

# **Exploring collective housing solutions in a housing system geared towards individual housing: between transgression and integration**

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This paper is concerned with the transgressive potential of social innovations in the field of housing provision for marginalized groups in two Belgian cities. Although Belgium, like many other countries in the Global North, has established a constitutional right to housing, in reality access to housing largely depends on someone's labour market position. The small size of the social housing sector, the absence of price regulation in the private rental sector and the focus of housing policy on supporting home ownership completely undermine the formal right to housing. Citizens are hence individually held responsible for their housing need. In the absence of an adequate central government response to problematic access to quality and affordable housing for low income groups and ethnic cultural minorities, welfare organisations have recently explored collective housing solutions. In this paper, we analyse how these organisations strategically navigate to position collective housing projects in a political and legal context geared towards individual housing solutions. We do so on the basis of two case studies of potentially transgressive housing projects for culturally diverse groups of residents: the project 'Leeggoed' in Brussels and the project 'Solidair Wonen' in Sint-Niklaas. While the initiators seek recognition of collective initiatives in housing legislation, they are also forced to adapt to existing regulations to sustain their projects.

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