

Interactive comment on “Climate and resource information as tools for dealing with farmer-pastoralist conflicts in the Sahel” by O. Mertz et al.

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Thank you very much for a very detailed review and the positive notes on the relevance. We have responded to all of the constructive suggestions, most of which we can address in the revision:

1) Initial statements on pastoralist-farmer conflicts need to be better connected to the peer-reviewed literature (e.g. the first two references are working papers).

a. It is not entirely correct that they are working papers – they are published as a book chapter and in a series. But point taken that more of the peer-reviewed literature could be cited here

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2) References in the introduction are quite selective (e.g. only citing three papers on the climate-conflict link, despite a body of recent literature).

a. We can indeed add more citations to this section, but perhaps the referee could point us to some key references. We thought we had captured some of the most relevant for the current debate. As we focus on small-scale resource conflicts and not the wider climate-conflict links, the latter is mainly used to set the context for the paper.

3) Since the paper aims to enter new ground by connecting different issues, a more systematic review is needed on pastoralist-farmer conflicts related to key resources (land, water, livestock, crops, ..) and why information on those is relevant for farmers and pastoralists in the Sahel, as suggested in the paper.

a. We acknowledge the benefits of doing systematic reviews, but we find that it is beyond the scope of this paper to do a full systematic review of the pastoralist-farmer conflict literature. We believe that we have captured the (few) papers that discuss information needs in relationship to farmer-pastoral conflict but if we have missed some important pieces, we will of course be pleased to integrate these. The paper is essentially an explorative piece of ideas and to implement a systematic review procedure at this point would not be possible. It probably would also not be worth the effort given the limited literature that speaks of climate and resource information for pastoralists as documented in the sources used in the paper (Rasmussen et al. 2014, 2015).

4) Further it is important to make the meaning of conflict used in this paper more explicit which apparently deals with small-scale conflicts.

a. Point taken – this will be corrected. We can clarify that we work with small-scale conflicts that despite their limited individual extent are an issue of relevance across the Sahel.

5) Some statements deserve better justification, e.g. the authors associate references with “simplistic explanations” but it is not discussed why they are simplistic and which

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better explanations could be given

a. Agree, we can elaborate on these

6) Drawing on the literature more specific research questions and hypotheses could be derived, leading to the core part of the paper, the discussion of different categories of information sources, means of communication and relevant data

a. We are not entirely sure what is meant here, but we can work on sharpening the research questions if they are not clear enough. We believe that we are indeed doing what is suggested here.

7) Comments related to the survey at the workshop and the figure.

a. We realize that figure 1 does indeed appear as an attempt to make a quantitative assessment of the data, but in reality it was meant to give the reader an overview of the responses. We will consider presenting the figure and caption in a different way or at least make it clear that we know it is not a representative sample that can be the basis for statistical analysis (which is also why we didn't attempt the latter). b. The figure represents absolute numbers c. We have reported most of the statements of interest from the questionnaire and discussions.

8) No theoretical explanations are given whether and when information is leading to competition, sharing or better distribution of resources. Did conflicts emerge because of correct information or due to wrong and lacking of information? This could be identified as a research questions earlier in the paper

a. We do have an example of conflict arising because of 'wrong' information – to quote the respondents. The answer was not elaborated on by the respondents and it could be an issue of how the information was interpreted along the communication pathway rather than actually being wrong information. We will see if more information can be derived from the discussions at the workshop that were also recorded. We do not really see the need to develop this as a full research question.

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9) The paper emphasizes agreement among the workshop participants “that there is a need to improve both the quality of information and how it is disseminated” (page 8). This raises the questions which indicators could be used to measure improvement and how to improve them

a. Very relevant point. We do discuss models for improving, but not indicators for measuring their success. We can elaborate on this although it will be somewhat speculative.

10) Although representatives from three countries (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger) were participating, almost no country-specific experiences are presented. Burkina Faso was shortly mentioned twice, Mali once and Niger not at all. Any information on the differences or similarities of these countries would be helpful

a. Partly because of the limited number of respondents, we decided not to discuss country differences too much. However, based on the discussions there was a clear difference not so much between nationality, but more based on whether they worked in more or less pastoral areas. We can try to elaborate on this latter difference.

11) A new type of conflicts between farmers and institutions from information dissemination (page 7). This is an interesting point that could be elaborated further.

a. Yes, we can add some more comments to this as it is indeed a type of conflict that may arise more if information systems are developed and implemented to a higher extent in the future

12) The paper emphasizes how important traditional ways of information and communication are and to ensure the participation of pastoralists (page 8). Here it would be valuable to include a little more about these traditional ways.

a. These traditions have been documented in detail by Rasmussen et al. (2014, 2015), but we can consider adding a few more details here

13) Generally it would be useful to have a table on conflicting issues and how informa-

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tion could address them, following the classification mentioned in C). This might include cases where similar information among different groups leads to similar strategies that increase the risk of overuse and depletion of resources, as well as cases where more options are created that reduce conflict and the added value of modern vs. traditional information dissemination.

a. Good idea, but we are not entirely sure how to construct such a table without making some unfounded simplifications. We can consider the idea, but are not sure that it will work.

14) Another point that deserves further discussion is the empowerment of pastoralists by equitable access to information to influence land use policies (page 9). How are empowerment and information related in this context?

a. This was also raised by another referee and we will try to add some elements to this discussion.

15) The conclusions are too short and unspecific to represent the content of the paper.

a. Point taken – conclusions will be elaborated (but still kept relatively short).

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