



KU LEUVEN

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Graduate Studies:

KU Leuven, 2011 to 2016.

Ph.D. in Economics

Thesis Title: "Efficient Federalism: Taking Taxation to Another Level of Government."

Completion Date: October 3, 2016

References

Professor André Decoster (advisor)
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Professor Stef Proost (co-advisor)
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Professor Susana Peralta (committee member)
Nova school of Business and Economics
Campus de Campolide, 1099-032 Lisbon
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Fields of Specialisation:

Political Economy, Public Economics, Fiscal Federalism

Teaching Experience (undergraduate level):

2013-present Public Economics, KU Leuven, teaching assistant for André Decoster
2015 Public Finance, KU Leuven, teaching fellow for André Decoster
2013-2014 Macroeconomics, teaching assistant for André Decoster

Honors and Grants:

2016-2017 Research grant, 'fiscal transfers in Belgium', Flemish government
2013-2015 'Steunpunt Fiscaliteit en Begroting' research grant, Flemish government
2011-2013 Belgian Science Policy (BELSPO) grant, BEL-DEBT project

Research Papers:

'Accountability and Subnational Tax Autonomy: When Do Politicians Lose Fiscal Interest?'

Job Market Paper

Devolving tax authority to lower-level jurisdictions in a federation is often argued to better align the actions of politicians with the wishes of voters. In this theoretical paper, I derive the conditions for tax autonomy to bring about local growth-enhancing policies – as the fiscal incentives approach of Weingast (2009) would predict – and investigate whether this is indeed beneficial to voter welfare. I add to the literature by modelling a multi-tiered, political agency setting where growth-enhancing policies produce additional public revenues. Rent-seeking incumbents can then improve their chances of re-election by setting precisely such policies, which boost their reputation and provide additional resources for (pork-barrel) targeting. Surprisingly, the resulting 'discipline effect' proves stronger in a unitary setting, where all of public provision is kept at the center. However, given a certain degree of decentralisation and a sufficient amount of rent-seeking politicians, shoring up discipline via sharper fiscal incentives is more effectively done at lower levels of government. Expanding local tax autonomy will, in this case, unambiguously boost voter welfare.

'Can Fiscal Equalisation Mitigate Tax Competition? Ad Valorem, Residence-Based Taxation in a Federation.' International Tax and Public Finance, forthcoming.

In this paper, I revisit the combined effect of horizontal and vertical tax externalities in a federal context, extending the theoretical framework of Keen and Kotsogiannis (2002) by allowing for ad valorem and residence-based taxation. When taxes are levied ad valorem rather than per-unit firstly, the interaction between both types of externalities becomes more ambiguous than commonly understood. As a result, and contrary to earlier findings, fiscal equalisation mechanisms such as the representative transfer system (RTS) fail to fully internalise the tax externalities. Given these limitations, I derive the conditions under which a standard RTS will either: (i) at least nudge politicians in the right direction; (ii) realise no welfare gains at all; (iii) considerably overshoot the second-best efficiency mark causing welfare loss. Lastly, I find that when taxation is residence-based rather than source-based, a different kind of competition emerges where tax cuts are aimed at stimulating outward factor flows, rather than attracting inward flows.

'A Soft Spot for Bailouts: Regional Affiliation in a Federal Government.' (with Amedeo Piolatto)

We study the soft budget constraint problem, often stretching subnational public borrowing to the limit in many federations. Focusing on institutional design and political practice, we add to the literature by introducing logrolling and regional affiliation at the federal level. In our inter-temporal model, voters are shown to elect federal representatives with a keener preference for debt accumulation than their own preference. Such strategic voting behaviour not only leads to overly generous bailout policies. Also, and compared to a setting where federal decision making does not follow from bargaining and regional affiliation, states over-borrow more inefficiently because of this federal generosity. Allowing for heterogeneity in state income and population does not affect this inefficient outcome lastly. Lower relative per capita incomes even boost federal generosity and subsequent over-borrowing by the states.

Research Papers in Progress:

'Voluntary Provision of Public Knowledge Goods: Group-Based Social Preferences and Coalition Formation.' R&R at Economics of Innovation and New Technology (with Tom Dedeurwaerdere and Paolo Melindi-Ghidi)

'When to Play the Populist Card? Accountability, Tax Autonomy, and Regionalism.'

'Invest-As-You-Go: Public Health Investment, Long-Term Care and Welfare.'
(with Paolo Melindi-Ghidi)

Relevant Research History:

2016-present	KU Leuven, Department of Economics, postdoctoral researcher
2010-2016	KU Leuven, Department of Economics, research assistant for professor André Decoster

International Research Visits:

2016	Institut d'Economia de Barcelona (IEB), University of Barcelona (July)
2015	Nova School of Business and Economics, Universidade Nova de Lisboa (September)
2015	Institut d'Economia de Barcelona (IEB), University of Barcelona (March-June)

Conferences

2017	AEA (Chicago)
2016	SAEe (Bilbao); IIPF (Lake Tahoe); LAGV (Aix-en-Provence); ZEW (Mannheim)
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)

Invited seminars

2016	Max Planck Institute for Tax Law and Public Finance (Munich); Walter Eucken Institute (Freiburg)
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Predoctoral Studies

2011	M.Phil. in Economics, KU Leuven (magna cum laude)
2008	Partial B.A. in Philosophy, Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès
2007	M.Sc. in Business Engineering, KU Leuven (cum laude)
2006	Erasmus program in Business Economics, Universidade Nova de Lisboa
2005	B.Sc. in Business Engineering, KU Leuven

Other Activities:

Refereeing	Journal of Public Economic Theory (JPET)
MOOC	Co-development of the 'Principles of Economics for Scientists' Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), Faculty of Science, KU Leuven
Service	Invited as expert for the IMF mission to Belgium (2013, 2015) & the TAIEX Workshop on EU fiscal acquis and governance (2016)

Computer Skills:

Stata, Mathematica, LaTeX, EViews, EUROMOD

Personal Information

Nationality	Belgian
Languages	Dutch (native), English (fluent), French (fluent), German, Portuguese