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Changed relations : understanding conflicts in pastoral areas

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Introduction Conflicts between nomadic pastoralists and sedentary agriculturalists are as old as civilizations (Nori et al . , 2005) and in many parts of the world , they are still a matter of major national and even international concern especially in areas where transhumane grazing systems prevail . A vast body of literature has been dedicated to this topic (Nori et al , 2005) . Forms of conflicts and causes described include competing land uses , i . e . expansion of farming lands , competing forage resources , denial of grazing rights and conversion of previous rangelands into conservation purposes or for infrastructure development . Solutions to conflicts have thus been recommended accordingly . However , rarely did any author ever recognize the changed relations between nomadic peoples and sedentary communities and such changes in relations may have been an important factor underlying increasing conflicts .

Interdependence between Nomadic Pastoralists and Sedentary Communities The interdependence between nomadic pastoralists and sedentary communities can be described in terms of exchange of services , i . e . supplies and demands . Traditionally , pastoralists benefited sedentary communities by providing : (1) material service , i . e . fertilizers in the form of manure , dairy products , transport , commodities from distant markets , cash loans , etc . ; (2) information from outside world , since pastoralists are more mobile and more cosmopolitan in their outlook ; and (3) political or military support , especially the horse-riding tribes . In return , they benefited from the sedentary communities by (1) using the rangeland resources geographically close to or traditionally belonging to the sedentary communities , usually by obtaining customary grazing rights ; (2) buying or bartering fodder (especially in winter settlements) ; and (3) obtaining cereal products to be used as concentrates for animals or human food .

Changing trends in their interdependent relations The close integration between pastoral and agricultural activities has been the foundation for the peaceful co-existence of nomadic pastoralism and sedentary agriculture . The degree to which the two systems could co-exist in harmony depends on how they could maintain the mutually beneficial relations . However , by nature , this interdependence has been asymmetric , which has been the causes of many historical wars . In particular , the development of a social service system , infrastructure and trade networks in modern times has greatly reduced the dependence of the sedentary communities on the nomadic societies for basic material needs , information and political or military support . They are now able to obtain from other channels most of what used to be supplied by the nomadic pastoralists , which has made it unnecessary and irrelevant for them to offer reciprocities to the other side . However , the development of aforementioned dimensions did not reduce the dependence of nomadic pastoralists on sedentary communities for rangeland resources , winter fodder and crops . This asymmetric nature of changes has resulted in situations increasingly disadvantageous to the pastoral societies and has sharpened the conflicts .

Conclusion and recommendations By this analysis , to dissolve the conflicts between the nomadic people and the sedentary communities , it is necessary to recognize such changing trends . Strengthening integration of pastoral development and agriculture may help to enhance the mutual beneficial relations between the pastoral groups and the sedentary agriculturalists . A combination of legal instruments (i . e . , clarifying and legalizing grazing rights) and institutional innovations to address the changed relations are necessary . There are examples of successful negotiations between nomadic and sedentary communities through governmental interventions (Axelby , 2007) .

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