

Willem Sas

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Employment

2024 - .. Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, 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, UCLouvain
2019 - CESifo Research Network Affiliate, Munich
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

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

Publications (Peer-Reviewed)

"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).

Ongoing Research

"Zero-sum Thinking and Group Identity" (with Pierluigi Conzo and Seth Sanders).
"Externalities and Trust" (with Gianmarco Daniele, Andrea Martinangeli, Francesco Passarelli and Lisa Windsteiger). *CESifo Working Papers* No. 10474. Submitted.

“Restoring Trust and Social Cooperation: The Power of Narratives” (with Tommaso Capezzone, Pierluigi Conzo and Roberto Zotti).

“Who Is to Blame (or Praise)? Perceived Service Quality and Responsibility in Multilevel Government” (with Tommaso Capezzone, Pierluigi Conzo, Dmitriy Vorobyev and Roberto Zotti).

“Are Bad Institutions Always Bad for Society? Trust and Cooperation in Times of Crisis” (with Gianmarco Daniele, Pierluigi Conzo and Andrea Martinangeli).

“The Evolution of Devolution: Socio-Economic Shocks & Attitudes Towards Devolution and Secession” (with David Bell and Hector Gutiérrez-Rufrancos).

“Can Scapegoating Backfire? The Socio-Political Effects 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). *Submitted*.

“Where There Is Smoke, There Is Water: Canals as Proxies of Industrial Past and Urban Income Disparity” (with Keiti Kondi and Vincent Vandenberghe).

“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).

Long Visiting at Other Institutions

2026	University of Cornell (3 months).
2025	University of Turin (1 month).
2024	University of Turin (1 month).
2023	Bocconi University (1 month), University of Turin (1 month).
2022	Bocconi University (2 months), University of Turin (1 month).
2020	Max Planck Institute for Tax Law and Public Finance (1 month).
2019	LMU Munich (1 month), Bocconi University (2 months), Nova School of Business and Economics (1 month).
2018	University of California, Irvine (3 months), UAB Barcelona (1 month).
2015	Nova School of Business and Economics (PhD visiting, 1 month).
2015	University of Barcelona (PhD visiting, 2 months).

Conferences & Seminars

2026	CLOSER to Evidence workshop, Collegio Carlo Alberto (Turin, invited), University of Stirling (invited), University of Antwerp (invited), Bocconi-Cornell Summer Conference (Rocca Grimalda, invited), IIPF (Lisbon).
2025	University of Turin/Collegio Carlo Alberto (Turin, invited), Bocconi-Cornell Summer Conference (Rocca Grimalda, invited), BSE Summer Forum (Public Economics, Barcelona), IIPF (Nairobi).
2024	Behavioral Economics Institute annual 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).

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 - 2025	Behavioural Economics I & II, master program (6 ECTS, co-instructor)
2017 - 2025	Economic Policy (Public Economics), undergrad program (6 ECTS, 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)
2015	Public Finance, MSc program (6 ECTS, co-instructor)

Other

Refereeing	Journal of Public Economics, PNAS, 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 (2023), 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

Chapters in Peer-Reviewed Academic Books

Sas, W., Decoster, A., Piron, D., Popelier, P. (2026). 'Fiscal Federalism in EU Member States: Belgium'. In Griller, S., Huber, F. and Riekmann, S.P. (Ed.). (2026). 'Building a Successful Fiscal Federation: Constitutional Lessons for the EU.' Oxford Dublin: Hart Publishing.

Bayenet, B. and Sas, W. (2026). 'Financing the Belgian federation'. In Reuchamps, M. et al. (eds), 'The Oxford Handbook of Belgian Politics', Oxford Handbooks.

Articles in Peer-Reviewed Academic Journals (in Dutch)

Decoster, A. and Sas, W. (2015). 'Het nut van dotaties in gelaagde staatsvormen: een vergelijking van vereveningsmechanismen.' Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Sociale Zekerheid, 57 (3), 561-595.

Decoster, A. and Sas, W. (2015). 'De economische theorie van het federalisme: was de 6de staats hervorming 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.

Chapters in Peer-Reviewed Academic Books (in Dutch)

Decoster, A. and Sas, W. (2012). 'Feiten en cijfers over de nieuwe financieringswet'. 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. (2014). 'De 6de staats hervorming goedgekeurd. Is er nog een 7de staats hervorming 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

Sas, W. and Truyts, T. (2024). *Interregionale financiële stromen in België: update 2000-2023 & prognoses 2024-2028*. UCLouvain.

Decoster, A. and Sas, W. (2017). 'Interregionale financiële stromen in België van 2000 tot 2020.' Department of Economics, KU Leuven.

Decoster, A., De Swerdt, 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 staats hervorming: 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.