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Pastoral Livelihoods in Urban and Peri-urban Spaces of Ethiopia: The Case of Yabello,

Borana Zone

Edlam Aberra *

Abstract

This paper outlines the emergence of pastoral settlements in urban and peri-urban spaces of Ethiopia focusing on Yabello, the present capital of Borana zone. By doing so, the paper seeks to contribute to ongoing debates on the manner in which pastoral livelihoods are changing in Ethiopia, and elsewhere in Africa. More specifically, a livelihoods approach is adopted to examine the wellbeing of Borana pastoralists in peri-urban spaces of Yabello in terms of their asset status and use of those assets to pursue various livelihood strategies. The conceptualization of assets goes beyond economic assets to incorporate social and human assets which are equally important to improve wellbeing. Due to intra-household differentiation, particular attention is paid to gendered differences in livelihood strategies and their consequent implications for men and women's wellbeing. Drawing on data from a household survey that covered 170 households within a 20 km radius of Yabello, the paper highlights the 'paucity' of assets owned by Borana pastoralists in urban and peri-urban settlements which limits the range of livelihood strategies they can access to those which are 'opportunistic' and unsustainable in the long term. The results also suggest the importance of gender as a critical determinant of Borana men and women's participation in various livelihood strategies available within urban and peri-urban spaces. The paper proposes strategies for incorporating these pastoralists into development planning with a view to enhancing the sustainability of their livelihoods.

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1. Introduction

Pastoralists constitute approximately ten percent of the Ethiopian population (over 6 million) and occupy much of the peripheral lowlands that surround the central highland plateaus dominated by rain-fed small-scale agriculture (Fecadu 1990)¹. Numerous studies have documented the threats to pastoral livelihoods in Ethiopia over the last few decades including drought, conflict, and inappropriate development interventions that have led to the weakening of traditional coping mechanisms in rural pastoral areas (Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA) 2001; Beruk 2001; Hogg 1997; Helland 1997). In response to such threats, pastoralists have had to adapt the activities and assets from which they derive a living as well as their patterns of migration. Existing trends indicate that traditional livestock-based livelihood strategies (defined as pastoral livelihood strategies) alone will not be able to provide for the country's pastoral population. It is thus evident that non-livestock based strategies will have to supplement or in some cases substitute previously dominant pastoral livelihood strategies. Already, trends of pastoral livelihood diversification have been noted among the Borana and Afar whereby pastoralists are combining livestock production with a variety of non-pastoral activities including agriculture, wage labour and trade (See Little et al. 2001; Grahn 2001; Getachew 1991; 2001).

Trends of seasonal mobility amongst pastoralists are changing significantly characterized by increased permanent settlement in various locations. An emerging alternative for livestock destitute pastoralists has been settlement in and around urban centers in order to exploit non-livestock based livelihood opportunities (defined as non-pastoral livelihood strategies) that would otherwise be unavailable in rural pastoral areas. The unreliability of rural pastoral livelihoods as a result of recurring drought and conflict is likely to ensure the continuing influx of pastoralists into urban and peri-urban spaces. There is thus an urgent need to examine the livelihoods of those

pastoralists in urban and peri-urban spaces who constitute some of the poorest and most vulnerable groups in Ethiopia's pastoral areas.

This paper outlines the emergence of pastoral settlements in urban and peri-urban spaces of Yabello, the present capital of Borana zone. By doing so, the paper seeks to contribute to ongoing debates on the manner in which pastoral livelihoods are changing in Ethiopia, and elsewhere in Africa. Drawing on data from a baseline household survey undertaken among 170 Borana pastoral households settled within a 20 kilometer radius of Yabello the paper seeks to elucidate how pastoralists who have 'exited' from rural pastoral systems survive within urban and peri-urban spaces. Furthermore, through an examination of the assets available to households and their livelihood strategies, this paper seeks to assess the wellbeing of pastoral men and women in such spaces.

The paper is organized as follows. First the conceptual underpinnings of the study are outlined followed by a brief overview of trends of pastoral development in Ethiopia and more specifically among Borana pastoralists and Yabello. The paper then proceeds to summarize and analyze findings from the household survey. The paper concludes by considering the implications of these findings for policy and future research.

2. Conceptual Issues: Livelihoods, Wellbeing and Gender

Despite its widespread endorsement, a precise definition of the livelihoods approach is contentious and remains a key problem in research on livelihoods. The livelihoods approach has largely emerged out of changing conceptualizations of poverty towards a multidimensional approach beyond income poverty (Rakodi 2002, 4-6). A defining feature of the approach is that it introduces the concept of 'livelihoods' defined as "...the *capabilities, assets* (including both

material and social resources) and *activities* required for a means of living” (Scoones 1998, 5). Livelihoods analysis entails an examination of the assets (resources) that are available to people and how they are able to transform those assets through various livelihood strategies into sustainable livelihood outcomes such as reduced poverty and improved wellbeing (Scoones 1998). Broadly defined, assets refer to ‘...capital which can be stored, accumulated, exchanged or depleted and put to work to generate a flow of income or other benefits’ (Rakodi 1999, 316). Six types of assets are commonly incorporated in livelihoods analysis namely natural, human, social, physical, financial and political assets².

The emphasis on assets within a livelihoods perspective emanates from the argument that the ability of individuals or households to pursue particular livelihood strategies is dependent upon the assets which they can access and use (Scoones 1998, 7), where a livelihood strategy refers to the activity or combination of activities from which people derive a living. In turn, the types of livelihood strategies pursued are thought to determine the ability of individuals or households to achieve positive outcomes such as improved wellbeing and reduced vulnerability (Moser 1998; Scoones 1998). It is however, important to note that peoples’ livelihoods do not always result in positive outcomes and this is particularly so in the case of the poor who have limited access to various assets and whose livelihood strategies may result in further impoverishment and vulnerability (Rakodi 2002, 6). Furthermore, context specific institutional processes, such as market and political processes, at local, regional and national scales shape livelihood outcomes.

Drawing from the livelihoods approach, wellbeing is conceptualized in this study in terms of peoples’ access to a range of assets and their use of those assets to pursue various livelihood strategies and achieve positive outcomes. A livelihoods approach allows the examination of a plurality of dimensions of wellbeing whereby noneconomic dimensions such as social and human

indicators are given equal emphasis to economic indicators. However, as Beall (2002, 73-74) has recently emphasized, livelihoods analysis should pay attention to gender and generation differences in determining individual household member's access to various assets and capability to use those assets. Since the asset status and livelihood strategies of individual household members are subject to gendered differences wellbeing too becomes gendered. Therefore, it is understood here that peoples' access to various assets, the livelihood strategies which they pursue and consequently their wellbeing are all gendered processes.

Before delving into a discussion of the assets and livelihood strategies of pastoral households in peri-urban Yabello, a brief overview of trends of pastoral development in Ethiopia are considered followed by a more focused discussion of Borana pastoralism and Yabello.

3. Trends of Pastoral Development in Ethiopia

Pastoralists occupy the lowland areas of Ethiopia characterized by arid and semi-arid climates, which make these areas unsuitable for agriculture. The arid and semi-arid regions are said to account for 60 percent of the surface area of the country (Hogg 1996). Apart from numerous smaller groups, there are three main pastoral groups namely the Somali, Borana, and Afar pastoralists living in the south-east, south, and north-east respectively (Hogg 1997). These pastoralists derive their living mainly from livestock which serve as the 'backbone' of their economies, whilst contributing to the sociocultural and political organization of those societies (Hogg 1991, 10). Livestock support the social fabric of pastoral societies serving as a symbol of social status and item for exchange during various social functions such as marriage, birth, and initiation ceremonies thus cementing social solidarity (Farah 1996, 129). However, the last 30 years have been characterized by an increasing reliance on nonlivestock-based activities

including trade, agriculture and wage employment. This has mainly been a result of the declining viability of traditional livestock- based livelihood strategies.

The viability of pastoral livelihoods in Ethiopia has been compromised due to the interplay between external factors and factors internal to pastoral societies. Some external factors include expansionist interests of central governments at various points in time resulting in the loss of valuable pastoral land to state-owned and private entrepreneurial ventures (see Getachew 2001 and Gamaledin 1992). As Haile-Gebriel (2003, 6) notes, the loss of key grazing and watering points to various nonpastoral purposes is responsible for the increasing impoverishment of pastoral communities. Central governments have been critiqued for marginalizing pastoral areas in terms of integration into national economy and investments in infrastructure and services (CRDA 2001; Beruk 2001; Hogg 1997; Farah 1996). Today, Ethiopia's pastoral areas remain some of the most backward regions in terms of infrastructural development and basic service provision such as education and health. A series of state-led development initiatives in pastoral areas in the 1970s and 1980s were not entirely successful in redressing the imbalances between pastoral and nonpastoral areas³.

Dynamics within pastoral systems themselves, which cannot be seen separate to external factors, have shaped the trajectory of pastoral development. Increasing human and livestock populations, recurrent drought and famine, weakening of traditional resource management systems and sedenterisation are some of the factors which have brought about shrinkage in pastoral resources vital for the sustenance of livestock. Conflict is also common to Ethiopia's pastoral areas both as a cause and consequence of shrinking pastoral resources, but also as a result of political interference by national governments⁴. The vulnerability of pastoralists to market price fluctuations, particularly during times of drought and/or famine has further led to the depletion of their livestock assets⁵.

Overall, the trajectory of pastoral development in Ethiopia over the last 30 years in particular points to the declining ability of pastoralists to subsist mainly from livestock based activities alone, and the consequent increased significance of nonlivestock based activities, including but not limited to agriculture. At the same time, those who have lost most or all of their livestock assets are unable to subsist within the rural pastoral economy and must settle in spaces which offer them the maximum range of alternative livelihood opportunities, including urban and peri-urban spaces. Such trends are also evident amongst the Borana pastoralists of Southern Ethiopia.

4. The Borana Pastoralists and Yabello

The Borana have been occupying the semi-arid and arid rangelands of Southern Ethiopia and Northern Kenya probably since the sixteenth century (Helland 1997). They subsist mainly from livestock products and indirectly from cereals purchased with proceeds from the sale of livestock and livestock products. Like other Ethiopian pastoralists the Borana have been victimized by the combined impact of drought, conflict, market and state induced constraints with the consequent shrinking of key resources such as pasture and water⁶. Past development interventions among the Borana mainly took the form of large-scale livestock development projects focusing primarily on infrastructural development and veterinary service provision (Tamene 1996). With the earliest ones dating back to the 1960s, state led development interventions have had as much negative consequences as they have brought about positive change and this is examined in detail elsewhere (see Helland 1997; Aberra 2001). The Borana continue to rely on livelihoods which are highly vulnerable. The probability of occurrence of drought remains high while at the same time several factors are causing the weakening of traditional resource management institutions

and mechanisms for coping with resource scarcity such as seasonal migration. Privatization and alienation of traditional rights of access to pastoral resources as well as restrictions of free movement in search of pasture and water are key threats to the continuation of Borana pastoralism (Baxter 2001, 245).

The Borana region has been hit by repeated droughts and consequent loss of livestock for the last three decades, the most recent one being in the period between 1999-2000. For example, a recent study estimates that during the years 1980-1997 alone, monetary losses due to livestock deaths in the Borana plateau exceeded US \$ 300 million (Desta 2001, 1). The study further argues that ‘cattle crashes’, or widespread loss of cattle, occur every 5-6 years, particularly during times of low rainfall and high stocking rates. Consequently, urban centers such as Negelle, Moyale, Wachile, Arero and Yabello have emerged as alternative spaces for many destitute pastoralists who have become ‘herdless’ due to various reasons including but not limited to drought (Getachew 1996, 114). It should however be noted that the region has received good rains consecutively over the last three years which has slowed the influx of destitute pastoralists into urban and peri-urban spaces.

Yabello is now the zonal capital of the recently formed Borana zone (end of 2002) with a total population of 16,112 of which 8,050 are female and 8,062 are male⁷. The growing population of Yabello, however, has not been accompanied by adequate provision of social services such as school, health establishments and water provision⁸. Furthermore, Yabello’s economy is limited both in scale and specialization with inhabitants engaged mainly in the service and small-scale industry sectors. Service providing establishments include mills, hotels, salons, barbers, shops and restaurants (Planning and Development Office of Borana Zone 2002, 19). Some inhabitants are civil servants employed by the various government establishments⁹.

Also, contraband trade in various goods including livestock, hides, and plastic goods is a key part of the town's economy¹⁰. However, due to the tightening of government controls in recent years the role of such trade has declined significantly¹¹. Despite the limited economic activities, destitute Borana pastoralists continue to be drawn to peri-urban spaces of Yabello.

5. Research Sites and Methods

The results presented in this paper draw from a household survey undertaken in eleven settlements around Yabello between November 2002 and January 2003 involving a total of 170 Borana households.

Table 1: Target Settlements and Households

<i>Kebele</i> ¹²	Settlement	Distance from Yabello Kms	Number of Households Involved
Obda	Debobeti	> 5	26
	Nyaro	6-10	18
	El Dima	6-10	15
	Gololcha	6-10	19
Yubdo	Gesu	>5	4
	Borama	6-10	23
Ganya	Garbiminch	>5	11
	Kubichura	>5	12
Did Yabello	Olla Huka Jilo and Olla Kature Huka	6-10	19
Tadim	Cholkassa	18-20	9
Areri	Hidi Ale	18-20	14
	Total		170

The settlements were located at varying distances from Yabello which are critical due to the differences in the level of interaction with Yabello and type of livelihoods strategies pursued by their inhabitants.

Due to the absence of a readily available list of all households in the selected settlements or a sampling frame, it was not possible to employ probability sampling. Therefore purposive sampling was used whereby households were selected based on characteristics which best fitted the objectives of the study. Two main criteria were used to identify respondents. First, respondents must have settled in selected communities over the last 25 years so as to include victims of the 1984/85 drought and to limit the recall period for inquiry into aspects of respondents lives prior to eviction. Second, the study targeted only those Borana who had been practicing nomadic pastoralism prior to settlement in peri-urban spaces in order to track the changes in their livelihoods and their survival strategies. This was particularly important due to the existence of other groups, in the selected communities, with an agricultural background from highland parts of the country (e.g. Burji, Wolaitta). Multiple strategies were used to gain access to respondents who fit these criteria, namely list from *Kebele* chairmen and traditional leaders of settlements (*Abba Olla's*), community meetings and snowballing. Accordingly, 170 households were selected from eleven different settlements. Results gained from completing questionnaires with these households are presented below.

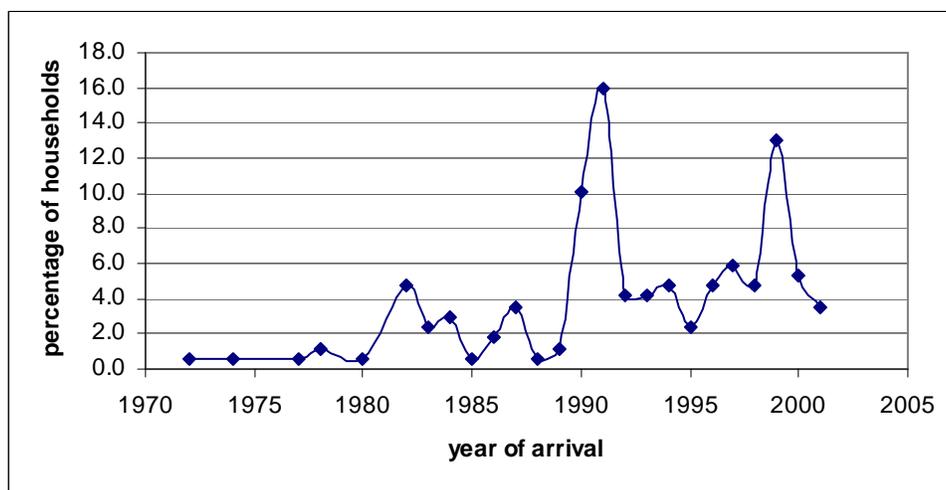
6. Causes of Urban and Peri-urban Settlement by Borana Pastoralists

The pattern of settlement of Borana pastoralists is not necessarily a unilateral movement from rural areas to peri-urban and urban spaces. Accordingly, while the majority of the Borana households in peri-urban Yabello had come directly from rural locations, some came from other urban (8.2 percent) and peri-urban (5.3 percent) locations. For most of the pastoral households, settlement in peri-urban Yabello was based on personal decisions without the involvement of

other authorities such as the government which was responsible for the settlement of only a few households (7.6 percent).

Three factors emerged as the main motives for the settlement of Borana pastoralists in and around Yabello, namely drought induced loss of livestock (36.5 percent), urban trade opportunities (23.5 percent) and ethnic conflict (21.2 percent). The time of arrival of pastoralists in the settlements also coincided with the major drought periods in Borana region (1984-85, 1990-91, 1999-2000) (see figure 1), further demonstrating that drought is a key cause of settlement of Borana pastoralists in urban and peri-urban Yabello¹³. Additional factors causing such settlement included loss of livestock due to reasons other than drought such as raids (2.9 percent) and diseases (2.4 percent) and access to agricultural land (2.9 percent). The remaining respondents provided a variety of other reasons for settling in peri-urban Yabello such as widowhood, access to education and access to agricultural labour work.

Figure 1: Year of Arrival in Settlement



Source: Household Survey Data

The average length of stay of Borana households in peri-urban Yabello was 9.6 years. Households had experienced significant changes in their asset status and livelihood strategies in the periods prior to and after settlement in peri-urban Yabello as discussed below. The fact that the majority settled in peri-urban Yabello as a result of drought also had implications for their asset status upon arrival.

7. Household Assets and Livelihood Strategies

As noted earlier, access to assets is essential for individuals or households to reduce their poverty and access various livelihood options. The survey examined four main types of household assets, namely financial (credit and savings, banking, livestock and remittances), physical (housing), human (health and water), and social assets (kinship based support and traditional wealth transfer mechanisms). The first two have been categorized as tangible assets and the latter two as nontangible assets.

7.1 Tangible Household Assets: Financial and Physical

Financial assets were measured using proxy indicators, namely livestock assets, access to banking and savings and credit associations¹⁴. Livestock continue to be valued as a financial asset by Borana in peri-urban areas partly because they can generate immediate financial income either through sale of the animal (s) or dairy products, but also due to the social value of livestock as symbols of wealth, prestige and identity. If used as draught animals, livestock can generate financial income, assuming that some of the agricultural produce is sold in the market.

The survey indicated that Borana pastoralists in peri-urban spaces own six main types of livestock assets, namely camels, bulls, cows, calves, goats, and sheep. Overall, almost all households (95.9 percent) had experienced a decline in their livestock assets immediately before settlement in their current location, whilst only a few households (4.1 percent) had actually experienced an increase in their livestock assets following settlement. When livestock indexes were computed for the periods before and after settlement in current location results showed that whilst average livestock index was 122.54 prior to settlement, the current livestock index was only 18.965¹⁵. It can therefore be said that most of the pastoralists living in urban and peri-urban spaces experience a major decline in their livestock assets prior to settlement. The main cause of decline in livestock assets was drought (72.9 percent) followed by livestock diseases (12.4 percent) and livestock raids (7.6 percent). Distress sale accounted for only 2.9 percent of the cases of livestock decline.

In terms of access to financial services none of the households had a bank account, the main reason for this being that most of their earning was 'from hand to mouth' and insufficient to cover even their daily needs. Membership in formal savings and credit associations was also low with only 11.8 percent of the households being members of a formal credit and saving association whilst 88.2 percent had no such membership. Where households were members, the weekly contributions were either small amounts of money or contribution in kind, mainly agricultural produce¹⁶. Again, the reason which all households provided for nonmembership in formal savings and credit associations was the lack of financial capacity.

The main physical assets of importance for Borana livelihoods in peri-urban Yabello were agricultural land holding and housing. Average land holding per household was 0.44 hectares, which is much less than the average land holding for highland Ethiopia that is 1 hectare per household (Zergeye and Girma 1997, 1). Over half of the households (53.5 percent) did not own

any agricultural holding whilst 31.8 percent owned less than 1.25 hectares of land. Only 14.7 percent owned more 1.25 hectares of land. The comparatively small size of agricultural land is likely to be due to two reasons. First, until recently, agriculture was not an important livelihood strategy for the Borana pastoralists. Second, agricultural land holding is likely to decrease with proximity to urban centers and the consequent increase in competitiveness for land. A comparison of average agricultural land holding according to distance from Yabello showed that pastoralists owned 0.217 hectares, 0.536 hectares and 0.5162 hectares on average at less than 5 kilometers, between 6-10 kilometers and between 18-20 kilometers distance from Yabello respectively.

Housing has already been identified as an important asset for the urban poor (Moser, 1998). The majority of the households owned the houses they were living in (81.8 percent) while a smaller percentage of dwellings were rented (5.9 percent) or owned by relatives (6.5 percent). In some cases (1.2 percent), Borana pastoralists were living in houses owned by other Borana in return for which they would provide agricultural labour or herd livestock for the owners of the house. In other instances (2.9 percent), pastoralists were living in houses which had been abandoned by other Borana pastoralists who left the area to settle elsewhere. A further 1.2 percent of the respondents had other living arrangements. It is therefore evident that households enjoy some level of tenure security with regards to housing.

Tenure security over housing is thought to encourage the urban poor to upgrade the quality of their housing and use this asset productively by renting it out or running businesses (Moser 1998). However, in the context of pastoralists in urban and peri-urban spaces, most live in houses made of poor quality and locally available materials (see Annex 1). Therefore, given the poor quality of their housing compared to houses in Yabello and their location at the peripheries they are unlikely to be able to rent their homes. Furthermore, limited access to financial capital

hinders possibilities of running home based enterprises. Also, an examination of housing as an asset must be culturally sensitive. For the Borana, and most likely other pastoralists in Ethiopia, frequent mobility and the need to abandon housing during movement means that the importance of housing is comparatively less than in the context of sedentary communities and especially urban centers.

To summarize, the results from the survey showed that Borana households in peri-urban Yabello have limited access to financial assets. The absence of financial assets in the form of livestock and savings further excludes Borana in peri-urban areas from accessing credit. Households are thus unable to participate in livelihood activities that require financial capital such as trade. Physical asset status of households in terms of agricultural land is also limited which has implications for their ability to participate in agricultural production. Where households do not own agricultural land, they are unable to complement their income from other activities with agricultural production and where they own agricultural land, it is often small plots which yield harvests that can barely cover subsistence needs. The status of households in terms of tangible assets both influences and is influenced by access to nontangible assets such as human and social assets.

7.2 Nontangible Household Assets: Human and Social

Social assets were assessed in terms of kinship based support and wealth transfer mechanisms at the clan level. The majority of the households (85.9 percent) do not receive support from their relatives living in rural areas with only 14.1 percent receiving such support. Much of this support was in the form of crops (40.6 percent), followed by other goods (25 percent), money (15.5 percent), livestock (12.5 percent) and milk and butter (6.25 percent). The primary reason for

nonreceipt of support from relatives in rural areas was the lack of financial ability of relatives to provide such support (41.8 percent). The next widely noted reason was that relatives did not wish to help because they despised Borana in peri-urban areas due to their poverty (18.8 percent). Additional reasons included distance (10.6 percent) and not having relatives in rural areas (2.9 percent). A few noted that they were self sufficient (2.9 percent) and hence did not need such help while others said they had never asked support from their relatives (2.9 percent). Others were unsure of why they had not received support from relatives (6.5 percent) while some (5.8 percent) presented other reasons for the non receipt of such support.

One of the most important wealth distribution mechanisms among the Borana is *Busa Gonofa*¹⁷. This mechanism allows Borana with no livestock assets to petition the wealthy to redistribute cattle at annual clan meetings (Coppock 1994, 3). All Borana who lose their livestock through drought or raids are eligible to receive livestock through *Busa Gonofa* (Coppock 1994). However, if one loses livestock through negligence, inappropriate sale or loss due to livestock disease (seen as partial negligence), request for support through *Busa Gonofa* is denied. The majority of the pastoralists (88.2 percent) noted that they had not received such support following settlement. Yet, as noted earlier the majority of the households lost their livestock due to drought (32.5 percent) and ethnic conflict (21.2 percent) and should therefore have been eligible for receipt of support through *Busa Gonofa*.

The overall decline in livestock assets of clan members and the increasing number of 'livestock destitute' pastoralists was the most widely noted reason for nonreceipt of *Busa Gonofa* (30.6 percent). A further reason was that *Busa Gonofa* is at times discriminatory towards the very poor (15.9 percent). Most said this was simply because of their poverty, while others said that they were denied support because their limited assets meant they were unlikely to sustain reciprocity in the future. This is contradictory in that the central purpose of *Busa Gonofa* is to

ensure wealthier clan members provide support to poorer members. Various other reasons were provided for nonreceipt of assistance through *Busa Gonofa* such as good health and ability to make a living (7.1 percent) and being young (1.2 percent)¹⁸.

Human asset status was examined mainly in terms of access to medical services and clean water. All the respondents were within physical reach of modern medical services, although many expressed that the purchase of subscribed medicines was well beyond their financial means. The majority identified Yabello health center (88.2 percent) as the first place where they would seek medical treatment, followed by *El Waye* health post (5.9 percent), and *Tadim* Catholic Higher Clinic (5.3 percent). *El Waye* health post was identified by those living in *Hidi Ale*, which is closer to the town of *El Waye* than to Yabello. Even so, households in *Hidi Ale* at a distance of 10-20 from Yabello also used Yabello health center. Households in *Cholkassa* also frequented *Tadim* Catholic higher clinic, which is also between 10-20 kilometers from Yabello. Only one of the households mentioned seeking treatment in private clinics as a possible alternative.

Inquiries into sources of water for cooking and cleaning indicated that the majority of the households (77.6 percent) lack access to clean water, and instead use water from springs and rivers¹⁹. Some of the households (20.6 percent) were able to access a community water points whilst a few noted that they purchased water from Yabello (1.8 percent).

Overall, the access of Borana households to intangible assets such as social and human assets is limited and this is interrelated with their status in terms of tangible assets. For example, support amongst relatives was contingent upon the financial status of both the ‘helpers’ and those receiving the help. Furthermore, the main reason for nonreceipt of *Busa Gonofa* was the increasing impoverishment and overall decline in livestock assets among the Borana. In the case of human assets also, despite physical access to medical services, households were unable to

benefit from such services due to their limited financial assets. The paucity of both tangible and nontangible assets at the household level has implications for the livelihood strategies which households are able to pursue.

7.3 Livelihood Strategies of Pastoralists in Urban and Peri-urban Spaces

Pastoral households in urban and peri-urban spaces were engaged in a total of twenty-three different livelihood activities ranging from trade related activities to reliance on social support. Seventeen of the different livelihood strategies were nonpastoral activities, while only four of the activities were purely pastoral activities and the remaining two strategies could be classified as both pastoral and nonpastoral (see table 1 Appendix)²⁰. This indicates that settlement in urban and peri-urban spaces is accompanied by declining importance of livestock-based livelihood strategies (pastoral livelihood strategies) and increased reliance on nonlivestock based livelihood strategies (nonpastoral livelihood strategies).

The main source of income for pastoral households in urban and peri-urban spaces is fuel wood trade (59.41 percent) followed by agriculture (44.60 percent) and livestock herding (27.05 percent). Other livelihood activities that emerged as significant were sale of water (15.88 percent) and paid agricultural work (15.20 percent) (see table 1 Appendix). It is possible to distinguish between these livelihood strategies on the grounds of whether they are ‘opportunistic’ or ‘strategic’. Opportunistic strategies are livelihood strategies pursued in response to crises or stress and are more aimed at survival. Also such strategies are not sustainable in the long term and do not have significant bearing on welfare. As Rakodi (2002, 6) notes, ‘the poorest and most vulnerable households are forced to adopt strategies which enable them to survive but not to

improve their welfare'. In contrast, strategic livelihood strategies are aimed at accumulation rather than survival, and may lead to long term improvement in wellbeing.

Fuel wood trade which was the primary source of income for the majority of the households, is an opportunistic strategy mostly undertaken by those who lack access to alternative livelihood strategies²¹. Mainly female members of the households undertook fuel wood trade. This activity requires women (and girls) to walk an average of 6-8 hours to fetch the fuel wood and take it to Yabello for sale. Despite the physical exertion involved in this task, women are only able to gain from 5-8 birr for the fuel wood they sell in Yabello, which they then spend on the daily needs of the household. Furthermore, the sustainability of this activity is questionable because, as some women noted, the number of women engaged in this activity is on the rise. Therefore, there is less fuel wood available for sale and women have to walk even longer distances to continue to sell fuel wood. Also, women engaged in fuel wood trade are at risk due to governmental and nongovernmental enforcements to protect forest resources.

Agricultural production was also an opportunistic strategy. Rudimentary agricultural implements were used for farming mainly the ox drawn plough (50 percent) and the hand hoe (14.1 percent), which is likely to lead to low agricultural productivity. Maize was the most widely cultivated crop with 64.1 percent of the households noting they cultivated maize, followed by beans (53.5), sorghum (18.8), *Teff*²²(14.2), wheat (14.1), and barley (2.4). Data on the purpose for which crops are produced also indicates that much of the production is subsistence oriented. Accordingly, 90.1 percent, 87.4 percent, 71.4 percent, 64.3 percent, and 60 percent of the maize, beans, wheat, teff and barley production respectively was for the purpose of consumption. Instead, the majority of the households (79.2 percent) purchased crops and other food items from the market while 17.3 percent purchased food items other than crops. The high proportion of households who purchase crops from the market, despite the fact that most of them

engage in agricultural production indicates crops from the market must often supplement their own produce. Agricultural production is also unsustainable in the long term, not only because the climatic conditions and soil are not suited for farming but also because of the problems relating to the erosion of communal rights to grazing lands caused by the enclosure of land as ‘private’ agricultural land (Tache, 2000).

Given that trade was one of the important livelihood strategies for many of households, the extent and type of market interaction was examined. The majority of the households visited Yabello market (90.6 percent) while only a few households did not visit this market at all (9.4 percent). On average, households visited Yabello market between 3 to 4 days a week. A further 11.7 percent of the households frequented other markets such as *El Weye, Harro Beke, Did Harra and Finchawa*. Most of the market interaction was for the purpose of both purchase and sale of goods (64.7 percent) while one in three of the households (32.4 percent) visited markets solely for purchasing various items. In terms of goods sold in the market, the single most important good was fuel wood (43.5 percent), followed by agricultural products (7.6 percent) and water (5.8 percent). Only 4.7 percent of the households sold dairy products in the market while only 1.7 percent sold livestock. Again this points to a decline in livestock based strategies such as livestock and dairy marketing following settlement.

In general, two of the main livelihood strategies pursued by pastoralists in urban and peri-urban spaces namely fuel wood trade and agriculture are ‘opportunistic’. Both activities generate minimal income, which is insufficient to meet livelihood requirements, and not sustainable in the long term within urban and peri-urban spaces.

7.4 Gender and Livelihood Strategies

There were clear gendered differences in participation in livelihood strategies. Gendered analysis of the first livelihood strategy which households identified (see table Appendix) indicated that women dominate trading activities in various goods, particularly fuel wood (65.2 percent²³), *kundi*²⁴ (66.7 percent), salt, sugar and tobacco (100 percent). Fuel wood trade was the activity in which women participated the most, accounting for 92.3 percent of their overall participation in household livelihood strategies. Women were also engaged in trade in salt, sugar and tobacco to lesser extents. The findings also show that daughters are likely to assist their mothers in trading activities, as shown by the fact that mothers and their daughters were responsible for 12 percent of the fuel wood trade and 33.3 percent of the *kundi* trade in the household targeted in this study.

In contrast, men do not participate in any of the trading activities and instead dominate other activities such as paid agricultural work (42.9 percent), own agricultural production (47.5 percent) and daily labour (100 percent). Furthermore, all activities involving labour work and employment in the formal sector, such as seasonal labour (gold digging), civil employment and daily labour were limited to men. Male children were found to dominate two main activities, namely paid agricultural work (57.1 percent) and agricultural work at home (30 percent). This indicates the likelihood that male children will assist their fathers in agricultural work. The main activity which both male and female children were responsible for was livestock herding (16.7 percent).

Headship is a critical determinant of gendered participation in various livelihood strategies, as well as the importance of specific livelihood strategies for the household. For instance, fuel wood trade was mentioned more by female-headed households than male-headed households. This is possibly associated with the fact that, on average, female-headed households

have significantly less livestock assets and agricultural land than male headed households and are therefore likely to resort to strategies which do not require prior ownership of assets. For example, a comparison on average land holding by household headship indicated that female-headed households, on average, own less land (0.322 hectares) than male-headed households (0.483 hectares). Furthermore, a comparison of current livestock index by headship showed that the current livestock index for female-headed households was less than half (9.46) of that of male-headed households (20.9). If female headed households have less livestock assets than male headed households then they are less likely to engage in livestock-based livelihood strategies and more likely to rely on activities that do not require livestock assets such as trade and daily labour. This may be related to the fact that among the Borana ‘...men are largely the decision makers for livestock production’ (Coppock 1994, 103) and the main owners of livestock assets²⁵.

Gender roles were also examined in terms of participation in productive and reproductive activities. Women are primarily responsible for reproductive activities such as cooking, fetching water and fuel wood, washing and cleaning and childcare. Daughters are also likely to participate actively in reproductive work regardless of whether they go to school or not. Women’s roles outside the house were primarily in trade and, in some cases, agriculture and livestock herding. Where women participated in agriculture, it was mostly in the latter stages of weeding and harvesting, whilst men were responsible for the bulk of the agricultural work. Accordingly, men were primarily involved in agricultural activities outside the house followed by daily labour. Men participated in reproductive activities in only a few cases. Male children were also unlikely to participate in productive activities, and were instead likely to be studying. Beyond the household, male children participated mainly in agriculture and herding activities combining this with their studies.

Overall, traditional gendered division of labour with regards to reproductive work remains intact, in that it remains to be the responsibility of women and young girls. However, unlike in the rural areas, Borana women in peri-urban Yabello share the responsibility of generating income, primarily through trading fuel wood. Such opportunities to participate in trading activities, previously nonexistent in rural areas, do not necessarily translate into the improved financial status of women. This is because the meager income generated from trading is often used entirely to meet household requirements on a daily basis. For men, the lack of livestock assets has meant that they have had to adapt to new activities such as agriculture and labour work. Their role within the household remains minimal, as is the case of rural areas. The importance of livelihood strategies also varied by headships and the assets owned by household. Consequently, those households with fewer assets (livestock and agricultural land) the majority of whom were female-headed relied more on trading and labour activities.

8. Synthesis: Pastoral Livelihoods , Wellbeing and Gender in Peri-Urban Spaces

The paper set out with the objective of examining the wellbeing of Borana pastoralists settled in peri-urban Yabello vis-à-vis an examination of their assets and livelihood strategies. The results of the survey have indicated several key issues in this regard. First, the paucity of assets owned by households, both tangible and nontangible, is evident, limiting the livelihood opportunities which they are able to access. Assets are interrelated and the absence or limitation of one asset impinges upon the status of all other assets. Financial assets in particular are critical in determining access to other types of assets. Second, the types of livelihood strategies pursued by households were found to be ‘opportunistic’ in that they were aimed at survival rather than accumulation and therefore unable to bring about positive change in wellbeing. The paucity of

household assets means that households have access to a limited range of livelihood options. Again, financial assets are key determinants of access to various livelihood strategies, while other assets such as agricultural land, skills and knowledge are also important to access better livelihood strategies (i.e. that can bring about improvements in wellbeing). A third implication of the survey results was that gender is a critical determinant of participation in various livelihood strategies and therefore the benefits gained from livelihood strategies are gendered. Whilst women's reproductive responsibilities remain intact, they have an added responsibility to generate income to cover household needs. Although women have increased chances to participate in trade and earn incomes, these are used directly for household needs and do not necessarily bring about improvements in women's wellbeing. A fourth issue is that household earnings are from 'hand to mouth' and do not allow households to save part of their earnings. This increases their vulnerability to various threats and shocks whilst limiting their ability to recover from such shocks. Based on these points, it is plausible to argue that the wellbeing of Borana pastoralists has not improved since settlement in urban and peri-urban spaces. Rather the limitations in their asset status and the types of livelihood strategies have failed to create positive livelihood outcomes and instead resulted in further impoverishment and vulnerability.

9. Research and Policy Implications

'...it would be mere romanticism to imagine that the currently displaced and impoverished populations of the Ethiopian lowlands will one day all return to traditional nomadic livelihoods. Many former pastoralists have become sedenterized, and no doubt the trend will continue.' (Farah 1996, 141)

As indicated above, pastoralists who have been sedenterized are unlikely to return to their nomadic way of life. Whilst most pastoralists themselves would prefer to return to the nomadic

way of life, this is unlikely in the short term, given their lack of livestock assets without which it is impossible to survive in rural areas. Therefore there is a need to provide livelihood support for pastoralists in urban and peri-urban spaces within the contexts where they are currently found. The following are suggested policy, development intervention and research options which could contribute towards enhancing the sustainability of the livelihoods of pastoralists in urban and peri-urban spaces:

1. *Recognition of the Existence of Pastoralists in Urban and Peri-Urban Spaces:* As a starting point, there is a need to recognize urban and peri-urban spaces as potential destination areas for pastoralists who exit from rural pastoral systems, not only as temporary spaces but as permanent settlements. It should not be assumed that these spaces are inhabited by non-pastoralists only.
2. *Strategies to Enhance the Asset Status of Pastoral Households in Urban and Peri-Urban Spaces:* Interventions should seek to improve the asset status of households since paucity of assets is a main constraints for pastoralists to pursue livelihood strategies that can enhance their wellbeing,. For instance:
 - a. *Financial Service Provision:* Financial service provision such as local level saving and credit associations will enable pastoralists settled in urban and peri-urban spaces to gain access to required capital for participation in new livelihood strategies whilst improving existing strategies.
 - b. *Improved access to Physical Assets:* For example, improved access to agricultural land can enable pastoralists settled in urban and peri-urban spaces to adapt agriculture as one livelihood strategy.

- c. *Developing Human Capacity*: Appropriate skill training in various livelihood strategies such as for instance agriculture and small scale trading can improve how pastoralists settled in urban and peri-urban spaces pursue those strategies and enhance returns from those activities.
3. *Integration into Local Development Strategies*: Regional and zonal development strategies in pastoral areas should take into consideration the role of urban and peri-urban areas in local development and how they can contribute to and benefit from local development.
4. *Gender Sensitive Development Interventions*: Development interventions should take into account gendered differences in livelihood opportunities for Borana men and women in urban and peri-urban spaces and how their roles are redefined within this context. Both men and women have access to new resources and are faced with their new constraints. Therefore interventions should address their needs and priorities accordingly.
5. *Further Research on Urban and Peri-Urban Spaces of Ethiopia's Pastoral Areas*: There is a need for further research into the livelihoods of destitute pastoralists who settle in urban and peri-urban spaces of Ethiopia, which have generally been neglected.
6. *Pastoral Policy Pertinent to Current Transformations in Pastoral Livelihoods*: In developing an Ethiopian Pastoral policy, there is a need to take account of the manner in which pastoral livelihoods. It should be recognized that, as a result of the declining viability of rural pastoral livelihoods, Ethiopian pastoralists are increasingly relying on nonlivestock based livelihood strategies and giving up seasonal migratory strategies to settle in various spaces including urban and peri-urban spaces.

APPENDIX

Table 1: Livelihood Strategies Pursued by Households

Livelihood Strategy	Livelihood Strategy	Number of households Engaged	Percentage of total households	Pastoral/Non-pastoral livelihood strategy
TRADE	Trade- Fuel wood	101	59.41	Nonpastoral
	Trade- Sugar and Salt	4	2.35	Nonpastoral
	Trade- <i>Kundi</i> ¹	6	3.52	Nonpastoral
	Trade- Tobacco	5	2.94	Nonpastoral
	Trade- Locally brewed alcohol	1	0.58	Nonpastoral
	Trade- Water	27	15.88	Nonpastoral
	Trade- <i>Ergemsa</i> ²	4	2.35	Nonpastoral
	Trade- Shoe making	12	7.05	Nonpastoral
	Trade- construction materials for housing such as soil	1	0.58	Nonpastoral
	Trade- Chat	1	0.58	Nonpastoral
LIVESTOCK BASED ACTIVITIES	Livestock Herding (Own)	46	27.05	Pastoral
	Livestock Brokering	1	0.58	Pastoral
AGRICULTURE	Agriculture	76	44.70	Pastoral
LABOUR WORK	Hand Pushed Cart (Garri)	3	1.76	Nonpastoral
	Paid Agricultural Work	26	15.29	Nonpastoral
	Gold Digging	1	0.58	Nonpastoral
	Daily Labour	17	10	Nonpastoral
	Paid Livestock Herding	15	8.82	Pastoral
FORMAL SECTOR EMPLOYMENT	Civil Employee	3	1.76	Nonpastoral
	Driver	1	0.58	Nonpastoral
SOCIAL SUPPORT	Begging	3	1.76	Nonpastoral
	Support from Neighbours	5	2.94	Pastoral + Nonpastoral ^{*3}
	Support from Relatives	4	2.35	Pastoral + Nonpastoral

*¹ *Kundi* refers to a local material used as a perfume and incense.

*² *Ergemsa* refers to a local material used in decorating milk and butter containers.

*³ Strategies practiced in both rural pastoral areas and urban and peri-urban spaces.

Source: Household Survey Data

Table 2: Gendered Participation in First Livelihood Strategy Identified by Households

L I V E L I H O O D S T R A T E G I E S		1 * ¹	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total	
	<i>Trade- Feul wood</i>					65.2 * ³	3.3		3.3		12.0		1.1	15.2	100
	<i>Trade- sugar and salt</i>					100									100
	<i>Garri</i>	100													100
	<i>Paid Agricultural work</i>	42.9						57.1							100
	<i>Gold digging</i>	100													100
	<i>Civil employee</i>	100													100
	<i>Livestock herding (own)</i>	16.7			16.7				16.7		16.7	16.7		16.7	100
	<i>Driver</i>	100													100
	<i>Trade- Kundi</i>					66.7					33.3				100
	<i>Trade- Tobacco</i>					100.0									100
	<i>locally brewed alcohol</i>	100													100
	<i>Daily labour</i>	100													100
	<i>Begging</i>	100													100
<i>Agriculture</i>	47.5	5.0					30.0	7.5	2.5				7.5	100	
Total	21.2	1.2	0.6	38.2	1.8	9.4	4.1	0.6	7.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	14.1	100	

* ¹ 1 = husband 2 = other adult male 3 = husband, wife, daughter, sons 4 = wife 5 = daughter 6 = sons 7 = husband and wife 8 = husband and sons 9 = wife and daughters 10 = sons and daughters 11 = husband and daughters 12 = non-participation.

* ² Percentage of cases in which specific members of the household participated in specific livelihood strategies.

* ³ All figures are in percentages

Source: Household Survey Data

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¹ There are some variations in estimates of the size of Ethiopia's pastoral population. For instance, Beruk (2001) notes that the pastoralists constitute as much as thirteen percent of the total population numbering 7.7 million.

² The definition of assets varies between different studies that adopt a livelihood approach but broadly these include the following: natural assets (soil, water, vegetation, wildlife and environmental resources), human assets (skills knowledge, labour, good health), social assets (social networks, group affiliation, relationships of trust, access to social institutions providing support to people), physical assets (transport, shelter, water, energy, communication and production equipment), financial assets (savings, credit, remittances, pensions) and political assets (local level decision making power, influence over external political bodies) (Scoones 1998; Carney 1998; Rakodi 1999).

³ A series of large-scale development schemes since the 1960's funded mainly by the World Bank have been heavily criticised for failing to improve the livelihoods of Ethiopia pastoralists. As Solomon (1996, 49) notes, 'hundreds of millions of Birr have been invested over the last 30 years to develop ...the rangelands... (yet) human life in the pastoral areas continues to be full of uncertainties' (emphasis mine).

⁴ For example, Ethiopian Somali pastoralists were caught in the war between Ethiopia and Somalia in the late 1970's and as they supported their ethnic affiliates in Somalia, they were forced to flee from the forces of the Ethiopian government (Farah 1996, 133). Again Hogg (1997) notes that the state and development agencies have influenced the balance of power amidst conflicts between Garri and Borana pastoralists of Southern Ethiopia. New agendas of political representation have also emerged as issues of dispute between pastoralists, for example between Borana and the Somali pastoralists (Helland 2000).

⁵ Sen (1981) for example, argues that during the 1970s famine in Ethiopia, one of the main reasons for the impoverishment and starvation of pastoralists was the declining term of trade of livestock for grain, whereby the value of livestock fell while that of grain soared. Pastoralists thus had to exchange their livestock for less grain than prior to the drought. In Sen's words, '...the pastoralists, bit by the drought was decimated by the market mechanism' (Sen 1981,112).

⁶ For an overview of pastoralism in Ethiopia and the constraints faced by this sector see Hogg (1997), Beruk (2001), CRDA (2001), Fekade (1990), Haile-Gebriel (2003).

⁷ Interview with Ato Sebsibee Gulummaa, Deputy Head of Yabello City Administrative Office. It is possible to question whether or not Yabello can be considered an urban centre. Within this study, Yabello is considered as an urban centre on the basis of the existing definition of 'urban centres' in Ethiopia. The last population and housing census in 1994 defined any locality with more than 2000 or more inhabitants as an urban centre (CSA 1999, 189).

⁸ There are three primary schools, one secondary school, one junior secondary school and one kindergarten in Yabello. Only two health establishments provide health services for the Yabello's inhabitants, namely one health clinic run by the Full Gospel Believers Church and one government-run health centre. Likewise, there is one private pharmacy and one government owned pharmacy. Overall, the number of health professionals and health establishments is inadequate in light of the widespread occurrence of malaria and other diseases common to arid areas (PDOBZ 2002). The main source of water is a tanker located some five kilometres, which was constructed at a time when the total number of inhabitants was not more than 6,000. Now it has to cater for the water needs of close to 30,000 people, given that inhabitants of surrounding *kebeles*, currently not recognised as part of the city, also use the city's water points. For this reason, some of the inhabitants, especially those living in the peri-urban *kebeles* use alternative sources of water from springs, rivers and streams.

⁹ Interview with Ato Sebsibee Gulummaa, Deputy Head of Yabello City Administrative Office.

¹⁰ Interview with Ato Sebsibee Gulummaa, Deputy Head of Yabello City Administrative Office.

¹¹ Interview with Ato Sebsibee Gulummaa, Deputy Head of Yabello City Administrative Office.

¹² This is the lowest administrative structure in Ethiopia. *Kebeles* form *woredas* that then form zones which then make up Regions.

¹³ Helland (1998), Alemayehu (1998), Haile-Gebriel (2003) respectively note 1984-85, 1991-92, and 1999-2000 as periods when major droughts occurred in Borana region.

¹⁴ It could be argued that the concept of income is more useful in contexts where people receive a salary or some sort of regular income. Not only are the majority of the households in this study not employed in the formal sector and therefore not recipients of a salary, but the income they gain from other activities such as trade is irregular and often subject to seasonal variation.

¹⁵ It was not possible to compare aggregate livestock assets due to the differences in the value of livestock. Therefore the value of each type of livestock was weighted to create a livestock index in order to describe livestock numbers of various species as a single figure that expresses the total amount of livestock present irrespective of specific composition. To do this, each of the types of livestock were weighted according to their market price with camels (value 6) being the most expensive, followed by cows (value 5), bulls (value 4), calves (value 3), goats (value 2) and sheep (value 1). One drawback in using this index is that it does not clearly define what 'prior' to settlement means. This could be any time before settlement, which makes it difficult to understand the temporal changes in livestock assets over time.

¹⁶ For example, in *Nyaro* settlement, the UK based international NGO, SOS- Sahel International-UK, has started work on a grain bank to which members of the community shall be expected to contribute.

¹⁷ Other institutions of livestock transfer include '*Dabaree*' whereby livestock destitute Borana are given livestock by more wealthy clan members on a loan basis. The person who receives cattle through *Dabarree* is entitled to use the dairy products produced by the livestock but is expected to return the livestock upon the request of the owner.

¹⁸ Due the increasing number of persons requesting support through *Busa Gonofa* amidst declining ability of the clan to provide such support, healthy and young applicants are told to seek work and earn a living in order to give priority to the those who are unable to work and earn a living, such as the elderly and disabled (Interview with Borbor Bule, May 30, 2003).

¹⁹ Using access to clean water as an indicator of health within this context is somewhat problematic because most inhabitants of Yabello *woreda* and other parts of Borana zone for that matter use water from rivers and springs.

²⁰ The livelihood strategies pursued by pastoralists in urban and peri-urban areas have been categorised into *pastoral livelihood strategies* which require continued livestock production and *non-pastoral livelihood strategies* which are non-livestock based such as wage labour or small scale trading. Furthermore, activities which are practised in rural pastoral areas where classified as pastoral while those which were not practised in rural areas were classified as non-pastoral.

²¹ Most households noted that they were engaged in fuel wood trade out of lack of choice and for the sake of survival. Some households noted that they participated in fuel wood trade in the past and would start to sell fuel wood again if a they were faced with a crises.

²² *Teff* is a grain used as a staple food in many parts of Ethiopia.

²³ These figures represent the number of cases in which women were responsible for that specific activity.

²⁴ Local product used as perfume or incense.

²⁵ This is not to suggest that Borana women have no ownership rights over livestock. Indeed they have ownership rights of small stock and possible cows as dairy production is largely women's responsibility.

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