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Nomadic culture , a mirror for current grassland policy—a case of Grassland of Inner Mongolia of China

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Key words : Nomadic culture , grassland degradation , permanent settlement , family contract , double options

Introduction Grassland degradation in Inner Mongolia has been commonly recognized and rehabilitation program continuously enhanced by the government . However , whether or not the goal can be achieved depends greatly on the identification of the cause for degradation which needs to be clearly identified .

Materials and methods The materials used are mainly from field investigation and interview with herdsmen , and also from published research results .

Results The main cause of grassland degradation has been mostly recognized as over-grazing . But most herdsmen don't fully accept the recognition . This research result shows that the different recognition about degradation is indeed created from different identified cause . The fact that all the major measures taken for grassland development or rehabilitation such as permanent settlement , family grassland contract , and the on-going re-allocation provide us a clue to analyze the direction of changing of the grassland : all the measures have focused on social-economic aspects , such as improving livelihoods , adapting market economy or increasing production . Although some positive results have been gained through the measures , the ecological aspect has been ignored . The reason of without recognition of real cause and simply concluded the grassland degradation is caused by over-grazing of herdsmen is because a mis-judgment that the nomadic culture is totally backward . Indeed , the nomadic culture views man and nature as integrated but the degradation is caused by isolation of man from nature nowadays .

Conclusions In general , culture is always developed through double options : social and natural options . Grassland degradation is the result of only one option of social aspect . How balance the two options is a challenge faced with grassland development today . Natural aspect and nomadic culture harmonized with the nature should be taken into account of the policy . In this regards , nomadic cultures is a mirror for current grassland policy .

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