

Rethinking Housing Justice Through Counter-Mapping

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Rethinking Housing Justice Through Counter-Mapping

Unequal Housing Chances in the Netherlands

- ↳ Different groups face unequal barriers
- ↳ Who can inhabit, shape & remain in the city?
- ↳ Need for plural knowledges beyond technocratic data

Our Proposal: Counter-Mapping

- ↳ Co-created counter- narratives with affected groups
- ↳ Challenges dominant narratives
- ↳ Counter-Mapping Framework



Distraction by Construction

Debate Dynamics

- ↳ Crisis framed as neutral, “shortage” → supply & demand
- ↳ Focus on owner-occupied market

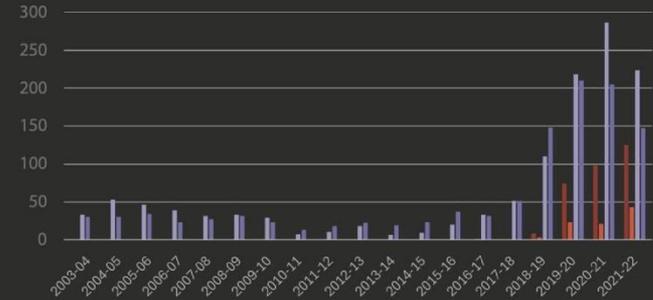
Depoliticization Effects

- ↳ Scapegoating climate policies, migrants & internationalisation
- ↳ VVD (conservative-liberal political party in the Netherlands)

mantra:

“Build, build, build”

a) Parliamentary Documents



b) Newspaper Items



Some Narratives Shelter, Others Exclude

Narratives define what seems feasible and urgent

- ↳ Shortage narrative → supply-side fixes (flex housing, deregulation)
- ↳ Outcome: poverty stigmatized, residents displaced

Counter-mapping as a method to shape unsettling narratives

- ↳ Exposing hidden assumptions and power asymmetries
- ↳ Bring forward the knowledge and realities of the most affected

While administrative violence leaves no visible scars, counter-mapping can make this violence visible, and perhaps a way to create understanding.

Garbasz, Yishay



Counter-Mapping Precarious Student Housing Workshop

Why students?

- ↳ Overlooked in housing debates
- ↳ Framed as temporary → *in-between* position

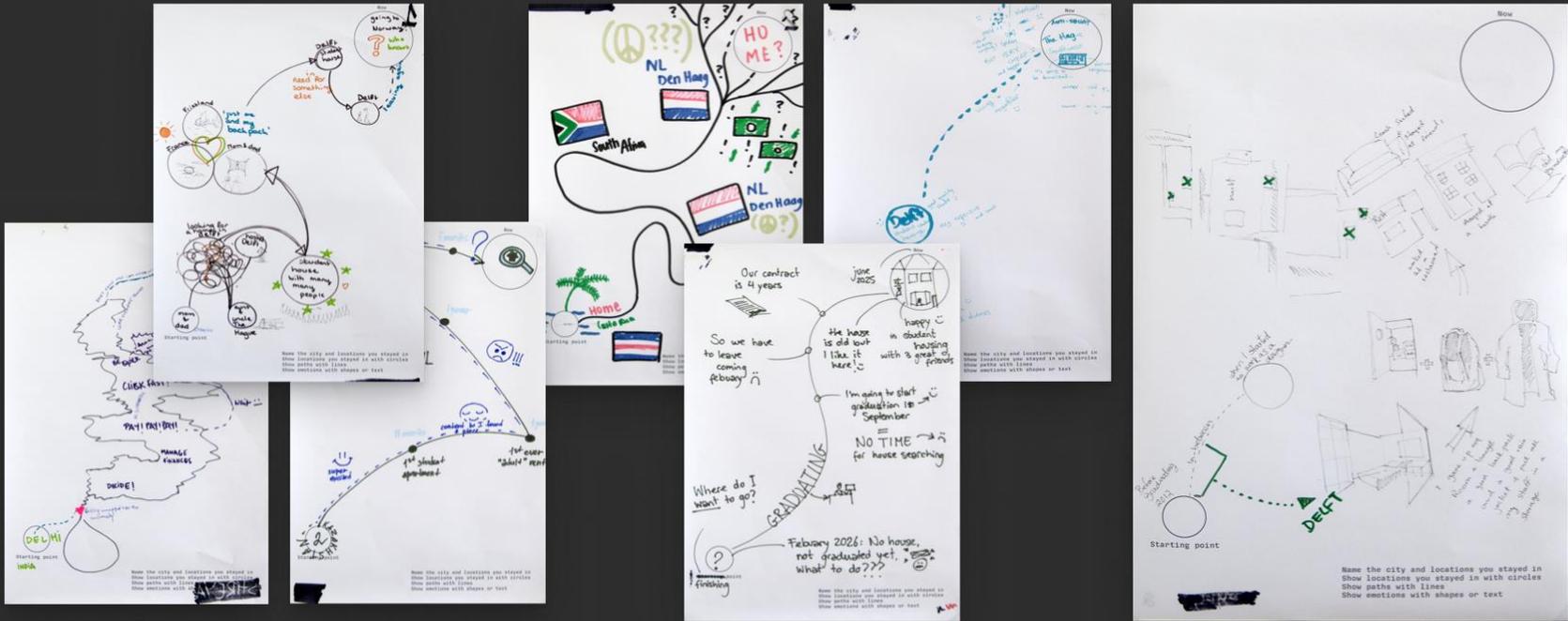
The Workshop

- ↳ Documented lived, spatial, emotional experiences
- ↳ Shape counter-narratives against scapegoating of internationals

Framework (3 steps)



What if a map speaks of housing improvisation, Invisible networks of care, or administrative violence?

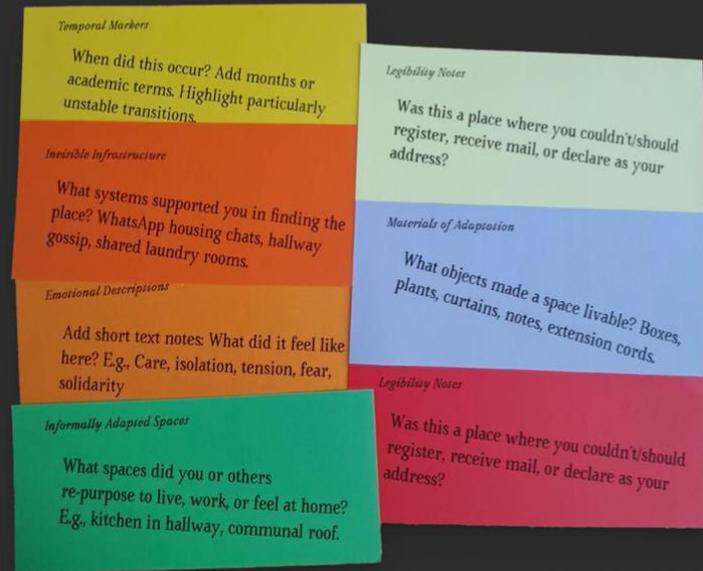


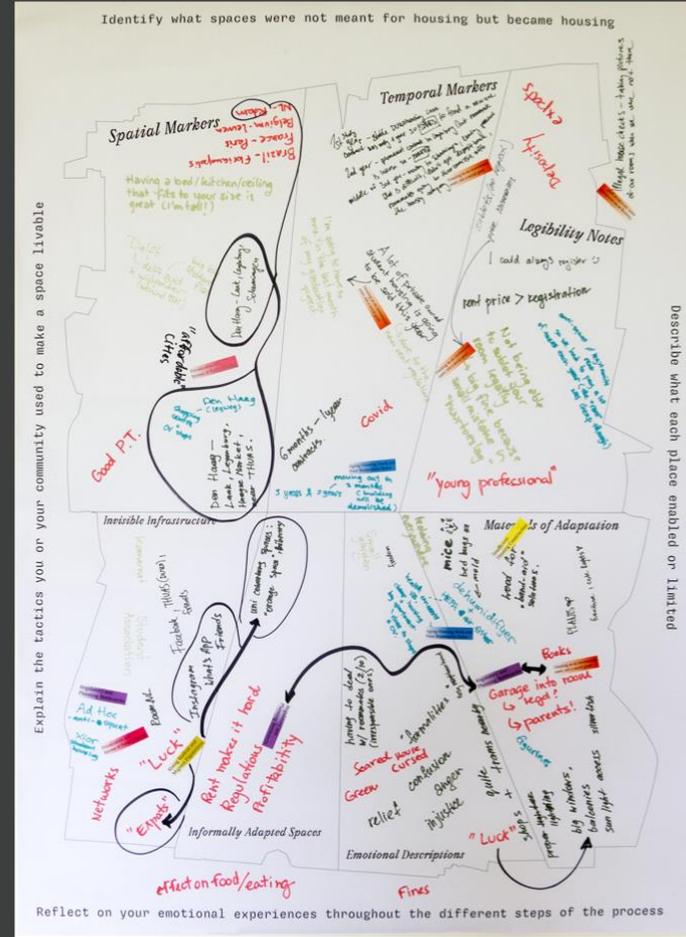
Capabilities to Inhabit the City

Focus on abilities to inhabit, remain & shape the city, beyond access to a “unit”

Key Questions

- ↳ What strategies do students use?
- ↳ How do these strategies connect to other life aspects?
- ↳ Are they supported or prohibited by policies and planning?





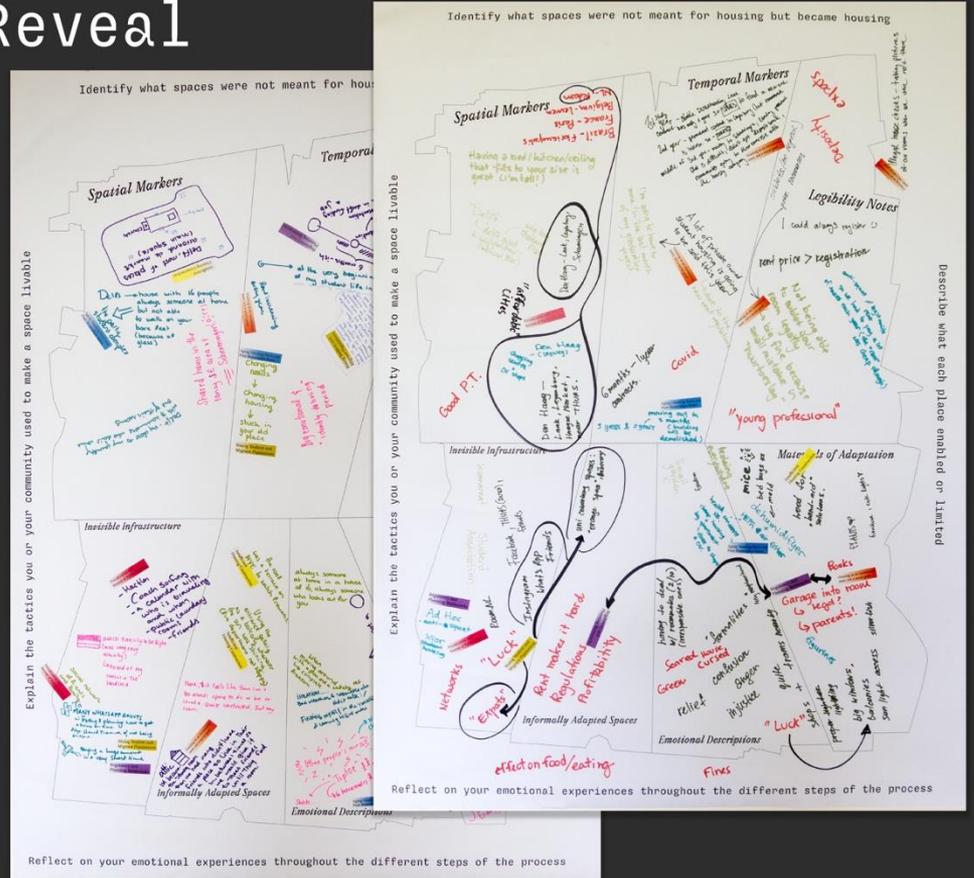
Layers of a Manufactured Crisis

- ↳ Housing is an investment asset, not a social good
 - ↳ Lack of affordable and mid-segment housing
 - ↳ Regulatory and planning bottlenecks
 - ↳ Insufficient housing construction
 - ↳ Aging housing stock and a poor renovation rate
 - ↳ Privatisation and retreat of public housing
 - ↳ Rising student and migrant population

What Counter-Maps Reveal

• Emotional Geographies

- “Fear”
- “Instability”
- “Occasional Solidarity”
- “Scared”
- “Injustice.”



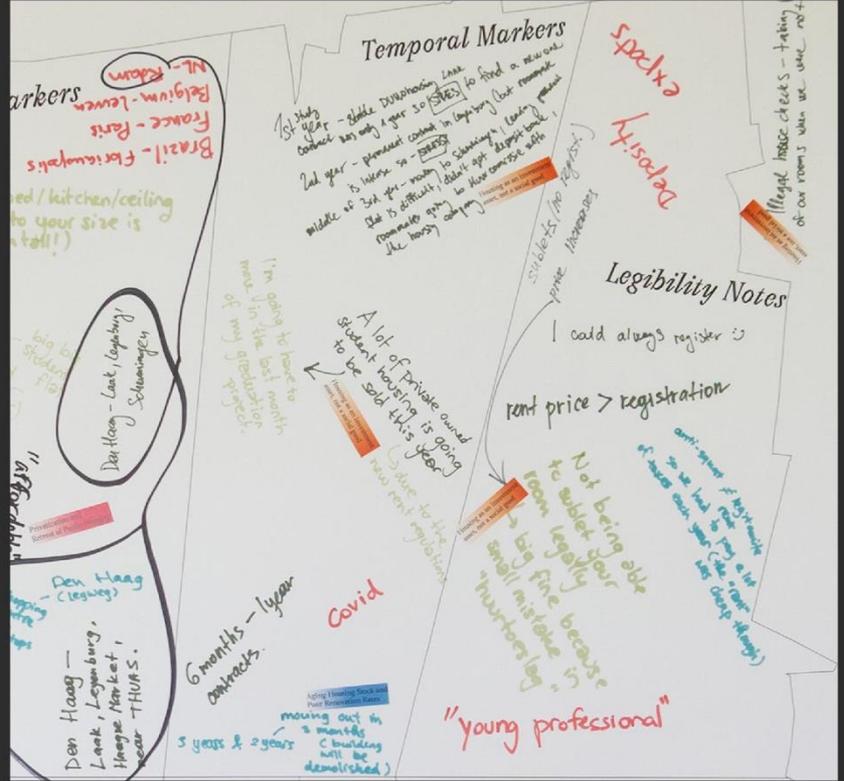
What Counter-Maps Reveal

- Precarity is engineered, not imported

Short contracts, demolitions, forced moves

“The contract was only 1 year... stressful to find a new one.”

“3 years & 2 years > Moving out in 3 months (building will be demolished).”



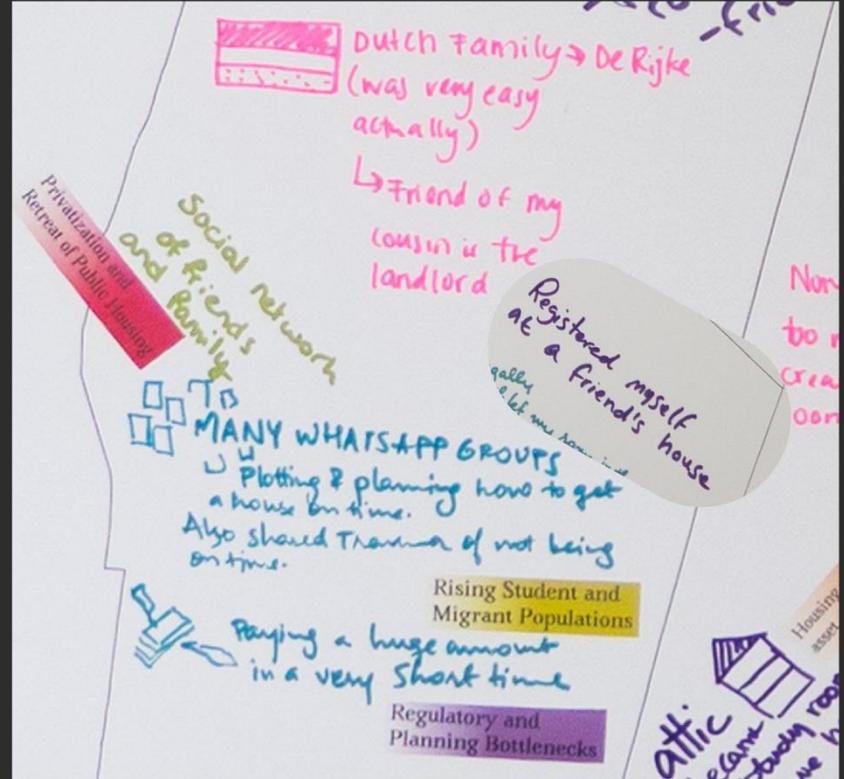
What Counter-Maps Reveal

- **Reliance on social capital and invisible networks of care**

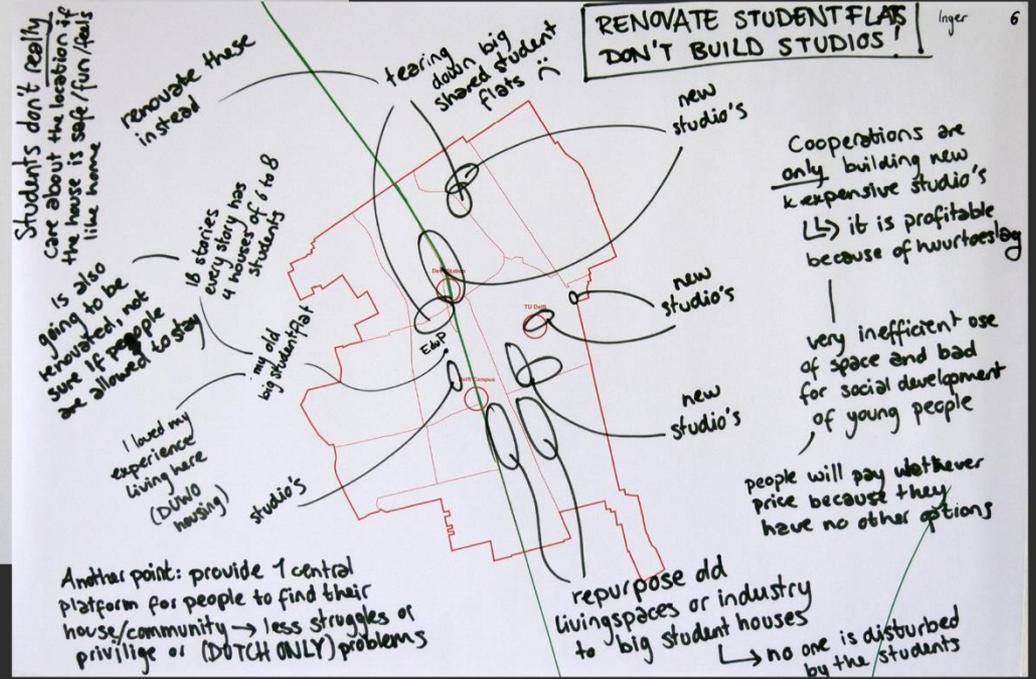
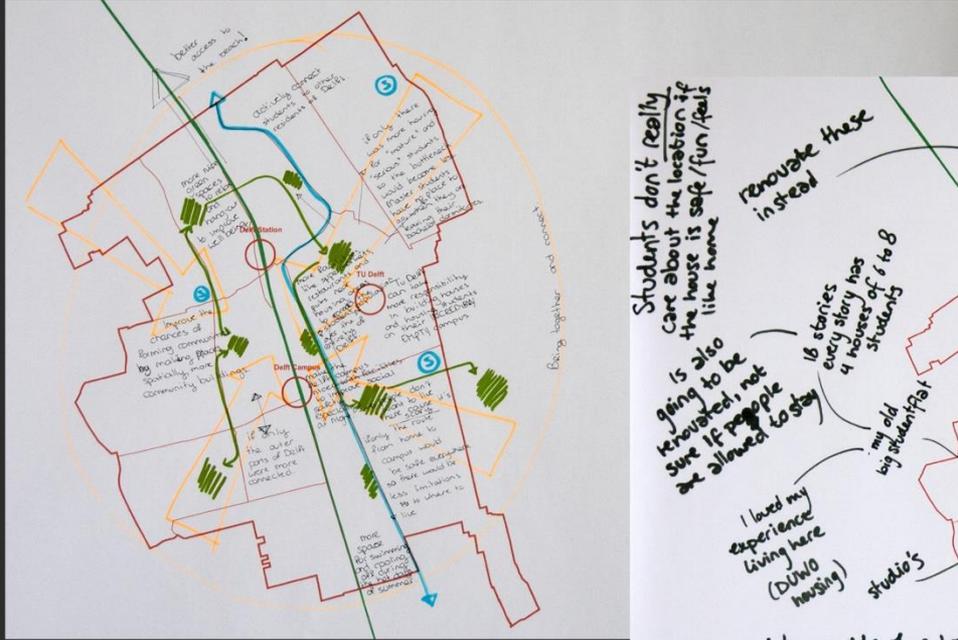
“Instagram, Whatsapp, Friends, ‘Luck’.”

“My cousin’s friend is the landlord.”

“registration in friends home”



From Counter-Mapping to planning



Policy and Planning as Obstacles to Resilient housing practices

Housing Precarity as a Governing Logic

Exclusionary Infrastructures of Access

Suppressive regulatory frameworks

Complicit planning

In-between state of student housing

DIY fixes

Re-appropriation of space

Reliance on Informal networks

Unsettling Data

Key Reflections

- ↳ Connecting memories, ideas, and demands → new ways of thinking about housing precarity
- ↳ Tension with conventional methodologies

Messiness of data

- ↳ Layered, unstable, contradictory
- ↳ Categories are open to different interpretations
- ↳ Risk: stories harden into static symbols

Epistemological tensions

- ↳ Counter-mapping: specificity, multiplicity, subjectivity
- ↳ Policy data: reproducibility, fixed categories, comparability
- ↳ Risk: counter-maps dismissed as “unreliable”

Thank you!