

# Understanding Double Standards in Tanzania's Forestry

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# Talk abstract

Professional foresters in Tanzania emphasize on technical management plans for community managed forest reserves while most government forest reserves have none. Scholars have sought to explain the double standards in terms of foresters' instrumental use (deliberate) of technical knowledge to gain more power and control over forests on village land. While sympathetic to this rather dominant explanation and based on fieldwork conducted in Tanzania over a period of two years, and drawing on Bourdieu's theory of practice, the presentation sought to submit:

- That professional foresters do not ask themselves at every instance whether technical management plan is necessary or not. They show disposition towards, are predisposed and presuppose a necessity to privilege technical forestry knowledge over other forest management knowledges.
- That acquired dispositions (habitus) and presuppositions (doxa) naturalizes violence built into professional foresters' practices and thus they mis-recognize it. Hence, foresters' oppression of forest-dependent villagers takes the form of symbolic violence.
- For a meaningfully rethinking of technical approaches to community forestry to materialize, it is important to focus on the processes of acquisition by foresters of scientific forestry dispositions (habitus), particularly the professional forestry education.

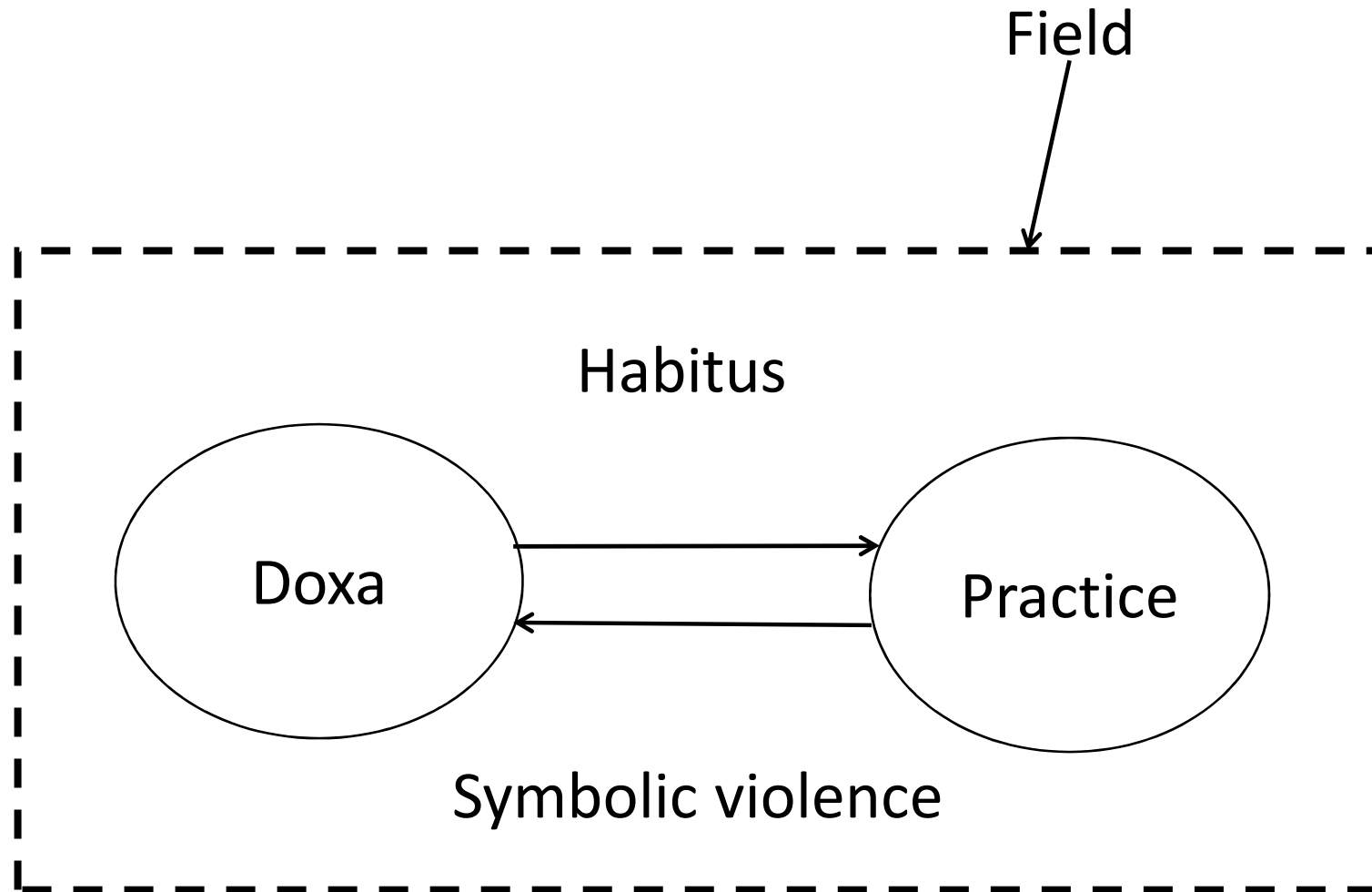
# Outline

- Research problem and conceptualization.
  - Practice, habitus, doxa, symbolic violence (Pierre Bourdieu).
- Methods.
- Illustrative example - The double standards.
- Reproduction of domination – symbolic violence.

# Research Problem & Conceptualization

- Participatory forestry is couched in scientific forestry terms lead to problems (Green & Lund, 2015; Scheba & Mustahti, 2015).
- Villagers do not question 'the perceived necessity of expertise', rather the consequences (Green & Lund, 2015).
- Scientistic arguments afford foresters more power/domination and money/material outcomes (Larson & Ribot, 2007; Ribot et al, 2006).
- Dispositions and presuppositions legitimate domination (Ojha, 2006; Ojha, 2008; Ojha et al, 2009).

# Conceptualization



# Operationalizing habitus, doxa, symbolic violence

- Practices are observable, habitus and doxa amenable to empirical analysis. Eg. To excavate pugilistic habitus, you observe the practice of boxing.
- Examine foresters' practices:
  - Contradictions, double standards.
  - Underlying assumptions.
  - Questioning of assumptions, Silences.
- Examine forestry education + activities of forestry academics - whether it imposes "the forestry knowledge" or "knowledge pluralism".

# Sources

- Fieldwork – May 2015 to July 2017.
- Conversational interactions/interviews with foresters, academics, students, timber traders, villagers, NGO staff, technical advisers.
- Observations.
- Review of documents/reports.
- Attended eight workshops involving forestry stakeholders in Tanzania.
- Personal experiences – as a staff at the Ministry and WWF and as a student at the forestry college of Sokoine University.



# Forests in Tanzania by Land ownership

	Reserved Land	Village Land	General Land	
			Neither reserved nor village land	+ Unused village land
<b>Land Owner</b>	Government	Village members	Government	Village
<b>Forest Size (Ha)*</b>	19,664,855	21,908,274	2,732,575	
<b>Forest/trees owner</b>	Government	Villages	Government	Government?
<b>Forest Management Strategy</b>	National Parks Forest Reserves Game Reserves	Village Land Forest Reserves	No management Harvested	No management Harvested

\*Source: Tanzania's National Forest Resources Monitoring and Assessment Report, 2015



# Managing forests with plan

- Village land forest reserve cannot be declared without an approved forest management plan.
- Plans prepared during registration not based on detailed inventory. Detailed inventory and harvesting required for harvesting to be allowed to go through.
- Other requirements: marking hammer, contract with buyers, registration of villages as timber traders, DFO presence, transit pass.



# Managing forests without plan

Forest Reserve Managed by Tanzania Forest Service (Ha)		
All	455	14,300,000
<b>Production forest reserves with plans</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>4,752,754</b>
Plans that expired as of 2015	13	4,571,085
Plans that expired in 2017	3	22,542
Plans that expired in 2018	1	16,835
Plans that expired in 2019	2	94,924
Plans that expired in 2020	3	47,368
Source: Tanzania Forest Service reports (2014)		

\*Harvesting in forest reserves stopped in 2011. But continued on general land without plans.

# Foresters' justification for double standard

- Harvesting on general land based on some sort of inventories and plans, though not perfect.

*“Well, no. We have been doing this for a long now. Actually, until recent past, the practice was to extrapolate using nearby similar areas. **We have been carrying these simple surveys for last two to three years [suggesting it’s an improvement.]. Yes, if you want to be really scientific, detailed inventories are required. But we have been sailing without detailed inventories all these years. No problem at all”.** (Field notes #136)*

# Foresters' justification for double standard

- Double standard because villagers are non-professionals. They cannot quantify.

*"Yes. We are all gambling because nobody is 100% sure. But we are gambling at different degrees. Foresters' gambling has some basis and thus there is a chance of getting it right. **Villagers' gambling, on the contrary is probably based on nothing. It is thus less defensible and of lower value. Also, villagers do not engage in quantifying things.**" (Interview #82)*

# Foresters' justification for double standard

- No double standard. We are just underfunded.
- *“Management plans are expensive and therefore under FBD, it was difficult to pay for them. Shortage of staff. Even now, there are only few staff competent to do management planning. When TFS came into operation, the priority has been to secure reserves/boundary demarcation/remove illegal settlement/eviction. Interpret on the ground what TFS is mandated to manage. Ensuring that all forest reserves have management plans and a management team to implement the plan” (Field notes #85).*
- *“What we have been implementing is less than ideal scientific forestry because we have never had sufficient funding and staffing. **The day we get to implement the ideal scientific forestry, we should see the intended results” (Interview #135).***

# Foresters' justification for double standard

- Strict on villagers to inculcate on villagers the culture of respecting management plans.
- No complaints from villagers.

“For villages, we are strict because we want to create a sense of value for management plans. We want villagers to embrace the value of management plan in the management of forests. To say that because the government does not use management plans in managing forests, then villages should also be allowed to manage without plans is wrong. **We are yet to come across a situation in which villages resist the requirement for management plan.**” (Interview/Head of Natural Forests Unit, Tanzania Forest Service E88).

# Foresters' justification for double standard

- Emphasis on scientific forestry even in situations of insufficient information.

“It is true. MAI (mean annual increment) for most species is **not known**. It is known for few species and **then assumed to be the same for other closely related species**. In natural forest realm, there are **a lot of unknowns** and thus a lot to be done. Even people at SUA (the university) know very little about natural forests. Academics are not doing their research everywhere. So, MAI for each site characteristics is not known. **Maybe it will never be known, considering the amount of work that has to go into calculating them**”  
(Interview #81).

# Reproduction of double standards

1. Boundary work – if villagers can be allowed to manage forests on their own, why do people go to school to study forestry? (Sismondo, 2010)
2. Personal/institutional profits (material outcomes) – forest on general land important for meeting revenue targets. Deliberate actions to dominate villagers. (Larson & Ribot, 2007)
3. Doxic practices – “technical management plan leads to sustainable forest management”; “villagers, as non-experts, cannot be left to make forest management decisions on their own”.



# Reproduction of double standards

- Professional foresters undertake strategic actions and they use scientific claims in the process. But to them, the necessity of scientific approaches to the management of forests, miombo woodlands in particular, is beyond question.
- Symbolic violence – foresters emphasis on scientific approaches in genuine (scientific forestry habitus), making them oblivious to the how oppressive their practices are.

# Breaking the doxic thinking/mentality

- ‘Bwana Miti Mentality’ – “this rigid mentality of not wanting to change, despite changing contexts and needs” (Principal forester – TFS, Field notes #137).
- Radical rethinking of the technical framing of participatory forestry (FAO 2004 & 2016; Green & Lund, 2015; Hansen & Lund, 2017; Poteete & Ribot, 2011).
- Focus on disrupting production of technical habitus and doxic practices it engenders. Focus on rethinking the way forestry is taught (curricula + contents), for example.



Thank you!

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