



Navigating Housing Challenges: *Temporal Housing Alternatives and Their Impact on the Right to the City for Homeless International Students in Groningen*

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Abstract

This research explores the intricate dynamics between *temporary housing alternatives*, housing satisfaction, and the realization of the right to the city among *homeless international students* in Groningen. Drawing on a theoretical framework encompassing spatial justice, *the right to the city*, and *housing satisfaction*, the study investigates how these factors intersect and influence the lived experiences of temporary residents. Through a mixed-methods approach including surveys, interviews, and secondary data analysis, the research uncovers nuanced insights into the challenges, aspirations, and coping strategies of individuals navigating temporary housing in Groningen. The findings reveal the pivotal role of location in shaping housing experiences, with financial constraints and area-specific factors influencing housing stability and satisfaction. Despite resilience and adaptability, temporary residents express a strong desire for stable, affordable housing alternatives that foster a sense of belonging and integration into the community. The study underscores the urgent need for comprehensive housing solutions that prioritize affordability, accessibility, and inclusivity to ensure the realization of the right to the city for all residents of Groningen.

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Introduction

In contemporary times, the Netherlands is grappling with a growing housing shortage (NL Times, 2023). This issue is particularly acute in the Groningen region, where it is projected that there will be a shortfall of approximately 10,000 housing units by the year 2025, unless there is a significant acceleration in the execution of housing construction plans (Groninger Internet Courant, 2022). The housing shortage has emerged as a pressing crisis on the political agenda in this densely populated nation. The Netherlands presents a formidable challenge for spatial planners seeking to identify suitable locations for new housing developments.

The impending implementation of the 'Omgevings wet' (Environment Act) in 2024 marks a pivotal development in addressing this housing shortage. Under this legislation, provinces and municipalities will be granted more flexibility and fewer regulatory constraints, thereby affording them greater latitude to pursue their respective housing ambitions (Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Waterstaat, 2023). The effectiveness of these measures in alleviating the housing crisis remains a matter that will require empirical validation in the future. Until then, the inhabitants have to deal with the negative effects on quality of life caused by the housing shortage. Because there is more demand than supply, house prices will rise and more people become homeless. In other words, a lack of houses will influence urban justice.

The city of Groningen is a vibrant student hub, with the University of Groningen offering academic opportunities to international students. In the 2021-2022 academic year, over 35,000 students were enrolled at the RUG, of whom 25.8% held foreign nationalities (Pastoor, 2021). These international students arrive in the Netherlands with hopes of pursuing their studies and enjoying life. However, securing housing has become an arduous task amid the ongoing housing crisis. The challenge is amplified for international students seeking student accommodations, as they often face exclusion from housing provider websites like 'kamernet.nl'. Preference is frequently given to Dutch nationals, severely limiting available alternatives (HanzeMAG, 2022). Consequently, students are forced to explore unconventional avenues for lodging, such as staying in hostels for extended periods or even resorting to spending nights in bus shelters. They must exercise creativity in utilizing public spaces to meet their housing needs. In some unfortunate cases, this homelessness leads to students returning to their home countries (HanzeMAG, 2022).

The literature currently engages in a dialogue regarding the hurdles students encounter while searching for accommodation. Sotomayor et al. (2022) assert the significance of adopting a student-centric perspective to grasp these challenges, especially in urban locales with limited housing options. They argue that overlooking this approach risks oversimplifying students' decisions and experiences, thereby disregarding the intricate social dynamics involved. While the most effective strategy for assisting homeless students remains a topic of debate, there is a pressing need for further investigation and adjustment in planning methods to adapt to evolving local conditions and navigate the complexities of urban development (Revington et al., 2020). Numerous studies like these, delve into the urgency and expansion of the shared housing market. Uyttebrouck et al. (2020) emphasize the

importance of regulatory measures, such as implementing specific standards for shared space design, to tackle issues related to affordability, accessibility, and potential drawbacks associated with shared housing. The authors anticipate similar patterns in other cities grappling with housing shortages and the commercialization of housing, both within the Netherlands and across Europe.

Research gap

According to Fang & van Liempt (2021), there is a pressing need for further research in Dutch university cities to explore options and policies for providing adequate housing for international students. A notable deficiency exists in studies examining students' housing experiences during their university years (Crutchfield et al., 2019). This study seeks to bridge this gap by integrating the concept of the right to the city with efforts to find housing solutions for homeless students. Homelessness among international students is a growing concern in cities with large student populations (Crutchfield et al., 2019). Understanding the difficulties students encounter is essential for academics studying social policy, homelessness, and potential remedies. Moreover, while a small number of students are chronically homeless and forced to live in public spaces, they do not represent the broader population living in unstable temporary accommodations (Hallett et al., 2019). Thus, the research gap lies in the lack of a thorough and comprehensive examination of homeless students' experiences and their entitlement to urban living, crucial for informing necessary developments and strategies in addressing the housing shortage in student-centric cities.

Recognitional justice is essential for this research as it provides a framework to address the specific challenges faced by homeless international students in Groningen. The housing shortage in the region not only affects the general population but also disproportionately impacts international students, creating a spatial injustice. Recognitional justice emphasizes understanding and acknowledging the unique needs and experiences of different groups within a community.

Research problem

The aim of the research is to identify temporary housing alternatives and the associated housing satisfaction for homeless international students in the city of Groningen. Subsequently, the study aims to assess how these shelters affect their sense of belonging to the city. The findings from this research can offer valuable insights to the Groningen municipality about this specific group of residents residing in temporary shelters. Additionally, other cities can benefit from this information when considering similar issues in their urban landscapes. This objective leads to the following main research question:

- *How are the temporal housing alternatives and associated housing satisfaction for homeless international students impacting the realization of the right to the city in the city of Groningen?*

This main research question leads to the following secondary questions;

1. *What are the temporal housing alternatives for homeless international students in the city of Groningen?*
2. *What is the associated housing satisfaction for students living in temporal housing in the city of Groningen?*
3. *How is housing satisfaction of the homeless international students in temporal housing alternatives impacting the realization of the right to the city?*

Theoretical Framework

Homeless students in temporary housing

Homeless students are individuals experiencing a lack of stable and adequate places to live and may be residing in temporary or unstable housing situations (Dhaliwal, 2021). This category includes students living in shelters, temporary student accommodations, hotels, motels, cars, or those "doubled up" in the homes of others due to the absence of their own housing. These students encounter distinct challenges associated with their housing instability. This lack of accessible housing is according to Sotomayor et al. (2022) leading to the emergence of a hidden curriculum where they learn to be resourceful in securing accommodation. While international students often face the stereotype of being economically privileged (Fang & van Liempt, 2021). Some supposedly affluent international students are compelled to rent expensive flats if they cannot secure a student room due to housing shortages. Other international students lacking the financial means for such expensive options have to explore alternatives like staying with friends, hostels, or even illegal dwellings. Sotomayor et al. (2022) adds in addition to this argument that this situation places significant pressure on students, impacting their mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being.

Despite their efforts to adapt and find housing solutions, many students encounter barriers and discrimination. In the worst-case scenario these barriers can result in students who may need to seek shelter outdoors in public space (Wusinich et al., 2019). Homeless individuals prioritize safety when choosing where to sleep at night to avoid theft and physical harm. They often seek locations with security measures, such as cameras or police presence, and may sleep in public areas like train stations for safety, but according to Navarrete-Hernandez et al. (2021), public spaces are configured in a way that perceived safety differs for men and women. Casey et al. (2008) agrees and argues homeless women experience more exclusion in their needs, extending beyond the streets and homeless institutional spaces. These spaces play a crucial role in the lives of homeless women, emphasizing the importance of linking generic public services like libraries to homeless service providers and the role of recreational activities in homeless women's coping strategies. In addition to the strategies for housing accessibility for individuals, Pavlakis (2019) emphasizes the importance of collaboration, adaptability, understanding participants' needs, and employing creative approaches to address the unique challenges faced by students experiencing homelessness. This cooperative method has the potential to generate a variety of solutions within the confines of urban areas. Take, for example, the Bokompakt initiative, spotlighted in a case analysis, which diverges from the tiny housing trends prevalent in North America. Instead, it prioritizes the creation of compact rental apartments, catering to the demand for student accommodations rather than catering solely to individual homeowners' needs. These tiny houses align with students' living preferences (Mutter, 2013).

Spatial justice and the right to the city

According to Lian et al. (2020), spatial justice pertains to ensuring fairness and equity in how physical space is distributed and accessed within urban settings. It underscores the notion that all individuals and communities should enjoy equal rights and opportunities concerning urban spaces, encompassing principles of democracy, human rights, and socioeconomic

factors that influence spatial outcomes. Spatial justice acknowledges that physical space is not merely a passive backdrop but significantly influences social and economic dynamics. It underscores the importance of examining the allocation of urban resources, the processes contributing to spatial disparities, and the active involvement of citizens in shaping urban environments to foster a more equitable society. However, Iveson (2011) contends that adopting a spatial perspective does not offer a guaranteed solution to all issues or ensure political success, as opponents also incorporate spatial considerations, which are not inherently progressive or radical. Pursuing spatial justice complements rather than detracts from the pursuit of social justice, enriching it.

The "Right to the City" as conceptualized by Henri Lefebvre, is closely related to spatial justice, but extends beyond the mere physicality of urban landscapes, delving into the intricate web of its social dynamics and vulnerabilities (Aldinhas Ferreira, 2021). Lefebvre advocates for a paradigm shift towards a city life founded on direct democratic engagement and genuine human experiences, rejecting abstract notions. Within this framework, fundamental rights such as liberty, individuality, adequate housing, and equitable access to essential services are deemed imperative for all urban inhabitants. Expanding on this perspective, Turok & Scheba (2019) assert that within the overarching umbrella of the right to the city, the creation of residential spaces assumes a transformative role, constituting an ongoing evolutionary process. Aligned with the insights of Aalbers & Gibb (2014), they posit that the right to the city should not be seen as a final destination but rather as a continual endeavor to cultivate urban environments that are less alienating and prioritize utility over commercial value. This stands in opposition to conventional notions of property rights and forced acquisition, centering on the utilization and ownership in the pursuit of social utility within urban landscapes. These contentions stem from various factors, including displacement triggered by gentrification and privatization, highlighting the clash between the right to the city and the unbridled workings of the free market.

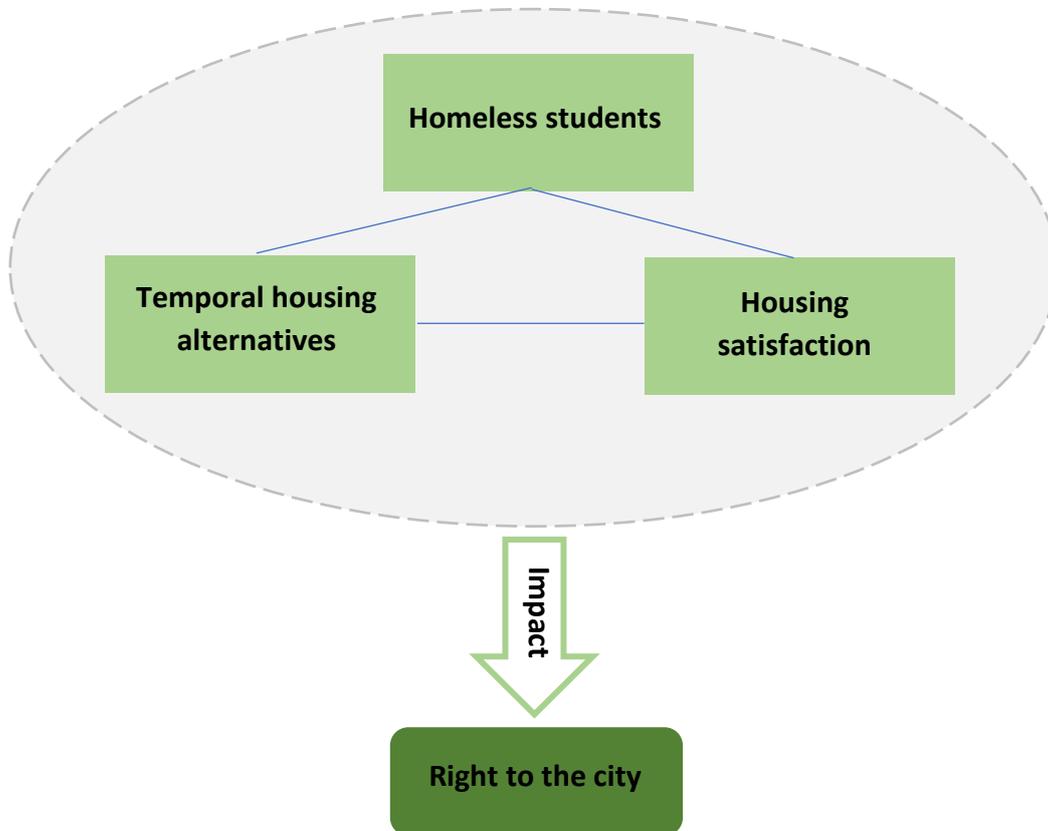
Housing satisfaction

Housing satisfaction refers to the positive balance between one's expectations and their actual experience with their living space. It is a critical measure of students' quality of life, influenced by various factors like the physical attributes of the dwelling, life stage, neighbourhood characteristics, personal expectations, past experiences, and subjective assessments (Gifford, 2007). This concept aligns with a study on housing satisfaction among students (Olufemi, 2014). Housing satisfaction is key to predicting an individual's perception of overall quality of life. The importance of home in people's lives varies due to their housing pathway stages and diverse cultural and social contexts. However, generally, a home is considered significant for all, including students in temporary situations (Clapham, 2005). Furthermore, according to Thomsen (2007), many students view their student residence as their main home despite its temporary nature. However, homelessness impacts school attendance patterns and emphasizes the importance of stability in education (Dhaliwal, 2021). Students in temporary housing are more likely to face chronic absenteeism compared to those in stable housing (icphusa).

When students have a place to stay, various factors come into play. According to Navaraz (2017), the location of student housing is crucial—accessibility to campus, social activities, and the city center are important for housing satisfaction and the feeling of 'homeyness.' Additionally, factors such as privacy and hygiene also matter (Romero et al., 2020). These

factors can be lacking in shelters and present challenges in urban spaces for different societal groups, such as the LGBT community.

Conceptual model



The conceptual model seeks to comprehend how the independent variables of homeless students, temporary housing alternatives, and housing satisfaction affect the dependent variable, the right to the city. In this, the independent variables are strongly interconnected. Homeless students, in fact, live in temporary housing alternatives and determine housing satisfaction, while housing satisfaction depends on temporary housing alternatives. These variables can collectively measure the impact on the realization of the right to the city.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis for this research is that the availability and quality of temporary housing alternatives significantly influence the housing satisfaction of homeless international students in the city of Groningen. It is anticipated that a positive correlation exists between satisfactory living conditions and a heightened sense of belonging to the city. Additionally, it is hypothesized that the realization of the right to the city, as perceived by homeless international students, is contingent upon the adequacy and appropriateness of the temporary housing solutions provided by the city. The study expects to uncover a nuanced relationship between the type of housing, housing satisfaction, and the extent to which homeless international students feel integrated into the urban fabric, providing valuable insights for both local policymakers in Groningen and other cities grappling with similar challenges in their respective contexts.

Methodology

Research methods

To answer the central question, *'How are the temporary housing alternatives and associated housing satisfaction for homeless international students impacting the realization of the right to the city in the city of Groningen?'*, both primary and secondary data collection will be required. Primary data collection is valuable for addressing the first and second sub-questions: *'What are the temporary housing alternatives for homeless international students in the city of Groningen?'* and *'What is the associated housing satisfaction for students living in temporary housing in the city of Groningen?'*. Secondary data is mainly needed to answer the third sub-question: *'How is housing satisfaction of the homeless international students in temporary housing impacting the realization of the right to the city?'*

This study centers on three specific zones within Groningen, selected following an interview with the municipality (Appendix C). The municipality shared insights into temporary housing alternatives for students, primarily comprising apartments, container residences, and hotel/hostel accommodations. Consequently, the research focuses on these three shelter types and their respective surroundings, facilitating a comparative analysis of neighborhood experiences across Groningen.

Selwerd (Flats: Esdoornlaan, Duindoornstraat)

Established in the 1960s, this neighbourhood comprises numerous social housing units and boasts a diverse populace. Selwerd stands out as the most culturally diverse community in the city, with one in every four children experiencing poverty. Its proximity to the Zernike Campus results in a high concentration of student residences, lending an energetic atmosphere to the area. However, this also presents challenges like noise pollution. Specifically designated for students, the flats on 'Esdoornlaan' and 'Duindoornstraat' are managed by the SSH housing organization, accommodating international students for up to six months.

City Center (Student Hotel, Other Accommodations)

Groningen's city center is the epicenter of activity, hosting various attractions and social hubs. Alongside these are numerous hotels and hostels catering to visitors. The Student Hotel, located on the outskirts of the center, is particularly popular among students, offering extended stays ranging from two weeks to a year.

Stadspark (132 Peizerweg, The Village)

Operated by 'The Village,' this facility provides additional student housing in Groningen, featuring a substantial number of container homes specifically designed for international students. Situated adjacent to the city park, it lies a mere one and a half kilometers from the city center, allowing stays of up to one year.



Map 1: Map of the city Groningen with the three research locations and their main temporal housing alternatives (image from Google Earth, edited by writer)

First and foremost, it is crucial for this study to evaluate the current circumstances in Groningen to ensure its relevance. A written interview (Appendix C) with the Municipality of Groningen has yielded key insights, identifying the locations and occurrences of temporary housing. This information has facilitated outreach to the specific target demographic of homeless international students. To address the first sub-question, *'What are the temporary housing alternatives for homeless international students in the city of Groningen?'*, a survey (Appendix A) has been formulated. This survey enables students to share their temporary housing alternatives and creative ideas to acquire shelter. Additionally, the survey is instrumental in addressing the second sub-question, *'How is housing satisfaction of the homeless international students in temporal housing impacting the realization of the right to the city?'* It elucidates the characteristics and experiences related to temporary housing in Groningen, enabling comparative analysis across different locations.

For the third sub-question, *'How is housing satisfaction of the homeless international students in temporal housing impacting the realization of the right to the city?'*, in-depth interviews are needed. Interviews with three students, each representing one of the locations, can provide deeper insight into the impact of these temporal housing alternatives

and associated living conditions on the sense of inclusivity in the city, their right to the city. The interviews can be analyzed by comparing the three locations and exploring variations in the impact on the right to the city based on the specific living conditions in each location. Additionally, the possible challenges can be described for each location.

	INSTRUMENT	WHY	HOW
PRIMARY DATA	-Survey -Written interview	-Several temporal housing alternatives and housing satisfaction data	-Emailing -Networking -Location visits
SECONDARY DATA	-3 In-depth interview with students per location	-Deeper understanding the impact	-Approaching students by visiting locations -Via connections

Table 1: overview of methods

Limitations

The research outlined has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, its generalizability beyond Groningen may be limited due to the city's unique housing challenges and demographic composition. Additionally, the sample size and representativeness of participants in surveys and interviews could introduce bias, potentially overlooking the experiences of marginalized groups. The temporal context of the study's findings is crucial, as changes in housing regulations or economic conditions could impact their relevance over time. Social desirability bias and subjective interpretations of concepts like housing satisfaction and the right to the city may affect the reliability of the data collected. Language and cultural barriers with international students, along with the reliability of secondary data sources, pose further challenges

Ethics

In conducting this research, ethical principles must be rigorously upheld. Informed consent is paramount, ensuring participants fully comprehend the study's purpose and procedures, emphasizing voluntary participation. Confidentiality measures, such as anonymizing data and secure storage, must safeguard participants' privacy. Cultural sensitivity is crucial, acknowledging diverse backgrounds of homeless international students. Minimization of harm is a priority, with empathy in addressing sensitive topics and provision of information on support services. Survey design requires clarity and unbiased questions, while the interview protocol should respect emotional well-being, allowing flexibility and post-interview debriefing. Collaboration with community organizations ensures alignment with ethical guidelines, and continuous ethical review throughout the research process is essential to address emerging concerns promptly.

Results

For the locations 'Selwerd' and 'Stadspark,' 30 respondents were recruited for each, while for the 'City Center,' there were 12 respondents. Finding respondents for the 'City Center' location was challenging, at the moment of recruiting, there are only a few individuals sleeping in hotels due to homelessness. These respondents are specifically those who indicated in the survey that they currently have no permanent place of residence right now. Respondents who have experienced not having a permanent place of residence in the past at these locations were also used as additional data for possible other temporal housing alternatives in Groningen (9 respondents). According to the Municipality of Groningen, these three locations are crucial for preventing outdoor sleeping in public spaces and ensuring accommodation in the city (Appendix C).

Temporal housing alternatives

The survey revealed additional options beyond the three designated research locations. Mainly, students reported staying overnight at friends' or acquaintances' homes as their primary alternative (see Figure A). Some also mentioned staying briefly at a campground, while approximately 5% of students who did not choose the 'City Center' option in the survey opted for hotels/hostels. Only these three alternatives were cited by respondents. None reported having to seek shelter in public spaces in Groningen. According to the municipality (see appendix C), the number of students experiencing this in recent years is negligible. Gender did not seem to influence the search for shelter among respondents; for example, both men and women expressed similar difficulty, with 30% of men and 34% of women finding it nearly impossible to secure accommodation in Groningen.

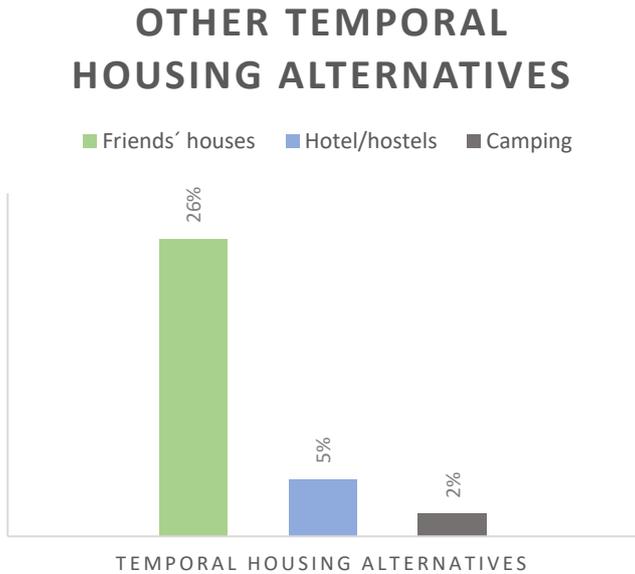


Figure A: Percentage of students in temporal housing, who have used other temporal housing alternatives.

While only three alternatives have been proposed for addressing housing needs in a creative or innovative way, one suggestion stands out: staying overnight at Basic-Fit. The respondent

argues that since Basic-Fit is open all day and offers amenities like a warm space, water, lockers, and showers, it could serve as a potential solution, though it may seem unconventional. Another idea involves staying with friends or acquaintances, with the respondent noting the prevalence of single-person rooms in Groningen, often overlooked by landlords. Data on temporary housing alternatives reveal that in Groningen, Friends' houses are the primary choice, alongside designated temporary housing for international students.

Housing satisfaction

Across all locations, there was a nearly equal distribution of gender among respondents. International students were not the sole participants in this study, as 5% of the respondents reported experiencing homelessness in Groningen as Dutch citizens. The age distribution mirrored this balance, with 96% of respondents indicating they were between 18 and 25 years old. However, there is a disparity in the duration respondents have spent or are currently spending in their temporary housing alternatives (see Figure B). In the 'City Center,' respondents appear to stay for a much shorter period compared to those in the 'Selwerd' and 'Stadspark' shelters.

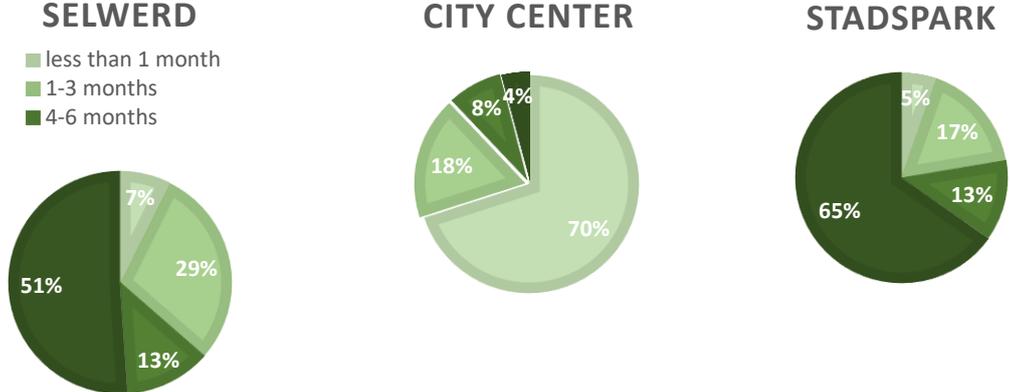


Figure B: Percentage of time students stay in each research location

Examining the costs across the three locations reveals an outlier in the 'City Center' (Figure C). Respondents incur significantly higher expenses for hotel accommodations compared to temporary housing in 'Selwerd' and 'Stadspark'. This discrepancy is also evident in whether students feel compelled to secure new shelter due to financial constraints (Figure D). In 'Selwerd' and 'Stadspark', respondents tend to extend their stays considerably, with only a negligible minority feeling pressured by costs to relocate. Additionally, Figure E illustrates a substantial percentage of respondents in the 'City Center' expressing a desire to leave as soon as possible, rendering it comparatively less stable.

MONTHLY COSTS

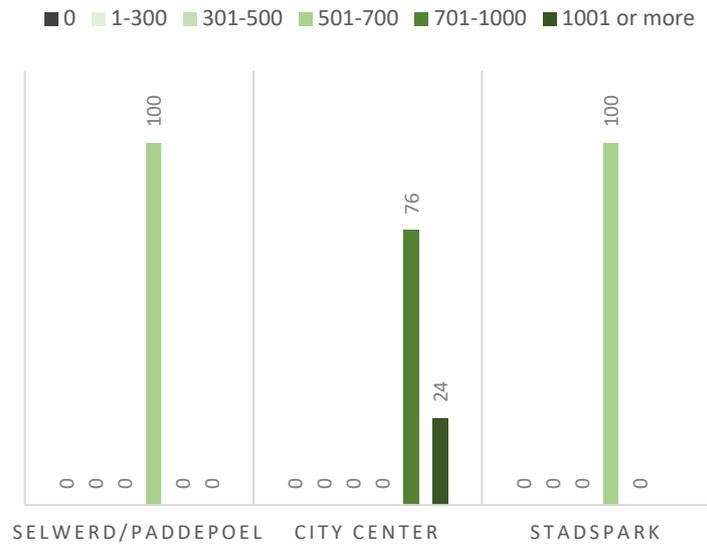


Figure C: The monthly costs what students have to pay per research location

DO YOU FEEL A CONSTANT PRESSURE TO FIND A NEW PLACE TO SLEEP DUE TO YOUR SHELTER COSTS?

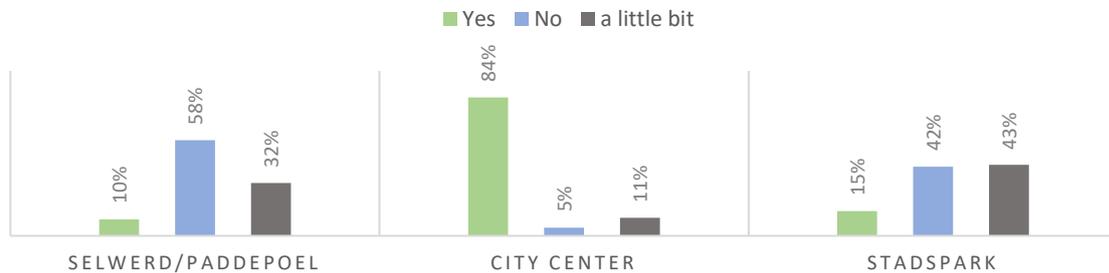


Figure D: Percentage of students feeling pressure, due to their costs, for the the three research locations

To measure housing satisfaction, an important gauge is the feeling of being at home. The differences do not seem significant regarding this sense of home; however, no one feels extremely at home in these locations (Figure E). But a large portion of 'Selwerd' and 'Stadspark' at least feel somewhat at home.

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THIS TEMPORARY PLACE PROVIDE A 'HOME' FEELING?

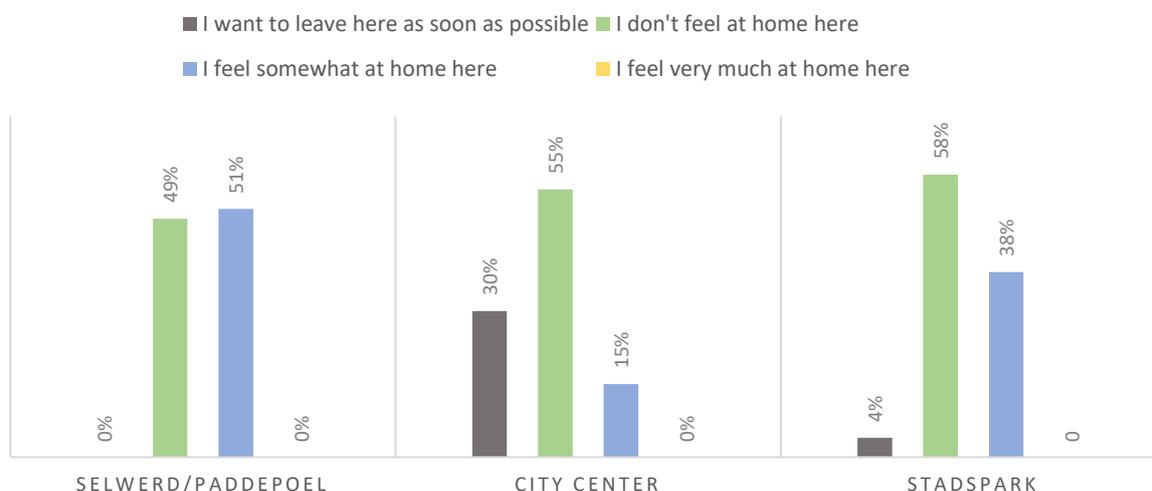


Figure E: Percentage of feeling 'home' for the three research locations

Regarding hygiene levels, some individuals have noted poor hygiene at the respective locations, although none consider it a reason to relocate. In 'Selwerd' and 'Stadspark,' there were complaints about cramped bathrooms and rooms quickly becoming musty. 'Selwerd' has hired cleaners who visit once a week to tidy common areas, which residents find satisfactory. The Student Hotel did not face criticism regarding hygiene. Similarly, regarding privacy levels, there is no urge to move out. Sharing spaces and potentially inconveniencing each other is seen as part of normal student life. Residents value having their own space while also appreciating shared areas, fostering connections with peers and facilitating communal activities like shared meals.

Friend's places

Staying at the homes of friends or acquaintances emerged as a common choice among respondents. The presence of trusted companions and the ability to personalize their living space contribute to a sense of security and emotional connection, even in temporary lodgings. While this option is often financially advantageous, respondents noted a lack of a true sense of home for the most part. Moreover, there is a prevalent reliance on alcohol to expedite finding a new place, alongside significant concerns about privacy intrusion. Respondents find it challenging to retreat to their own space when everything is shared, leading to a sense of encroachment.

Area specific

The location within the city and its surrounding context are crucial factors for feeling engaged with the urban environment. For 65% of respondents, the location serves as a significant factor influencing their decision to move. Neighborhoods like 'Selwerd' and 'Stadspark' exhibit lower levels of cohesion compared to the 'City Center' (figure F).

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE LOCATION/NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAY A ROLE HERE?

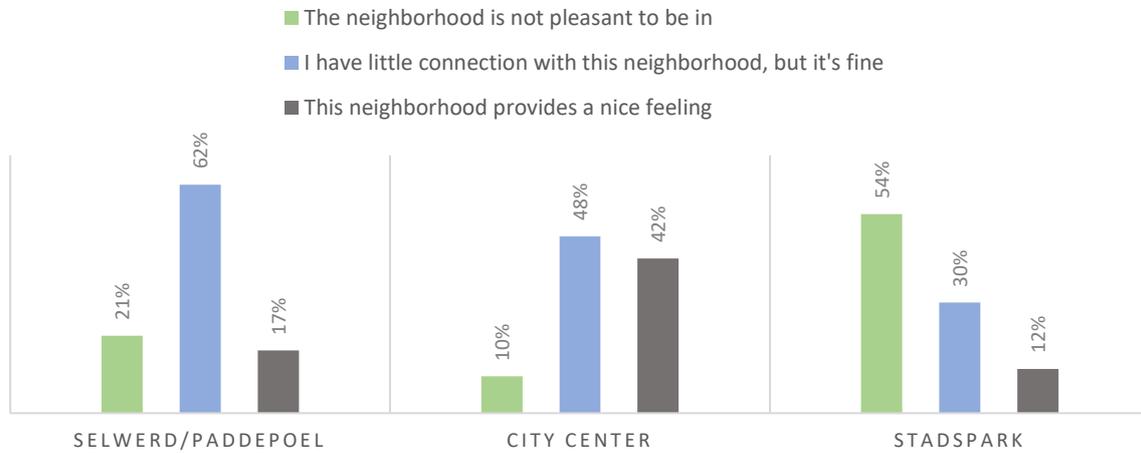


Figure F: The role of the location researched for the three research locations

Several factors come into play here, including the lack of greenery in both the 'Selwerd' and 'City Center' neighborhoods (Figure G). In 'Selwerd', the residents appear to influence the neighborhood dynamics, while in Stadspark, it seems more related to the less favorable overall location within the city. Students residing in the 'Stadspark' area express dissatisfaction with various aspects of their living situation (as shown in Figure G). They observe that despite the proximity to 'Stadspark', the absence of nearby access roads discourages frequent visits. Additionally, the industrial nature of the area contributes to a sense of detachment from the community, heightening their feelings of isolation. Furthermore, the persistent noise levels in the vicinity contribute to their discontent with the living environment.

Which factors play a role?

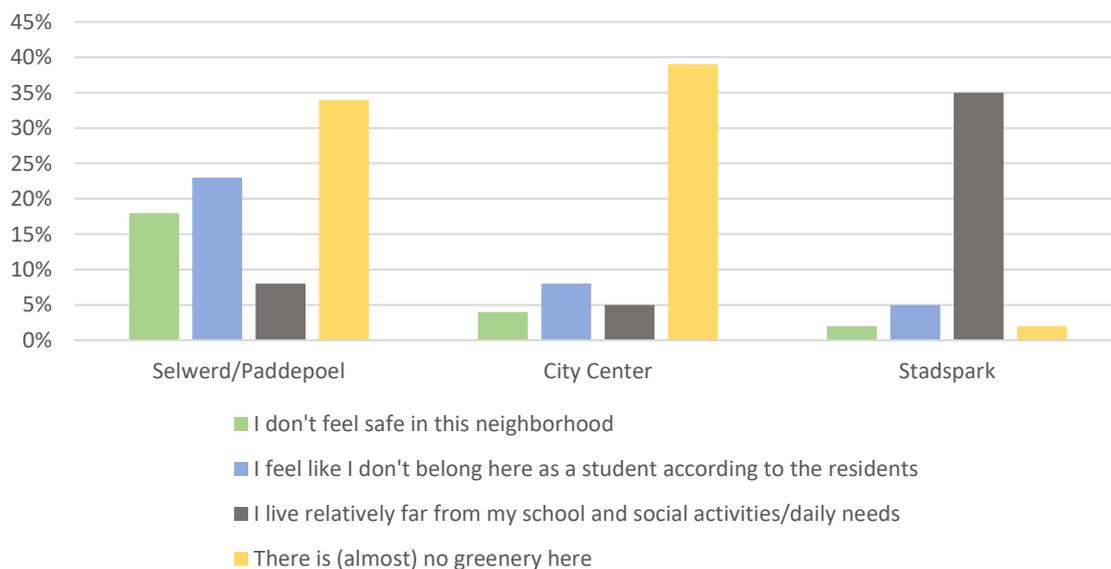


Figure G: The factors which play a role for the three research locations

Right to the city

Three interviews conducted in different temporary housing setups in Groningen provide insights into the experiences, challenges, and aspirations of individuals navigating the city's housing landscape (Appendix E, F, G). Despite their varying locations, each interviewee shares common themes of resilience, adaptability, and the quest for stability amidst uncertainty.

Living in temporary housing within Groningen presents a mixed bag of emotions for the interviewees. While Respondent 'Selwerd' expresses a growing sense of belonging and comfort within their temporary abodes, others grapple with a persistent feeling of disappointment and setback. Respondent 'City Center' emphasize this as follows: *'While I do feel a sense of familiarity and belonging to some extent, there is always this nagging feeling of impermanence looming over me. It is like being caught between two worlds - wanting to fully immerse myself in the city's culture and life, yet feeling like an outsider because of my temporary status'*. The transient nature of their housing situations casts a shadow of uncertainty, challenging their ability to fully immerse themselves in the city's culture and community. Despite efforts to connect with fellow residents and engage in city life, the specter of transience remains a significant hurdle.

Accessing essential urban resources such as education, healthcare, and employment proves to be a balancing act for those in temporary housing. While respondent 'Stadspark' navigates these services without major obstacles, others face limitations due to their unofficial residency status. Participant 'City Center' emphasizes this as follows: *'I actually want to have a room first before joining a student association. I want to make sure that I can stay here.'* The lack of stability in housing complicates daily routines and long-term planning, adding layers of stress and inconvenience to their lives.

The impact of housing circumstances extends beyond practical concerns, touching on deeper aspects of identity and integration. International students, in particular, navigate unique challenges, including language barriers, cultural differences, and stereotypes. Respondent 'Stadspark' notices this during home visits and formulates it as follows: *'Sometimes I can participate in housing interviews, but then I already know that I have a very small chance of getting the room, but I spend my entire evening on it.'* Despite efforts to assimilate and contribute to the local community, feelings of marginalization and exclusion persist, fueled by perceptions of privilege and the complexities of the housing market.

Despite these challenges, individuals in temporary housing demonstrate resilience and resourcefulness in navigating their circumstances. They form connections, seek out support networks, and actively engage with available resources to mitigate the effects of transience. However, the overarching desire for stability and a sense of permanence remains unfulfilled, overshadowing their experiences in Groningen. Respondent 'City Center' is afraid for his future perspective and formulates this as follows: *'Someone I know has returned to his hometown because the prospect of accommodation became minimal. I'm not so afraid of this now, but that fear always remains.'*

In an ideal scenario without a housing crisis, all interviewees express a desire for stable, affordable housing alternatives that align with their long-term goals and aspirations. While their current accommodations offer temporary reprieve, they fall short of providing the foundation for a fulfilling student life. The quest for housing stability emerges as a common thread, driving individuals to seek solutions that go beyond mere temporary fixes.

These interviews shed light on the multifaceted experiences of individuals living in temporary housing within Groningen. Their stories underscore the urgent need for comprehensive housing solutions that prioritize affordability, accessibility, and inclusivity, ensuring that all residents can truly call Groningen home.

Discussion

The alternatives for temporary housing among homeless students in Groningen encompass a spectrum of innovative solutions and existing social structures. While staying with friends or acquaintances emerges as a prevalent choice, reflecting the vital role of social networks in times of housing instability, it raises concerns about long-term sustainability and the potential exacerbation of stress on students navigating housing challenges independently, as noted in prior research (Dhaliwal, 2021; Sotomayor et al., 2022). Conversely, proposals like utilizing gym facilities such as Basic-Fit for overnight stays demonstrate a forward-thinking approach to repurposing existing spaces creatively, although feasibility and collaboration with various stakeholders remain essential considerations. Similarly, recognizing overlooked single-person rooms and leveraging designated temporary housing for international students underscore pragmatic efforts to address housing shortages, aligning with calls to maximize existing resources while ensuring equitable access and addressing systemic barriers (Pavlakis, 2019; Fang & van Liempt, 2021). However, amidst these solutions, it is crucial to acknowledge and confront the pervasive challenges and barriers faced by homeless students, including discrimination and safety concerns, which disproportionately impact marginalized groups like women, necessitating comprehensive strategies that prioritize safety, inclusivity, and the unique needs of vulnerable populations (Casey et al., 2008; Navarrete-Hernandez et al., 2021).

The notion of housing satisfaction, as articulated by Gifford (2007), underscores the importance of the match between one's expectations and the reality of their living conditions. This theme resonates throughout the findings, where respondents' contentment is shaped by factors like the physical attributes of their homes, neighborhood characteristics, and personal anticipations. The study underscores the pivotal role of housing satisfaction in predicting overall quality of life, echoing the sentiments of Olufemi (2014). Moreover, the literature review accentuates the significance of the concept of "home" in individuals' lives, even in transient circumstances. Thomsen (2007) suggests that many students regard their temporary residences as their primary homes. However, while respondents may not feel entirely settled in such lodgings, they still value elements of familiarity and comfort, particularly in locales like 'Selwerd' and 'Stadspark', where they experience a semblance of belonging. This nuanced understanding of 'homeyness' aligns with Navaraz's (2017) emphasis on the role of location and accessibility in nurturing a sense of home. Dhaliwal's (2021) research on homelessness underscores its detrimental impact on school attendance and emphasizes the necessity of educational stability. The findings of this study corroborate these assertions, noting a minority of Dutch citizens in Groningen experiencing homelessness, potentially disrupting their academic pursuits. This underscores the broader societal ramifications of housing instability, particularly among student populations.

The interviews highlight the disparities in access to stable and affordable housing, echoing the principles of spatial justice outlined by Lian et al. (2020). The experiences of the interviewees underscore the inequities in how physical space is distributed and accessed within Groningen, with some facing greater obstacles due to their unofficial residency status or international student status. This aligns with the concept of spatial justice, which

emphasizes the importance of ensuring fairness and equity in urban spaces to promote social and economic well-being. Furthermore, the interviews shed light on the broader implications of housing instability on individuals' sense of belonging and integration, echoing the principles of the right to the city as conceptualized by Henri Lefebvre. The interviews highlight the challenges faced by individuals in fully participating in urban life due to their temporary housing situations, emphasizing the need for adequate housing as a fundamental right for all urban inhabitants. This resonates with Lefebvre's vision of the right to the city as a framework for fostering democratic engagement and genuine human experiences within urban environments. Moreover, the interviews underscore the tensions between the right to the city and the workings of the free market, as discussed by Turok & Scheba (2019) and Aalbers & Gibb (2014). The experiences of the interviewees reveal the consequences of prioritizing commercial value over social utility in urban development, leading to displacement and housing insecurity for vulnerable populations. This highlights the importance of adopting a rights-based approach to urban policy that prioritizes the well-being of residents over profit-driven motives.

Conclusion

Based on the empirical findings presented in the study, several convincing generalizations can be drawn. Location significantly influences the housing experience of temporary residents in Groningen, impacting factors such as satisfaction, sense of belonging, and access to amenities. While traditional options like staying with friends are common, innovative solutions such as utilizing gym facilities as temporary shelters are suggested. Financial constraints play a significant role in housing stability, with higher costs in the 'City Center' leading to shorter stays. Temporary residents, including international students and Dutch citizens, encounter challenges beyond practical concerns, including feelings of impermanence and difficulty accessing urban resources. Despite their resilience, temporary residents express a strong desire for stable, affordable housing alternatives aligned with their long-term goals.

Examining the temporal housing alternatives available in Groningen, aside from the three focal points of research, only two additional alternatives have been identified. According to the survey, a considerable number of homeless students resort to staying with friends. A camping is also used as a place of residence. Furthermore, there appears to be a lack of innovation regarding potential alternatives within the city. Sleeping in public spaces is not considered a pertinent option for homeless international students at present.

Assessing the housing satisfaction linked to temporary housing alternatives, it is evident that gender has little impact on the search for shelter, as no students are found sleeping outdoors in public spaces. When comparing the three research locations, it is apparent that there are differences in the duration of stay among them. With financial constraints prompting relocations in the 'City Center' but longer stays in 'Selwerd' and 'Stadspark'. While no location fosters a strong sense of home, 'Selwerd' and 'Stadspark' elicit somewhat more comfort. Hygiene issues, while present, are not significant drivers of relocation. Privacy concerns arise in shared spaces, including friends' places, impacting the sense of security. Area-specific factors, like neighborhood dynamics and environmental quality influence housing decisions for 'Stadspark'. Dissatisfaction in 'Stadspark' is notable due to industrial surroundings, noise levels, and lack of community engagement.

The collective experience of individuals in temporary housing in Groningen highlights a shared journey marked by resilience, adaptability, and the pursuit of stability amidst uncertainty, underscoring its impact on the right to the city. Their emotions range from belonging and comfort to disappointment and setback, as the transient nature of their housing situations challenges their integration into the community. Accessing essential urban resources presents obstacles, compounded by unofficial residency status, impacting daily routines and long-term plans. Housing circumstances deeply affect identity and integration, particularly for international students facing language barriers and cultural differences, fostering feelings of marginalization despite efforts to assimilate. Despite these challenges, individuals demonstrate resilience and resourcefulness, seeking support networks and engaging with available resources to mitigate transience. Yet, the overarching desire for stability remains unfulfilled, highlighting the need for comprehensive housing

solutions prioritizing affordability, accessibility, and inclusivity to truly make Groningen home for all residents.

Recommendations

Future research could employ longitudinal studies to track changes in housing conditions and satisfaction levels among homeless international students in Groningen over time, providing insights into the temporal dynamics of their experiences. Comparative analysis across diverse urban contexts could reveal contextual factors influencing the realization of the right to the city for these students. Additionally, deeper qualitative exploration through ethnographic studies or phenomenological approaches could offer richer insights into the lived experiences and meanings attributed to temporary housing. Incorporating intersectional perspectives would illuminate how various identities intersect with housing experiences, while community-based participatory research approaches could foster co-creation of knowledge with affected communities. Policy analysis could assess the effectiveness of existing housing policies and inform evidence-based recommendations, while international comparative studies could offer insights into global trends and best practices in addressing housing challenges among international student populations. Integrating these methodological approaches and research directions would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of housing experiences, inform evidence-based interventions, and advance the realization of the right to the city for all urban inhabitants.

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Appendix

A: Survey questions

What is your gender?

Male

Female

Non-binary

Prefer not to say

What is your age?

Under 18

18 - 25

26 - 35

36 or older

Are you an international?

Dutch

International

How long have you been living in Groningen?

Housing Situation

Do you currently not have a permanent place of residence, or have you ever experienced what it's like to not have a permanent place of residence in Groningen?

Yes, I have currently no permanent place of residence in Groningen

Yes, I have experienced what it's like to not have a permanent place of residence in Groningen

No

Where did you experienced not having a permanent place of residence? (if you have more than one, choose your most recent one)

Selwerd/Paddepoel (Flats: Plutolaan, Esdoornlaan, Duindoornstraat)

City Center (Student Hotel, other hotels/hostels)

Damsterbuurt (Damsterdiep 269/271)

Stadspark (Peizerweg 132, The Village)

Friend's places

Camping tents

Other:

For how long have you had a temporary place of residence/ For how long do you have a temporary place of residence right now?

Less than 1 month

1-3 months

4-6 months

More than 6 months

How would you describe your living conditions when you do not have a permanent place of residence?

Shelter living conditions

Answer the questions based on your temporary place of residence experience

To what extent does this temporary place provide a 'home' feeling?

I want to leave here as soon as possible

I don't feel at home here

I feel somewhat at home here

I feel very much at home here

To what extent does the location/neighbourhood play a role here?

The neighborhood is not pleasant to be in

I have little connection with this neighborhood, but it's fine

This neighborhood provides a nice feeling

Which other factors are playing a role?

I don't feel safe in this neighborhood

I feel like I don't belong here as a student according to the residents

I live relatively far from my school and social activities/daily needs

There is (almost) no greenery here

Other:

what is your monthly rent? (if you sleep in a hotel/hostel, calculate your monthly overnight costs please)

0

1-300

301-500

501-700

700-1000

1001 or more

Do you feel a constant pressure to find a new place to sleep due to your shelter costs?

Yes

No

Maybe

Is the privacy level and the hygiene level a reason to leave?

I have little privacy

The hygiene is poor

Both

Neither of both

Can you explain the privacy level and hygiene level in your situation? (use examples)

At this temporary place of residence, do you constantly feel stress for finding a new location to stay?

Yes, I am very stressed about my search for my future shelter

A little bit

No, I do not feel stressed about my search for my future shelter

Is it difficult to find shelter in Groningen?

It is almost mission impossible

It is hard, but duable

It is easy to get shelter

Shelter Alternatives

What were are/were your shelter alternatives in Groningen? (Please, name all your alternatives)

Hostels

Friends' houses

camping

hotels

Other:

Which situation was the most unpleasent? please explain why

Have you found any creative or innovative solutions to address your housing needs while homeless in Groningen? Please describe.

...

If you are interested to have a short interview with me for my research, you can put your number or email here below!

...

B: Written interview with municipality (Dutch)

Vragenlijst interview Gemeente Groningen

1. Kunt u een overzicht geven van de huidige initiatieven en beleidsmaatregelen om dakloosheid aan te pakken, met name gericht op internationale studenten, in de stad Groningen?

Wij herkennen ons niet in het gegeven dat er sprake is van dakloosheid onder studenten.

Jongeren en studenten zijn een belangrijke doelgroep voor Groningen. Op zijn er circa 38.000 studenten woonachtig in Groningen, daarvan wonen circa 30.000 in kamers. De afgelopen jaren is er fors bijgebouwd voor deze doelgroep. Het gaat in totaal om een toevoeging van circa 7.000 wooneenheden in de afgelopen tien jaar. Voorbeelden hiervan zijn [Atlas](#), [De Helix](#) en de [Zwarte Doos](#). Daarnaast wordt er gewerkt aan de realisatie van een campus op het Zernike.

In de periode augustus – september is er sprake van een piekprobleem. De instroom van studenten is dan groot en afgestudeerden zijn in dezelfde periode op zoek naar een volgende stap, hierdoor is er sprake van overlast. In deze periode voorzien wij, samen met de onderwijsinstellingen, in extra huisvesting. Zie ook:

- <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/1041502/in-paddepoel-tijdelijk-120-slaapplekken-voor-internationale-studenten-zonder-kamer>
- <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/857991/noodopvang-voor-studenten-in-groningen-blijft-historisch-lang-open>

2. Hoe bewust is de gemeente van de uitdagingen waarmee dakloze internationale studenten in de stad worden geconfronteerd?

De woningmarkt in Groningen is krap, dat geldt voor alle doelgroepen, maar zeker voor studenten en jongeren. We adviseren studenten tijdig te beginnen met zoeken naar woonruimte en als ze voor augustus geen woonruimte hebben gevonden geven we ze het advies niet naar Groningen te komen.

3. In hoeverre werkt de gemeente samen met lokale universiteiten en studentenorganisaties om de huisvestingsbehoeften van internationale studenten aan te pakken?

We werken al enkele jaren samen onder een convenant, zie:

<https://gemeenteraad.groningen.nl/Documenten/Bijlage-Convenant-Jongeren-en-Studentenhuisvesting-2023-2026.pdf>

4. Wat zijn de opvangmogelijkheden speciaal ontworpen voor dakloze internationale studenten in Groningen?

In de piekperiode voorzien we in extra huisvesting. Dit hebben we de afgelopen jaren gedaan in leegstaand vastgoed (hotels, scholen, slaapzalen, etc.). Omdat we voorzien dat er altijd een piek blijft zijn we bezig met de ontwikkelen van een permanente locatie. Hiervoor worden 400 wooneenheden ontwikkeld die in de piekperiode kunnen worden ingezet als dorm rooms. Op dit manier kunnen er tijdelijk 800 studenten worden gehuisvest. Het streven is om de locatie voor 1 augustus 2024 op te leveren.

5. Welke samenwerkingen of partnerschappen heeft de gemeente met organisaties of initiatieven die onderdak bieden aan kwetsbare bevolkingsgroepen, inclusief internationale studenten?

We werken hoofdzakelijk samen met onze convenantpartners.

6. Hoe pakt de gemeente momenteel de leefomstandigheden aan van individuen, inclusief internationale studenten, die in de openbare ruimte verblijven?

Voor buitenslapers wordt er samen gewerkt met verschillende professionals bijvoorbeeld de politie, opvanginstellingen, de WIJteams en zorgorganisaties. Zoals eerder al aangegeven zijn bij ons geen signalen bekend dat studenten op straat slapen.

8. Welke bestaande regelgeving of beleidsmaatregelen reguleren het verblijf in de openbare ruimte binnen de stadsgrenzen?

Daarvoor zou je bij de dienst Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling van de gemeente Groningen of de WIJ-teams kunnen informeren.

9. Zijn er specifieke regels of overwegingen voor internationale studenten die met dakloosheid worden geconfronteerd?

Er zijn geen regels opgesteld. Als die signalen ons bereiken dan zorgen wij met onze partners voor onderdak.

10. Zijn er door de gemeenschap gedreven initiatieven die de gemeente ondersteunt om onderdak te bieden aan mensen in nood?

Zie beantwoording op vraag 8.

11. Gezien de focus van het onderzoek op creatieve/informele opvangmogelijkheden in de openbare ruimte, staat de gemeente open voor het verkennen van innovatieve benaderingen om de huisvestingscrisis voor internationale studenten aan te pakken? (en welke?)

We streven naar kwalitatieve goede huisvesting voor alle doelgroepen. Opvang in de openbare ruimte hoort daar niet bij, maar piekopvang locaties wel.

12. Wat voor onderdak alternatieven van internationale studenten is de gemeente tegengekomen? (Ik ben specifiek benieuwd naar gevallen in de binnenstad van Groningen en in parken zoals Noorderplantsoen en Stadspark).

De afgelopen jaren zijn de volgende opvanglocaties ingezet:

- Slaapzaal The Village Damsterdiep
- Dorm rooms: Martinihouse, Vondellaan, Admiraal de Ruyterlaan
- School Metaallaan
- Esdoornflat
- Plutolaan
- Shelter Our Students

C: Written interview with municipality (translated to English)

Survey Interview Municipality of Groningen

1. **Can you provide an overview of the current initiatives and policy measures to address homelessness, particularly focusing on international students, in the city of Groningen?** We do not recognize the notion of homelessness among students.

Young people and students are an important demographic for Groningen. There are approximately 38,000 students living in Groningen, with about 30,000 living in student accommodations. Over the past years, there has been significant construction aimed at this demographic, totaling approximately 7,000 additional housing units over the past decade. Examples include Atlas, De Helix, and the Zwarte Doos. Additionally, efforts are underway to establish a campus at Zernike.

During the period of August-September, there is a peak issue. There is a large influx of students during this time, and graduates are also searching for their next step, leading to overcrowding. During this period, we, along with educational institutions, provide extra housing. See also:

- <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/1041502/in-paddepoel-tijdelijk-120-slaapplekken-voor-internationale-studenten-zonder-kamer>
 - <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/857991/noodopvang-voor-studenten-in-groningen-blijft-historisch-lang-open>
2. **How aware is the municipality of the challenges faced by homeless international students in the city?** The housing market in Groningen is tight, affecting all demographics, but particularly students and young people. We advise students to start their housing search early, and if they haven't found accommodation by August, we advise against coming to Groningen.
 3. **To what extent does the municipality collaborate with local universities and student organizations to address the housing needs of international students?** We have been collaborating for several years under a covenant, see: <https://gemeenteraad.groningen.nl/Documenten/Bijlage-Convenant-Jongeren-en-Studentenhuisvesting-2023-2026.pdf>
 4. **What are the accommodation options specifically designed for homeless international students in Groningen?** During peak periods, we provide extra housing. In recent years, we have utilized vacant properties (hotels, schools, dormitories, etc.). Because we anticipate continued peaks, we are working on developing a permanent location. This involves developing 400 housing units that can be used as dorm rooms during peak periods, temporarily accommodating 800 students. The aim is to complete the location by August 1, 2024.
 5. **What collaborations or partnerships does the municipality have with organizations or initiatives providing shelter to vulnerable populations, including international students?** We primarily collaborate with our covenant partners.
 6. **How is the municipality currently addressing the living conditions of individuals, including international students, residing in public spaces?** For those sleeping outdoors, we collaborate with various professionals including the police, shelters, WIJ teams, and healthcare organizations. As mentioned earlier, we have no reports of students sleeping on the streets.

7. **What existing regulations or policy measures regulate staying in public spaces within the city limits?** For that information, you could inquire with the Social Development department of the Municipality of Groningen or the WIJ teams.
8. **Are there specific rules or considerations for international students facing homelessness?** No specific rules have been established. If such cases come to our attention, we, along with our partners, ensure accommodation.
9. **Are there community-driven initiatives supported by the municipality to provide shelter for people in need?** Refer to the answer to question 8.
10. **Considering the focus of the research on creative/informal shelter options in public spaces, is the municipality open to exploring innovative approaches to address the housing crisis for international students? (and which ones?)** We aim for qualitatively good housing for all demographics. Sheltering in public spaces is not part of that, but peak accommodation locations are.
11. **What alternative shelter options for international students has the municipality encountered? (I am specifically interested in cases in the city center of Groningen and in parks such as Noorderplantsoen and Stadspark).**
In recent years, the following accommodation locations have been utilized:
 - Dormitory The Village Damsterdiep
 - Dorm rooms: Martinihouse, Vondellaan, Admiraal de Ruyterlaan
 - Metaallaan School
 - Esdoornflat
 - Plutolaan
 - Shelter Our Students

D: Interview questions in-depth interviews

Thanks for making some time to chat! Before we start, I'll need your consent to record our conversation. Is that alright with you?

Firstly, could you share your thoughts on how you feel living in temporary housing within the city? Do you feel a sense of belonging here?

Have you managed to establish connections with fellow residents in your temporary housing or within the broader city community?

How has the transient nature of your housing impacted your access to essential urban resources like education, healthcare, and employment?

Do you believe your housing circumstances hinder your ability to fully embrace the opportunities available within the city?

Have you encountered any instances of discrimination or felt marginalized due to your temporary housing status, particularly as an international student?

People sometimes think international students are rich. Do you ever feel that, and do you feel welcome here in Groningen?

Do you believe your housing situation has an impact on your ability to develop skills, network, or integrate into the local culture?

Can you share any positive experiences or coping mechanisms that have helped you navigate challenges related to your right to the city?

Is your location where you live now, a place where you could live your whole student life, if there was no housing crisis?

E: Interview respondent 'Selwerd'

E: Thanks for making some time to chat! Before we start, I'll need your consent to record our conversation. Is that alright with you?

Interviewee: Sure, recording is fine.

E: Great! So, let's dive into our discussion. Firstly, could you share your thoughts on how you feel living in temporary housing within the city? Do you feel a sense of belonging here?

Interviewee: Living in this flat for almost six months now has started to make me feel like I'm really part of the city. Even though my place isn't permanent, I've been getting more comfortable and familiar with it. It's been okay for now, but finding a permanent home is still something I need to sort out.

E: Have you managed to establish connections with fellow residents in your temporary housing or within the broader city community?

Interviewee: Well, in our building, we have shared spaces, but I mostly stick to myself on my floor. Sometimes, I chat with neighbors, but most of my socializing happens with people from my study group. Still, I don't feel left out or anything.

E: How has the transient nature of your housing impacted your access to essential urban resources like education, healthcare, and employment?

Interviewee: Accessing these things hasn't been too hard, but the uncertainty about where I'll be living next does add some extra stress. It makes it harder to focus on my studies and job when I don't have a stable place to call home.

E: Do you believe your housing circumstances hinder your ability to fully embrace the opportunities available within the city?

Interviewee: It's frustrating that my housing situation could hold me back, especially being an international student. We pay a lot for school, but without a solid place to live, it's tough to make the most of it. I'm here to study, but if I don't have a place to live, it's tough to keep going. Trying to find a place to live in this city feels like playing a big gamble.

E: Have you encountered any instances of discrimination or felt marginalized due to your temporary housing status, particularly as an international student?

Interviewee: Well, I haven't had many visits from friends since I got here in Groningen. It's definitely harder for international students, but having an address helps avoid any problems.

E: People sometimes think international students are rich. Do you ever feel that, and do you feel welcome here in Groningen?

Interviewee: Not really, but it seems like international students stick together and don't mix much with Dutch students.

E: Do you believe your housing situation has an impact on your ability to develop skills, network, or integrate into the local culture?

Interviewee: Absolutely. The fact that I'm always moving around makes it harder to fully engage in those opportunities. It makes me feel like maybe I should leave the city.

E: Can you share any positive experiences or coping mechanisms that have helped you navigate challenges related to your right to the city?

Interviewee: Making friends with other people in temporary housing and being flexible have been helpful. They've made me feel like I fit in, even with the challenges.

E: Is your location where you live now, a place where you could live your whole student life, if there was no housing crisis?

Yes, If the city could offer me this, I would be completely happy. It costs maybe more than most of the student houses, but this is a fine spot.

F: Interview respondent 'City Center'

E: Thanks for making some time! I need your consent to record our conversation. Is that alright with you?

Interviewee: No Problem.

E: Great! So, let's dive into our discussion. Firstly, could you share your thoughts on how you feel living in temporary housing within the city? Do you feel a sense of belonging here?

Interviewee: Living in temporary housing within the city feels like a constant struggle. While I do feel a sense of familiarity and belonging to some extent, there's always this nagging feeling of impermanence looming over me. It's like being caught between two worlds - wanting to fully immerse myself in the city's culture and life, yet feeling like an outsider because of my temporary status. Seeing other students with stable housing arrangements adds to this sense of envy and exclusion, making me question if I truly belong here.

E: Have you managed to establish connections with fellow residents in your temporary housing or within the broader city community?

Interviewee: In the hotel, there is a big chilling place where you can connect with others and study or play games with others. Sometimes it is very gezellig hier. Ik ken wel andere die hier, maar de meesten blijven hier niet super lang vanwege de hoge kosten. Ik heb veel connecties in de stad waar ik mee het studentenleven kan ervaren.

E: How has the transient nature of your housing impacted your access to essential urban resources like education, healthcare, and employment?

Interviewee: The transient nature of my housing has certainly posed obstacles in accessing essential urban resources. Not being officially registered as a resident limits my access to certain services like healthcare and employment opportunities. It's frustrating to feel like a second-class citizen simply because I don't have a permanent address, adding another layer of difficulty to an already challenging situation.

E: Do you believe your housing circumstances hinder your ability to fully embrace the opportunities available within the city?

Interviewee: My housing circumstances undeniably hinder my ability to fully embrace the opportunities available within the city. The constant uncertainty about where I'll live next makes it difficult to commit to long-term plans or fully engage in activities like joining student associations. Instead of focusing on personal and academic growth, I find myself preoccupied with the precariousness of my housing situation, which is a significant barrier to fully participating in city life.

E: Have you encountered any instances of discrimination or felt marginalized due to your temporary housing status, particularly as an international student?

Interviewee: While I haven't experienced discrimination firsthand, the lack of stability in my housing situation makes me feel marginalized in some ways. I long to feel rooted and connected to the city, but my temporary status prevents me from fully integrating into the community. Despite being an international student, my concerns are universal - the desire for stability, security, and a sense of belonging transcends cultural boundaries.

E: People sometimes think international students are rich. Do you ever feel that, and do you feel welcome here in Groningen?

Interviewee: Regarding perceptions of wealth, yes, my ability to afford temporary housing may give off the impression of financial privilege. However, the reality is far from glamorous. Living in a hotel may seem luxurious, but it's merely a temporary solution to a much larger problem. I believe universities should take

more responsibility in providing affordable housing options to combat stereotypes and ensure all students, regardless of their financial background, feel welcome and supported.

E: Do you believe your housing situation has an impact on your ability to develop skills, network, or integrate into the local culture?

Interviewee: The impact of my housing situation on skill development, networking, and cultural integration cannot be overstated. The constant struggle to secure stable housing consumes valuable time and energy that could be spent on personal and academic pursuits. Additionally, the fear of being uprooted at any moment creates a barrier to fully immersing myself in the local culture and forging meaningful connections with fellow students and residents.

E: Can you share any positive experiences or coping mechanisms that have helped you navigate challenges related to your right to the city?

Interviewee: Despite the challenges, there have been moments of support and assistance from organizations dedicated to helping students navigate the housing crisis. However, until there is a fundamental shift in housing policy and availability, these efforts can only do so much. Ultimately, my primary requirement is a stable home where I can feel safe, secure, and truly part of the community.

E: Is your location where you live now, a place where you could live your whole student life, if there was no housing crisis?

Interviewee: In an ideal scenario without a housing crisis, the location where I currently reside would still not be suitable for long-term student living. While the facilities are excellent, the high cost and lack of cohesion due to constant turnover make it an unsustainable option. I crave a place where I can build lasting connections, contribute to a vibrant community, and truly call home throughout my student life.

G: Interview respondent 'Stadspark'

E: Thanks for making some time! I need your consent to record our conversation. Is that alright with you?

Interviewee: That's fine.

E: Sure, let's get started. First, how do you feel about living in temporary housing in the city? Do you feel like you belong here?

Interviewee: Living temporarily in The Village isn't ideal, but it's manageable. Despite knowing it's not permanent, I feel somewhat comfortable with my living situation. Having all the necessary amenities helps, but knowing I have to leave eventually does stress me out. Still, I stay positive and have found ways to connect and feel like I belong in the city while living here temporarily.

E: Have you been able to make connections with other residents in your temporary housing or in the wider city community?

Interviewee: Definitely. The Village creates a strong sense of community among residents, almost like living with roommates. I've made meaningful connections and friendships through shared experiences and interactions here. Outside of The Village, I've been active in the broader city community, especially through school activities. These interactions have made me feel more at home and integrated into the Netherlands.

E: How has the temporary nature of your housing affected your access to important urban resources like education, healthcare, and work?

Interviewee: While it's sometimes a challenge because of The Village's location, overall, it hasn't stopped me from accessing what I need in the city. I've managed to navigate the city's services for education, healthcare, and work without too much trouble. But the extra time commuting does affect my daily routine and planning.

E: Do you think your housing situation stops you from taking advantage of opportunities in the city?

Interviewee: There's a chance my current housing could limit me from fully embracing everything the city offers. Stability in housing is important for feeling secure and being able to fully engage in academics, work, and social activities. While I try to make the most of it, I worry that the temporary housing might hold me back in the long run.

E: Have you faced any discrimination or felt left out because of your temporary housing, especially as an international student?

Interviewee: Unfortunately, as an international student, finding housing can be tough. Websites like 'kamernet.nl' can be hard to use because of language barriers and preferences for locals. This can be frustrating and make the search for stable housing feel uncertain. Sometimes, international students might feel ignored or marginalized in the housing market, which can add to feelings of exclusion.

E: Some people assume international students are rich. Have you come across this idea, and do you feel accepted in Groningen?

Interviewee: While I haven't personally encountered assumptions about my finances, I know these stereotypes exist. As for feeling welcomed in Groningen, I haven't had many chances to interact with the local community because of school and housing demands. So, it's hard to say how the city views international students, but I hope to connect more in the future.

E: Do you think your housing situation affects your ability to learn new skills, make connections, or fit into local culture?

Interviewee: Definitely. Temporary housing makes it hard to fully immerse myself in local life. It's tough to feel rooted and to keep up with studies, activities, and socializing when housing is uncertain. Despite this, I'm determined to grow personally and professionally, even if it's harder because of my housing situation.

E: Can you share any positive experiences or strategies for dealing with challenges related to accessing urban resources?

Interviewee: Despite the challenges, I've found ways to adapt. Programs like The Village, made for international students, have given me stability and community. Also, relying on support from the university and seeking out resources for international students has been crucial. By staying proactive and using available help, I've managed to deal with some of the issues that come with temporary housing.

E: If there wasn't a housing crisis, would you choose to stay in your current location for your whole student life?

Interviewee: While The Village has been a temporary home during my studies, I wouldn't stay here if there were better options available. It's not permanent, and its location and temporary feel don't match what I want for my student life. If I had the choice, I'd look for more stable and centrally located housing that fits better with my long-term goals and preferences.