

Willem Sas

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Employment

2024 - ..	Assistant Professor, PEC, Hasselt University
2021 - 2024	Lecturer, Economics Division, University of Stirling
2017 - 2020	Early Career Fellow, Economics Division, University of Stirling

Affiliations

2024-	Honorary Lecturer, Economics Division, University of Stirling
2022-	Research Fellow, CAPE & JURI, UCLouvain
2019 -	CESifo Research Network Affiliate, Munich
2018 -	Research Fellow, Centre on Constitutional Change, University of Edinburgh
2017 -	Research Fellow, Department of Economics, KU Leuven

Fields of Interest

Research:	Public Economics, Political Economy, Behavioural Economics, Applied Micro Theory
Teaching:	Microeconomics, Public Economics, Political Economy, Game Theory, IO.

Education

2011 - 2016	Ph.D. in Economics, Department of Economics, KU Leuven <i>Thesis title:</i> 'Efficient Federalism: Taking Taxation to Another Level of Government.' <i>Committee:</i> André Decoster & Stef Proost (advisors), Susana Peralta, Albert Solé-Ollé & Joep Konings
2009 - 2011	M.Phil. in Economics, KU Leuven
2007 - 2008	Partial B.A. in Philosophy, Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès
2005 - 2007	M.Sc. in Business Engineering, KU Leuven

Articles in Peer-Reviewed Journals

- "Conditioning Public Pensions on Health: Effects on Capital Accumulation and Welfare" (with [Giorgio Fabbri](#), [Paolo Melindi-Ghidi](#) & [Marie-Louise Leroux](#)), *Journal of Population Economics*, 37 (2): 1-21 (2024).
- "The Causal Impact of Pandemic Distress on Anti-Immigration Sentiments" (with [Gianmarco Daniele](#), [Andrea Martinangeli](#), [Francesco Passarelli](#) and [Lisa Windsteiger](#)), *Economica*, 91 (363), 1124-1155 (2024).
- "Does the Winner Take It All? Federal Policies and Political Extremism" (with [Amedeo Piolatto](#) and [Gianmarco Daniele](#)), *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, 105: 103986 (2024).
- "Starting From Scratch: A New Approach to Subnational Public Finance" (with [David Bell](#) and John Houston), *Regional Studies*, 55 (4): 617-629 (2021).
- "Networked Innovation and Coalition Formation: The Effect of Group-Based Social Preferences" (with Tom Dedeurwaerdere and [Paolo Melindi-Ghidi](#)), *Economics of Innovation and New Technology*, 27 (7): 577-593 (2018).
- "Can Fiscal Equalisation Mitigate Tax Competition? Ad Valorem and Residence-Based Taxation in a Federation", *International Tax and Public Finance*, 24 (5): 817-853 (2017).

Work in Progress

- "Externalities and the Erosion of Trust" (with [Gianmarco Daniele](#), [Andrea Martinangeli](#), [Francesco Passarelli](#) and [Lisa Windsteiger](#)). *CESifo Working Papers* No. 10474. Submitted.
- "When Scapegoating Backfires: The Pitfalls of Blaming Migrants for a Crisis" (with [Michela Boldrini](#), [Pierluigi Conzo](#) & [Roberto Zotti](#)). Submitted.

“Who Cares? Attitudes Towards Redistribution and Fiscal Austerity” (with [Sarah Brown](#), [Alberto Montagnoli](#) and [Mirko Moro](#)).

“Institutions in the Fast Lane: Strike Petitions and the Electoral Cycle in Mexico” (with [Hector Gutiérrez-Rufrancos](#)).

“No Taxation Without Decentralisation? Tax Autonomy and Vertical Yardstick Competition” (with [Susana Peralta](#)).

Research Visits

2025	Department of Economics; University of Turin (May)
2024	Department of Economics; University of Turin (May & Nov)
2023	Department of Economics; Bocconi University (March & May).
2022	Department of Economics; University of Turin (Dec)
2022	Department of Economics; UAB Barcelona (July).
2022	Department of Economics; Bocconi University (March & May).
2022	Center for Economic Studies; LMU Munich (May).
2021	Department of Economics; Bocconi University (Sep);
2020	Max Planck Institute for Tax Law and Public Finance; Munich (Feb).
2019	Nova School of Business and Economics; Universidade Nova de Lisboa (June & Oct).
2019	Center for Economic Studies; LMU Munich (April).
2019	Department of Economics; Bocconi University (Feb/Mar/May/Sep/Dec).
2018	Department of Economics; UAB Barcelona (July-August).
2018	Department of Economics; University of California, Irvine (April-June).
2016/2017	Institut d’Economia de Barcelona; University of Barcelona (July).
2016	ZEW; University of Mannheim (April).
2015	Nova School of Business and Economics; Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Sep).
2015	Institut d’Economia de Barcelona; University of Barcelona (Mar & June).

Conferences & Seminars

2025	University of Turin (invited), Bocconi-Cornell Summer Conference (invited), BSE Summer Forum (Public Economics, Barcelona), IIPF (Nairobi).
2024	Behavioral Economics Institute anual workshop (Valencia), University of Turin (invited), BSE Summer Forum (Public Economics, Barcelona), ThreeSaNE workshop (Crieff), IIPF (Prague).
2023	Ludwig Erhard ifo Conference on Institutional Economics (Fürth), Behavioral, Experimental, and Theoretical Economics Workshop (St.Andrews, invited), RES/SES (Glasgow).
2022	Lisbon Meeting on Economics and Public Science (Lisbon).
2021	IIPF (online).
2020	Max Planck Institute for Tax Law and Public Finance (Munich, invited); KU Leuven (Leuven, invited); ICEI & Ituna (Madrid, invited).
2019	LMU (Munich, invited); Walter Eucken Institute (Freiburg, invited); LAGV (Aix-en-Provence); APET (Strasbourg); IIPF (Glasgow); EP@B Workshop ULB (Brussels).
2018	UQAM (Montreal, invited); Bruneck Workshop on Political Economy (Bruneck); IIPF (Tampere); ERSa (Cork); University of California, Irvine (invited).
2017	AEA (Chicago); IIPF (Tokyo).
2016	SAEe (Bilbao); IIPF (Lake Tahoe); LAGV (Aix-en-Provence); ZEW (Mannheim); Max Planck Institute for Tax Law and Public Finance (Munich, invited); Walter Eucken Institute (Freiburg, invited).
2015	IIPF (Dublin); ERSa (Lisbon); IWH (Halle); Walter Eucken Institute (Freiburg)
2014	IIPF (Lugano); APET (Seattle).

2013	LAGV (Aix-en-Provence); AFSE (Aix-en-Provence); APET (Lisbon); IIPF (Taormina); ERSA (Palermo); IWH (Halle).
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Awards & Research Grants

2023	'Fiscal Flows in Belgium II' (project for the Flemish Government, joint with UCLouvain).
2022	Bank of Portugal best paper prize ('Polarisation in Trust', Lisbon Meeting on Economics and Public Science).
2022	FEDIRIS: 'Bruxelles dans le fédéralisme de demain' (INNOVIRIS project, joint with UCLouvain).
2020	' Comparative Fiscal Federalism : Lessons to be learned for the EU', co-PI.
2016	'Fiscal Flows in Belgium' (project for the Flemish Government).
2015	'Maatschappijprijs Humane Wetenschappen' (KU Leuven impact award for ex-ante evaluation of election programs in run-up to Belgian elections of 2014: "Rekening14").

Teaching Experience

Courses at Hasselt University:

2024 -	Introduction to Economics, undergrad program (6 ECTS, instructor)
2024 -	Research Methods, undergrad program (5 ECTS, instructor)

Courses at University of Turin:

2024 -	Political (Behavioural) Economics, master program (6 ECTS, co-instructor)
2022 -	European Political Economy, master program (6 ECTS, co-instructor)

Courses at University of Stirling:

2022 -	Behavioural Economics I & II, master program (6 ECTS, co-instructor)
2017 -	Economic Policy (Public Economics), undergrad program (6 ECTS, co-instructor)
2022 - 2024	Industrial Organisation, undergrad program (6 ECTS, instructor)
2018 - 2024	Decision & Game Theory, undergrad program (6 ECTS, instructor)

Courses at KU Leuven:

2016	Principles of Economics for Scientists, undergrad MOOC (co-developer)
2013 - 2017	Public Economics & Macroeconomics, undergrad program (TA)
2015	Public Finance, MSc program (6 ECTS, co-instructor)
2012 - 2017	Dissertation tutor for the undergrad & graduate programs in Economics

Other

Refereeing	Journal of Public Economics, Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization, Regional Studies, European Journal of Political Research, European Journal of Political Economy, Journal of Public Economic Theory, International Tax and Public Finance, FinanzArchiv.
Service	Coordinator Re-Bel initiative (ongoing), ' Les Futurs ' project Brussels Region (2023), IMF mission to Belgium (2023), Finance Committee Brussels Parliament, OECD workshop on place-based policies (2023), ' Burgerbevraging ' project Belgian government (2022), Constitution Reform Group (2019), 'Evidence in policy workshop' (Scottish government, 2018), TAIEX workshop on EU fiscal acquis and governance (2016), IMF mission to Belgium (2013, 2015).
PhD	Guillaume Delvaux (PhD committee, UCLouvain), Achtee Al Yussef (PhD committee, VUB, completed), Stefanie Vanneste (PhD committee, University of Gent, completed), Caitlin McKennie (PhD committee, University of Stirling, completed).
Memberships	Royal Economic Society, International Institute of Public Finance.
Computing	Stata, LaTeX, Mathematica.
Languages	Dutch (native), English (fluent), French (fluent), German, Portuguese.

Other Publications

Articles in peer-reviewed journals (in Dutch)

Decoster, A. and Sas, W. (2015). 'Het nut van dotaties in gelaagde staatsvormen: een vergelijking van vereveningsmechanismen.' (*The aim of federal grants: a cross-country analysis of equalisation mechanisms*). Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Sociale Zekerheid, 57 (3), 561-595.

Articles in peer-reviewed academic books

Decoster, A. and Sas, W. (2012). 'Feiten en cijfers over de nieuwe financieringswet' (*Facts and figures on Belgium's new financing law*). In Popelier P., Sinardet D., Velaers J., Cantillon B. (Eds.), 'België, quo vadis?', Chapt. 10, Intersentia, 311-340.

Articles in other academic journals

Decoster, A. and Sas, W. (2015). 'De economische theorie van het federalisme: was de 6de staatshervorming een schot in de roos?' (*Fiscal federalism: The Belgian 6th Institutional Reform as a bull's-eye?*). Tijdschrift voor Bank- en Financieuzen (2), 151-157.

Decoster, A. and Sas, W. (2014). 'De 6de staatshervorming goedgekeurd. Is er nog een 7de staatshervorming nodig?' (*The sixth Belgian state reform: do we need a seventh?*). Samenleving en Politiek, 21(2), 30-41.

Decoster, A. and Sas, W. (2012). 'De nieuwe financieringswet: anders en beter?' (*The new Belgian financing law: different and better?*). Samenleving en Politiek, 19(1), 12-22.

Sas, W., and Liedekerke, L. V. (2009). 'Driving forces behind CSR in a SME context: Internally driven CSR.' European Business Ethics Network, Athens.

Policy papers

Decoster, A. and Sas, W. (2017). 'Interregionale financiële stromen in België van 2000 tot 2020.' (*Interregional fiscal flows in Belgium from 2000 until 2020*). Department of Economics, KU Leuven.

Decoster, A., De Swert, K., Sas, W., Spiritus, K., van der Wielen, W., Vanheukelom, T., Vanleenhove, P. (2014). 'Rekening 14 - Een vergelijking tussen de partijprogramma's.' Eindrapport, CES, VRT, De Tijd, De Standaard.

Decoster, A. and Sas, W. (2013). 'De herziening van de financieringswet: over het hoe, het waarom en het resultaat.' Leuvense Economische Standpunten, LES 2013/139, Leuven (Belgium): KU Leuven CES.

Decoster, A. and Sas, W. (2013). 'De nieuwe bijzondere financieringswet van de 6de staatshervorming: werden de beloften ingelost?' FLEMOSI discussion paper 28, Leuven (Belgium): Flemsi project CES.

Decoster, A. and Sas, W. (2012). 'De nieuwe financieringswet: anders, maar ook beter?' Leuvense Economische Standpunten, LES 2012/137, Leuven (Belgium): KU Leuven CES.

Decoster, A. and Sas, W. (2011). 'De bijzondere financieringswet voor dummies.' FLEMOSI discussion paper 4, Leuven (Belgium): Flemsi project CES.

Van Liedekerke, L. and Sas, W. (2008). 'MVO en KMO, de rol van pioniers.' In 'Pioniers in Maatschappelijk Verantwoord Ondernemen', UNIZO, 9-35.

In the Press (Selected)

'Vlaamse begroting nog meer in het rood: Paniek is nergens voor nodig'. Radio interview for [De Wereld Vandaag](#), 12/09/2023.

'België heeft nood aan efficiënt federalisme'. Interview for [Samenleving & Politiek](#), 15/6/2023.

'Eerste post-Brexitakkoord: Voordeel én valkuil is dat het een redelijk akkoord is'. Television interview for [Kanaal Z](#), 28/02/2023.

'Debat over begrotingstekort schiet nog altijd tekort'. [De Tijd](#), 6/1/2023.

'IMF vraagt België om energie uit de gezondheidsindex te halen'. Radio interview for [De Wereld Vandaag](#), 22/12/2022.

'De Universiteiten staken in het VK' Radio interview for [De Ochtend](#), 24/11/2022.

'Op lange termijn staan we er slechter voor dan Italië'. Interview for [De Standaard](#), weekend edition, 5-6/11/2022.[PDF]

'Een krop sla staat er beter voor dan Liz Truss?' Radio interview for [De Ochtend](#), 15/10/2022.

'Waarom we beter wel wakker liggen van de begroting'. Interview for [De Tijd](#), 08/10/2022.[PDF]

'Na aanpassing van "crazy" plan Liz Truss: Denk niet dat de financiële markten hierdoor zullen kalmeren?' Radio interview for [De Wereld Vandaag](#), 04/10/2022.

'Italiaanse extreemrechtse verkiezingszege is geen zwarte zondag'. [De Tijd](#), 26/9/2022.

'Hoe erg is het gesteld met de Waalse schatkist? Perspectief doorheen de rode cijfers'. Interview for [Nieuwsblad](#), 25/09/2022.[PDF]

'Energiecrisis doet de euro naar een nieuw dieptepunt zakken'. Television interview for [Kanaal Z](#), 5/09/2022.

'Onze politici slagen er niet meer in onpopulaire maatregelen aan de man te brengen'. Interview for [Trends](#), 31/08/2022.[PDF]

'Weg met de afkeer voor nuance'. [De Tijd](#), 30/8/2022.[PDF]

'Trends Summer Talk met econoom Willem Sas'. Television interview for [Kanaal Z](#), 20/08/2022.

'Energieprijzen wurgen Europese economie'. Television interview for [Kanaal Z](#), 16/08/2022.

'Boris Johnson Stapt op'. Television interview for [Kanaal Z](#), 07/07/2022.

'De burgerbevraging over een staatshervorming is broodnodig'. [De Tijd](#), 2/6/2022.

'Is Wallonië failliet?' Radio interview for [De Wereld Vandaag](#), 24/5/2022.

'Hoe is het gesteld met onze koopkracht?' Radio interview for [De Ochtend](#), 13/5/2022.

'Jongeren getuigen over hoe zij worstelen met stijgende prijzen.' Television interview for [BelRiadh](#), 28/4/2022.

'Des aides publiques qui s'attaquent aux causes profondes de la perte de pouvoir d'achat'. [L'Echo](#), 23/4/2022.[PDF]

'Le fédéralisme à quatre est-il révolutionnaire?'. [L'Echo](#), 26/2/2022.[PDF]

'Is federalisme met vier grensverleggend?'. [De Tijd](#), 22/2/2022.[PDF]

'Vaccines are necessary, but not sufficient without better healthcare and ventilation.' [The Conversation](#), 09/12/2021.

'Belgium's most wanted man ignites a culture war.' Interview for [Politico](#), 5/06/2021. [PDF]

'Populisme heeft een vraag en aanbod, net als de oplossingen?' [De Tijd](#), 28/05/2021. [PDF]

'Van brexit naar scexit: barsten in het Verenigd Koninkrijk?' [De Tijd](#), 10/05/2021. [PDF]

'Onafhankelijkheid wordt inzet Schotse verkiezingen.' Interview in [De Tijd](#), 30/04/2021.

'Geef dit land meer (fede)realisme en minder surrealisme.' [De Tijd](#), 27/04/2021. [PDF]

'New economic study dispels myths about Belgium's biggest regional tax contributors'. Interview for [The Brussels Times](#), 24/02/2021.

'How COVID-19 is shaping the way Europeans think about politicians.' [The Conversation](#), 28/10/2020.

'Covid-19 and socio-political attitudes in Europe: In competence we trust.' [VoxEU \(CEPR Policy Portal\)](#), 2/10/2020.

'Gezondheidszorg hervormen? Betrek experts én zorgsector erbij.' [De Standaard](#), 31/7/2020. [PDF]

'The rise of extreme politics in a federation', [VoxEU \(CEPR Policy Portal\)](#), 7/05/2020.

'Het geld is niet op.' Interview in [Knack](#), 1/01/2020.

'Confederalisme is onze Brexit.' [De Tijd](#), 18/12/2019.

References

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