

## **Livelihood Diversification among the Pastoral and Agropastoral Groups in the Upper Awash Valley, Ethiopia**

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**ABSTRACT** This study explores variations in livelihood diversification among three pastoral or agropastoral groups in the Awash Valley, Ethiopia. The data were derived from a survey of 596 households randomly selected in 31 *kebeles* (subdistricts) and from participatory rural appraisal exercises in nine *kebeles*. The indigenous peoples of the study area have traditionally depended on livestock for their livelihoods. In the last few decades, however, pastoralists' engagement in non-pastoral activities has become increasingly common as modern development schemes convert the rangelands into non-pastoral productions. Yet, the patterns of diversifications differ among the three groups. The Afar, who still enjoy a relatively large number of livestock per household have the least diverse portfolio, but when diversified, activities tend to be lucrative such as irrigated agriculture or well-paying or high-status jobs. By contrast, the Kerreyu and Ittu, with fewer livestock holdings per household, are engaged in more diversified income generating activities. Some of these activities, however, tend to be low-return, often with potentially negative environmental and socio-economic consequences. This study demonstrates that the pattern of livelihood diversification among the study groups is related to the household level livestock holding, which, in turn, may be related to the amount of rangeland and economic options available to pastoralists. Policy and development interventions need to consider these variations.