

The Paradox of Inequality in Belgium | BE-PARADIS WORKSHOP

Tuesday 3 December 2024

University Foundation | Egmontstraat, 11, 1000 Brussel

Language | English

Registration fee | €30 (including lunch and book) to be paid at:

BE 09 4320 0000 1157 - KU Leuven, Krakenstraat 3 - 3000 Leuven

Reference: 400/0026/80269 + name of participant

In this workshop we present the research results of the BE-PARADIS project, a 4-year research project funded by BELSPO and carried out by the University of Leuven, the University of Antwerp and the ULB.

The project started from the observation that the consistently low and stable level of Belgian income inequality, as reported in official statistics, seems at odds with how the public at large experience inequality and its evolution, and with how this is framed in the public debate. We have called this the Belgian Paradox of Inequality Studies (BE-PARADIS). To shed light on this paradox, we not only thoroughly reviewed the data used, we also tapped new data sources and broadened the concept of 'inequality' to include dimensions other than just income.

The project provided several new insights. First, we highlighted and quantified the relative importance of different drivers in the evolution of inequality. Second, a macro-based approach to distributional issues, the so-called Distributional National Accounts, provides a different picture of the degree and trend of inequality in Belgium. Third, by going beyond the standard household analysis of income inequality, we gained insights in intra-household inequality, the unequal access to public goods and housing inequality.

We have summarised the results of the research in a book published in Dutch and French by Lannoo-Campus and Racine, respectively. The aim of the workshop is to present the book and discuss the results with the authors.

Program

09.00 - 09.30	Welcome with coffee
09.30 - 09.40	Introduction A. Decoster (KU Leuven), A. Naji (BELSPO)
09.40 - 10.15	A new take on income inequality in Belgium A. Decoster
10.15 - 10.40	Drivers of inequality G. Verbist (U Antwerpen)
10.40 - 11.10	Coffee break
11.10 - 11.35	(Un)Equal access to public goods M. Castanheira (ULB)
11.35 - 12.00	Inequality in housing P. Gobbi (ULB)
12.00 - 12.25	New data, new insights J. Vanderkelen (KU Leuven)
12.30 - 13.45	Lunch
13.45 - 14.10	Inequality in well-being K. Decancq (U Antwerpen)
14.10 - 14.35	Inequality within households B. De Rock (ULB)
14.35 - 15.00	Young and old E. Schokkaert (KU Leuven)
15.00 - 15.20	Coffee break
15.20 - 16.10	Dimensions of Inequality: Reflections from the Deaton Review R. Blundell (Institute for Fiscal Studies – London)
16.10 - 16.40	Closing remarks: what have we learnt? W. Van Besien (VDK Bank) P. De Grauwe (London School of Economics)
16.40	Reception

