**Exploring the Impact of Anti-Squatting as a Temporary Housing Option on Residents'
Housing Career: A Case Study in the Netherlands**

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Abstract

This paper examines the housing careers and pathways of individuals who have resided in anti-squatting arrangements as a temporary housing option. Given the housing crisis in the Netherlands, securing affordable housing, especially for young people has become increasingly challenging. While numerous news reports highlight the country's housing crisis, including the lack of availability and high cost of rent, as well as the social implications of this issue, there is a scarcity of academic research and quantitative data regarding anti-squatting and temporary housing arrangements from the perspective of those residing there. Choosing anti-squatting can vary depending on residents' decisions, but analyzing the experiences of living in this type of arrangement is essential to determine if this specific temporary housing can serve as an interim solution for their housing careers. Examining people's perspectives on anti-squatting will provide crucial insights for urban development, particularly for new strategies like temporary housing units, and assess whether these are beneficial or disadvantageous given the country's housing crisis. This work provides insights from previous and current residents of anti-squat housing and analyzes how anti-squatting influences their future housing careers and shapes their long-term housing pathways.

Keywords: anti-squat, temporary housing, housing career, housing pathway, Netherlands

Acknowledgement

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1 Introduction

Since 2008, particularly in large global cities, there has been a significant surge in the demand for housing (van Doorn et al., 2019). Housing accessibility has decreased in many countries, and the housing crisis is no longer a relatively new problem but a persistent threat exacerbating inequalities within urban areas (OECD Regional Development Papers, 2020). This issue is particularly apparent for young people, who face a lack of affordable options when starting their housing careers (Hochstenbach and Boterman, 2015). Consequently, temporary housing options have gained both social attention and academic interest (Stocker et al., 2021; van Kampen, 2021). According to authors like Stocker et al. (2021), temporary housing serves as a stopgap for some individuals until permanent accommodation is found, while others may choose this form of living to experiment with alternative lifestyles or relocate for higher education. However, this type of arrangement has led to precarious situations, as vacant spaces have been commodified (Debrunner and Gerber, 2023) and financialized by private corporations managing vacancies without upholding tenant rights (Dadusc, 2019). Ferrari and Vasudevan (2019) further argue that temporary housing is closely tied to broader economic inequalities and a lack of legal protections, creating tenure insecurity.

Various news reports and academic articles consistently underscore the persistent housing crisis in the Netherlands (Haffner et al., 2010; Haffner et al., 2014; Huisman, 2015; Huisman, 2016; Huisman et al., 2020; Oosteveen, 2022; Geis, 2023; Boztas, 2023; Henley, 2024). This crisis extends beyond mere affordability, encompassing structural issues regarding housing availability and accessibility. Importantly, this challenge is not unique to the Netherlands; cities worldwide, as highlighted by the OECD Regional Development Papers (2020), have faced housing crises in recent decades, worsening urban inequalities.

In countries like the Netherlands, where there is a severe housing crisis (Oostevan, 2023), temporary housing has increased (Huisman, 2019; Huisman, 2015). One relatively new temporary housing option is known as 'anti-squatting,' a living arrangement where individuals can temporarily stay in empty buildings for a cheap price until the property is demolished or repurposed (Brown, 2024). However, compared to other types of temporary housing, this particular one offers a relatively short notice period, with individuals facing eviction within two weeks (Hot et al., 2019). It remains questionable whether anti-squatting provides interim solutions for those in need of housing and how individuals cope with living in such arrangements given the precarity and insecurity they bring.

Despite efforts by Dutch housing policies to diversify housing options (Schilder & Scherpenisse, 2018), persistent doubts remain as the problem remains, complicating the quest for suitable living spaces. In response, anti-squatting has emerged as a notable option for temporary occupancy, initially conceived to prevent illegal occupation of vacant buildings and vandalism, anti-squatting has evolved into a sought-after housing alternative (Scully, 2017; Brown, 2024). However, regardless of its growing popularity, academic literature and comprehensive statistics on anti-squatting remain scarce.

While news reports shed light on the experiences of individuals living as anti-squatters, the limited research impedes a determination of whether anti-squatting can effectively serve as a practical interim housing solution, temporary interruption to individuals' housing career (van Kampen, 2021) or merely a way into insecurity (Huisman and Mulder, 2020) and precarity (Huisman, 2015)**.**

Therefore, this research aims to investigate the impact of anti-squatting on residents' housing careers, exploring its role as an intermediate housing solution and its influence on long-term housing pathways. It examines how living in such accommodations shapes housing decisions, post-accomodation plans, factors influencing housing choices, and progress toward permanent housing. Additionally, it aims to understand anti-squatting in residents' broader housing strategies, determining whether it serves as a temporary necessity or a deliberate interim solution. The central question guiding this study is: *How does anti-squatting as a temporary housing option influence individuals' housing careers and shape their housing pathways?*

In the realm of urban development, temporary uses of vacant buildings, as highlighted by Huisman (2016) have emerged as a preferred strategy, albeit often entailing fewer housing rights for the tenants. Analyzing the experiences of anti-squatters and how these experiences have shaped their housing pathways provides valuable insights into assessing the efficacy of temporary housing as an innovative approach to addressing immediate needs. It remains unclear however, whether anti-squatting contributes to a progressive strategy to housing that addresses immediate needs while experimenting with short-term solutions, or whether it generates more urban inequality and precarity, leaving individuals vulnerable and constantly seeking housing.

Understanding these dynamics through research can shed light on the broader implications of temporary housing solutions within the field of development studies. Specifically, investigating the impact of anti-squatting on housing pathways and career offers significant perspectives on the feasibility and sustainability of such intervention in urban environments. By

exploring how temporary housing influences individuals' decisions, long-term housing strategies, and their overall resilience in the face of housing challenges, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of urban development strategies, aimed at achieving sustainable and equitable access to housing.

This thesis begins with a general introduction to anti-squatting as temporary housing and explores the housing career and pathways of anti-squatters. It outlines the research aim, questions, and the relevance of the study. The subsequent sections will first explain the theory and concepts employed to provide an overview of the thesis's main idea and research purpose. Secondly, it will detail the methodology and operationalization of concepts to illustrate how the research was conducted. Then, it will present a Dutch geographical contextual framework about historical events of squatting in order to understand anti-squat, as well as the Dutch housing market. Following this, the thesis will present the study results examining housing career and pathways for individuals who were or are anti-squatters, and how living in such dwellings influenced their housing career and shaped their pathways. The discussion will then present valuable research findings, concluding with a final discussion that addresses the research questions.

2 Theory and Literature Review

This paper uses Critical Urban Theory as a broad perspective to examine Temporary Housing and Urbanism. It employs Temporary Housing as the main theoretical framework to analyze the research topic as this elucidates the nature of anti-squatting, seen as a form of temporary renting considering it within the broader context of Critical Urban Theory. Additionally, the paper applies the Housing Career and Pathway approach to enhance the conceptual framework, providing a more detailed explanation.

2.1 Critical Urban Theory

When analyzing the emergence of anti-squatting in the Netherlands, it's essential to first understand squatting, defined as occupying a dwelling without the owner's consent (Pruijt, 2013, p.19). Historical focus primarily centers on the Amsterdam squatting movement, detailed in the geographical contextual framework section of this paper. This section outlines squatting practices, linking them to Critical Urban Theory for a broader perspective on global urban debates. This approach sheds light on evolving housing needs and their transformation into profit-making opportunities, such as anti-squatting, while exploring the theory's insights on this phenomenon.

To begin with, Priemus (2015) notes that in European countries, squatting has a distinct background that can be defined as an urban social movement with the goal of altering politics, the neoliberal economic system, and/or society at large (Castells, 1983; Draaisma & van Hoostraten, 1983, as cited in Priemus, 2015). The same author argues that squatting aims to bring about societal change by strengthening emancipation, promoting sustainability, and challenging authorities that employ authoritative styles of leadership. On the other hand, Vasudevan (2023) emphasizes the practice of squatting to understand the shared city life. He states that the act of squatting reinterpreted the city as a place of need and safety, experimentation and resistance, from the areas they inhabited to the terminology they employed (Vasudevan, 2023, p.9).

The practice of squatting hence, is presented as a form to reclaim the rights to the city. Especially in northern and western Europe, the practice itself had brought social movement that created identities that were shared by not only the squatters but across a number of cities (Vasudevan, 2023). In this regard, the practice of squatting can be related to Critical Urban Theory in which it claims and insists the right to the city as a more democratic, socially just and

sustainable form of urbanization (Brenner, 2015). According to Brenner et al., (2015), Critical Urban Theory interprets that under capitalism, cities function as key locations for the commodification process. They contend that cities serve as important hubs for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods, and that it is important to comprehend how their internal socio-spatial organization, political structure, and patterns of socio-political conflicts are changing in light of this function. In accordance with many academics (King, 2018; Brenner, 2015; Marcuse and Imbroscio, 2014), this theory criticizes capitalism by understanding how urbanization shapes and determines socio-spatial inequalities and injustice that result from capitalist systems. And emphasizes that the city should not be only for profit making.

Accordingly, as argued by Vasudevan (2023), housing serves not only as a place of residence but also as a means of income generation, a platform for property rental and profit, and a vehicle for the creation of new financial instruments, all contributing to patterns of social and regional inequality. This perspective is echoed in the work of Debrunner and Gerber (2021), who discuss the rapid growth of the commodification of temporary housing. They contend that housing is no longer viewed primarily as a fundamental human need or essential good, but rather as a commodity subject to trade and financial transactions within a globalized market, affecting the 'right to housing' (Brenner et al., 2012; Harvey, 2012, as cited in Debrunner and Gerber, 2021).

In many European countries, since the criminalization of squatting around 2010, numerous private corporations managing vacancies have emerged (Ferrari and Vasudevan, 2019; Vasudevan, 2023). This trend highlights that housing, rather than fulfilling the social need for habitation, is increasingly reconfigured as a financial instrument for private investment (Dadusc, 2019). Again, Critical Urban Theory criticizes this neoliberal urbanism, characterized by the commodification of basic social amenities, as both unsustainable and socially unjust (Brenner et al., 2009). This view offers a framework for reviewing the rise of private firms managing vacant properties as part of a larger trend of financializing urban space, thereby undermining the right to housing as a fundamental human necessity.

In the next section, the theory of Temporary Housing and Urbanism will be discussed to delve deeper into anti-squat arrangement.

2.2 Temporary Housing

When discussing anti-squatting, the prominent narrative often revolves around the concept of temporary housing. Debrunner and Gerber (2021) define it as the use of vacant buildings slated

for demolition or reconstruction. This period, marked by the absence of previous residents and pending demolition or renovation, represents an undetermined phase of occupancy. The same authors explain that temporary housing has its roots in illegal and informal squatting, which historically served as a form of a social protest highlighting the lack of affordable housing. They also note that the emergence of a new, profit-oriented temporary housing model is managed on behalf of property owners. This model is based on loaning contracts that require payment for operating expenses but not rent, which undermines tenants' rights in favor of greater flexibility for developers and landowners.

Ferrari (2015) adds that the underlying idea of temporary urbanism is about connectivity. It views both people who need spaces and the unused spaces themselves as a social and economic 'waste'. He challenges the apparent solution, which is to create mechanisms to connect these people with the vacant spaces, arguing that it does not address the root causes of the scarcity of affordable, non-commercial spaces. In his view, it ignores the socio-economic factors that lead to urban vacancies. In another work by Ferrari et al., (2016), they highlight how property guardianship; another term for anti-squatting, creates significant precarity. They argue that the lack of legal protections leaves individuals vulnerable to sudden evictions. While this type of arrangement offers lower costs, it sacrifices stability, posing challenges for sustainable and affordable housing.

Madanipour (2015) argues that the short-term use of vacant spaces has evolved into a tool for filling gaps and serving as an interim measure until economic conditions improve. The increase in short-term rentals in the housing market exemplifies this trend, as more young people find it increasingly difficult to afford long-term residential leases. He notes that while temporary usage is a flexible way to create space and offers various opportunities, it also highlights the precariousness and vulnerability of its users. He clarifies that the parallels with temporary and precarious housing are evident, where temporary use is manifested by the increase of short-term rentals, as long-term access to living space becomes unaffordable for many young people.

On the other hand, Németh and Langhorst (2014) adopt a definition from Bishop and Williams (2012), highlighting that the temporary phase can vary in duration, intentionality, and legality. What sets temporary use apart from "permanent" usage is not only its transitory nature but also its perception as a provisional or substitute option. This distinction assumes that temporary use is secondary to or a placeholder for the preferred permanent option. In their work they state that this is not a solution to create resilient, sustainable, social and ecologically just cities. They claim that it is crucial to place efforts at temporary use in the specific social,

economic, political, and ecological contexts in order to explore and realize the potential of urban vacant places.

As for Bragaglia and Rossignolo (2021), vacancy is caused by moments of ambivalence in urban production as well as transitional periods, such as deindustrialization and/or relocation. In their view, it could also be the outcome of the extended timescale that urban development frequently necessitates. They question whether temporary urbanism can be a solution to the challenges that contemporary cities face, such as social inclusion, housing, and equal accessibility to urban spaces and services, or that benefit a select few, perpetuating inequality and limiting genuine social and spatial improvement for the broader population (p. 2). However, they also mention that temporary uses can be a valid method for experimenting with alternative solutions to some of the contemporary city's problems.

Using the theoretical insights from the authors mentioned, this research within the framework of Temporary Housing and Urbanism theory will analyze whether anti-squatting provides affordability (Debrunner and Gerber, 2021; Ferrari, 2015), accessibility (Bragaglia and Rossignolo, 2021), and availability (Madanipour, 2015) of housing.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

To define a research question and find appropriate, meaningful answers, the Housing Career and Pathway approach serves as a conceptual framework. This framework incorporates the essence of temporary housing, as discussed previously within a broader conceptual framework. Specifically, it focuses on each approach to determine the influence of anti-squatting on individuals' housing career and long-term pathways. In this chapter, both terms will be explained, clearly differentiating between them.

2.3.1 Housing Career

Firstly, according to Skobba (2023), the concept of a housing career first originated in the 1980s as a framework for studying residential mobility, specifically the transitions from renting to purchase. The author mentions Forrest and Kemeny (1982) as ones who developed this term to address a lack of conceptual direction in the existing literature on the relationship between household structure, housing opportunities, and tenure types. He explains that these two authors proposed that analyzing housing careers could shed light on residential mobility patterns (Skobba, 2023). Kending (1984) explains that the residential mobility focused on housing, shows how dwelling choices change over time, driven by life events, market limits,

individual preferences, and economic means. He underlines how economic variables, social status, institutional restraints, and market conditions all have a substantial impact on housing tenure and mobility.

Coulter and Van Ham (2019), describes the concept referring to the sequence of housing states and transitions that people go through time, impacted by their living conditions, neighborhood, characteristics, and major life events. They explained that initially, housing careers were viewed as logical decisions aiming at increasing satisfaction and quality of living, frequently motivated by family life-cycle events.

According to Abramsson (2012), housing careers are shaped by housing policies and welfare state regimes, which influence the options and limitations people encounter in the housing market. She explains that these factors are intertwined with other life events and vary according to experience, education, and socio-economic status. The author also states that individuals' decisions to relocate are determined by their goals, resources, and perceived possibilities, all of which are influenced by lifestyle preferences, financial means, and limitations.

While in many literatures, the term "housing career" is used interchangeably with "housing trajectories," the latter encompasses a broader view by incorporating specific demographics. Simone and Newbold (2014) use "housing trajectories" synonymously with "housing careers", describing them as how households change their housing situations over time. These changes are influenced by individual choices and broader economic and housing factors, intertwined with shifts in employment, family, and life paths, focusing on specific groups. In other words, this concept highlights the importance of studying specific groups to understand broader trends and patterns in housing over time.

Academics such as Aubry et al. (2021), Manting et al. (2024), Mikolai and Kulu (2019), and Simone and Newbold (2014) contribute to this field by examining how different factors influence housing trajectories and how these factors vary across demographic groups. However, in this paper, "Housing Career" will be employed since this precise concept is widely used in the academic field and it is more well-known, but it will also incorporate some viewpoints on "Housing Trajectories" to delve deeper into the concept.

2.3.2 Housing Pathway

The Housing Pathway framework was developed by Clapham (2002), conceptualizing "*patterns of interaction (practices) concerning house and home over time and space*" (p. 63). In his work, Housing Pathways provides a postmodern framework that highlights the diversity and fluidity of

housing experiences. He also claims that the approach was built on the Housing Career approach. However, unlike typical housing careers, which presuppose a linear and upward progression, housing pathways emphasize the dynamic interaction, social meanings, and personal identities that comes with housing consumption. This approach underlines the significance of social practices, lifestyle choices and larger socioeconomic circumstances, and individuals' housing processes evolving over time, acknowledging that housing decisions are influenced by a complex interaction of personal, social, and structural variables. To elucidate further, in the work of Skobba (2023) illustrates the difference between Housing Career and Pathways where the latter provides more nuanced understanding of housing experiences by emphasizing the social meanings and relationships embedded in housing consumption, moving beyond linear, normative assumptions of the housing career concepts (see figure 1). The author highlights that housing experiences are not isolated from social ties, as stated in definitions throughout the housing pathways literature. Conceptual definitions encompassed a broader variety of links, including family members, neighborhood linkages, social networks, and housing actors such as landlords and legislators. Definitions and descriptions imply that these linkages, and the changes that occur within them, influence housing experiences and practices.

Hochstenbach and Boterman (2014), broadens the concept of housing pathways for young people by incorporating Bordieu's theories of habitus and capital, emphasizing how different types of capital (social, cultural, symbolic, and economic) influence housing access in diverse sectors. It implies that an individual's habitus impacts their housing decisions, with strategic (planned) and tactical (ad hoc) action influencing their pathways.

Belperio et al., (2024) delve even deeper by explaining that the housing pathway framework emphasizes the personal experiences and perceptions of households regarding their housing situations, as opposed to the often impersonal perspective of housing policies. They mention that it includes not only key elements such as housing careers, but also the physical characteristics and uses of dwellings, interactions with neighbors and landlords, and the impact of life events and planning on housing decisions.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework investigates the impact of anti-squatting on individuals' housing careers by examining their choices, constraints, and opportunities before, during, and after residing in such arrangements. Anti-squatting can mark the beginning or a stage in one's housing career, serving as a temporary solution, emergency measure due to housing shortages, or an alternative housing option. By exploring residents' perspectives and experiences with

anti-squatting, the framework aims to understand how these shape their housing perspective and influence the consideration for future plans. It analyzes the transition from anti-squatting to current or future housing situations to assess its impact on their long-term housing aspirations, including potential returns to anti-squatting or exploration of alternative options.
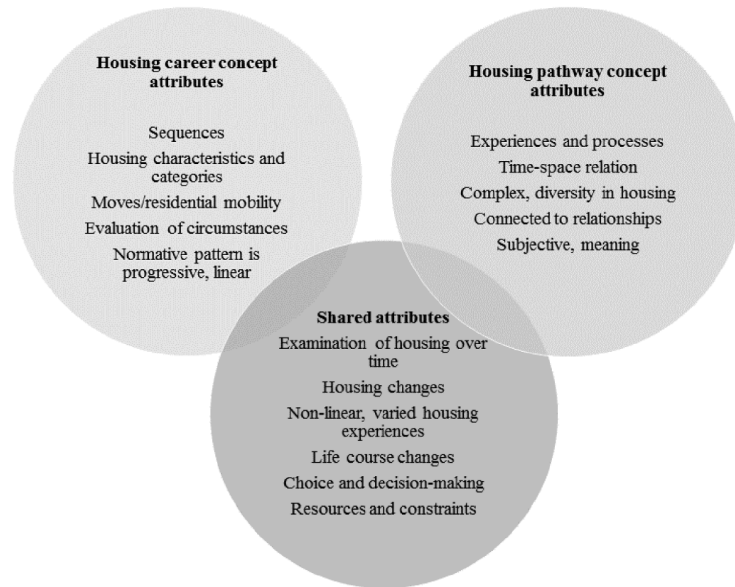

Figure 1: Skobba's illustration of shared and unique conceptual attributes of Housing Career and Pathways (Source: Skobba, 2023)
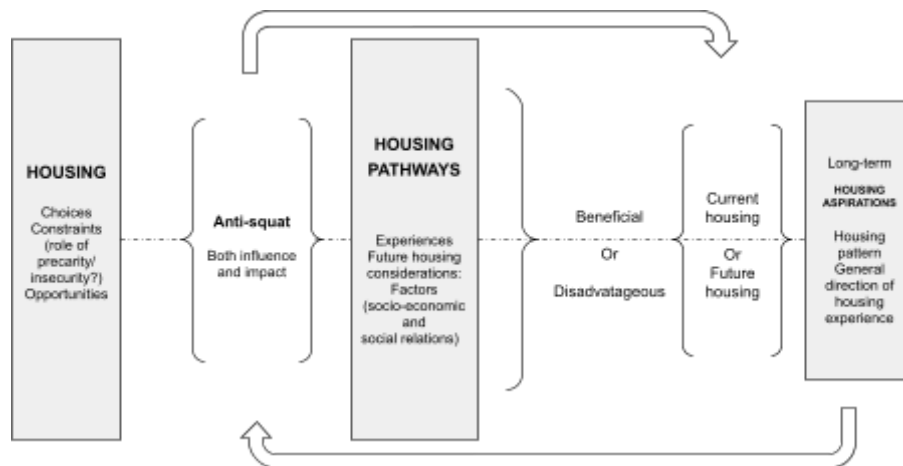

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

3 Methodology

Recapitulating the research question: *How does anti-squatting as a temporary housing option influence individuals' housing careers and how do these experiences shape their housing pathways?* The sub-questions are as follows:

- How do individuals deal with the policies and regulations of agencies?
- How do socio-economic factors and social relations living in anti-squat influence individuals' housing decisions?
- How beneficial or disadvantageous is anti-squatting for individuals considering future housing?

The research conducted in this work is exploratory in nature, as outlined by Swendenberg (2020), aimed at assessing the viability of anti-squatting as an interim housing solution for residents and exploring its impact on their housing career. It examines residents' motivations for choosing this type of accommodation, considering both opportunities and constraints, alongside their future housing aspirations and the effectiveness of anti-squatting in facilitating housing solutions. Furthermore, the study explores how these experiences have shaped residents' housing pathways and perspectives. Given the lack of specific studies on anti-squatters' housing career, this research fills a gap in the literature through its exploratory approach.

The target population for studying anti-squatting practices was young people, especially students as this specific group is the most vulnerable in securing housing (Hochstenbach and Boterman, 2014; Boztas, 2023). According to Beedham (2023), there is an urgent need to address the ongoing housing challenges faced by students. His article shows that out of 754,500 higher education students in the Netherlands, 398,900 live independently and 355,600 live at home. Of those living at home, 45 percent cite lack of affordability as the reason, while another 20 percent indicate lack of availability. Considering this, the focus of this research shifted to both previous and current anti-squatters to determine the housing career and pathway after living in anti-squat: how it influences them or how it will influence them in the future.

The regions chosen for this study were Amsterdam, Utrecht, Amersfoort, and Groningen (see figure 3). Amsterdam was selected due to news articles about experiences of anti-squatters and its major shortage of affordable housing with long waiting lists of getting it (*Woningbouwplan 2018-2025*, 2018). Utrecht, known for its student population (20%), has a very competitive housing market, with Utrecht University advising students to secure housing before studying there (Gemeente Utrecht, n.d.).

Groningen, where 25% of the population are students, was chosen for its housing challenges and the viability of anti-squatting (The Northern Times, 2023). Amersfoort, a neighborhood of Utrecht city, was included due to its popularity among Utrecht University students. Thes selections aim to understand anti-squatting dynamics in major student hubs in the Netherlands.

[Map of the Netherlands with cities highlighted for the Research]

Created with Datawrapper

Figure 3: Map of the Netherlands.

3.1 Operationalization of concepts

Table 1 shows the operationalization of concepts of Housing Career and Pathways to observe residents' perspectives and experiences of anti-squatting. Questions for interviews were designed to address concepts and multiple variables simultaneously. Therefore, a single answer might pertain to different questions of the study. For this, refer to **Appendix 2**, for the interview guide.

Table 1: operationalization of concepts

Concept	Variables	Operalization	Literature	Interview questions
Housing Career	Sequences of housing; series of moves and changes in housing	Analysis of previous housing before anti-squat, current and future housing to determine housing progression or regression.	Coulter and Van Ham (2019); Skobba (2023)	2,3
	Choices	Reasons for choosing anti-squat: Availability, accessibility, affordability, lack of options, and/or lifestyle preferences.	Temporary Housing Theory and Abramsson (2012)	4
	Constraints or barriers and opportunities	Housing policies and agency's regulations that are intertwined with other life events such as education and socioe-conomic status that influence before, during, and after living in anti-squat.	Ambrasson (2012) Ferrari et al., (2016)	6,8,910,15
	Trends and patterns for time in anti-squat	Analyze the experiences of current and former anti-squat residents to determine if this housing type helps with future accommodations and to explore their likelihood of choosing it again based on their group affiliations (e.g., students, unemployed).	Manting et al., (2024); Simone and Newbold (2014)	11,19,22
	Long-term housing pattern considering temporary solution	Analyze how anti-squat fits into residents' long-term housing: beneficial or disadvantageous, and whether it provides more housing options.	Abramsson (2012); Temporary housing Theory, specifically (van Kampen, 2021)	16,17,20,21

Concept	Variables	Operalization	Literature	Interview questions
Housing Pathways	Experiences	General experiences of living in anti-squat to evaluate if it affects future housing plans.	Skobba (2023)	1,5,7,22
	Factors; housing considerations	Social relations, socio-economic, and other factors that influence access to housing or that shaped their housing perspective.	Hochstenbach and Boterman (2014) Belperio et al.,(2024)	5,12,18
	Process	Individuals' housing processes evolve over time. Decisions and actions undertaken; transitions between different housing situations.	Skobba (2023)	13

3.2 Methods and techniques

For data collection, qualitative methods were employed, specifically interviews since it allowed for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, perspectives, and opinions about anti-squat housing. The interview questions were developed based on the conceptual framework of Housing Career, and Pathways and the theory of Temporary Housing and Urbanism (see **Appendix 2**). Additionally, some questions aimed to evaluate whether anti-squatting provides viable temporary housing options and its impact on alleviating or exacerbating the country's housing crisis, factors crucial for informing future housing decisions.

A short policy analysis was also used for data collection. However, the focus was not an extensive analysis due to the lack of clarity and limited information. Instead, the research provided a brief overview of the policy and law, and agencies' regulations.

A total of 16 participants took part in the study. The majority had previously lived in anti-squat housing, while a few had recently started living in this type of accommodation (see **Appendix 1** for participants characteristics and general information of location, duration, type of building they occupied, type of interview and date in which the interview was done).

Interviews were conducted both face-to-face and via Whatsapp, a messaging app, to accommodate participants' personal schedule, preferences or for some locating in different cities, as it facilitated communication without the need for in-person meetings. In cases where face-to-face interviews were not possible, respondents were asked to answer the interview questions in detail through Google Drive, Whatsapp, and emails, similar to an open survey. Follow-up questions were sent via the app if needed. However, the majority of interviews were conducted in person (see **Appendix 1**).

Participants were recruited through diverse methods, including social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn, which host numerous specialized groups. Because these groups serve various purposes, from discussing housing-related issues to organizing awareness-raising activities about the housing crisis. Recruitment involved joining these groups virtually, posting calls for participants, and directly contacting individuals identified through news articles. Visits to art schools in Utrecht, known for housing many students in anti-squat arrangements, also contributed participants. Lastly, a snowball effect occurred as initial participants referred to other anti-squatters they knew personally or shared rooms with.

The age of the participants was not asked directly but some shared their age through follow-up questions, with most being students during their time in anti-squat housing, or current anti-squatters being still students. Most former anti-squat residents lived in such an arrangement for one to six years (**see Appendix 1**). The current residents stay for a relatively short period, less than a year, and are uncertain about how long they could continue to stay.

Fictional names are used in this work to protect participants' identities while providing clarity and readability for readers and maintaining consistency in referencing participants without using numerical identifiers. When referencing the participants in the analysis section, since **Appendix 1** shows the general characteristics of participants as well as the date on which the research was conducted, only their fictional names are mentioned in the use of quotes.

Lastly, for the analysis of this research, narrative analysis was employed given that it centers on the stories individuals share, aiming to gain a profound understanding of their housing perspectives regarding anti-squatting and their overall housing careers. This approach involved storytelling of participants, and therefore, manual coding was conducted instead of using any specific qualitative coding program. This method facilitated the interpretation of the extensive responses provided by participants. Additionally, the participants were not asked for the specific years they stayed because, before the research was conducted the focus was on the duration of their stay (whether it was shorter or longer) rather than on the specific year. The

emphasis was on their socio-economic status, such as whether they were students or unemployed, rather than the year of their stay.

3.3 Reflection

Seeking housing is not only considered an insecure activity but also one that brings precarity, making individuals concerned about their basic needs. In the Netherlands, the housing problem affects not only Dutch citizens but also many internationals who come to study and work in the country. This research, however, lacks a study on the foreign perspective regarding housing and their housing careers.

According to a member of BPW, due to the scarcity of housing options, many internationals opt for anti-squat arrangements when they have a valid residence permit. However, agencies, particularly those managing anti-squat properties, often prefer citizens who speak the Dutch language. This preference relates to the flexible nature of anti-squat arrangements, where agencies may not provide alternative options if the property is demolished or repurposed. Effective communication is crucial in such cases.

Conducting research on anti-squatting and housing in the Netherlands as a non-EU citizen presented challenges. Ice-breaking questions were used to make participants comfortable before interviews, but questions about the researcher's integration into the Dutch housing market created discomfort. Participants' stories highlighted their housing struggles, revealing frustrations faced by many Dutch students. This perspective prompted a rethink of housing policies to ensure more inclusive and equal access for everyone.

4 Geographical Contextual Framework

As mentioned earlier in this paper, understanding anti-squatting practices and their emergence requires a review of the historical background of squatting in the Netherlands. However, existing literature predominantly focuses on the Amsterdam squatting movement. This section aims to briefly outline the chronological events of the squatting movement using limited sources. It will begin with a historical overview, followed by an examination of anti-squatting to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue and the current state of this housing type. And lastly, it will discuss the Dutch housing market focused on student and social housing as well as housing options for young people.

4.1 Squatting in the Netherlands

According to Vasudevan (2023), the history of squatting in the Netherlands dates back to the mid-1930s, during the Great Depression when many workers lost their homes. These people occupied empty apartments with the help of tenant associations. During the post-war period, it was more common to find families occupying empty buildings, but most of these actions were clandestine and hidden from the public eye.

However, when discussing squatting in the Netherlands, most attention is directed towards the squatting movement's history of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, as this is when the practice began to gain societal attention. Kadir (2014) observes that from the 1960s onwards, various urban groups emerged with different political and social objectives. Some engaged in squatting to pursue symbolic goals and establish free spaces, others to meet the housing needs of young people and resist State urban planning policies, or simply to address the pressing need for housing. According to Priemus (2015) and Dadusc (2019), the first squatting movement started in Amsterdam in 1964. These authors also explain that in this period, a group of people who were inspired by the Provo movement; "playing anarchist" non-violence group to create social change (*Netherlandic Treasures - Provo Movement (1960s Anarchism)*, n.d.) challenged authority and demanded more freedom and socio-political spaces (Priemus, 2015, p.86; Dadusc, 2019, p. 173).

In the 1970s, due to an urban development project that involved the displacement of a large part of a neighborhood in Amsterdam called Nieuwmarkt, a radical movement emerged. People fought to prevent affordable housing from being demolished and to stop residents and squatters from being forced to leave. The increasing opposition led the Dutch government to criminalize squatting for the first time in 1976 (Priemus, 2015; Coggins, 2017; Dadusc, 2019).

The most notorious and remarkable squatting movement occurred in the 1980s, marked by several violent confrontations and tensions between the squatters and the police (Kadir, 2014). According to the authors previously mentioned and Oswens (2009), the 1980 coronation of Princess Beatrix is considered as the most historic squatting event. Thousands of squatters, under the famous slogan "*Geen woning, geen kroning*" (no housing, no coronation), provoked riots in opposition to the coronation. Subsequently, in the 1990s, the Netherlands adopted neoliberal policies, privatizing social housing (social housing owned by housing association and/or corporations) and liberalizing the housing market, which exacerbated homelessness and created geographic segregation (Van Dempen and Van Weesep, 1998 as cited in Dadusc, 2019). Squatting was made largely illegal, which forced squatters into court disputes, and the government co-opted squatted areas through tolerance. Squatting was made a complete crime by 2010, which sped up evictions amid the financial crisis (Dadusc, 2019).

4.2 Anti-squatting

With the introduction of anti-squatting legislation enacted in 2010, a nonviolent measure adopted was the creation of private anti-squat agencies (Priemus, 2015). In legal terms, as explained by Zeighami (n.d.), a contract for anti-squatting is not a rental agreement but a loan agreement where residents do not rent but use the vacant buildings by paying the service fee and utilities. This type of contract leaves the tenant with no rights, allowing the contract to be canceled without any reason within fourteen days (Hot et al., 2019). What is particularly interesting about this legislation is that individuals residing as anti-squatter, serve as 'informal safe-guards' to deter squatting and vandalism and not as tenants (Huisman, 2015).

Although this practice lacks tenant rights, it is still considered an attractive option for many, especially young people (Zeighami, n.d.), since it is relatively cheap and affordable for those with limited budgets. Also, depending on the agencies there are different regulations or not strict rules regarding the use of the property. For instance, if the building is planned to be demolished, residents can decorate and paint the place, which generates more freedom in use of the space. Conversely, other agencies do have strict rules for taking care of the building, with many managing the anti-squat on behalf of the owners[1].

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[1] The information was retrieved by analyzing the websites of anti-squat agencies: *Camelot, Antikraak Direct, VPS, HOD, Interveste, Alvast, Ad Hoc, and Zwerfkeibeheer*.

4.3 Dutch Housing Market

Various sources indicate that the Netherlands faced a significant housing shortage of approximately 390,000 homes (Henley, 2024; Business Times, 2023). Henley (2024) highlighted that the average cost of a Dutch home has surged to €452,000, which is more than ten times the average salary of €44,000. Statista (2023) reported that rents for unfurnished housing in the Netherlands reached a record high in 2023. In the third quarter, the average rent per square meter for residential properties increased to €17.77, up from €16.90 during the same period in 2022.

For young people, the problem is even more severe. It lies not only in the affordability issues but also in the availability and accessibility of housing. Beedham (2023) focuses on students and the severity of the housing crisis, he says that the housing shortage is projected to increase to 60,000 by 2030. He also notes that in the academic year of 2022-2023, 46 percent of students took 3 to 6 months to find accommodation, and 19 percent took 6 to 12 months or more.

As for student housing (private-owned housing units for students), the NL Times (2024) reported that waiting lists for student housing are longer than the duration of a bachelor's degree. The issue is that many student housing providers allocate rooms based on how long the student has been subscribed. Those who have been registered longer get a home sooner than those who register later. The situation is similar to social housing, where the waiting list is approximately seven years or more (NL Times, 2023).

Figure 4 shows the average rent increase per province in the Netherlands up to July 2023. It also highlights that the four major cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht) experienced a higher rent increase. However, Groningen, one of the cities chosen for the research, did not see a dramatic increase compared to other regions. Despite this, considering the overall rent increase and the large number of students in Groningen, as reported by DutchNews (2023), the waiting lists for official student rooms in Groningen could be more than five years in some cases. This highlights the impact on both the affordability and accessibility of securing housing.

Average rent increase, 1 July 2023

Amsterdam		
The Hague		
Rotterdam		
Utrecht (municipality)		
Fryslân		
Noord-Holland		
Zuid-Holland		
Overijssel		
Noord-Brabant		
Groningen		
Drenthe		
Utrecht		
Zeeland		
Limburg		
Gelderland		
Flevoland		
Netherlands		

Groningen
■ Excluding tenancy change: **1.1% change**
■ Tenancy change effect: **0.8% change**

year-on-year % change
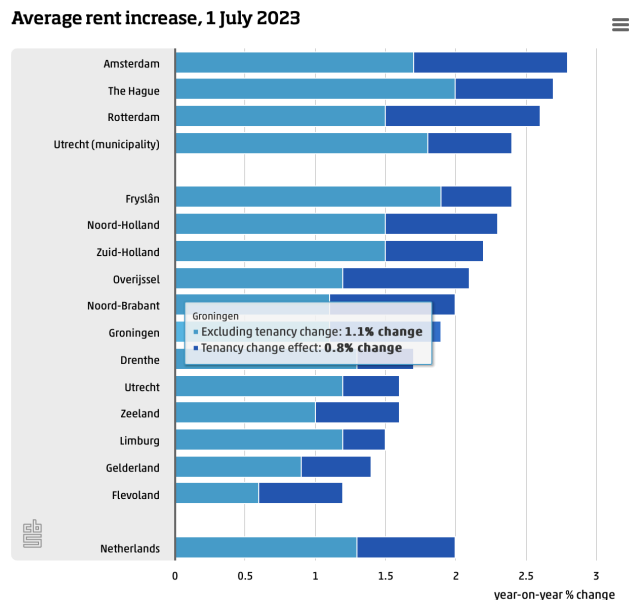
Figure 4: Average rent increase per province. Source: (CBS.nl, 2023)

Types of housing for young people within temporary contract:

According to the information retrieved by Zeighami (n.d.) there are four main temporary contract in the Netherlands, each representing different types of temporary housing where individuals can stay:

- **Vacancy Act:** For buildings slated for renovation, sale, or demolition. Contracts last at least six months and end with the building's permit expiration. Eviction notice is one month.(Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, n.d).

- **Interim rental:** For homeowners who will return on a set date, using the property as their primary residence. The rental period is defined. (SPEE, 2024).

- **Anti-squat:** These are loan arrangements, not rental contracts. Tenants have minimal rights and can be evicted without explanation within fourteen days. They only pay for services and utilities. (Huisman, 2016; OverheidNL, n.d).

- **Target group contract:** Indefinite contracts with clauses for specific demographics, such as students. Contracts expire when tenants no longer meet the demographic criteria (Lim, 2014; Zighami, n.d.).

5 Anti-squatters' housing career and pathway

This chapter presents the core living experiences of residents in anti-squat housing arrangements to study how anti-squatting as a temporary housing option influences residents' housing careers and shapes their long-term housing pathways. It will also review a brief policy and rules, the future housing considerations of the residents, and whether it was beneficial to live in anti-squat arrangements given their future housing decisions. For analytical distinction, it is divided into five sections: 1) anti-squat short policy analysis and law, 2) navigating the path to anti-squatting, 3) general evaluation of living in anti-squat, 4) anti-squat as a temporary option, and 5) general housing patterns.

5.1 Anti-squat policy and law

When analyzing anti-squatting in policy or legal documents, it falls into the category of the Vacancy Act. According to Overheid.nl; a central access point for information about government organizations in the Netherlands, the remedy of anti-squatting, or the application of the Vacancy Act, is increasingly being used. In the section '*Legal Guarantee'* of the document '*Anti-Squatting Policy Rule in the Netherlands',* under the part '*Ad 2 Tolerance',* it states:

> "An anti-squatting agreement must be concluded between the owner of the building and the user or vacancy manager (if applicable). An anti-squatting agreement is not a rental agreement but a loan agreement (Article 7:1.9 of the Dutch Civil Code). The users do not pay rent but an expense allowance for gas, water, electricity, and administration costs" (Overheid,nl, document created in 2014 but valid until present, 2024).

As previously mentioned in this work, anti-squatters do not have a tenant contract; instead, they operate under a loan agreement (see sections 4.2 Anti-Squatting and 4.3 Dutch Housing Market of this paper). However, in Book 7A of Dutch Civil Code, Title 7.6 "*Loan Agreement*" has not been developed yet as it states:

> "Still a few titles of Book 7, that will be incorporated in the Civil Code in future, have to be accepted by Parliament. This may take several years" (Dutch Civil Law, n.d.).

The policy lacks translation into practice and fails to provide sufficient guidelines. It mandates landlords to rent properties through anti-squat agencies or housing corporations, which allows agencies to set rules in their favor without clear tenant rights. Development of Book 7.6 is pending, leaving the Vacancy Act as the primary source, outlining procedures for temporary rentals, permit requirements, duration, and rental pricing limits set by municipalities.

Regarding the duration, the Vacancy Act (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2024) stipulates that the permit is initially valid for up to two years and can be extended yearly up to a maximum of five years upon request. There are two exceptions: 1) permits for owner-occupied dwellings last five years; 2) if the municipality grants a temporary allocation exemption, the permit can be valid for up to 10 years during the Environmental Permit period.

The maximum rent price is determined using a housing valuation system, and tenants do not have rental protection upon termination (see "Leegstandswet en huurbescherming" at https://www.volkshuisvestingnederland.nl/).

5.1.1 Management and Administration of anti-squat agencies

Regarding management and administration of anti-squatting properties, 'I AM EXPAT[2]' lists agencies and organizations in the Netherlands. Requirements for anti-squatting vary, but generally applicants must apply through each agency's website. They typically need to be at least 18 years old, hold Dutch citizenship or a valid residence permit, have no minor children living with them, show a stable monthly income (from work, benefits, or student finance), engage in daytime activities like work or school, provide a temporary relocation address, and understand that anti-squatting is temporary. Some agencies may request a motivation letter, application form, or sign-up on their website (Alvast, 2024; Gapph, 2024; VPS, 2024).

According to Scully (2017), agencies select occupants, often referred to as "guardians," based on different criteria. Some agencies seek specific profiles, while others select based on interviews or the applicant's reliability and low-risk profile.

The same author also notes that terms and conditions vary between agencies, but common rules include no press contact, no parties, no drugs, no structural changes, and restrictions on guests and overnight absences. Agencies may conduct unannounced inspections to ensure property maintenance. However, some properties allow residents to decorate and paint rooms or host parties and gatherings if the landlord permits it.

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[2] IAMEXPAT is a media platform that provides up-to-date information about a variety of services including housing, news and other for internationals in the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland. (IamExpat media, 2024)

It is important to note that since there are no standardized regulations for all agencies, each agency has slightly different rules regarding the management and administration of anti-squatting properties.

5.2 Navigating to path to anti-squat housing: access and the preceding journey

This article previously defined Housing Career as a sequence of housing states and transitions over time, influenced by living conditions, neighborhood characteristics, and major life events . Here, it will refer to 'housing sequence' as dwellings individuals occupy over their lifetime (Coulter and Van Ham, 2019), focusing initially on the transition to anti-squat housing .

Considering anti-squat as a significant housing arrangement within the respondents' housing careers, it is notable that the majority of participants experienced independent living for the first time in anti-squat accommodations. And almost all of them were students during the time they occupied and also for the current residents. Prior to this, they had resided with their parents and family. Therefore, anti-squat represented their initial housing career as adults.

> "This was my first time living alone. I chose the place because it was a little bit of a community place. So I knew it was going to be with more people, and it was close to my internship. And it was cheap, so that was also one of the reasons, otherwise I would never be able to as a student, afford to have my own place"
>
> (Thomas)

Conversely, a minority of participants had previous experience living in housing with friends or in student housing, from which they voluntarily opted to move away. This aspect is integral to understanding the rationale behind their housing career, which will be explored in detail later in this chapter.

> "[I lived] in another student housing, in the city center of Amersfoort. I think about 100 students live there. But I wanted a bit more something quiet. [...] The student housing I lived in before, there was too much alcohol, too much partying and all of those things [...]" (Jim).

"Before that (anti-squat) I lived with two best friends at the Fondor. It's like a neighborhood in the east of Amsterdam. Before that, I also lived in anti-squat in the south. [I left] because I had a little bit of a down flick with him (a friend). His mother was the owner and she could kick me out, so that's why I left" (Luke).

For Jim and Luke, anti-squat was not the first housing where they lived alone, but their circumstances led them to desire a change from their back then, current living situation. Lifestyle preferences played a significant role in Jim's case, whereas for Luke, it was a personal relationship that prompted him to seek another housing alternative.

For the start of a housing career, it has been shown that respondents who began studying in different city, knew they had to subscribe to student housing as they were nearing high school graduation:

"When I was 16, I had three choices for university, so I subscribed (student housing) in each of these cities so that I would have some time when I was actually about to move there. But it was still not enough for me to get to Utrecht (student housing)" (Andy).

"[...] Even before I started living in anti-squat, I think six months prior to graduating from high school, I found out about SSH (student housing) through a friend who had a sister who knew that if you were studying in Utrecht, it would be a good start to apply for SSH. It was quite a long time of waiting, almost three years" (Sam).

For Andy and Sam, the planning for their housing careers started at a very early age, even before graduating from high school. Anti-squat was the available option because they could not get into student housing, which had a longer waiting time. For others, their first housing was not thoroughly planned, but it was their first time living independently from their family, marking the start of their housing careers. In the next section, it will discuss the reasons for choosing this particular temporary housing option as living arrangements.

5.2.1 Choices

Primarily, more than half of the participants expressed a need for housing as their primary reason for choosing anti-squat, as it was often the only option available at the time. While concepts like affordability, availability, and accessibility were not directly mentioned by some

participants, these factors could be inferred from their responses as significant reasons for choosing this type of housing. For some, the combination of these three factors provided a strong rationale for their choice of anti-squat.

"I wanted to live by myself, so I was looking for a place and it was really hard to find a place that was affordable. And where there was not a waiting list was anti-squat. That's maybe one thing about it, that you can really get a house fast and it's cheap and it's also quite big" (Jane).

"I couldn't find 'normal' student housing. But this (anti-squat) came along and I really wanted to move out from my parents. So, no options for regular housing and this was the option I could take to do what I wanted, which was to live on my own" (Frederick).

"A friend of mine recommended it to me because it was really hard finding rental places for my age segment, like you don't have a good job or adding up education at all. [...] It was really my only option, which is not really an option" (Stephan).

"I think at first accessibility, [...] because it was available, and it was relatively easy" (Rachel).

"Breaking up with my ex, I needed a house as soon as possible. Anti-squatting is then a quick option, cheap, fun, and a good basis to move to a permanent home from there" (Julie).

Most participants cited affordability and availability as their primary reasons for choosing anti-squat housing. Some also mentioned accessibility, as it offered a quicker solution to securing housing. Economic constraints were particularly challenging for students, as they often faced limited budgets, making it nearly impossible to find more stable housing options than anti-squat. For Julie, anti-squat was viewed as a temporary solution while she planned or searched for something permanent. What's noteworthy is that, as argued by the majority of participants, anti-squat housing was the only option that fulfilled their need to start a new chapter, such as starting university, leaving them with no alternative but to reside there:

"Well, I didn't have any other choice. I was searching for a room in Utrecht, but I couldn't find anything" (Sam).

"Mainly because I couldn't find anything, really. It was quite difficult, especially coming from Groningen, to find something in Utrecht. Finding housing was challenging." (Martha)

"I wasn't necessarily seeking out anti-squat housing specifically; I just needed a place to live." (Monica).

For Sam, Martha, and Monica, starting university in Utrecht made finding housing difficult, especially for Sam and Monica, who couldn't secure student accommodation in the city. While searching for housing, Martha discovered an old school available for anti-squatting through an agency. She mentioned that the agency did not provide concrete information, and the details were vague. However, she was open to the idea of anti-squatting and decided to give it a try.

5.2.2 different accessibilities to anti-squat; barriers or opportunities?

The interesting part of anti-squat is that some anti-squat agencies intentionally look for a specific demographic (Scully, 2017), which can be both an opportunity and a constraint for individuals. For instance, Martha, Sam, and Andy were roommates who shared their living spaces, which was an old school for disabled children. They shared that in the process of looking for housing, all of them found this specific place through an agency's website. They did not know each other beforehand but started living together through the agency's selection of residents:

"We got lucky because the management, the company that put us there, chose us. They were looking for four girls, basically, girls starting their studies and having the same kind of lifestyle" (Martha).

"[paraphrased] me and my mom went to look at this building, and we thought we could make something of this, and I just went with it. I renovated it a bit and then I got to meet my roommate, but we didn't know each other before, which was random. It went really well" (Andy)

This illustrates that access to anti-squat housing isn't available for everyone, especially when agencies look for specific profiles. Accessibility varied by agency and their criteria, with individuals needing to be selected. Martha and Andy were uncertain why they were chosen, suggesting agencies may prioritize candidates who can maintain the property with similar lifestyles; ready to begin university.

Some participants accessed anti-squat housing through social connections ('via-via'), while others found openings easier when agencies had vacancies readily available.

"Because I started my bachelor's and the house I found was through someone I knew [...] So, I was starting university and found a room in a house through this network. [...] It was more about knowing someone who could recommend you. So, I moved into my first place in Utrecht - Zuilen." (Rachel).

"One of my friends already lived in anti-squat, and when I told her I wanted to leave my student house, she asked me to come live with her." (Caroline).

"I have two friends whose girlfriends were living in the [Bijmer] prison, and they said there were a lot of empty rooms (cells). I think I contacted [the agency's name]. I emailed them, and they said they had some rooms left. It was very fast. It was also a mistake from me, it would have been better to have patience and find a place to stay longer. I needed a house quickly and knew the prison was available immediately." (Luke).

"My friend found this project. We were both looking for living spaces because we were going to university. He found this project, and we both put our names in to apply. We got in through a lottery system. Part of the project involved helping the company transform the school building into living units." (Frederick).

Social networks played a key role in accessing anti-squatting housing. For some participants, friends recommended anti-squatting or set up a 'via-via' arrangement through social connections with people knowledgeable about anti-squatting. Some found anti-squatting housing through agencies and had to pass a selection process, while others relied on recommendations from friends or acquaintances. This demonstrates the varied accessibility to anti-squatting.

5.3 Living in anti-squat: general evaluation

This chapter will discuss the experiences of individuals living in anti-squatting arrangements and how these experiences have shaped their future housing considerations. Referring back to the main research question: how does living in anti-squatting as a temporary housing option influence individuals' housing careers, and how do these experiences shape their long-term housing pathways. This section will explore general experiences, as well as evaluate the pros, cons, and constraints of living in anti-squat housing.

5.3.1 Experiences and Housing Considerations Influencing Future choices

When participants were asked about their experiences living in anti-squat housing, the social relations with others were also explored. Given that anti-squat housing typically involves shared living spaces such as kitchen, toilet and showers with multiple residents, understanding these social dynamics was crucial. These interactions can significantly impact residents' overall experience and satisfaction with their housing situation (Skobba 2023; Hochstenbach and Bolterman, 2014). This indeed had shaped residents' perceptions of their current housing and their aspirations for future living situations. The majority of the participants shared a positive experience living with other residents:

> "[...] we really had a good connection with the roommates. It was four girls who you are living with, and we still see each other; we're still friends." (Martha)

> "I had a really good relationship with my roommates there because we did the same pre-studies. It was kind of the same type of people." (Mary)

> "It was amazing. I really, really had a good time. We were living with 14 people [...] We really got to know each other well, and for me, that was a really nice experience to have. I am living with my neighbor (anti-squat roommate) now in another house for a year and a half; we had to move out, and we started to live together just the two of us." (Thomas)

For Martha, Mary, and Thomas, the experience influenced even more compared to other participants. When they were asked about the housing considerations they take into account for future housing, all three mentioned social connection as an important factor:

"Social connection is important to me, definitely. And I also don't want to live on my own yet; I am still very much a student, and I like living with people [...] I really created connections with at least two or three roommates, so if this place (current housing, not anti-squat) doesn't work out, we are looking for high rent with the three of us." (Martha)

"[...] And I think the people, the social context of it, is very important to me. I want to live with people that I can actually connect with." (Mary)

"So right now, I just want to live anti-squat for life. I really loved it. And I'm actually saving for a longer-term project of mine because I really want to live in a community. [...] I'm just a bit sad because people have been distancing themselves from other people, and I think the beauty of living with a group is very much underestimated [...]" (Thomas)

These answers show that the relationships created while living in certain dwellings can greatly influence future housing considerations. For Martha, after anti-squat, she found housing through a Facebook platform where she developed strong social connections with her current roommates. She is now considering moving out with them and finding a place together. For Mary, she and her previous anti-squat roommates found an apartment where they could live together. Lastly, for Thomas, the relationship he built with his next-door roommate was a very valuable experience, and they now live together in his current housing. This demonstrates that social connections not only help in finding new places but also in securing housing together, which was not an established plan before, but one developed through their housing experiences.

On the other hand, some participants did not have close connections with other residents. However, this also didn't affect their future housing considerations, as they did not prioritize social connections as an important factor:

"I had really little or no communication with my neighbors; everything was set up through the agency, and so were the fellow anti-squatters. The original residents from the area, who were still being outplaced during that time, were very unwelcoming. [...] I had a party and some of the neighbors hated my presence in the building so much. I was being projected as a face of the changing neighborhood to the destruction of their neighborhood. They were terrorizing my party." (Stephan)

"I think for the most part it was really good, up until the point where my roommate got a boyfriend. Then we quickly found out that the walls were very, very thin. That ended up bringing quite a bit of tension because I don't think we were mature enough to really know how to communicate all that. So, it was really good until the point where it kind of got bad." (Rachel)

For Stephan and Rachel, their housing considerations for daily and future plans were more closely related to personal lifestyle and preferences. For Stephan, having a place to live alone was crucial, connecting to his life aspirations and lifestyle. He explained how previous personal relationships were affected by sharing material things with others:

"[the housing consideration that relates to my daily life is] My own space, and not sharing with another person. Also, that way I avoid the dependency on making a relationship work just because of the precariousness of housing. Because I've seen so many people who started living together and figured out, like, 'that sucks.' I know that's what I mean." (Stephan)

For Rachel, housing considerations were also very personal. She prioritized preferences such as having a place she could make feel like home:

"My favorite hobby is decorating my house. [...] I like spending a lot of time at home, and I like making it a nice place. I guess the anti-squat really did help with that because it allowed a lot of creativity and low stakes in terms of what I was doing. It didn't really matter because there was no rental company saying it needed to be in a certain condition when I left." (Rachel)

For other participants, locations and budgets were mentioned several times by different participants. Affordability was a default consideration; this is also why the majority of participants said that anti-squat is indeed affordable and a cheap option for living. In contrast, location had distinct reasons. Location also related to social connections; having friends or other social relations in certain locations made participants want to stay in the same regions.

"[location] is the first choice, because I'm sort of raised here or nearby, and I have family and friends here (Amsterdam). I also liked the prison, it was really nearby the center, I like to go out and have a drink and have things in center places, and the prison was perfect for that " (Luke)

A few noted that there are no considerations to take into account since individuals don't really have a choice in terms of housing:

"In the times we live in now, you don't really have a choice in terms of housing." (Julie)

In a time when finding a place to live is extremely challenging, individuals may have to give up some considerations because there aren't many housing options to choose from, as Julie states. From her answer, it can be understood that sometimes all the housing considerations that individuals have do not really matter if finding housing is more important than meeting their conditions, or if there were more affordable and available options.

Overall, the majority offered positive feedback, viewing their time in anti-squat as a captivating chapter in their life stories. As students, they found anti-squatting to be an adventurous beginning to their housing journey, filled with intriguing and memorable experiences.

"For me, it is my first experience of living on my own, and in the big picture, it will be a way to introduce me into this world of housing" (Lucy).

"I am extremely happy that I did not end up on the street. It made it possible to live on your own, easily, quickly, and cheaply" (Julie).

Those participants who were still students and had previously lived in anti-squat arrangements expressed openness to the idea of doing so again, if the conditions mirrored those they had experienced before. They acknowledged that anti-squat living suited the transient nature of young adult life and didn't demand stability, aligning well with their current status as students.

"It was really nice to do. It made for a lot of fun stories. I would do it again if the opportunity presented itself. So it's a funny story for a young adult living in anti-squat. [...] and I don't need this stability right now, so I'm more flexible" (Sam).

Participants who shared negative feedback about anti-squat were influenced in their future housing, as they looked for more stable housing.

"I won't do it again, since I want something more stable" (Caroline).

"It was worse than squatting. It was absolutely worse. [...] It's just a completely capitalist structure that exists to serve no one other than the middleman taking money out" (Stephan).

Experiences like Stephan had, brought social impact where in his current housing situation, he lives in a commune created by him, where he established a trade with the social housing agency. He works voluntarily for this agency in the selection of candidates and handles funding administration, giving priority to those who will contribute to the club or society. He also gives this priority to the people who work for the betterment of society such as social workers, and so on. Not only living in anti-squat influenced him but also other social experiences, like engaging in other social activities; squatting movement, LGBTQ+ and others.

5.3.2 Evaluating the Pros, Cons, and Constraints of Anti-squat Living

While living in anti-squat, the benefits and constraints or challenges presented differently that reflected on the regulations imposed by the agencies. Participants who faced fewer regulations enjoyed their living situation more and had relatively positive experiences:

"I had 64 square meters, which was amazing. So in that case, I was very lucky, and I wanted to live on my own basically, and had a little studio set-up. [...] my landlord told us that we could do whatever with the building, we could paint, spray, do art murals on the walls because it would be broken down anyways" (Martha).

"I had a big space and I had a garden. I never felt any limitation on what I could do with that space and how I could treat it" (Rachel).

"I think I had more freedom; we could spray paint the walls if we wanted to. [...] Opportunities are that owners have multiple buildings. I knew my landlord, he would sometimes come over for a coffee, not often. But I would talk to him and I knew that if I was looking for a place, I could maybe call him (for help), so it's more personal so that's an opportunity I think" (Mary).

Challenges: how do they deal with housing-related insecurities?

Most of the participants faced challenges while living in anti-squat arrangements, primarily related to basic services such as lacking warm water or gas during winter, which sometimes took weeks for the agency to repair. They also encountered difficulties in using certain amenities or facilities due to the unconventional nature of the buildings, which had previously served as old schools, hospitals, gyms, or prisons. Some facilities were no longer in use or easily broken down.

Regarding the regulations, participants were asked if there were any that seemed unfair. Some of them shared that the lack of information about moving out and the short notice period were particularly unfair:

"I think these four weeks are really short. And also, I don't know if they still do that as well, but the place in Amsterdam, I couldn't even see before I signed the contract. And they told me if I don't come to the office and sign the contract, other people will get the apartment. So, I didn't see the apartment. I went to see the place after, and it was not nice" (Jane).

"No, not really [unfair regulation], but they were not transparent about when we had to leave; we had to figure it out by ourselves. And of course, they [the agency] didn't know precisely, but they could have been a little bit more transparent. Because it's not really fair to us" (Sam).

"The extremely short time you have to move out and also no help at all with finding a new place. There's no prospect for this place, and actually the rents were pretty high. They [the agency] are earning from two sides. So it's hard to reach companies that's extraordinary" (Stephen)

Nicole expressed some frustrations regarding the contract and the agency making their own rules. She shared:

> "I think they are asking for more money than they should for anti-squat. If you look at the regulations, when you're in a quality control group of the anti-squat, when you apply to that, then I wouldn't have to pay more, but they [the agency] don't belong to that group. They just make their own rules. So in the beginning, I asked some critical questions about the price, and they were immediately like, 'Who are you? What is your background? What do you know about this?' Then I knew that I shouldn't touch this because I really wanted this place. I don't have any other choice right now" (Nicole).

One thing that is noticeable is that the individuals felt powerless and couldn't do anything about it. For example, like Nicole, who is currently living in anti-squat, felt that she was being asked to pay more money than she was supposed to. Nevertheless, because she really needed housing and liked the place, she decided not to do anything. She also asked for help in case there were situations in the future where she might need to be evicted. Others also said they didn't do anything because they feared being put on a blacklist and eventually ending up with no place to stay. Thus, the way they dealt with it could be described as simply accepting the situation and looking for another housing option.

For Thomas it was a different story: during his time in an old gym, Thomas faced a price increase for heating and gas due to the war between Russia and Ukraine. Since the building is a big old gym, the residents were not notified about what to do with the heating, and at the end of the year, they received a 3000-euro bill that each resident had to pay. It was 10 times more than his actual rent, and the landlord didn't want the residents to live there anymore since he had to pay thousands of euros to make it habitable. Thomas couldn't pay the bill since it was a lot of money, and together with other residents, they were trying to file a lawsuit:

> "[...] I wanted to do lawsuits together with some other housemates but then this company (the agency) was actually really helping us out finding a new place so we were in this, a little bit weird power dynamics, where I actually wanted to prosecute, but I also wanted to have a house so the agency helped me find something. [...] At the moment I though this is such a *shitty* company, basically they make money to put people in anti-squat places, and then after a year they say that we need to pay more since the services cost got

higher, so they make money with that, [...] at the end they helped me out, it was a token of goodwill from them" (Stehpan)

Apparently, that was the reason why he moved out of anti-squat housing. Thomas really enjoyed his time living there until his relationship with the landlord started to deteriorate. However, in his situation, the agency acting as a mediator actually helped him find new housing. This kind of social dynamic brings different outcomes. When he and other anti-squatters wanted to file a court case due to unfair pricing, their good relationship with the agency persuaded them not to proceed. Instead, they dealt with the situation peacefully, with the agency providing future housing. This is a different case from Nicole's. Although she did not clearly mention her relationship with the agency or the company in charge of her anti-squat, she did express dissatisfaction, which could be interpreted during the interview as indicating that her relationship with the agency was not as good as Thomas's or others who had positive experiences with their agencies or landlords.

For others, challenges or barriers were more abstract, such as uncertainty, insecurity, or a lack of agency and ownership.

One participant, Jane, highlighted the challenge of uncertainty, stating, "*The challenge was uncertainty. Because you never know when exactly you have to leave. I already had to leave after two months, so you have to move and put all your stuff in and then move again [...] the agency can give you another place only if they have. But of course, there's a lot of people that want the place. Finding another place within 4 weeks was really stressful.*"

Another participant, Frederick, echoed similar sentiments, saying, "*The worst part of anti-squat was the uncertainty. It was guaranteed for four years, and the agency applied for another year of extensions, and after, another year. Because at some point I was like if I need to find a house, I won't have much time to find one, and at some point I was really done with that uncertainty. Housing at that time was already getting very difficult to find as a student.*"

Stephan emphasized the challenge of lacking a connection to the living space and feeling a lack of agency or ownership, stating, "*Challenges are because of the transient nature of your living space; you have no connection to the area, you have no agency or ownership. So you don't take care of it.*"

Participants shared that their response to this precarity was to look for other housing through different agencies or their social networks, with the worst-case scenario being a return to their parents' homes.

Benefits

Regarding the benefits, almost all the participants agreed on one thing: the price. They found anti-squat living to be cheap and affordable. According to Buswell (2024), average price renting in the Netherlands is currently between €810-1020 for a one bedroom apartment. It was evident that the primary benefit was affordability compared to normal housing contracts with strong tenants' rights. The rent paid by participants varied, with amounts ranging from 180 euros as the lowest to 510 euros as the highest.

When asked whether they believed the anti-squat arrangement was worth the cost, despite acknowledging its affordability as a benefit, some participants expressed dissatisfaction. However, almost all of them affirmed that it was definitely worth what they paid for anti-squat.

Those who previously mentioned the affordability of anti-squat living but felt it wasn't worth the cost said:

"I think I paid 400 euros a month, and for that money, you expect some services. For anti-squat, it was expensive; normally, anti-squat costs around 100 euros or something, and it was a real prison with 400 euros a month." (Luke)

Another participant, expressing similar sentiments, stated:

"No. Because they [the agency] make a profit. They didn't operate like a normal rental agency; it was already horrible. They neglected our needs entirely. Paying 330 euros for an apartment building seemed cheap, but everything was easily broken down and it was unsafe. As a 20-year-old, I had no legal recourse. They were exploiting a group they knew couldn't fight back, without any oversight from the agency." (Stephan).

5.4 Consideration of anti-squat as temporary housing option

This section aims to assess participants' perspectives on anti-squat as a temporary housing option within their housing careers. It analyzes if it is merely a stopgap measure until permanent accommodation is secured, emergency choice or do individuals actively choose it to explore alternative living arrangements (Stocker et al., 2020). This aspect is crucial for understanding how anti-squat fits into their housing journeys and whether it aids or complicates their housing solutions. The findings will be presented in a table format for clearer illustration.

Table 2: How residents consider anti-squat

How they consider anti-squat:	Number of participants	Responses
Practical in-between solution	3	"I see an anti-squat house as a temporary home where you can live for a short period of time in your life" (Monica,)
Emergency option due to lack of availability	5	"For me it was more of an emergency, so I needed a place; an alternative. It was not something I would choose voluntarily" (Jane, 19 March, 2023) "Emergency solution, that you really have no choice because you don't choose this over any other option" (Stephan)
A conscious choice that fits with flexible life	4	"For me it was a conscious choice, because I wanted to know how it would be to live like this, I hope it will give me a useful experience of what it's like to 'survive' in this world when you don't have a safety net to fall back on" (Lucy).
Practical and emergency solution	2	"Practical and emergency solution because it's not amazingly practical, but it is practical in a way that it can help" (Thomas)
Practical and conscious choice5	2	"It is a practical and conscious choice. Like depending on what you want to do as a person [...] a good place to rent is really hard to find so I guess if you got this as an option, that's like a good solution" (Jim)

As shown in this table, half of the participants consider anti-squat as an emergency option. For them, it was not a choice but rather the only option available at the time. None of the participants initially planned to live in anti-squat housing; they were simply looking for a place to stay, and anti-squat was easier in terms of affordability, availability, and accessibility. Although slightly less than one-third of participants said that it fit with their flexible lifestyle, this perspective often developed after they had experienced living in anti-squat housing. Another group, also less than one-third, viewed it as a practical interim solution. However, they did not explain how this temporary arrangement helped them plan systematically for their future housing. Instead, it primarily addressed their immediate housing needs at a critical time.

Regarding whether anti-squat helps provide more housing options, all but one participant agreed that it does, though only temporarily. However, three participants believed that squatting is even better and provides more housing than anti-squatting. They also suggested future measures or policy changes to help more people secure housing:

"I believe there can be another way to rent out these vacant places, where the municipality rents out vacant places. There should be a way in which you have more rights." (Jane)

"We owe it to the squatting movement for the safety system. They still perform very important social functions in a cooperative manner. As part of the squatting legacy, you don't see anti-squatting buildings having the same social impact." (Stephan)

For those who said anti-squat does help, opinions were divided when asked if it helps or exacerbates the housing crisis. Some felt it helps, while others believed it exacerbates the issue:

"It feels like false safety; it feels like it's helping, but actually it exacerbates the problem because all these people [anti-squatters] still need to find housing since it isn't a long-term solution." (Frederick)

"I think it exacerbates the problem. Policymakers think they are solving a problem by providing anti-squat, but they're not. There are still a lot of empty buildings. It is a good solution for the interim but not a permanent solution." (Andy)

Andy advocates for anti-squat since it somehow recycles buildings, but she also shares that the government should not consider anti-squat as a permanent solution.

Those who shared that it helps the housing crisis believe that if it were not for anti-squat, the buildings would remain empty, and many people need housing. They consider leaving the buildings empty a waste:

"It helps because we cannot build as much as we want because of the CO_2 rules [...] if you want to tackle the housing crisis, I think you can better use what you have." (Sam)

5.5 Overall Housing patterns

The process of transitioning from anti-squatting to current housing differs from participant to participant. Table 4 illustrates the general housing patterns of participants by showing their current housing type and a brief description of how they obtained it. This table includes only those who no longer live in anti-squatting arrangements (13 out of 16 participants), aiming to analyze the transitioning phase and, if possible, their future housing.

As for the current anti-squatters, when asked about their future housing plans, their responses were more abstract and lacked concrete details. Most expressed a desire to remain in anti-squat housing until completing their studies. Afterward, they intended to seek more permanent housing, except for Jim, who plans to stay in his current anti-squat for at least 10 years: "[paraphrased] *I would prefer something more secure. I know I can live like this for 10 years, and if I decide to move out earlier, I can. For me, that starts with building a future from there.*" They agreed that future housing decisions would depend on their circumstances, whether they continue in academia or transition to professional roles, influencing their choices.

Table 3: Housing Patterns: from anti-squat to their current housing and future housing

Current housing; after anti-squatting	Individuals	Life course events: Choices, opportunities, and constraints	Housing pattern
Student housing	2	*Choices*: University: being a student allowed them to get student housing.	**Anti-squat —> student housing** Andy and Sam manage to get to student housing after living in anti-squat for 2 years. As previously mentioned, even before starting their university they subscribed for this type of housing, but the waiting list was 3 years and after anti-squatting they had sufficient time to get a room.
Other type of contracts: temporary contract	5	*Constraints*: 1)Termination of anti-squat contract.	**Anti-squat —> private housing —> anti-squat?** After leaving anti-squat housing, Caroline, Monica, Martha, Mary, and Thomas secured private housing with temporary contracts. Caroline and Monica moved in with friends, Mary found an

		Opportunity: 2) recommendation of friends to move in together 3) Help by agencies 4) New architecture project; new neighborhood	apartment with her previous anti-squat roommates, Martha found a shared room through Facebook, and Thomas got a new house through an agency with his previous roommate. Martha, Mary, and Thomas are considering returning to anti-squatting if conditions are acceptable, as they enjoyed the experience. Julie lives in a new project; new neighbors, in which she did not explained what was it, she mentioned that a friend of her came across this through an old broadcast, she signed up and shortly thereafter, she also signed up: "I mean, it was really cheap and I think we had a very good option. If this kind of option would present itself again, meaning I could live a little bit longer there, and I would kind of have the security. Yeah, to stay a little bit longer than three months or something, then I would do it again, probably. I kind of changed my attitude towards living on antikraak" (Mary).
Social housing with permanent contract	3	*Constraints; challenges but also opportunities:* Many long years of waiting for something stable and permanent. Constant moving from one housing to another	**Anti-squat —> temporary contracts —> social housing** Jane, Stephan, and Rachel are living in social housing. All three of them lived with temporary contracts after anti-squatting, where they had slightly better tenants' rights (3 months' notice instead of 14 days). Rachel moved into the same social housing as Stephan through her social connections. Jane, on the other hand, waited 10 years on the waiting list to get social housing. Both Rachel and Jane mentioned "luck" as a key factor in securing this type of housing. After living for 3 years in an elderly residential complex, Stephan got his first indefinite permanent contract.

Owning	1	Opportunities, choices: Job - financial stability	**Anti-squat —> living with a friend —> moving back to parents' house —> purchased an apartment** Frederick moved in with a friend after an anti-squat situation where the property was owned by the friend's parents. When the property was sold, he moved back in with his parents, and after 12 years, he finally purchased an apartment in Utrecht.
Other	2	Opportunities: Getting a new job in a different city.	**Anti-squatting —> currently looking for housing** As for Luke, he is currently looking for a house. At the time of the interview, he had recently started a new job that required him to travel to The Hague. Because of this, he is looking for a house that allows easy access to both Amsterdam and The Hague.

Figure 5: Housing cycle starting from anti-squat
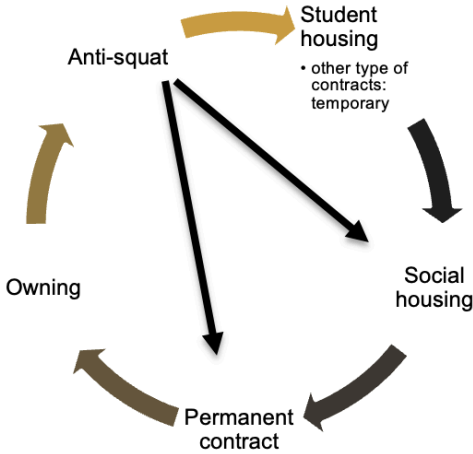
For the majority of participants who were still students, they did not have permanent contracts but temporary contracts that offered more tenant's rights than anti-squatting. Figure 3 illustrates the general patterns of the housing cycle: first anti-squatting, then transitioning to other types of temporary contracts, and eventually moving into social housing, which often offers permanent contracts. Others, like Frederick, opted to purchase a house.

6 Discussion of Findings

The experiences of residents in anti-squatting reflect the housing situation and the temporary housing measurement of the Netherlands. While most reported positive experiences, some shared negative aspects related to precariousness, such as feelings of insecurity and uncertainty about housing. As the Temporary Housing and Urbanism stated, this type of arrangement is precarious due to the lack of tenants' rights, even with this clause, anti-squatting remains a considerable option, especially for young people in need of housing.

Residents experience and housing insecurities

What is particularly interesting about how they cope with the precarity and insecurity of anti-squatting, is that even though most participants knew that the agency was making money from the service anti-squatters provided, the majority did not question it since it was relatively cheap compared to normal rentals that offer more tenant rights.

The theory of Temporary Housing and Urbanism as discussed by Debrunner and Gerber (2021) emphasizes that in order to be adaptable and financially competitive, property owners seek time and money-saving solutions. In the end, owners have complete decision-making authority and maximum financial security due to the nearly eliminated protection of tenants' rights and the lack of a formal tenancy obligation to provide maintenance services. The power dynamics within temporary housing created not only precariousness but also disempowerment leaving residents vulnerable with no concrete solution to deal with the situation (Ferrari et al., 2016). Participants, aware of their lack of rights, often feel powerless to act due to fear of eviction or being overlooked by agencies or landlords. There weren't sufficient legal or financial resources for them to address the insecurity of anti-squattings. The only measure they could take was to move out and find another place to live.

Ferrari et al. (2016) stated that while temporary arrangement offers lower costs, it sacrifices stability, posing challenges for sustainable and affordable housing. Its relative affordability, accessibility, and availability compared to traditional rental options make it attractive for young students, often leading them to accept the trade-off of limited tenant rights in exchange for these three aspects.

Long-term housing aspirations: housing career and pathway

On the other hand, despite the precarity of living in anti-squat housing, residents do enjoy the accommodations where they develop good social connections. This has greatly influenced

some participants, as their social connections within anti-squatting led them to plan future housing with the previous anti-squat room/housemates or consider returning to live in anti-squat. This supports the Housing Pathway Approach, where relationships not only with residents but also with agencies influence housing access and impact housing decisions with strategic and tactical actions that persuade their housing pathways (Hochstenbach and Boterman, 2014).

Participants who had good relationships with landlords or received help from agencies during their time in anti-squat, were more likely to consider returning if conditions remained the same. Flexibility from both residents and agencies or landlords was also an important factor. For instance, residents who are still students and used to live in anti-squat said that because of their social status or life stage, they do not require stability as much as others who have stable jobs or more responsibilities. In other words, they are more flexible in dealing with the insecurity that anti-squat arrangements bring, it can also relate with the lifestyle preference in a specific time of life-stage. As for the agencies, if they were more acceptable in giving freedom for the usage of the space and respecting the privacy of the residents, it created a leverage to consider anti-squat as beneficial experience.

Whether anti-squat is a practical interim solution depends on various factors. These include external factors such as the duration of stay and availability of other housing options. The availability of other housing played a key role in determining if anti-squat is a practical interim solution. If residents couldn't find anything else while staying in anti-squat, their housing situation remained precarious and insecure since their housing issue was not solved. If they could successfully find the next housing, then anti-squat was a good stopgap benefiting their housing career. While most participants could stay for one year or more, some already knew that the building would be maintained as anti-squatting for a certain period, making it a good alternative solution (Stocker, et al., 2021). However, when the contract needed to be extended year by year, things became difficult, prompting them to consider planning for their next housing without confidence in successfully finding accommodation.

Internal factors include social connections, individual preferences and lifestyle, and financial situation. These personal factors, depending on participants' experiences, shaped their opinions on whether living in anti-squat housing was helpful. Looking back at housing patterns, excluding current anti-squat residents, half of the participants found their future housing through social networks or connections, such as friends' invitations or relationships built while living in anti-squat. The other half had a more strategic plan, such as being on waiting lists for student and social housing before living in an anti-squat. Only one participant was still struggling to find

a place to live. As indicated in the Housing Career Approach, the individuals' decisions to relocate are determined by their goals, resources, and perceived possibilities which are influenced by lifestyle preferences, financial means and limitations (Ambrasson, 2012). This indicates that future housing plans differ depending on individual circumstances and situations. While some plan strategically, understanding that it may take longer to secure stable housing, others find housing or struggle to find, due to current limitations they face or opportunities that come through depending on the situation.

It is also important to consider that anti-squatting, as a temporary rental solution, does not alleviate the housing crisis in the country. As many participants mentioned, it creates the false impression that providing more temporary housing options is a viable solution. As Nemeth and Langhorst (2014) explained, temporary use is secondary to or a placeholder for the preferred permanent option. The preferred permanent option is to have a place to live without worrying about eviction or being forced to move out. If the country continues to lack adequate housing, anti-squatting does not truly address the housing crisis. Yet, some participants felt that the existence of numerous vacant buildings was wasteful. If these buildings were used for housing, even if it's temporary, it could help the housing needs of many young people starting their studies.

However, for the long-term impact of anti-squatting, policies and legal aspects need clarification. Anti-squatting agencies began to emerge in 2010, and now, more than a decade later, there are stories of people sharing experiences of precarity within anti-squatting arrangements. However, legal documentation related to anti-squatting has not been fully developed, and existing policies only outline the use of vacant properties. This lack of clarity creates confusion for those seeking a clear understanding of what anti-squatting entails and its legal implications.

Policy Implications and Future Directions

Since the beginning of this research, it became evident that housing affordability was a severe issue facing the country. The purpose of anti-squatting was to allow people to reside in properties until they were either demolished or repurposed. However, this study did not thoroughly analyze what happened to the buildings after occupants were evicted due to reconstruction or demolition. Only one participant mentioned that a building was transformed into high-priced housing, contributing to gentrification that made the entire neighborhood expensive.

Given that housing affordability is a primary concern in the Netherlands, it raises questions about whether making new buildings harder to afford actually benefits those in need of housing. This paper recommends future studies to investigate how former anti-squatting buildings have been repurposed and how this has impacted both people and the housing market in the country. Furthermore, a broader, more in-depth perspective is needed on the individuals most affected by gentrification—whether they were previous occupants of anti-squatting properties or not—and how this process is socially impactful and potentially provides more housing options.

Also, For future research, it would be valuable to analyze how foreigners living in anti-squat housing navigate Dutch policies and regulations and what plans they make when facing eviction from such properties. This will provide insight that housing should be accessible to everyone equally, without prioritizing specific groups or individuals, in order to promote inclusivity and fairness in housing development.

Additionally, for the international development sector, future studies should also analyze alternative uses for vacant spaces that are more inclusive and sustainable, providing more housing options, tenant's rights, and establish effective criteria for utilizing these buildings without requiring new construction or innovation.

7 Conclusion

This paper has studied how anti-squatting, as a temporary housing option, influences individuals' housing careers and shapes their long-term housing pathways. It seeks to understand how anti-squatting provides more housing options amid the country's housing crisis and how individuals view anti-squatting in the context of their future housing aspirations. By analyzing various narratives, it provides an in-depth understanding of how circumstances not only influence their experiences—positive or negative—but also act as crucial determinants in their future housing decisions.

Despite the ongoing need for reconfiguring or developing more concise policies and laws, the interactions within anti-squatting among residents, agencies, and landlords have significantly shaped their stories, both positively and negatively. These social experiences play a pivotal role in shaping housing pathways, offering a new perspective on temporary living arrangements. While anti-squatting brings precarity and housing insecurity, the social interactions within these communities also reveal positive aspects.

Indeed, while the ideal scenario would be more affordable and legally secure housing options for young people, experiencing anti-squatting has prompted them to develop different approaches to planning and securing housing in a volatile market. It has provided valuable training in navigating housing challenges. As revealed in the research, anti-squatting was the only option available at that time when there was a need to find housing considering individuals' budgets and preferences.

Housing provides stability for individuals, even if it is very temporary; the fact of having somewhere to live helps to enjoy a bit of security. As mentioned earlier, which the research reveals, social relationships are a determining factor in accessing housing. It has been shown that each individual manages their future plans differently, and this is reflected in how they approach the planning of their future homes, driven by their motivations and aspirations. For young people, anti-squatting can be seen as a viable option to gain experience of living in such conditions, although they must consider the precarious nature of anti-squatting.

Studying the experiences of anti-squatters was relevant, as it represented a relatively new method that deviated from conventional practices. It explored whether this approach helped alleviate housing provision, especially for young people entering the housing market. While policy and law needed further development, it was intriguing to observe the diversity in each story and how it influenced their future housing decisions.

While anti-squatting offers immediate relief for some amidst housing challenges, its sustainability and broader societal impacts necessitate ongoing evaluation and policy refinement. Residents' experiences highlight the dual nature of anti-squatting as both a pragmatic housing solution and a potential contributor to housing insecurity and social inequalities.

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9 Appendices

Appendix 1: Characteristics of participants and general information about individuals' anti-squat arrangement.

Participants	Age	Location where they stayed or stay	Type of anti-squat property	Rent Price (euros)	Duration in anti-squat housing	Type of interview	Date when interview was conducted
Jane	Not mentioned	Amsterdam	Regular house	180	3 years	In-person interview	19 March, 2024
Luke	29	Amsterdam	Old prison - Bijmer	300-400	1.5 years	In-person interview	21 March, 2024
Frederick	33	Utrecht	School	350	6 years	In-person interview	4 April, 2024
Caroline	Not mentioned	Utrecht	Old prison	+-250	1 year	Online interview: whatsapp	11 April, 2024
Monica	Not mentioned	Utrecht	Old prison	Not mentioned	1.5 years	Online interview: whatsapp	11 April, 2024
Martha	22	Utrecht - Zeist	Old school for children with special need	260	2 years	In-person interview	30 April, 2024
Jim	22	Amersfoort	Regular house	400	Currently living. More than 6 months	In-person interview	30 April, 2024
Lucy	18	Groningen	Old office	180	Currently living. More than a month	Online interview: questions were answered	4 May, 2024

					through Google Drive	
Andy	22	Utrecht - Zeist	Old school for children with special need	260	2 years	In-person interview	7 May, 2024
Sam	22	Utrecht - Zeist	Old school for children with special need	260	2 years	In-person interview	7 May, 2024
Mary	22	Utrecht	Nursing house	245	2 years	In-person interview	
Julie	Not mentioned	Utrecht	Office	270	6.1 years	Online interview: questions were answered by email	12 May, 2024
Nicole	21	Amersfoort	Office	510	Currently living. 3 weeks	In-person interview	10 May, 2024
Stephan	34	Utrecht	Apartment	330	10 months	In-person interview	13 May, 2024
Rachel	Not mentioned	Utrecht - Zuilen	Apartment building and Regular house,	250	3 years	In-person interview	15 May, 2024
Thomas	28	Amsterdam - Schiphol	Gym	340	1 year	In-person interview	20 May, 2024

Interview questions
1. Can you describe your daily life in the anti-squatting buildings?
2. Where did you live before?
3. Why and how did you end up living in antikraak?   a. What were the reasons for choosing to live in this type of accommodation?
4. How long have you stayed in this building?
5. Can you describe your experience living in this type of accommodation?   a. How's your social relation with other residents?
6. What are the biggest challenges AND benefits of living in this type of housing?
7. Does this type of housing impact your stability and security? How?
8. Is there any regulation that seems unfair to you?
9. Is it worth what you are paying for staying in an anti-squatting building?
10. What would you do if you had to leave the place within 14 to 28 days?   a. Do you know already until when will you be able to stay?
11. What is/was your future housing plan? And how did you or do you plan it? Specific answers will be appreciated
12. Can you describe the process of living anti-squat and then to your current housing? (how did you find this place? Which was the process after you had to move from anti-squat?) - pass this question if you are still staying in anti-squat.
13. How do you relate your housing plan with other daily life plans? (What are the considerations you take into account when you look for housing that relates to your other daily plan?)
14. What opportunities and barriers do you see by living in anti-squat?
15. How do you see anti-squat housing as part of these housing life aspirations and plans? (e.g, a practical in-between solution, imperfect emergency 'solution' in the context of lack of options, a conscious choice, fitting with your flexible and mobile lives, blocking your life advancement and opportunities?) and why?
16. Do you think anti-squat is practical until you find something stable? Or do you think anti-squat is the only option you would find in order to have a place to live?

17. What are the most important considerations you take into account when choosing housing? (affordability, housing structure, location, security, etc.,)
18. To what extent do you believe this practice (anti-squat) living arrangement is affordable, available, tenure security?
19. In your opinion, do you think anti-squatting helps to provide more housing options in the city?
20. In your opinion, do you think anti-squatting helps or exacerbates the housing crisis in the city?
21. How do you consider anti-squat as your housing career, (meaning, your housing life story)