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Position

April 2012-present: Senior Researcher, Chr. Michelsen Institute, Bergen, Norway

January 2015-present: Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, The Maxwell
School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University

Education

- Ph.D. Development Economics, Wageningen University, The Netherlands: 2012.
- Master of Science: Economics, University of Gothenburg, Sweden: 2006
- BA, Economics, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia: 2004

Research Interests

Development, State Capacity and Taxation Policy

Research

Publications in Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

- *Colonial Legacy, State-building and the Saliency of Ethnicity in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 2019, **Forthcoming in**, *The Economic Journal*, (With Odd-Helge Fieldstad, Boqian Jiang and Abdulaziz Shifa).
- Policy implementation under stress: Central-local government relations in property tax collection in Tanzania. **Accepted for publication in**, *Journal of Financial Management of Property and Construction* (With Fjeldstad, O-H and Lucas Katera).

- *To Pay or Not to Pay? Citizens' Attitudes toward Taxation in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and South Africa.* [World Development](#), vol. 64, pages 828-842, 2014. (With Odd-Helge Fjeldstad and Ingrid Hoem Sjursen).
- *Why can we not demonstrate the difference that Norwegian aid makes? An evaluation of the results measurement system and practice,* [Journal of Development Effectiveness](#), vol. 8, pages 171-195, 2015. (With Espen Villanger, Rob Lloyd and Derek).
- *Clustering as an Organizational Response to Capital Market Inefficiency: Evidence from Microenterprises in Ethiopia,* [Small Business Economics](#), vol. 43, pages 697-709, 2014. (With X. Zhang and J. Peerlings).
- *Farm households and non-farm activities in Ethiopia: does clustering influence entry and exit,* [Agricultural Economics](#), vol. 43, pages 253-266, 2012. (With J. Peerlings).
- *Value Added of Cluster Membership for Micro Enterprises of the Handloom Sector in Ethiopia,* [World Development](#), vol. 39, pages, 363-374, 2011. (With J. Peerlings).
- *Ethnic Ties in Trade Relationships and the Impact on Economic Performance: The Case of Small-Scale Producers in Ethiopia,* [Journal of Development Studies](#), vol. 47, pages 1241-1260, (With J. Peerlings).
- *Understanding Inequalities in Child Health in Ethiopia: Health Achievements Are Improving in the Period 2000–2011,* [PLoS ONE](#), 9(8):e106460. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0106460, 2014. (With Eirin Kruger Skaftun and Ole Frithjof Norheim).
- *Health inequalities in Ethiopia: modelling within-group and between-group inequalities,* [International Journal for Equity in Health](#), 12:52, 2013. (With Eirik Joakim Tranvåg and Ole Frithjof Norheim).

Working Papers and Ongoing Projects

- Pre-colonial Ethnic Institutions and Accountability of Local Government Officials in Africa.
- Building Fiscal Capacity in Developing Countries: Evidence on the Role of Information Technology. Revise and resubmit: [National Tax Journal](#) (With Shifa, A., Woldeyes, F., and Shimeles, A). Earlier version available as ICTD working paper.
- Colonial Rule and Corruption of Local Elites (With Shifa, A., and Fjeldstad, O-H).
- Pre-colonial Centralization, Tax-compliance Norms and Local Government Accountability in Uganda.
- Regulatory Burdens in Tax Administration and Firms' Compliance Cost in Africa. ICTD Working Paper.
- Policy implementation under stress: Central-local government relations in property tax collection in Tanzania. CMI Working Paper WP 1: 2018. Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute. Also

published as ATI Working Paper 1: 2018. Pretoria: African Tax Institute, University of Pretoria (With Fjeldstad, O-H and Lucas Katera).

- Cluster Development Programs in Ethiopia: Evidence and Policy Implications, Kiel Institute for the World Economy, 2016. (With Godart, O., Görg, H., and Seric. A).
- Diffusion of labor standards from origin to host countries: Cross-country evidence from FDI in Africa, EUI Working Paper RSCAS, 2014. (With Seric. A.)

Policy Briefs

- Property owners' knowledge and attitudes towards property taxation in Tanzania, CMI policy insight, 2018. (With Fjeldstad, O-H., and Katera, L.)
- Taxing the urban boom: property taxation in Africa: , CMI policy insight, 2017. (With Fjeldstad, O-H., and Goodfellow, T.)
- Property Taxation in Developing Countries. CMI policy brief, 2017. (With Fjeldstad, O-H., and Katera,L.)
- Industrial Clusters Promotion as a tool for private sector development: The UNIDO experience in Ethiopia. CMI policy brief, 2013. (With Coniglio, N., and Seric , A.)
- Government's role in cluster development for MSEs: Lessons from Ethiopia Merima Ali. CMI policy brief.

Teaching Experience

- Economic Ideas and Issues, Syracuse University, Department of Economics
- World Economy, Syracuse University, Department of Economics
- International Trade and Development, Syracuse University, Department of Economics

Grants Awarded

- 2016: Principal Investigator: Mapping Tax Compliance Costs for Businesses in Africa, funded by International Centre for Taxation and Development (50,000 USD)
- 2016: Taxing the urban boom in Tanzania: Interests, incentives and real estate in Dar es Salaam, funded by Norwegian Embassy in Dar es Salaam
- 2015: Principal Investigator: Electronic sales register machines, tax enforcement and tax outcomes, funded by International Centre for Taxation and Development (112,000 USD)
- 2013: Principal Investigator: Impact evaluation on the role of IT on tax compliance in Ethiopia, funded by International Centre for Taxation and Development (52,136 USD)
- 2013: Co-principal Investigator: A fair path towards universal coverage: National case study for Ethiopia, Uganda and Zambia, funded by International Development Research Centre (52,607 USD)

- 2013: End review of UNIDO, Entrepreneurship development for the youth in Mozambique, funded by NORAD
- 2013: Evaluation of the Norwegian aid administration's systems & practices, funded by NORAD
- 2013: Edible oil value-chain enhancement and clustering in Ethiopia, funded by UNIDO

Conference Papers and Presentations

- 2018: Pre-colonial centralization, fragility and state capacity in sub-Saharan Africa, at TaxCapDev-Network, Oslo, Norway.
- 2017: Regulatory Burdens in Tax Administration and Firms' Compliance Cost in Africa, at ICTD's Annual Research Conference, Entebbe, Uganda.
- 2015: Information technology and fiscal capacity in a developing country: Micro- evidence from Ethiopia, at the Econometric Society World Congress, Montreal, Canada.
- 2015: Economic Development and Efficient Tax Policy, as part of The Obama Administration's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), Syracuse University.
- 2015: Colonial legacy, state building and the salience of ethnicity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Presented at the Maxwell African Scholars Union, Syracuse University.
- 2014: Information technology and fiscal capacity in a developing country: Micro- evidence from Ethiopia: Presented at: ICTD Annual Research Conference, Arusha, Tanzania.
- 2014: Taxation and Development: Presented as part of The Obama Administration's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), July, Syracuse University.
- 2013: Understanding spatial heterogeneity in entrepreneurship across cities in Ethiopia: Presented at World Bank meeting at Norwegian School of Economics.
- 2013: Factors affecting tax compliant attitude in Africa: Evidence from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and South Africa Presented at: Centre for the Study of African Economies Conference at Oxford University.
- 2013: Clustering as an Organizational Response to Capital Market Inefficiency: Evidence from Microenterprises in Ethiopia: Presented at Fourth Annual Conference on "Business and Entrepreneurship in Africa", Makerere University Business School.
- 2012: The new Afrobarometer survey of taxpayer perceptions: Some preliminary results: Presented at: ICTD Annual Research Conference, Cape Town.
- 2012: Clustering as an Organizational Response to Capital Market Inefficiency: Evidence from Microenterprises in Ethiopia: Presented at Northeast Universities Development Conference (NEUDC), Dartmouth University.
- 2011: Farm Households Entry and Exit Into and From Non-farm Enterprises in Rural Ethiopia: Does Clustering Play a Role? Presented at International Congress of the European Association of Agricultural Economists, Zurich.

Professional Membership

Ethiopian Economic Association, European Economic Association, Econometric Society, American Economic Association