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PhD in Drylands Resource Management



Title of thesis: Analysis of governance on cross-border livestock trade between Kenya and Somalia

Summary of work done

Problem investigated and why:

Borders occupied by Somali ethnic groups have been characterised by state failure and instabilities, which have affected business, development, international relations and infrastructure. Kenya-Somalia border has been exceptional, where livestock trade has been thriving to support livelihoods and local revenues despite market failures and insecurity. Using

mixed research methods, the study focussed on how governance of cross-border trade undermines or supports institutional development.

Key findings

Livestock trade across the Kenya-Somali border gets formalized as livestock crosses into the Kenyan side. The trade has been resilient against market failures and instability and continues to support state revenues and livelihoods along the borders. Devolution has had positive impact on cross-border trade through improved services delivery along the borders.

Take home message

Livestock trading is a unique business that can take place in areas. Trust insecure in business can take place without written contracts, even across international boundaries. Informal institutions can work in areas where formal institutions are constrained.



Garissa Livestock market, FGD with female traders

Most interesting part about your PhD study program

Practical norms do emerge where both formal and informal institutions share a common goal of supporting business. Such norms and practices involve shared decision making among state and non-state institutions to form hybrid rules and regulations. For example, formal courts in Somali borders coperate with the council of elders in settling all criminal offenses.