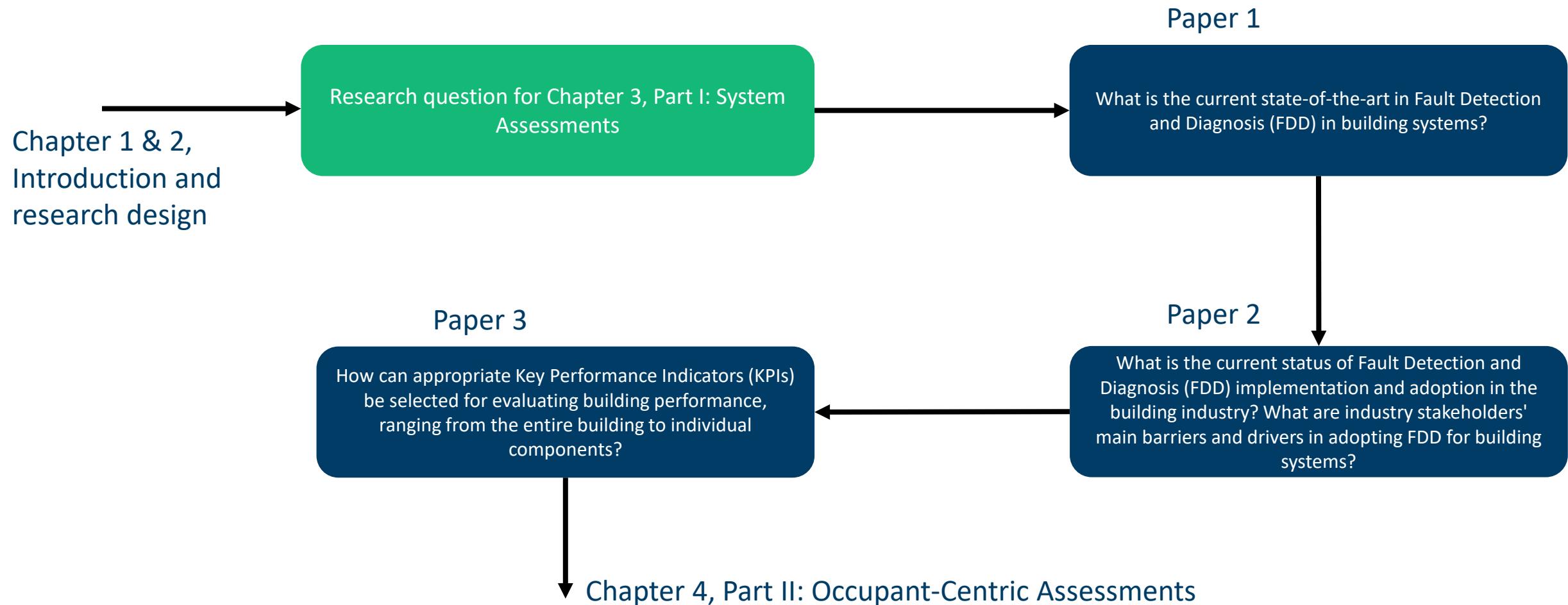
Building and Environment

Status on submitted papers to journals (Nov. 2024)

- Paper 5 is published with minor revision in the journal «Energy and Buildings» per September 2024
 - «*Increased Understanding of Building Operational Performance Through Occupant-Centric Key Performance Indicators*» is published in the special issue «*Innovations in Increasing Health, Comfort & Wellbeing, and Energy Performance of Building: Designs, Strategies and Future Directions*».
- Paper 6 is under 2nd round of review with minor revision in the journal «Energy and Buildings» per November 2024 (deadline December 1st, 2024)
 - «*A Mixed-Method Approach to Understand Energy-Related Occupant Behavior and Everyday Practices in Multi-Story Residential Buildings*» is under 2nd revision in the special issue «*Challenges, Solutions, and Methods for the Energy Transition in the Existing Housing Stock*».

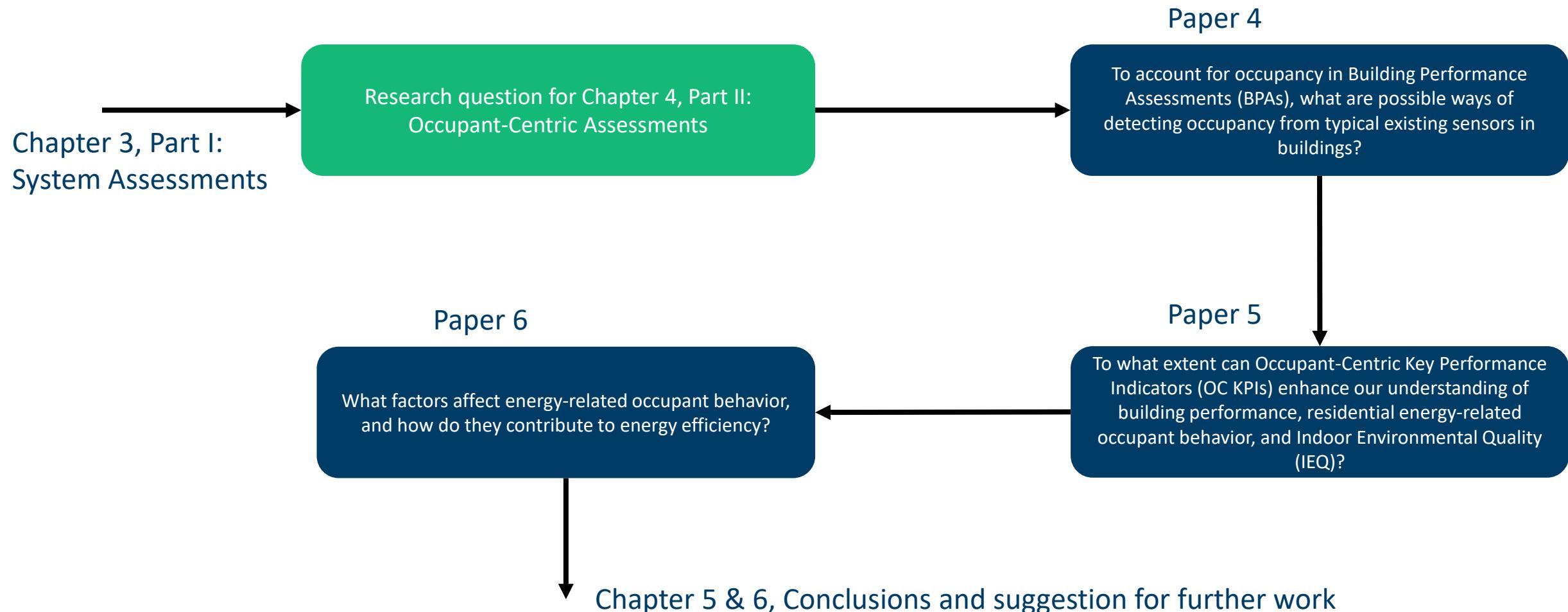
Sub-research questions

Part I: System Assessments



Sub-research questions

Part II: Occupant-Centric Assessments



Overview of building types and research method

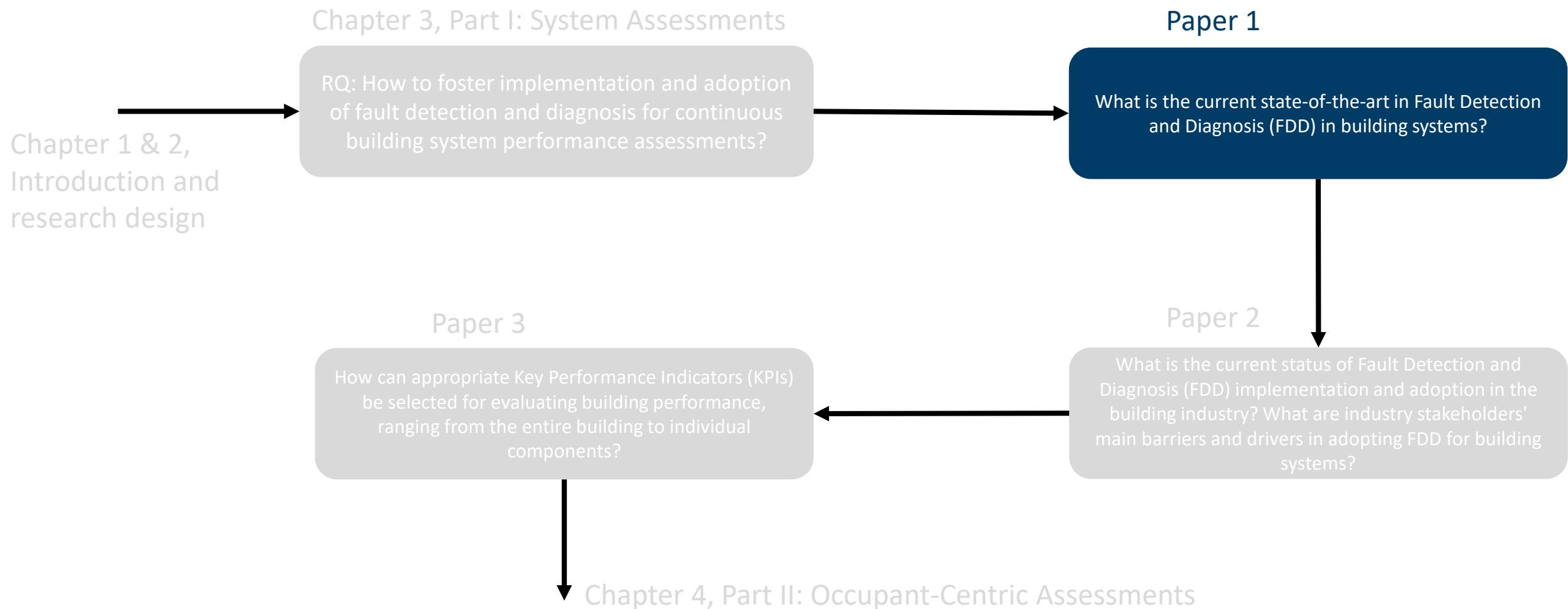
Paper no.	Building type	Research method
1	-	Literature review
2	-	Literature review & Semi-structured qualitative interviews
3	Office	Quantitative data analysis (sensor data)
4	Residential	Mixed methods: Semi-structured qualitative interviews & quantitative data analysis (sensor data)
5	Residential	Quantitative data analysis (sensor data)
6	Residential	Questionnaire & quantitative data analyses (sensor data)

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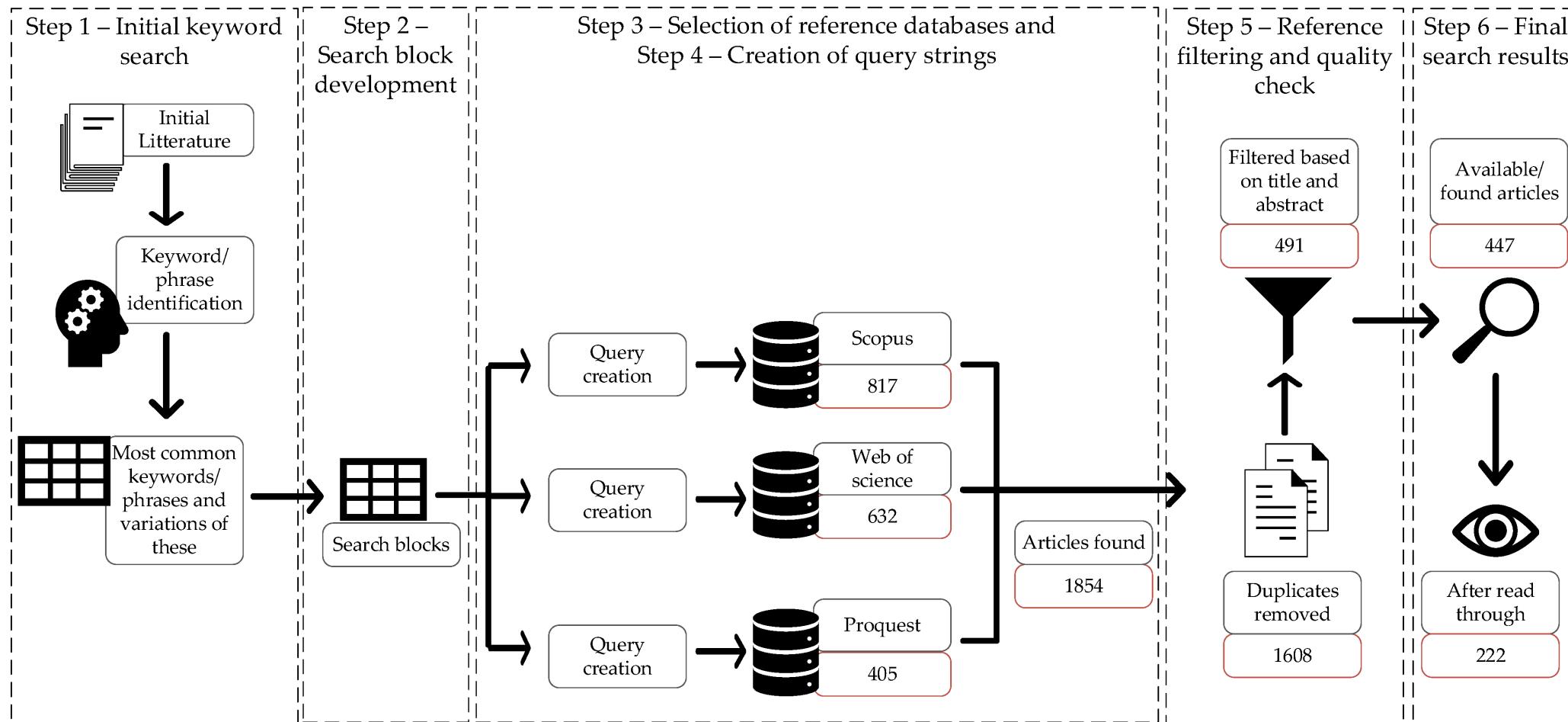
Sub-research questions

Part I: System Assessments



Current Status of Fault Detection and Diagnosis in Building Systems

Methodology



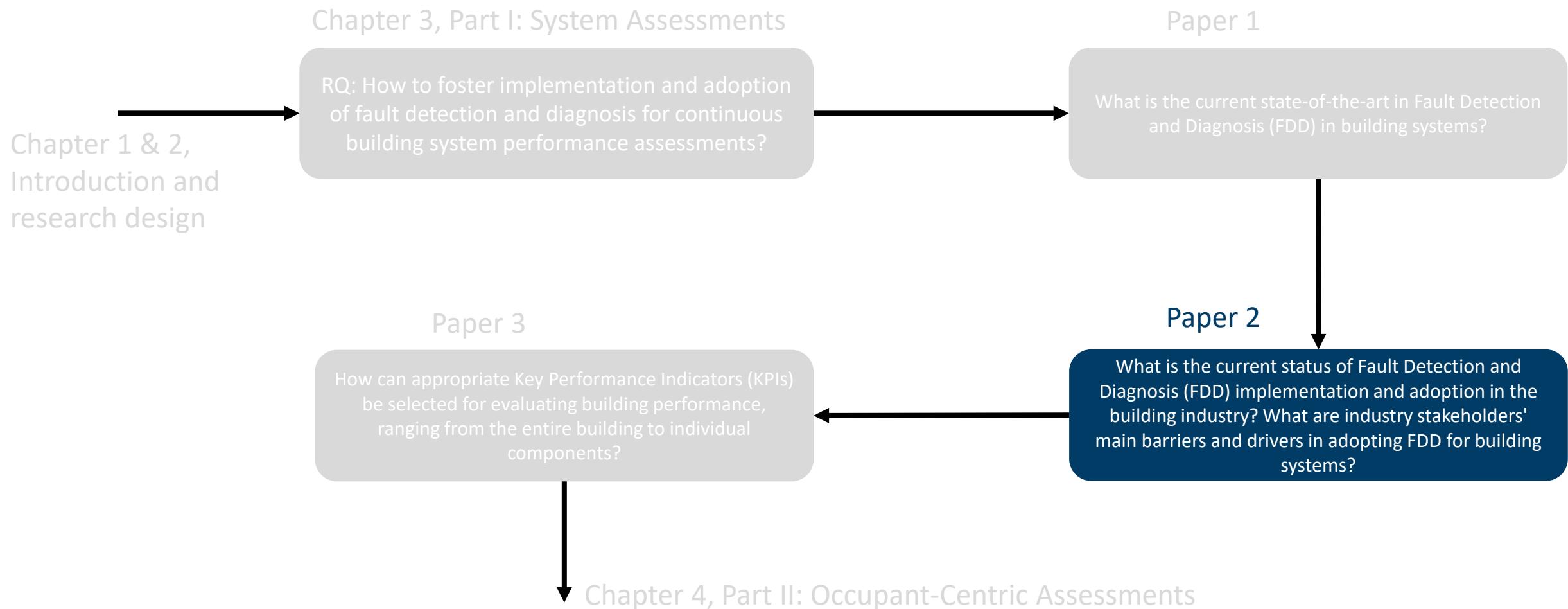
Current Status of Fault Detection and Diagnosis in Building Systems

Key findings

1. Research on FDD in building systems remains in its development phase
2. The most studied building systems were centralized cooling system (41 %) and air handling units (34 %)
3. Significant lack of reproducible content (29 %)
4. FDD-related datasets fosters research activity in the field, but there are few open datasets

Sub-research questions

Part I: System Assessments



What Hinders the Adoption and Implementation of System Assessments in the Building Industry?

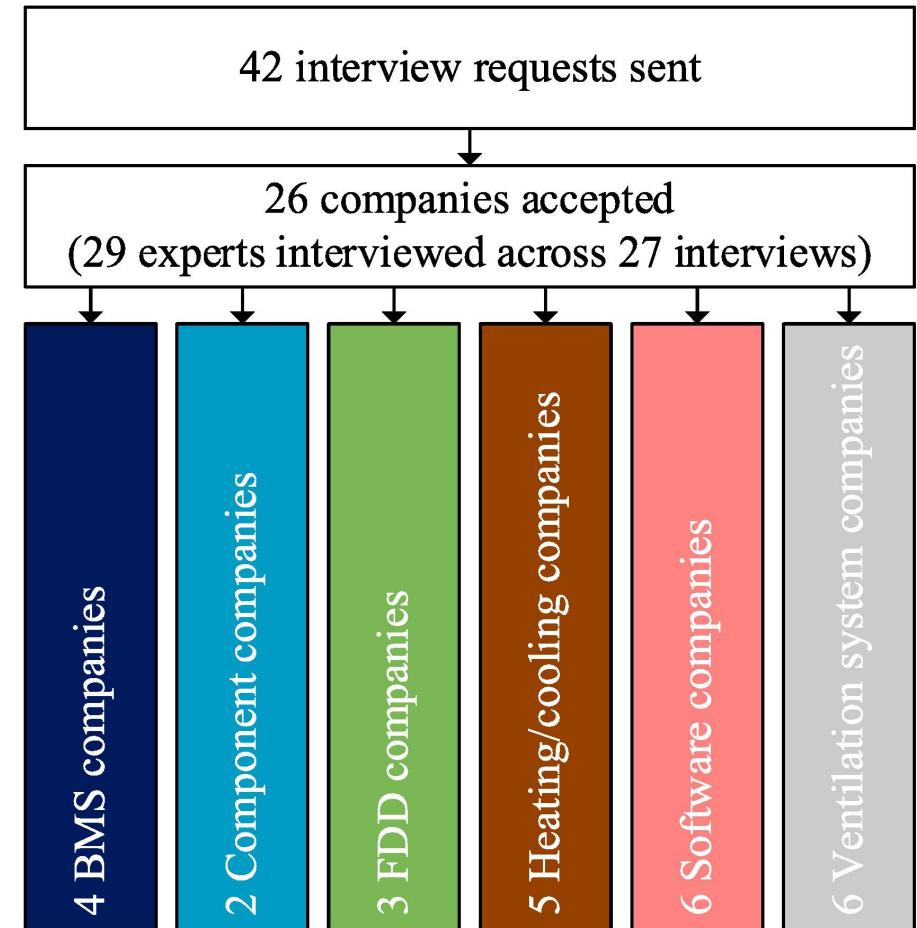
Methodology

- How different types of HVAC producers facilitate finding faults in their technical systems
 - What methods they use
 - What their challenges are
 - What their customers request
-
- 2-fold approach
 - Research perspective: Continuation of the literature review in paper 1 to investigate the focus on implementation
 - Industry perspective: Semi-structured qualitative interviews

What Hinders the Adoption and Implementation of System Assessments in the Building Industry?

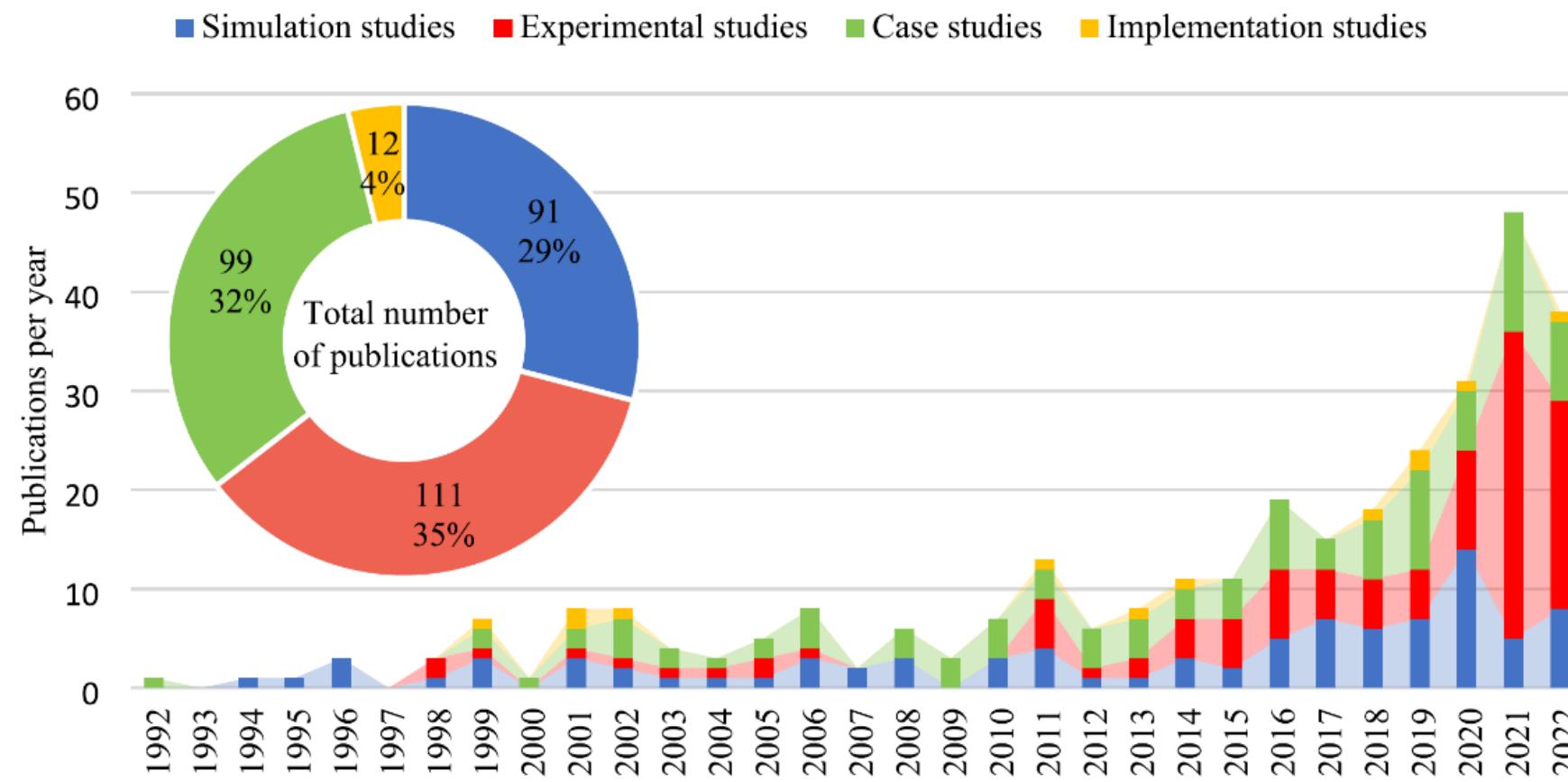
Methodology

- 62 % acceptance rate for interviews
- 26 companies located in
 - Scandinavia
 - Europe
 - USA
- Interview implementation
 - Majority online and a few physical
 - English, Danish and Norwegian



What Hinders the Adoption and Implementation of System Assessments in the Building Industry?

Results: Research perspective



What Hinders the Adoption and Implementation of System Assessments in the Building Industry?

Results: Industry perspective

Top three barriers

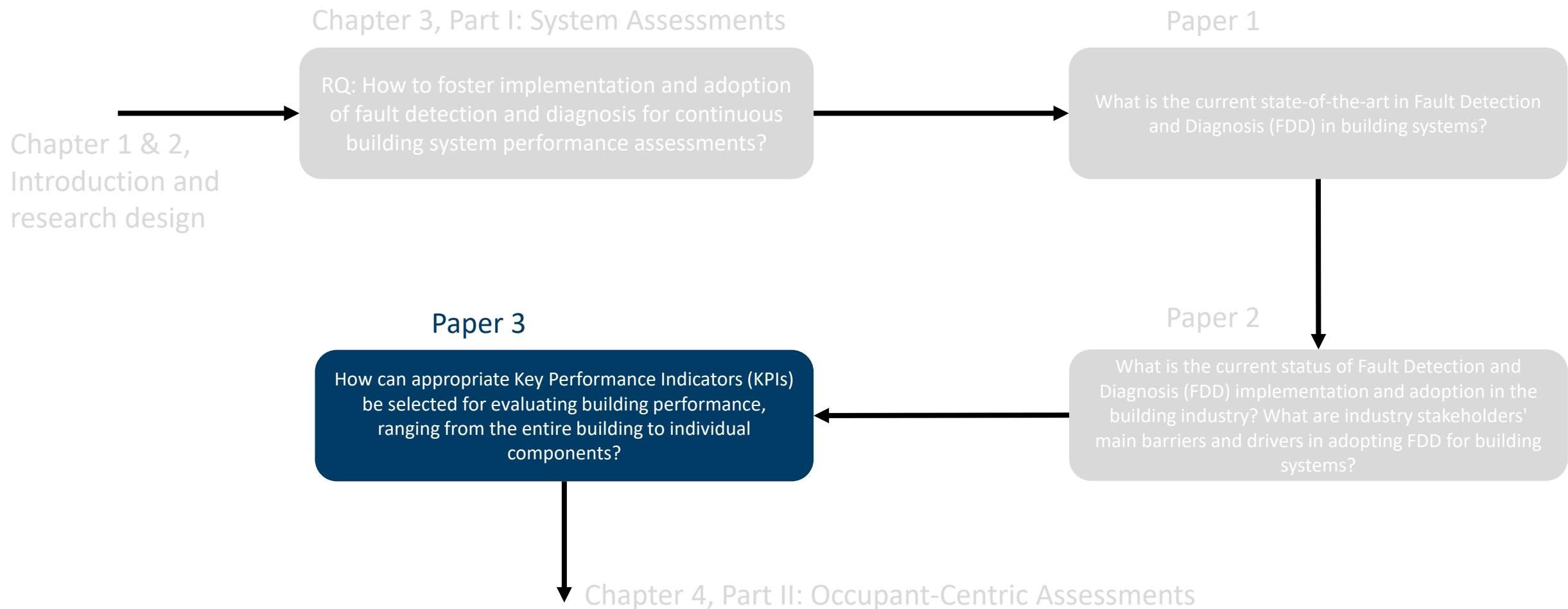
1. Lack of common knowledge, standardized methods, and tools for FDD.
2. General lack of understanding of what AFDD is, what it can achieve, and what customers can benefit from.
3. Trust in the FDD system from a user perspective

Top three drivers

1. Boosting the general digitalization and digitalization of the built environment.
2. Specifiers on large projects are gaining experience with FDD and are increasingly requiring it in future projects.
3. Increase building service reliability

Sub-research questions

Part I: System Assessments



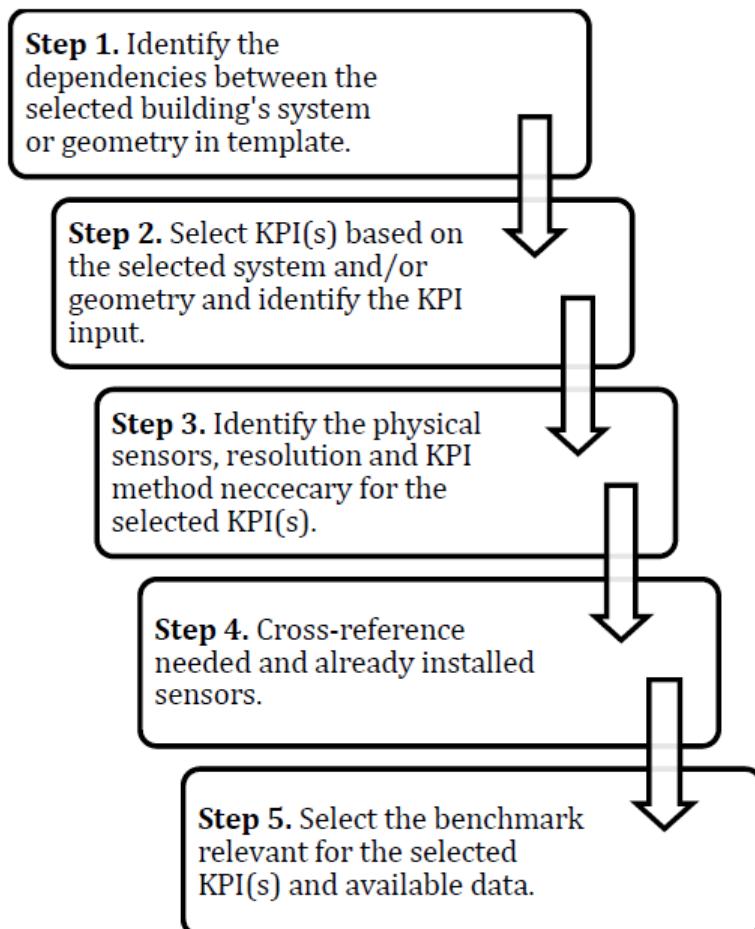
A Tool for Assessing Building Performance

Methodology



A Tool for Assessing Building Performance

Methodology

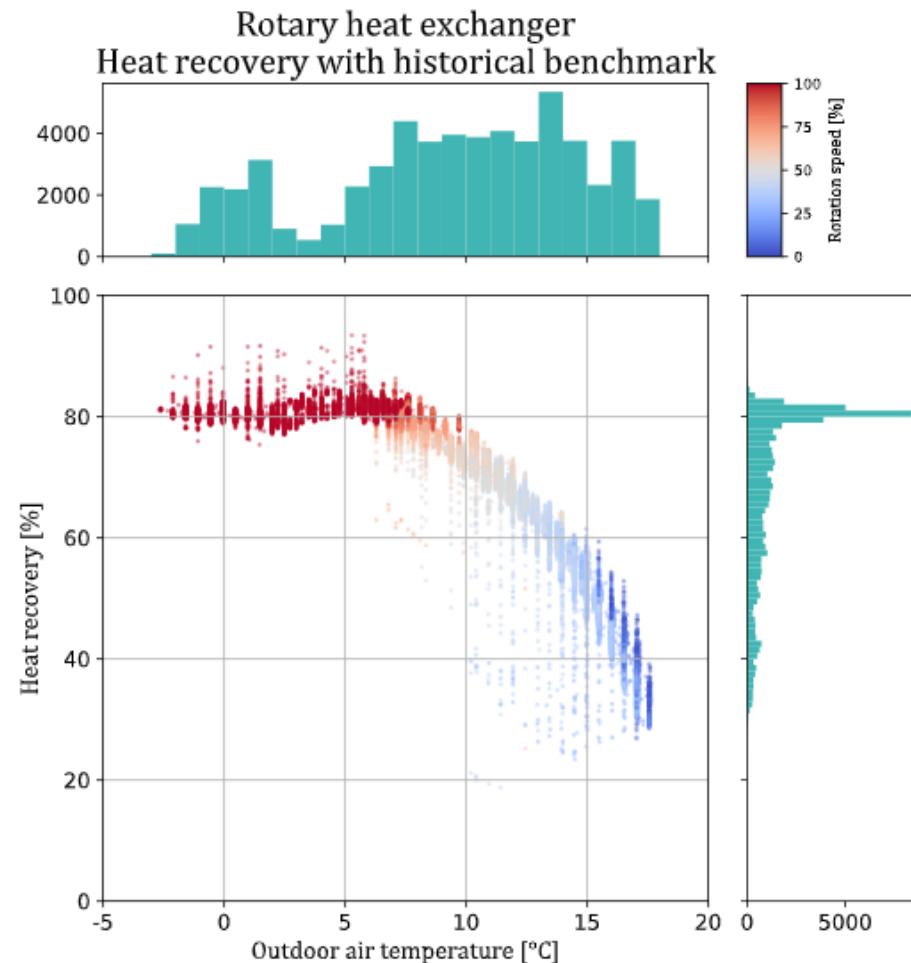


- Benchmarking methods
 - Historical
 - Reference
 - Contextual
- Three KPIs were selected for a ventilation system at TMV23

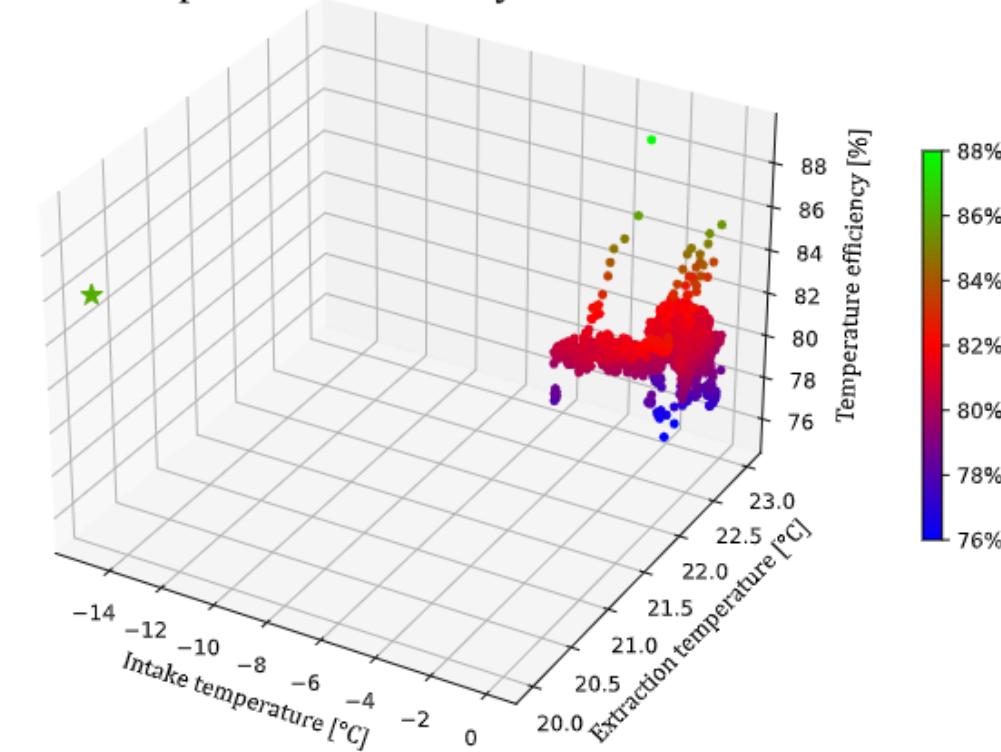
Location	KPI	Input needed
Subsystem (AHU)	1) Specific AHU power (electricity use per m ³ air)	Electricity use, air flow
Component (RHx)	2) Temperature efficiency and 3) Heat recovery	Efficiency, outdoor air temperature

A Tool for Assessing Building Performance

Results



Rotary heat exchanger
Temperature efficiency with reference bechmark



The measured values are based on 2912 points	Manufacturer value	Measured average value	Measured standard deviation
Temperature efficiency	86%	80.4%	0.8%
Intake temperature	-15°C	-1.4°C	1.1°C
Extraction temperature	20°C	22.6°C	0.2°C

A Tool for Assessing Building Performance

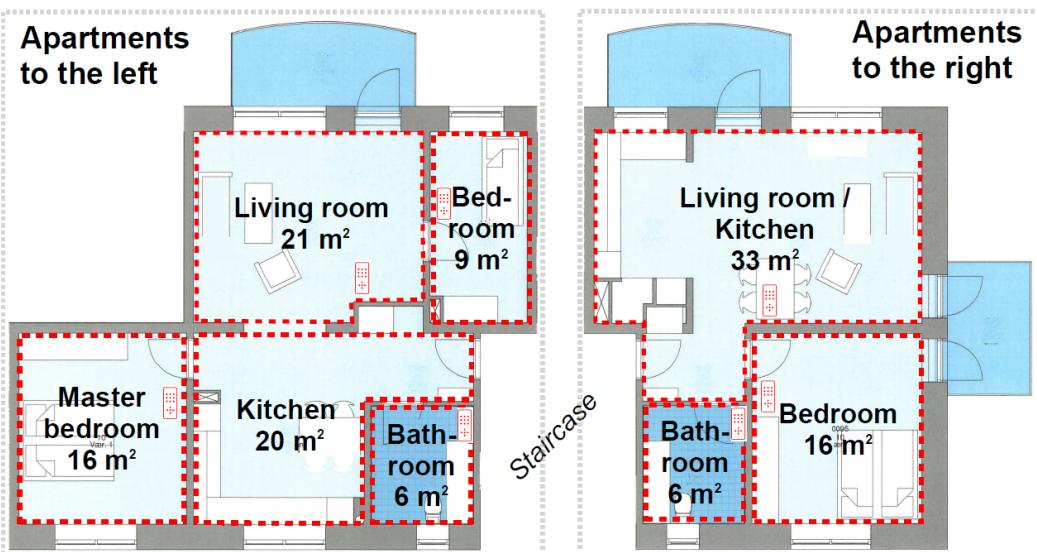
Key findings

- Scalable and portable FDD solutions do not exist yet, but data visualization and KPI tools can potentially help with manual FDD
- Presented methodology can help selecting adequate KPI for specific systems based on data constraints
- Presented KPI visualization tool facilitates rapid manual system assessment
- Including context and historical data can provide input to degradation detection, fault diagnosis, and preventive maintenance

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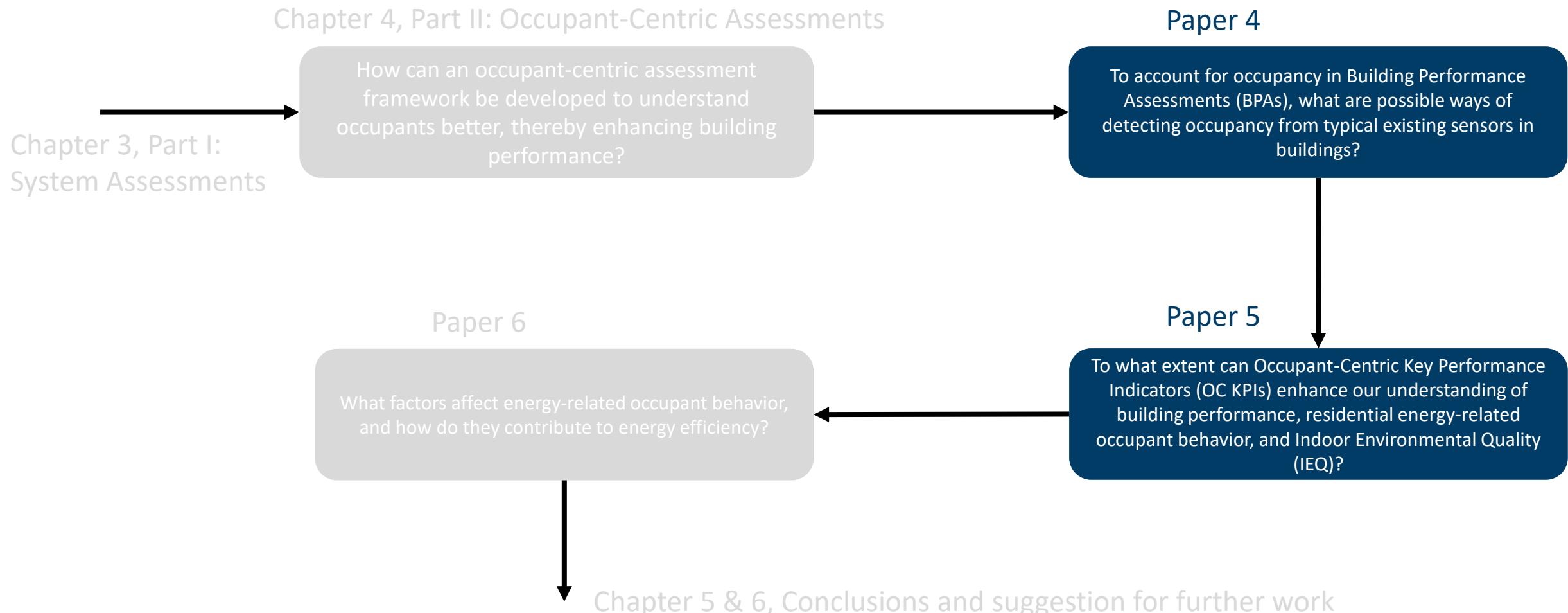
Residential Building Frederikshavn



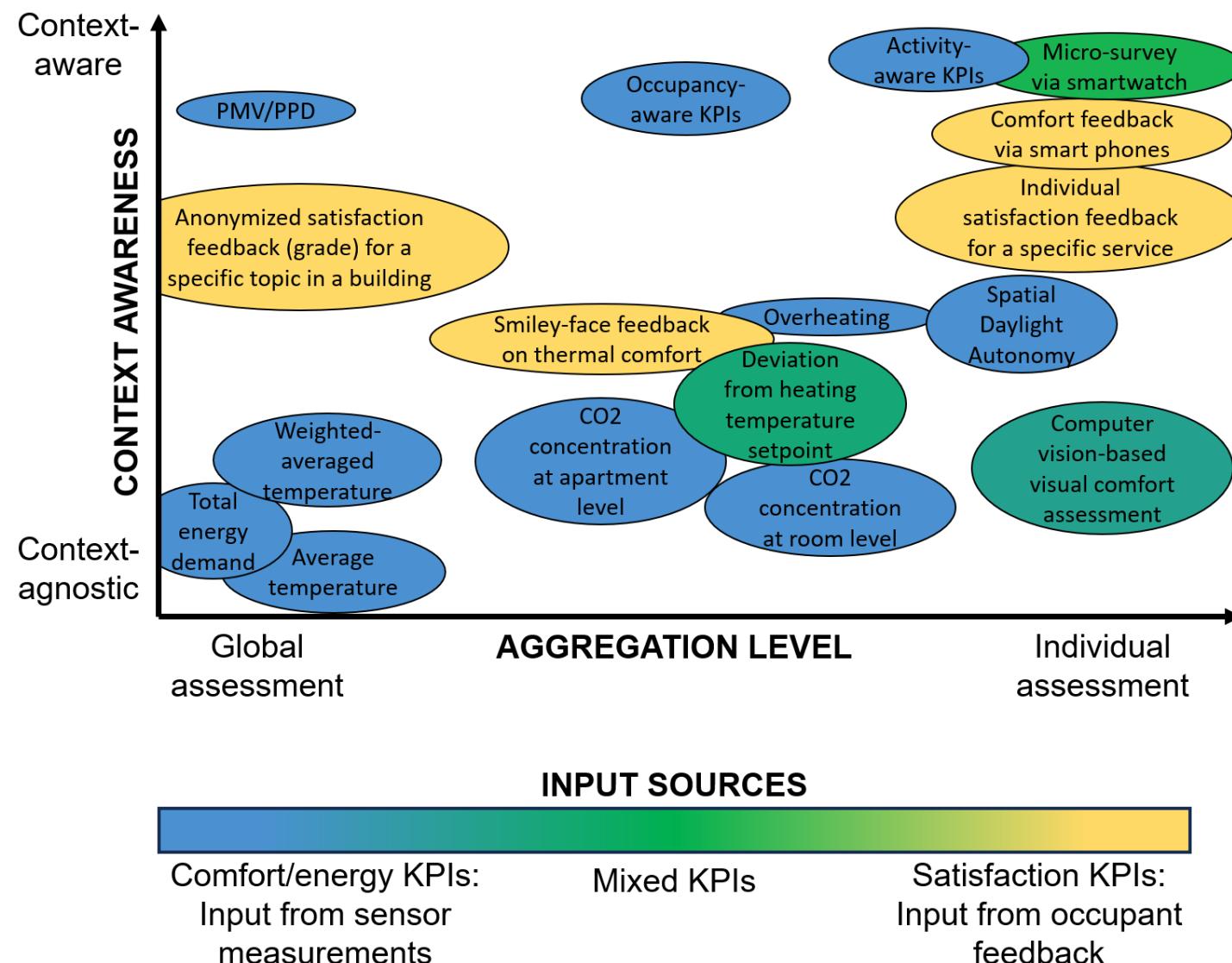
- 5 households
- 6 occupants
 - 3 occupants retired (> 65 years old)
 - 3 occupants ca. 30 years old
- 2 – 10 years length of residence

Sub-research questions

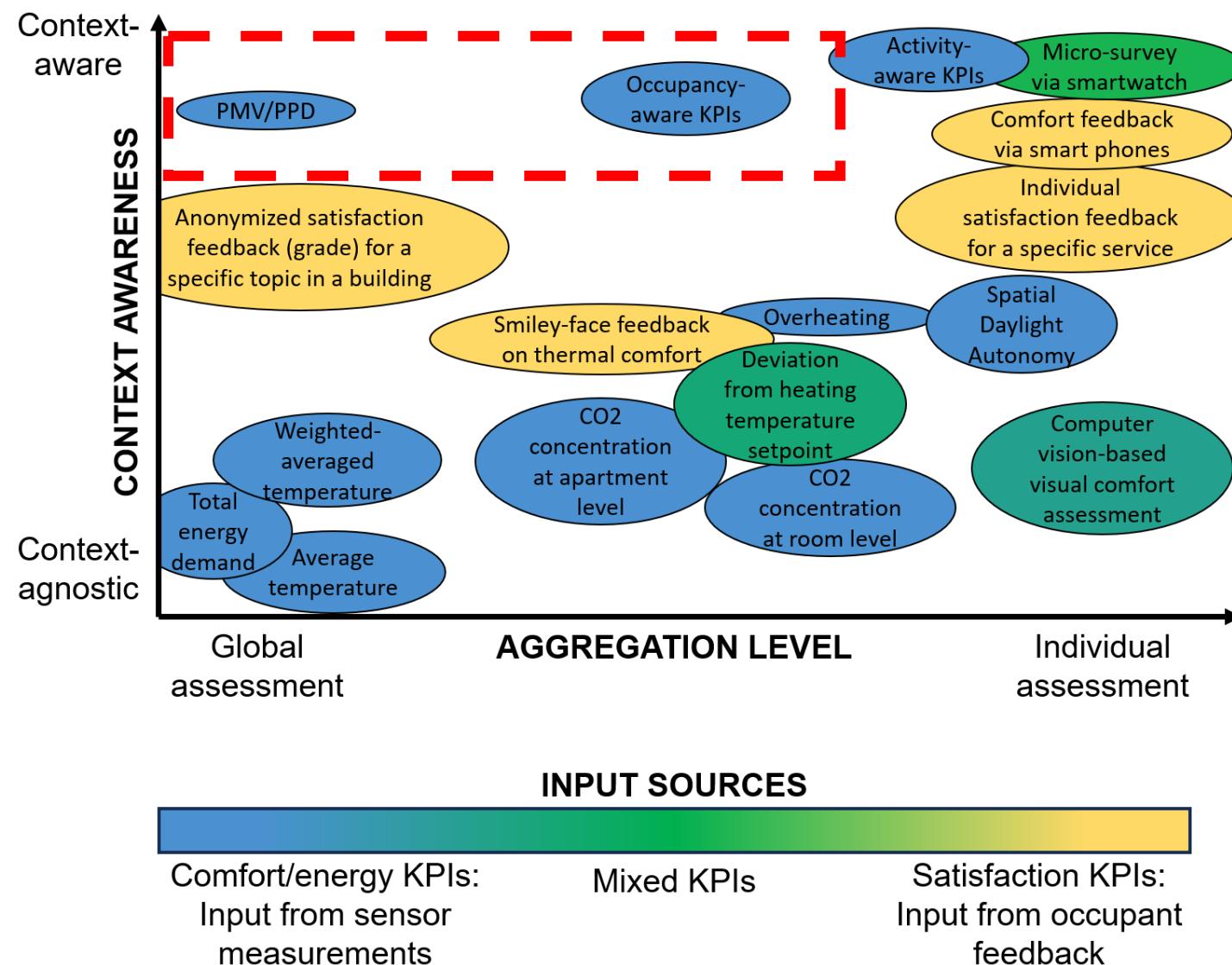
Part II: Occupant-Centric Assessments



Landscape of including occupants' characteristics into BPAs



Landscape of including occupants' characteristics into BPAs

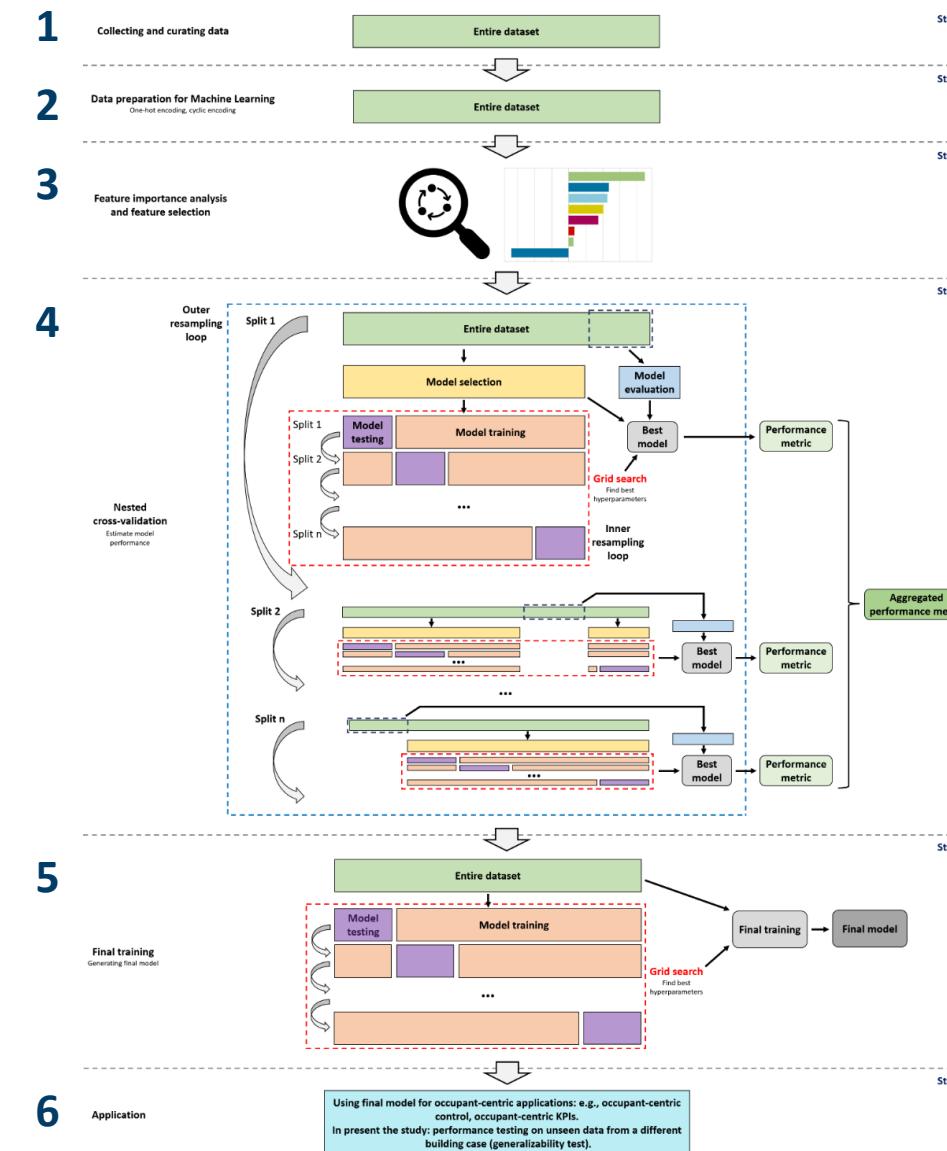


Building Performance Insights When Including Occupants in the Loop

Methodology

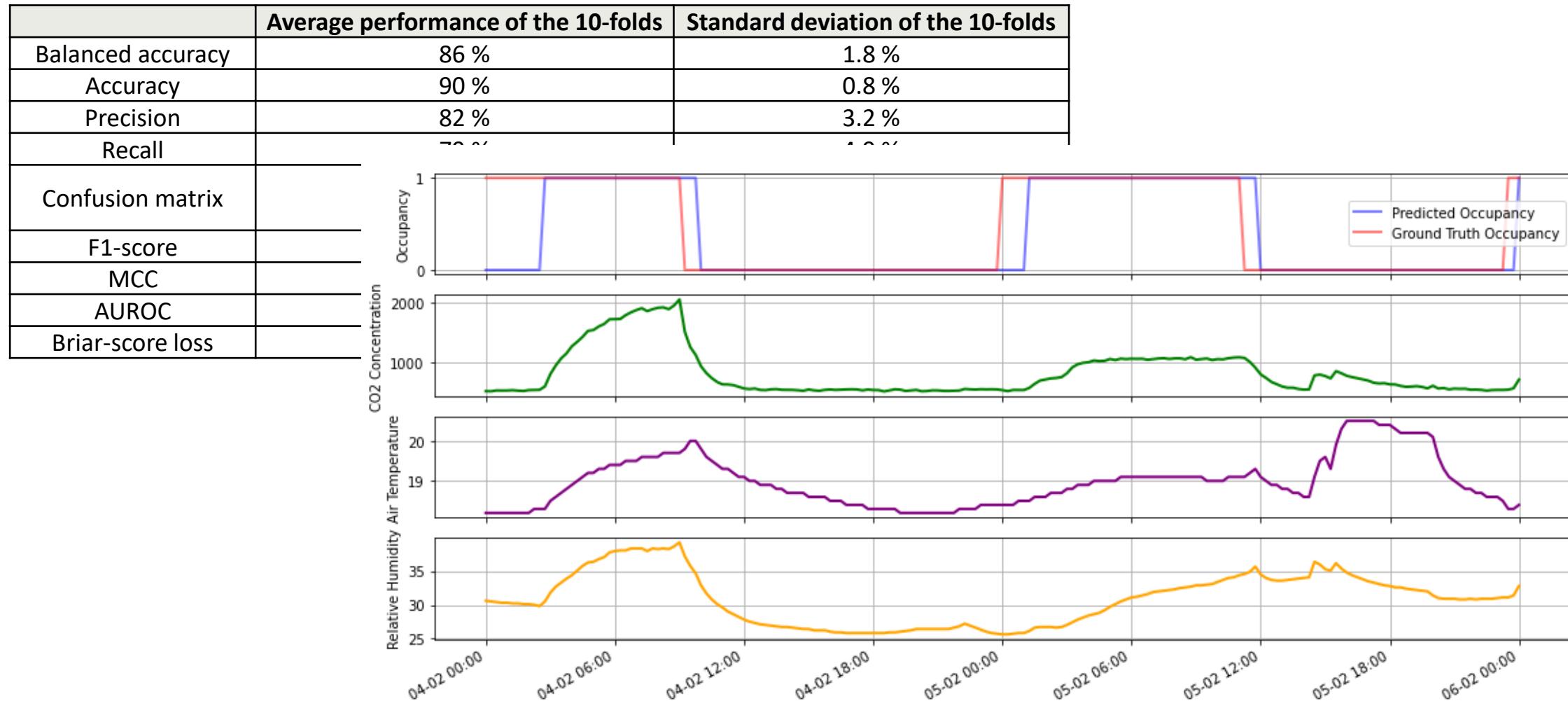
Machine learning pipeline

1. Collecting and curating dataset
2. Data preparation of dataset
3. Feature importance analysis and feature selection
4. Model training
5. Final training
6. Application



Building Performance Insights When Including Occupants in the Loop

Results and key findings



Building Performance Insights When Including Occupants in the Loop

Methodology

Building Performance Insights When Including Occupants in the Loop Methodology

Energy (PV and El.) and water data

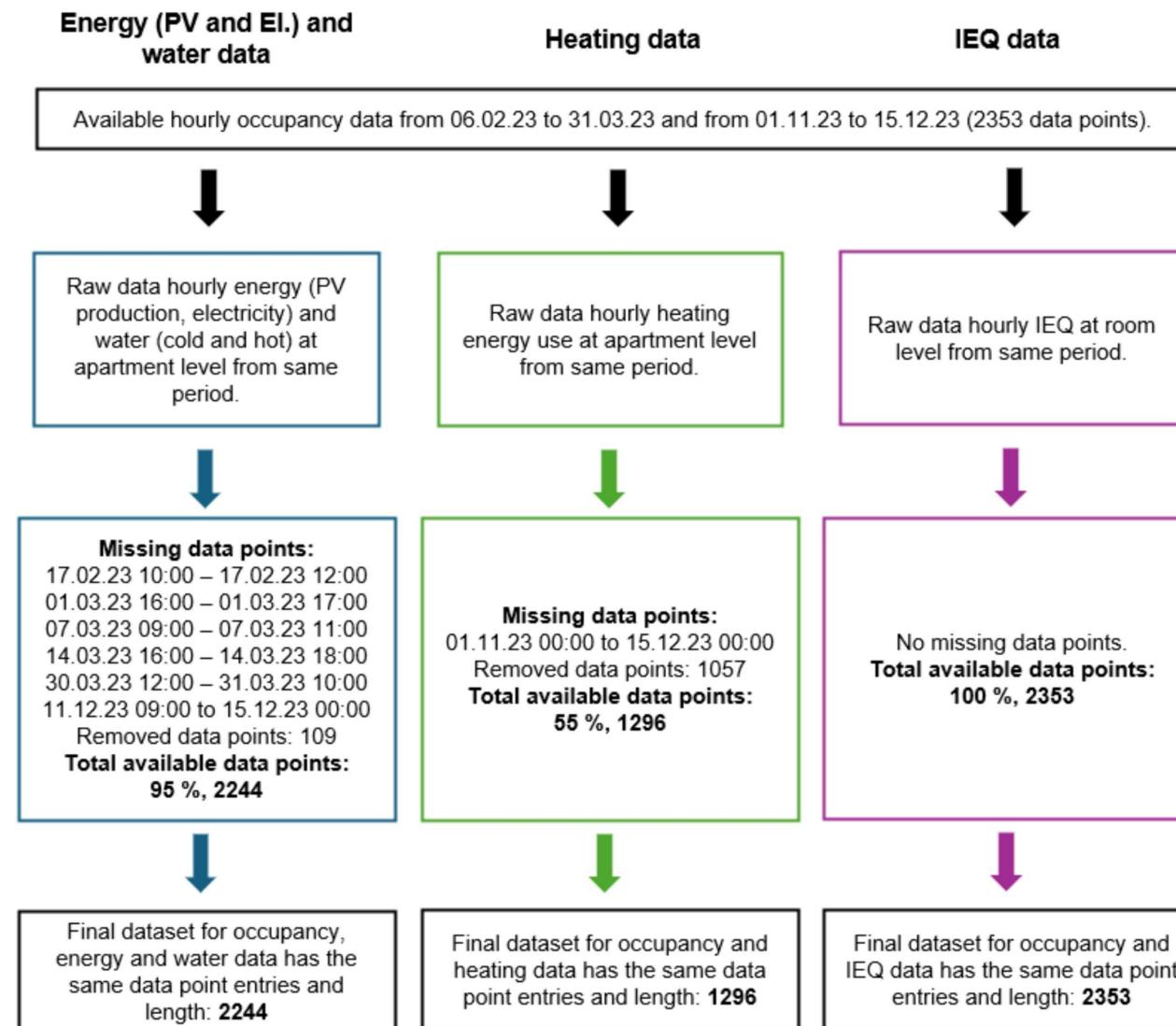
Heating data

IEQ data

Available hourly occupancy data from 06.02.23 to 31.03.23 and from 01.11.23 to 15.12.23 (2353 data points).

Building Performance Insights When Including Occupants in the Loop

Methodology



Building Performance Insights When Including Occupants in the Loop

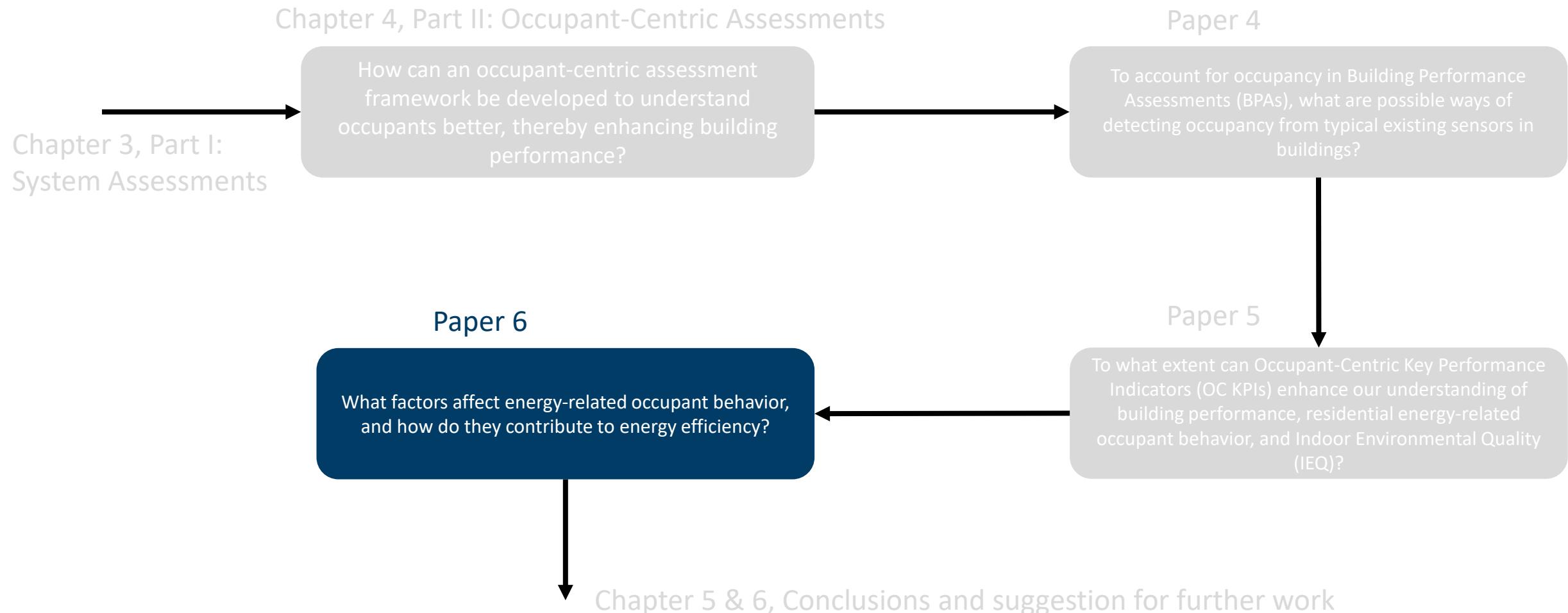
Results and key findings

Average occupancy	KPI cold water 1	OC KPI cold water 2b	OC KPI cold water 3b	OC KPI cold water 4a	OC KPI cold water 4b
	Monthly cold water use	Monthly cold water use during non-occupancy	Monthly cold water use during non-occupancy per m ²	Share cold water use during occupancy	Share cold water use during non-occupancy
	%	liter/month	liter/hour_no_occ per month	liter/hour_no_occ per m ² per month	%
Apartment 5	88%	2769	272,4	3,8	90% 10%
Apartment 2	86%	2316	337,6	4,7 85%	15%
Apartment 4	62%	2254	300,1	4,2 87%	13%
Apartment 1	98%	1791	22,8	0,4 99%	1%
Apartment 3	98%	1292	35,9	0,7 97%	3%

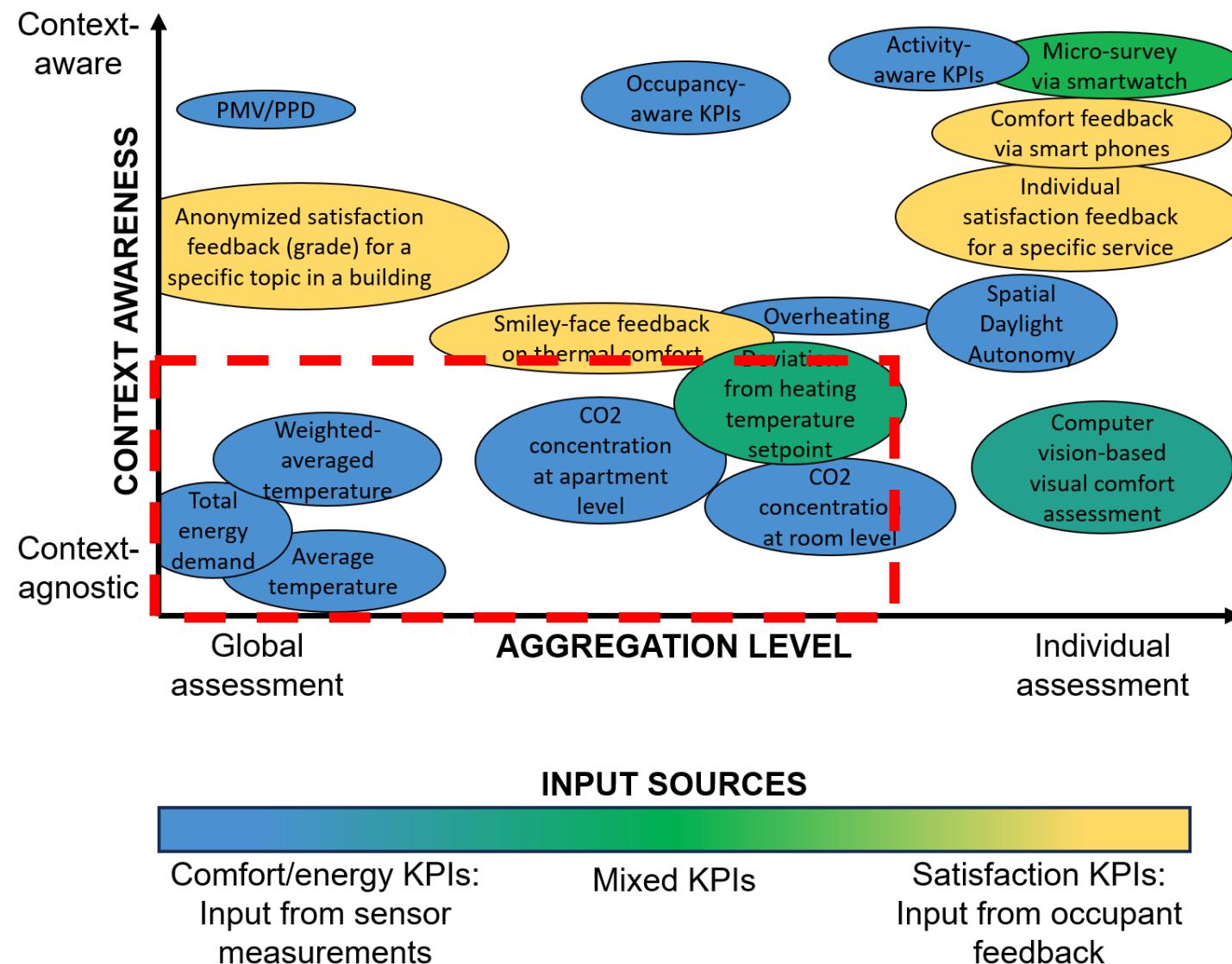
Average occupancy	KPI electricity 1	KPI electricity 2	KPI electricity 3	OC KPI electricity 1	OC KPI electricity 2a	OC KPI electricity 3a	OC KPI electricity 5	OC KPI electricity 6
	Monthly electricity use	Monthly electricity use per m ²	Load matching	Monthly electricity use per m ² per registered occupant	Monthly electricity use during occupancy	Monthly electricity use during occupancy per m ²	Total electricity per occupied hours	Total electricity per occupied hours per m ²
	%	kWh/month	kWh/m ² per month	%	kWh/m ² per month per registered occupant	kWh/hour_occ per month	kWh/hour_occ	kWh/hour_occ per m ²
Apartment 5	88%	144	2,0	19,1%	1,0	134,0	1,9	0,22 0,0031
Apartment 3	98%	123	2,2	17,3%	2,2	121,6	2,2	0,17 0,0031
Apartment 1	98%	115	2,1	18,1%	2,1	113,6	2,1	0,16 0,0029
Apartment 4	62%	90	1,3	22,6%	1,3	70,4	1,0	0,20 0,0028
Apartment 2	86%	70	1,0	25,0%	1,0	62,5	0,9	0,11 0,0015

Sub-research questions

Part II: Occupant-Centric Assessments



Landscape of including occupants' characteristics into BPAs



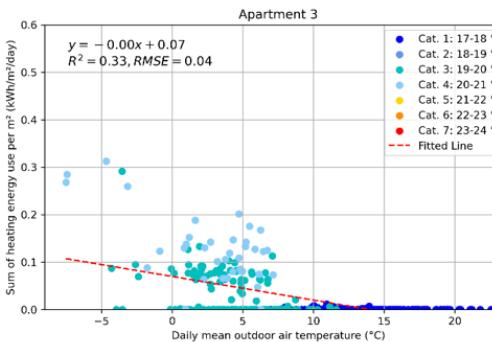
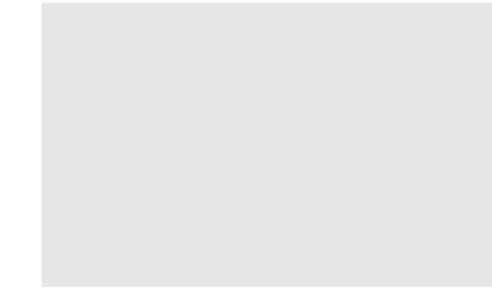
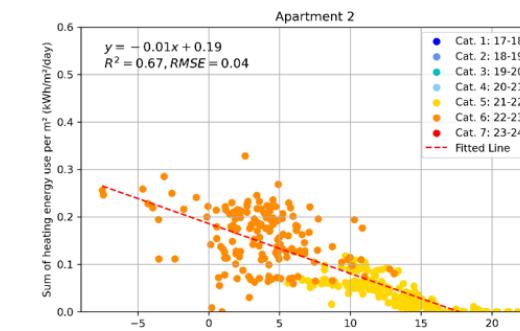
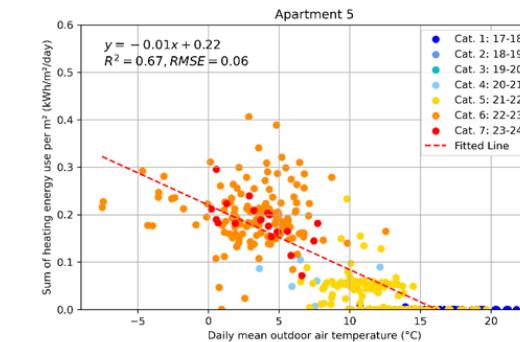
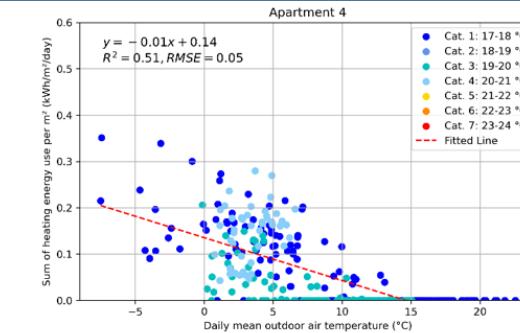
Occupant Heating Practices and their Effects on Heating Energy Use

Methodology

- Explanatory sequential mixed-method
 - Quantitative method: data analyses
 - Qualitative method: semi-structured qualitative interviews with 5 households (6 occupants)

Occupant Heating Practices and their Effects on Heating Energy Use Results

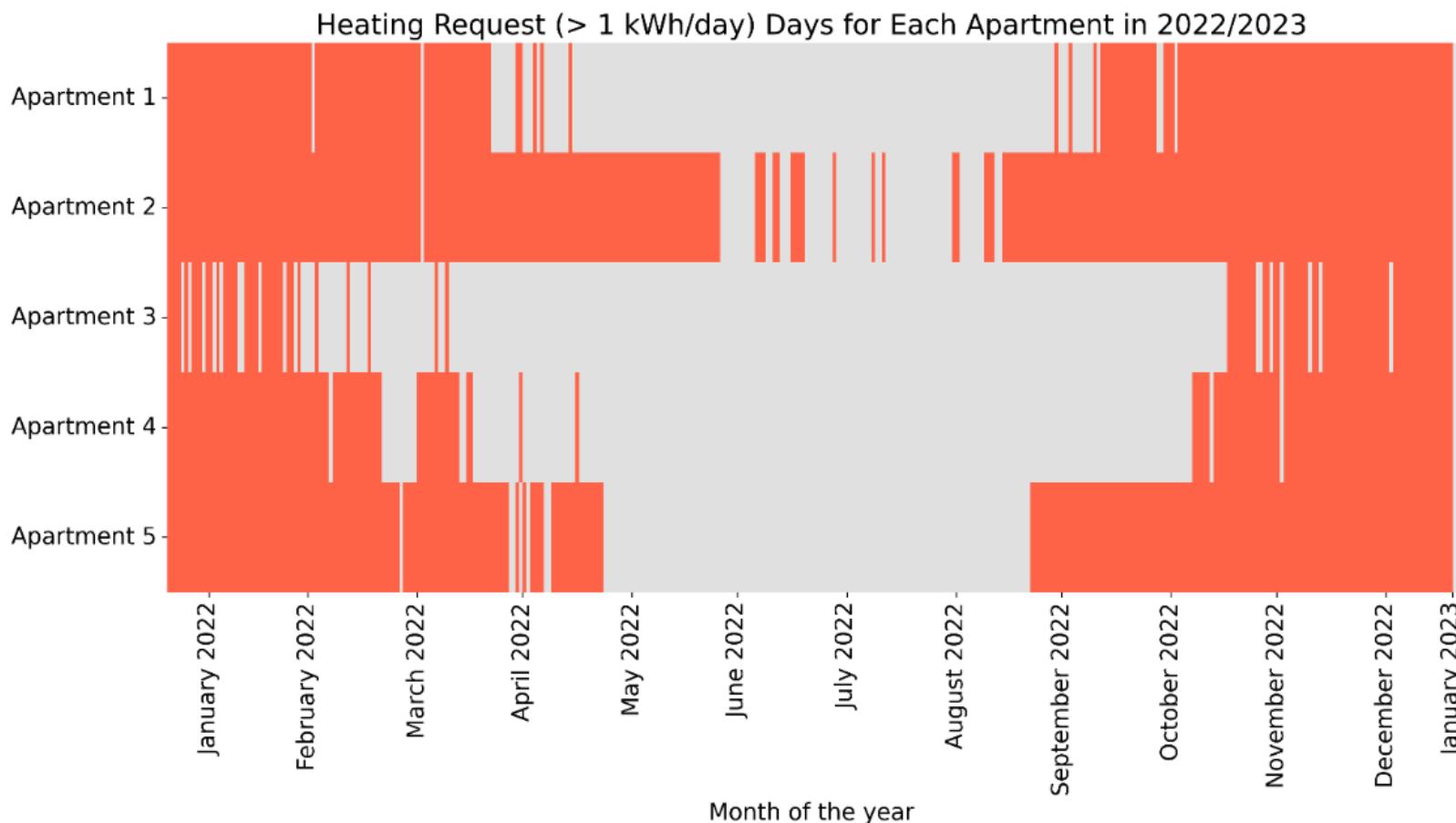
- Factor 1: Human-building interaction



Occupant Heating Practices and their Effects on Heating Energy Use

Results

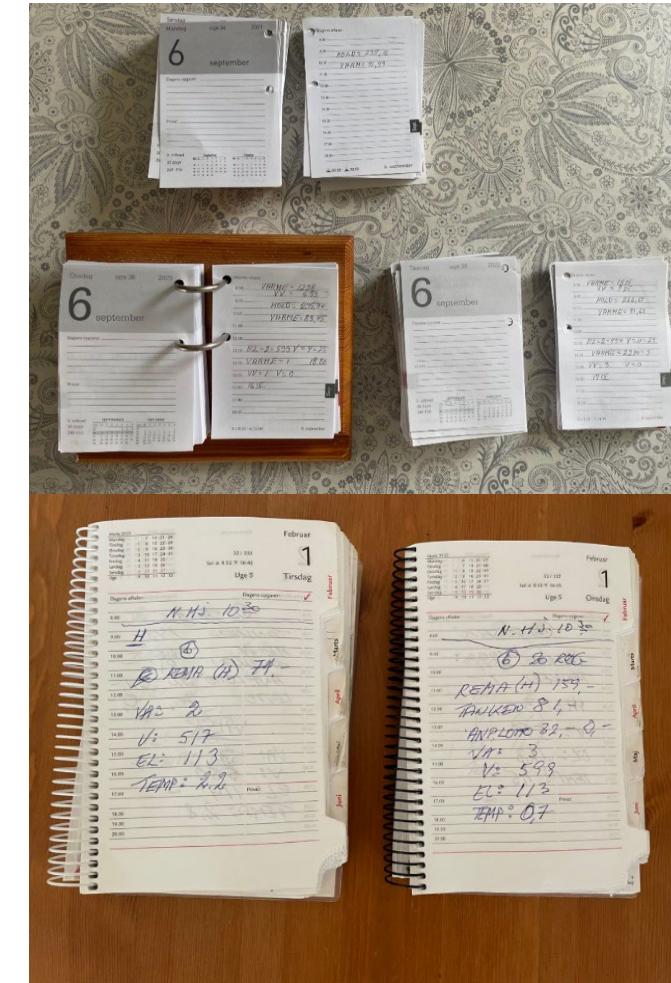
Factor 2: occupants' individual heating season over a year



Occupant Heating Practices and their Effects on Heating Energy Use

Results

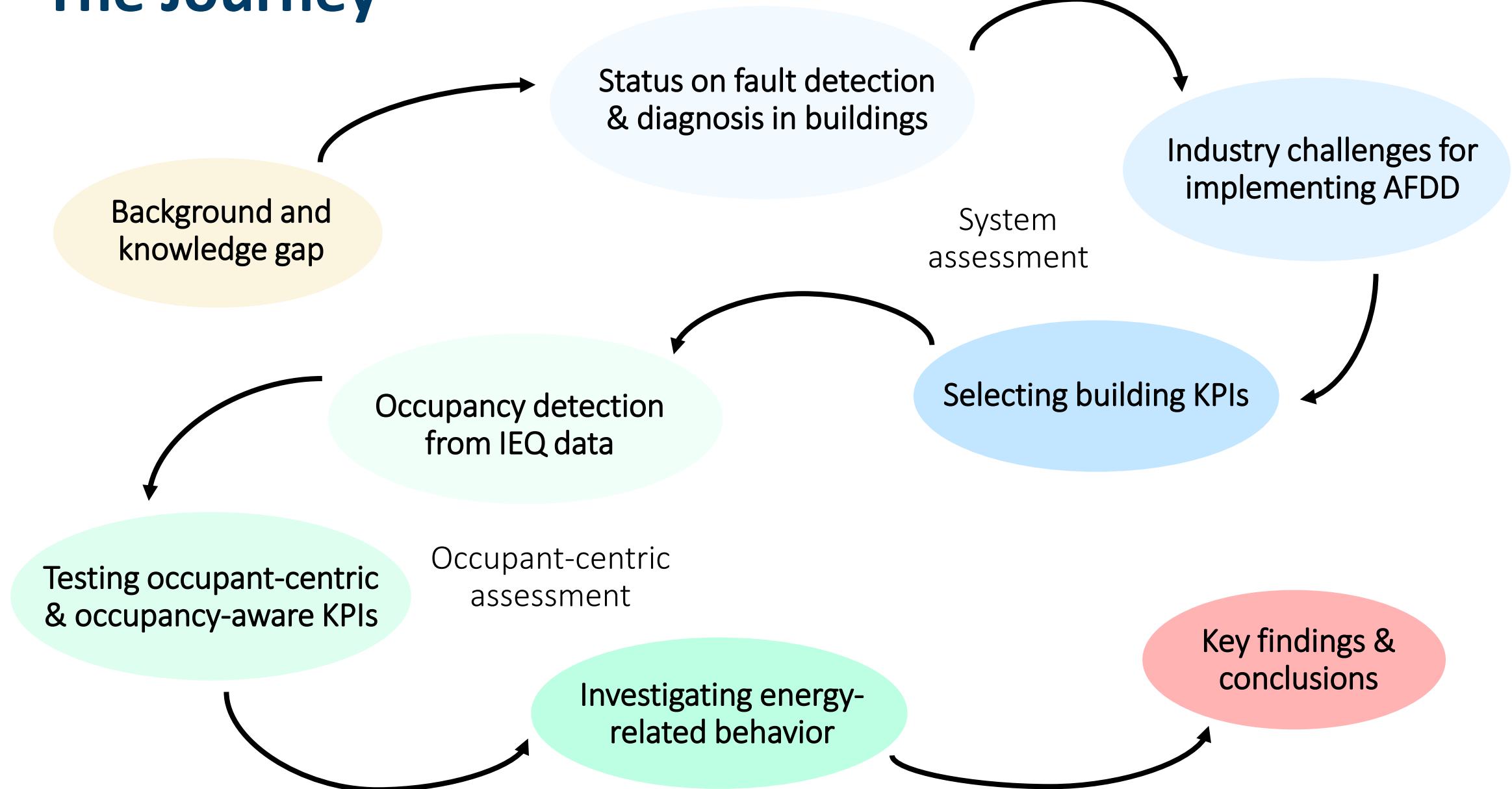
- Factor 3: social and behavioral dynamics
 - Feedback display – conversation starter
 - Shared practices – writing diaries on energy use
 - Interpersonal trust (building managers)



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The Journey



Conclusions

*How can **system** and occupant-centric **assessments** contribute to informing decisions that enhance a building's operational efficiency and occupant well-being?*

1. Research on FDD in building systems is still in a development phase
2. More FDD-related open datasets with ground truth are needed
3. Lack of common knowledge, standardized methods, and tools for FDD in the building industry
4. General lack of understanding of what FDD is, what it can achieve, and what customers can benefit from
5. Since efficient and scalable FDD solutions do not exist yet, advanced data visualization and KPI tools can greatly help with manual FDD

Conclusions

*How can system and **occupant-centric assessments** contribute to informing decisions that enhance a building's operational efficiency and occupant well-being?*

1. Common IEQ data is sufficient to predict dynamic occupancy for occupant-centric applications
2. Some of the occupancy-aware KPIs showed promising results to assess the actual building performance
3. Occupancy-aware OC KPIs can be used to detect energy-related occupant behavior
4. Energy-related behavior and preferences are varied, even within the same building, and have a huge impact on the performance on low-energy buildings
5. Heating practices can be shared within a building, can be leveraged to improve performance

Suggestions for future research

- System assessments
 - Explore scalability and interoperability of FDD on different types of building systems
 - Improve data quality and taxonomy of fault labels
 - Create more open datasets that provide ground truth for testing and benchmarking FDD algorithms
 - Work on stronger incentives and regulatory frameworks for FDD
 - Evaluating the actual impact of FDD implementation and adoption
- Occupant-centric assessments
 - Further explore the OC BPA field and especially,
 - evaluate the OC KPIs on other study cases with varied occupancy
 - Implementation and adoption of proposed OC KPIs in management practices

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Rethinking Building Performance during the Operational Phase

Towards increased implementation and adoption of system- and occupant-centric assessments

By Kamilla Heimar Andersen

Ph.D. Defense, BUILD – Department of the Built Environment, Aalborg University
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Thank you for your attention

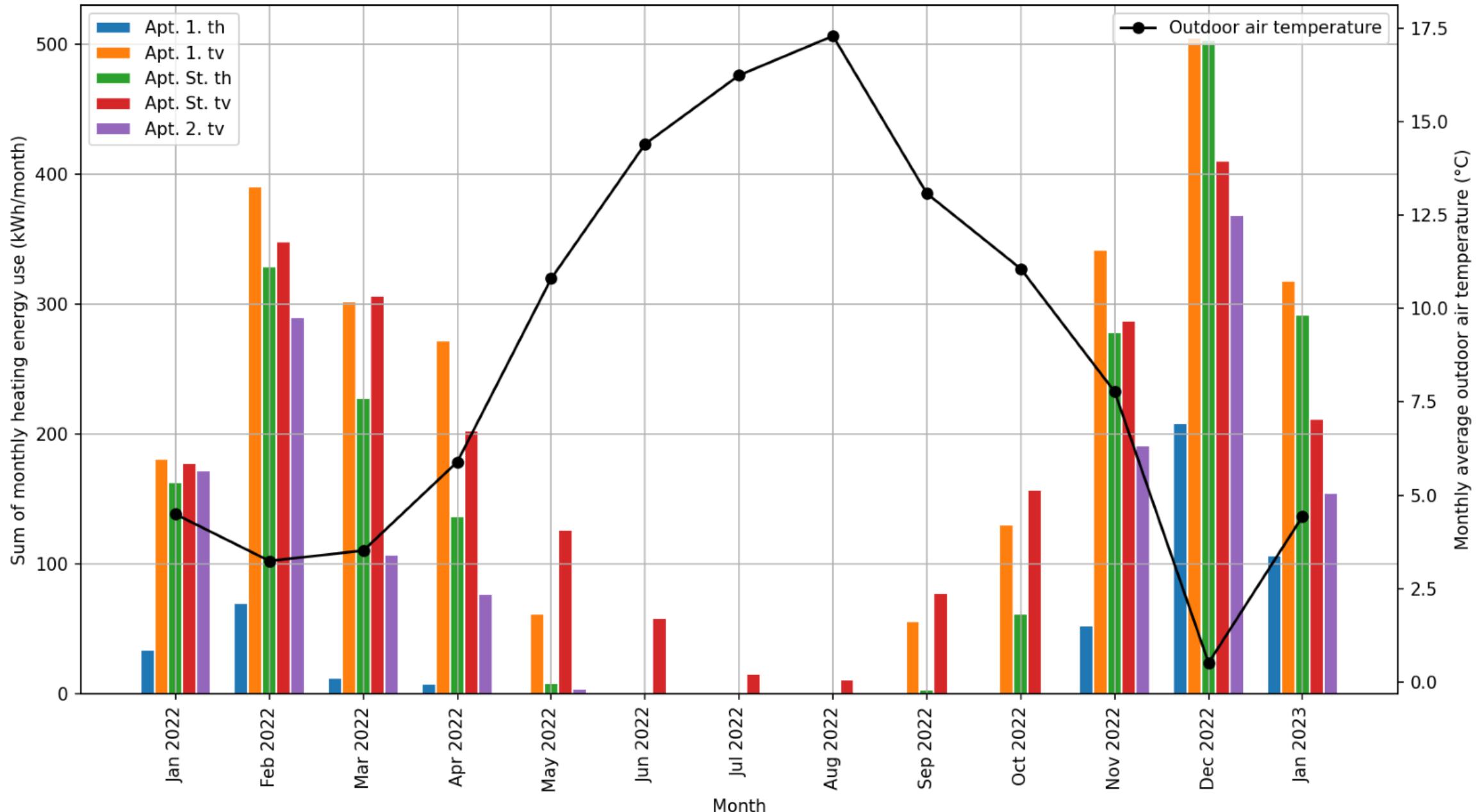
‘RBF’: The recruited occupants’ characteristics

Apt no. and size	No. of occupants	Room no.	Room type	Gender	Occupation
Apartment 1 (55 m ²)	1	1	Bedroom	Male	Retired
		2	Kitchen/living room		
Apartment 2 (72 m ²)	1	3	Bedroom	Female	Retired
		4	Kitchen		
		5	Living room		
		6	Office		
		7	Bedroom		
Apartment 3 (55 m ²)	1	8	Kitchen/living room	Male	Retired
		9	Bedroom		
Apartment 4 (72 m ²)	1 + an indoor cat	10	Kitchen	Female	Librarian
		11	Living room		
		12	Office		
		13	Bedroom		
Apartment 5 (72 m ²)	2	14	Kitchen	Female and Male	Nurse and shipping manager
		15	Living room		
		16	Office		

Apartment:
Date:

Room:
day of

Monthly heating energy use by apartment with outdoor air temperature



Feature importance (paper 4)

