

## **A Change in Property-Rights Regime and the Proliferation of Fenced Plots, Investigating Its Implication on the Livelihoods of the Locals: A Case Study of the Guji Highlands of South Ethiopia**

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**Abstract :** This study aimed at explaining factors behind the ever increasing individualization over pastoral commons land and assesses the implication of the current change in property-ownership and land use system on the livelihoods of the Guji agro-pastoral system. Thus, three kebeles of Ana Sora woreda were selected for they conventionally appear to accommodate farming, pastoral and agro-pastoral systems. The survey method was employed to gather information on the major socio-economic condition of households. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were also held in all the three kebele. The empirical results were interpreted by integrating institutional, livelihood and adaptation frameworks. In this study individualization of ownership of pastoral commons manifested in the form of fenced closures is on the rise among the Guji and it has been adopted as the outcome of a long run process. Factors related to ecology and rangeland degradation, socio-economic changes, land registration and certification has allowed the increasing engagement in fencing commons grazing land for individual use. Consequently, the Guji pastoral system of production demonstrated a declining trend, and are adapting to alternative livelihood strategies. Moreover, farming and other developments have facilitated pastoral land losses and land use claims and tenure ambiguities.

**Keywords :** land tenure, traditional institutions, property rights, fenced plots

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