

Rendering homogenous and incompatible: Pastoral grazing in Tanzania's village land forest reserves

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Abstract

Over the past 30 years, participatory forestry reforms have been attempted across much of the world. Ostensibly, these have been attempts at rolling back the enclosures of forests that characterized the colonial era. However, a vast and still-growing body of literature documents how the spread and significance of these reforms have been limited by resistance from forestry bureaucracies hesitant to give up control. In this article, I examine this conundrum from the perspective of grazing, which has been and continues to be a major use of landscapes with trees in Tanzania. By reviewing policies, legislation, and presidential and ministerial parliamentary speeches, I show how colonial tropes thrive in national-level governance circles, problematizing grazing in all forest spaces. Granted the institutional ambiguities and legal lacuna, the state succeeds in mobilizing homogenizing discourses of incompatibility. These discourses blur the differences between the categories of forest reserves and pathologize pastoralists as the 'other.' The analysis indicates that participatory forestry reforms cannot proceed in the absence of broader decolonization in the understanding of the values and capacities of (rural) communities.

Keywords: Participatory forestry, pastoral grazing rights, homogenizing discourses, Village Land Forest Reserves, Tanzania

Résumé

Au cours des 30 dernières années, des réformes forestières participatives ont été initiées dans une grande partie du monde. Ostensiblement, il s'agissait d'essayer de faire reculer l'enfermement des forêts qui a caractérisé l'ère coloniale. Cependant, une littérature abondante et toujours croissante montre comment la diffusion et l'importance de ces réformes ont été limitées par la résistance des bureaucraties forestières qui hésitent à abandonner le contrôle. Dans cet article, j'examine cette problématique du point de vue du pâturage, qui a été et continue d'être une utilisation majeure dans les espaces forestiers en Tanzanie. En examinant les politiques, la législation ainsi que les discours parlementaires présidentiels et ministériels, je montre comment les imaginaires coloniaux prospèrent dans les cercles de gouvernance au niveau national, probléatisant le

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pâturage dans tous les espaces forestiers. En dépit des ambiguïtés institutionnelles et des lacunes juridiques, l'état parvient à mobiliser des discours homogénéisant d'incompatibilité. Ces discours brouillent les distinctions entre les différentes catégories de réserves forestières et pathologisent les pasteurs comme « l'autre ». L'analyse indique que les réformes forestières participatives ne peuvent avoir lieu sans une décolonisation plus large de la compréhension des valeurs et des capacités des communautés (rurales).

Mots-clés: Foresterie participative, droits de pâturage pastoral, discours homogénéisants, réserves forestières des terroirs villageois, La Tanzanie

Resumen

En los últimos 30 años se han intentado reformas forestales participativas en gran parte del mundo. Ostensiblemente, han sido intentos de hacer retroceder los cercamientos de los bosques que caracterizaron la época colonial. Sin embargo, una vasta y creciente bibliografía documenta cómo la difusión y la importancia de estas reformas se han visto limitadas por la resistencia de las burocracias forestales, reacias a ceder el control. En este artículo examino este enigma desde la perspectiva del pastoreo, que ha sido y sigue siendo uno de los principales usos de los paisajes arbolados de Tanzania. Mediante la revisión de las políticas, la legislación y los discursos parlamentarios presidenciales y ministeriales, muestro cómo los tropos coloniales prosperan en los círculos de gobernanza a nivel nacional problematizando el pastoreo en todos los espacios forestales. A pesar de las ambigüedades institucionales y las lagunas jurídicas, el estado consigue movilizar discursos homogeneizadores de incompatibilidad. Estos discursos difuminan las diferencias entre las categorías de reservas forestales y patologizan a los pastores como imágenes del « otro ». El análisis indica que las reformas forestales participativas no pueden avanzar en ausencia de una descolonización más amplia en la comprensión de los valores y capacidades de las comunidades (rurales).

Palabras claves: Silvicultura participativa, derechos de pastoreo, discursos homogeneizadores, reservas forestales de tierras comunales, Tanzania

Ikisiri

Katika kipindi cha miaka 30 iliyopita, mageuzi shirikishi ya utunzaji na usimamizi wa misitu yamejaribiwa kote ulimwenguni. Haya yamekuwa majaribio ya kurudisha nyuma maboma ya misitu ambayo yalikuwa na sifa enzi ya ukoloni. Hata hivyo, kundi kubwa na linaloendelea kukua la fasihi linaandika jinsi kuenea na umuhimu wa mageuzi haya yamerudishwa nyuma na upinzani unaotokana na urasimu wa misitu unaosita kutoa udhibiti. Katika makala haya, ninategua kitendawili hiki kwa mtazamo wa malisho, ambayo yamekuwa na yanaendelea kuwa matumizi makubwa ya mandhari yenye miti nchini Tanzania. Kwa kuchambua sera, sheria, na hotuba za Rais na mawaziri bungeni, ninaonyesha jinsi nyara za wakoloni zinavyostawi katika duru za utawala wa ngazi ya kitaifa zinavyotatiza malisho na uchungaji katika maeneo yote ya misitu. Kutokana na utata wa kitaasisi na ombwe la kisheria, serikali imefanikiwa kuhamasisha mijadala ya kutokupatana. Mijadala hiyo hufifisha tofauti kati ya makundi ya hifadhi za misitu na kuwafanya wachungaji kuonekana kama watu 'wengine' wasiyo wa kawaida. Uchambuzi unaonyesha kuwa mageuzi shirikishi ya utunzaji na usimamizi wa misitu hayawezi kuendelea bila kuondoa fikra za ukoloni katika uelewa wa mahitaji na uwezo wa jamii (za vijijini).

Dhana za msingi: Misitu Shirikishi; haki za malisho kwa wachungaji, mijadala ya kufananisha, na hifadhi za misitu ya ardhi ya kijiji, Tanzania

1. Introduction

On July 6, 2018, Hassan Chevayo (age 43) had a close call with death in the Chambogho Forest Reserve, Same District, Kilimanjaro Region.² Earlier that day, around 90 heads of cattle were impounded by Tanzania

² *Nipashe* newspaper, July 6, 2018.

Forest Services (TFS) patrol officers for grazing in the reserve. Mr Chevayo had purportedly pursued TFS officers in a bid to repossess the cattle when he was shot in the abdomen.

Five years later, over 1,000 km (621 mi) away, a tragic event unfolded in Uvinza District, Kigoma Region. Three Uvinza District Officials were killed in the line of duty on January 31, 2023, in the Ilunde Forest Reserve in Chakulu village, by a 200-strong mob of villagers reported to be pastoralists who sought to repossess their livestock that were impounded in the reserve.³ Reports have it that, following the eviction of pastoralists from the forest reserve a couple of weeks prior, an 18-member team from the district authorities was sent to survey the forest area. The team was then attacked by an angry mob, leading to the fatalities and injuries to other officials.

These two incidents, unfortunate as they are, illuminate the dangers and horrors in central government and local authorities' forest reserves, as the state enforces Sections 26 (n) and 84 (3) of the National Forest Act No. 14 of 2002 which sanctions grazing therein (United Republic of Tanzania, henceforth URT, 2002). The magnitude of the 'problem' is also revealed in the impounding of over 110,000 livestock in forest reserves between 2017 and 2019.⁴ The present workings of the post-colonial state result from colonial policies that imposed political forests on the colonies, thereby criminalizing a range of uses.⁵ Tracing back to Germany in the 1870s, Wilson (2012, 2014) unpacks how demands by forest experts challenged the idea of forests as common properties, thereby rationalizing the institutionalization of new rules of access. A decade later, upon taking Tanganyika as its colony, the Germans imposed new limits (Schabel, 1990), prohibiting several pre-colonial uses such as livestock grazing (Sunseri, 2003, 2005, 2009).⁶ The post-colonial state inherited and reinforced such prohibitions, as embodied in the 1963 Amendments of the 1957 Forest Ordinance, just two years after independence.

The Forest Policy of 1998 (URT, 1998) presented a decentralized reimagining of forestry with the creation of Village Land Forest Reserves (VLFRs) through Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) (URT, 1998; 2007).⁷ VLFRs were designed along participatory forestry principles to grant village authorities a mandate to negotiate conservation and use priorities within the overall framework of the Forest Act (URT, 2002). With the general conception of forest reserves as a colonial creation, VLFRs could be considered an invention of the post-colonial state.⁸ Given the history of forestry, how instituting grazing rights into VLFRs might play out is therefore of interest. The VLFR-charcoal production nexus epitomizes this interest and how grazing could be reimagined. Tanzania's strategy for the charcoal sub-sector appreciates the potential of VLFRs for charcoal production, overturning the long years of criminality and incompatibility (URT, 2019). Therefore, accounting for approximately 46% of the forests in Tanzania (URT, 2015a), VLFRs are uniquely placed as spaces where other views on pastoralism and forestry could arise. Unlike in forest reserves run by the central government and local authorities, grazing has not been explicitly criminalized in this space, and village authorities can prescribe its use (URT, 2002). Further, some cases – such as Diguzi in Morogoro, Sunya, Olkitkit, and Laiseri, all in Kiteto – have institutionalized grazing in the VLFRs. The three Kiteto villages, for instance, are part of the renowned SULEDO VLFR (henceforth SULEDO), where the institutionalization of

³ www.uvinzadc.go.tz, and <https://www.michuzi.co.tz/2023/02/katibu-mkuu-prof-eliamani-sedoyeka.html>, retrieved August 18, 2023.

⁴ Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) Parliamentary Budget Speech for the 2017/19 and 2018/19 financial years.

⁵ Political forests are lands that the state declares as forests thereby with a legal frame that institutionalizes acceptable uses (Peluso & Vandergeest, 2001).

⁶ Tanganyika united with Zanzibar on 26 April 1964 to form Tanzania. As a landmass, it represents present-day Tanzania's mainland.

⁷ CBFM is a form of participatory forest management that "is realized where local villages, or sub-groups within the village, are the sole forest owners and managers by virtue of establishing various forms of communally or privately reserved forests on village lands" (URT, 2022, p. 1).

⁸ However, this does not imply that no external influences were involved in this process. Lovett (2003) and Williams *et al.* (1994) observe that substantial international influence shapes Tanzania's forest law and policy.

grazing in SULEDO predates both the Forest Policy and Act.⁹ No permits are required to graze in the 'VLFR' in these villages. I use 'VLFR' with caution here since this institutionalization happened even before the idea of VLFRs had come to institutional fruition at the national level. The central questions, therefore, that I was grappling with were: Can VLFRs be conceived of as grazing spaces and thus permit seasonal access? With the divergences between on-the-ground local realities and national positions, how much leeway do villages have to institutionalize such uses?

To address these questions, I draw on decolonial theory and Critical Political Ecology (henceforth CPE) for nuanced historical and discursive analysis. Whereas colonialism as a historical period may have lapsed, its remnants in economic, sociopolitical, and epistemic aspects remain. Decolonial theory illustrates that colonialism "erased or diminished longstanding Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices" (Duvisac, 2022, p. 2). Decolonial theory exposes the "'darker' side of Eurocentric epistemologies and the need for alternative epistemologies and philosophies" (Mabele *et al.*, 2022, p. 93). CPE on the other hand has been crucial in understanding how present-day pastoralism-forestry relations unfold. It specifically describes the social-political influences behind scientific knowledge leading to the political bias of environmental explanations (Forsyth, 2003, 2020). Goldman *et al.* (2018) write that CPE provides a critical engagement with sciences and highlights tensions in the co-production of knowledge. Such tensions are exemplified by diverse realities on the ground about forestry and pastoralism, tensions that lead to conflicts. CPE is relevant for unpacking the construction of pastoralism-forestry relations in the institutional landscape and key parliamentary speeches. Blending decolonial theory and CPE contextualizes and historicizes the study for a comprehensive analysis of the (re)production of pastoralism-forestry relations.

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. The second section historicizes and contextualizes the colonial state, forested landscapes and grazing rights in Tanzania. The third presents decolonial theory and CPE. A description of the methodology follows this. I then present how the state has instrumentalized homogeneity to render pastoral grazing and VLFRs incompatible. Finally, the conclusions of this study are presented.

2. Colonialism, forested landscapes and grazing rights

This section unpacks the role of colonialism in producing pastoralism-forestry incompatibility, thereby affecting grazing rights to this day. I begin by describing the pre-colonial ecological histories of forested landscapes. I then illuminate how colonialism served to re-organize communities while imposing new imaginaries around landscapes with trees. I show how the imposed 'colonial development' control measures created the earliest frames on pastoralism and forestry. I finish the section by highlighting how, in inheriting the colonial rationalities of forestry and livestock-rearing, the post-colonial state reinforces discourses of incompatibility. Providing a retrospective look into Tanzania's grazing history contributes to answering two questions: first, when and why did colonial powers legislate against pastoralism? Correspondingly, at what point does grazing in forests become a problem, and to whom and why?

Pre-colonial ecologies and histories of landscapes with trees are essential entry points to illuminate the role of colonialism in presenting a new norm. Detailing the rich history of the pre-colonial ecologies and uses of landscapes with trees is beyond this study's scope. Let it suffice to highlight that this history reveals an intricate relationship between pastoralism and forestry. Tropp (2006), for example, narrates the Xhosa people's broader claims to cultivate and graze, among other uses in wooded landscapes. The author further illustrates the customary management system, revealing the elaborate connection between forests and social and cultural life. In West and East Africa, Boutrais (2011) also narrates the co-existence between pastoralism and

⁹ SULEDO is an acronym of the three initial wards – Sunya, Lengatei and Dongo – that formed the VLFR. In 2002, SULEDO was the Equator Prize Winner in recognition of its initiatives. The villages institutionalized grazing as follows: Sunya Village By-Laws of 1996 part 4(vi), Olkitkit Village By-Laws of 1997, part 4(iii), Laiseri Village By-Laws of 1997, part 4(vii).

conservation areas. In particular, he unpacks the unique value of forests as provincial camps, transhumance routes and grazing sites. The triple uses served to reduce conflicts with farming communities.

In Tanganyika, Christopher Conte (1999, 2014) vividly portrays the ethic of pastoralism and forest conservation as manifest in West Usambara. Conte describes how the pastoral communities negotiated access to the forests while maintaining social and economic harmony with non-pastoral host communities. Thus, whereas cases of conflict have been shown, it is essential to note that co-existence was also visible. Furthermore, pastoralists deployed various measures to sustain their relationships with forests (Conte, 1999; Saruni, 2016). Saruni, for example, illuminates Maasai ecological knowledge and cosmologies for balancing rangeland productivity and societal livelihoods. This included zonation, defining mobility, communal use of water and livestock taxonomy. On the other hand, Conte (1999) shows how the community sustained the Shume-Magamba forest area, a preferred hotspot for pastoralists.¹⁰ He narrates pastoralists' use of fire to expand pastures, grazing regulation in forests made by the village council of elders, the control of herd sizes, and the diversification of grazing routes. The pastoralists-forests relationship was intertwined with a clear indication of which forest species were preferred and thus sustained by pastoralists (Conte, 1999, 2014). This is a testament to pastoral rationality, which is usually presented as absent.

With the advent of colonialism, the field of activity for pastoralists was significantly redefined and reduced (Frantz, 1975). To grasp the effects of colonialism on shaping pastoralism-forestry relations in Tanganyika and broadly in Africa, we need to unpack three levels of intervention that significantly affected pastoral grazing rights. The three levels are border formation, colonial forestry, and livestock modernization initiatives. Following the partition of the continent, borders presented new limits to acceptable mobility and established new relations with states (Markakis, 2004). This meant that even before the imposition of political forests, limits were imposed on (pastoral) mobility. Second, through the imposition of scientific forestry, African management of landscapes with trees was disrupted.¹¹ Correspondingly, new forest values were imposed, rendering prior customary uses, including grazing, incompatible (Sungusia *et al.* 2020; Sunseri, 2009). Even the conception of forest reserves, as we know it today, has roots in the earliest forest ordinances that separate communities from their resources.¹² Complementing border formation, scientific forestry reinforced the limits of pastoral mobility by creating intra-colony spaces outside pastoralists' bounds. Essentially, it mapped criminality onto rural communities (Ybarra, 2018). Finally, the third intervention was on the colonial imaginary of 'modernizing' the livestock sector, which framed pastoralists as unproductive and irrational. The British colonial government presented Tanganyika's livestock-keeping systems as quality-deficient, with modernization as the solution (Hill & Moffett, 1955; Sunseri, 2013).

Colonial epistemic frames were crystallized when 'scientific' forestry met 'modern' animal husbandry. In due course, new or alien life forms were designated as norms. Deviation from the new norm was considered illegitimate and against development. Therefore, direct or indirect controls were implemented to counter extra-normal practices, such as pastoralism. This resulted in bitterness and stiffened opposition to confinement and control, characterized by pastoral resistance (Ekemode, 1973). The resistance reaffirmed the colonizers' supposed assumption that pastoralists are inherently violent and ungovernable (Whittaker, 2017), calling for institutional structures to mediate pastoral relations. In a way, while imposing 'modern' animal husbandry and colonial forestry, the constructed labels of pastoralists were advanced. Based on this conception, pastoralists were perceived as people in a "state of disconnect with larger contemporary developments" (Singh, 2009, p. 65). The combined effect of the three levels of intervention pitted African pastoral communities against newly imposed colonial norms and rationalities.

¹⁰ By 1909, more than a decade after German colonial rule, it was already declared a reserve. As of March 2016, Magamba was 'upgraded' to a Nature Reserve.

¹¹ With roots mainly in Germany (Hölzl, 2010), scientific forestry offered to manage forests based on scientific principles and practices that optimize use and sustain productivity. It rendered forest resources "legible for central oversight, taxation and management" and henceforth carved out from landscapes (Sungusia *et al.*, 2020, p. 355).

¹² India's first Forest Acts of 1865 and later Act No. VII of 1878 present the earliest such institutionalization, ideas that later travelled to other colonies.

In *The Invention of Africa*, V. Y. Mudimbe (1988, p. 14) illustrates how "colonialism tended to organize and transform non-European areas into essentially European constructs." A historical analysis amplifies the fact that pre-colonial African societies were not vacuums. These societies had histories, knowledge, values, and positives before colonialism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013a). Colonialism, in its wake, brought a singular view of life that elevated Western ways, which were then presented as an antidote to the colonial people's 'problems.' This laid the foundation for mobilizing the technologies of rule and control on how life in general, and pastoralism in particular, ought to be. Simply put, it was *either* subscribing to Western ways *or* retaining pre-colonial practices. This presents an 'either-or' rationality that reinforces assumptions of Western superiority while naturalizing the inferiority of the colonized. Sticking with African ways was interpreted as a rejection of modernity and anti-development. Mudimbe (1988, p. 17) writes that such persons were termed "unadapted persons and confused minds."

The 'either-or' thinking was equally manifested in forestry and livestock-keeping. In forestry, colonialism created an imaginary that Indigenous users knew no bounds to land use or animal husbandry and, thus, were excessive and detrimental. It was, therefore, *either* following colonial forestry principles *or* losing forests to unregulated use. Schabel (1990) reinforces this thinking by presenting colonial forestry as valuable in arresting the severe destruction of forests from unregulated access. Further, he argues that the first Forest Conservation Ordinance of 1904 was in the public's best interest, grounded primarily on ecological or environmental motives (*ibid.*). However, the ecological argument has been challenged by scholars such as Neumann (1997) and Sunseri (2003, 2007, 2009), who show the Ordinance was primarily motivated by economic gain. Irrespective of the true motives, a new norm of forests free of people was presented and living in forests was pronounced as rebellious and anti-development. This was also linked to using forests as a front for guerrilla warfare in the *Maji Maji* resistance of 1905 – 1907 (Sunseri, 2003). This explains the excesses of the colonial state in ensuring people-free forests.

Concerning pastoralism, Hill and Moffet (1955) explicitly presented the rearing of livestock by the Indigenous population as anything but animal husbandry. The economic rationality of the pastoralists was deemed absent, and livestock were kept for "religion, prestige, barter, food, and clothing" (*ibid.*, p. 557). The authors present 'quality' as an alien conception to pastoralists, hence identified the quest for larger herds as being more important to pastoralists than animal quality. Such a racialized view of the Indigenous pastoral system has been contested by several detailed studies. For instance, Håkansson (1994, 1998, 2008) and Rockel (2019) show the ingenuities, and diverse practices, present in pastoral systems and economic decisions. This notwithstanding, framing quality-deficient livestock-keeping systems has justified pastoral modernization to meet the 'quality bar.' Without modernization, quality remains elusive. Again, this reaffirms the either-or thinking surrounding qualifying pastoral affairs based on Western standards (Hill & Moffett, 1955; Sunseri, 2013). The either-or thinking simplistically reduces life and practices to two classes – those that conform and those that do not; those that need to be amplified and those that ought to be disposed of.

Upon Independence in 1961, the post-colonial state deployed measures that reinforced colonial rationality surrounding conservancies in general and forestry in particular, thereby maintaining the colonial *status quo*.¹³ It appears that such measures both normalized and naturalized pastoralism-forestry incompatibility. The post-colonial state did not significantly part ways with colonial workings. Lovett (2003), for example, reveals how the gazetted forest reserves from the German (1891–1919) and British (1919–1961) colonial periods were recognized after Independence. This was not a surprise since, as Mamdani (2020) indicates, the post-colonial state behaves accordingly in inherited material and epistemic conditions first created by the colonizers n.

¹³ The Forest Policy of 1953 was amended in 1963, two years after Tanganyika's independence. The British Forest Act of 1959 remained in place until its revision in 1993. The Tanzania Forest Services (TFS) established in 2011, has its roots in the German Local Forest Bureau of 1899 <https://www.tfs.go.tz/index.php/en/about/category/historical-background>, retrieved May 9, 2024.

The post-colonial state has echoed the dominance of colonial rationalities in forestry and livestock-keeping. However, this dominance, which informs logic and practices along with modernization and development discourses, is worrisome. Over forty years ago, Raikes (1981, p. 25, emphasis in original) in *Livestock development and policy in East Africa* depicted how "the proponents of 'modernization' almost invariably exaggerate the productivity and economic returns of the sorts of programmes they propose, while consistently underestimating the same parameters for the 'traditional sector.'" This highlights the discursive embellishment of scientific forestry and animal husbandry while silencing Indigenous practices. Tied to Western imaginaries, discursive constructions are presented as natural and progressive. In *Romancing colonial forestry*, Bryant (1996) dissects the legacies of colonialism revealed in the fetishization of forestry as 'progress' that naturalizes some uses and marginalizes others. This unveils the power of discourses to classify ideal forest types, thereby producing exclusion (Leipold, 2014).

3. Decolonial theory and critical political ecology

The preceding discussion sheds light on the political and material conditions of colonialism that shape pastoralism-forestry relations in Tanzania. I mobilize decolonial theory and CPE in this section to unpack the supposed incompatibility between pastoralism and forestry. Given the historical trajectory of the relationship between pastoral grazing and landscapes with trees, as well as the excesses of the colonial and post-colonial states, this is a worthwhile examination. Specifically, whereas decolonial theory is vital in decentering Western norms and civilization while appreciating the tensions (Dunlap, 2022), CPE unveils the socio-political factors in framing environmental problems and the scientific understanding of them (Forsyth, 2003). Combined, the two frameworks expose the historical and present-day excesses of the state in shaping pastoralism-forestry relations.

Decolonial theory owes its history to the struggles of colonized peoples across the world. Notable writers such as Aime Cesaire, Amilcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon and Walter D. Mignolo made significant contributions.¹⁴ I do not intend to delve into the long history of each contribution. Instead, inspired by these writings, I situate the analysis of the construction and reproduction of pastoralism-forestry relations in Tanzania. Mukavetz (2018, p. 126, emphasis in original) frames decolonial theory as a "rhetorical tradition – one that *constellates* with and around additional traditions." Decolonial theory reveals the epistemic challenge based on colonialist rationalities and resulting injustices (Noxolo, 2017). Decolonial lenses illuminate the differences in histories, values and norms surrounding natural resources. This lays the foundation for prioritizing Indigenous epistemologies and the elevation of the histories, traditions and perspectives of the 'other' (Mukavetz, 2018). It provides a critical avenue to problematize the normalization and naturalization of colonial designs in the post-colonies.

Dunlap (2022, p. 9) notes that decolonial theory "exposes the internalization and reproduction of colonial orders favoring distinction and categorical exclusion." The abstract global designs proposed to be universal in colonial thinking are thereby subjected to cross-examination (Dunford, 2017). The advancing of scientific forestry and the modernization of livestock-keeping is used to dismiss the excluded. It reveals how colonial systems have naturalized the exclusion of several forest values and uses that do not fit the scientific forestry template. Generally, in the Western development architecture, specific land uses have been classified as a priority for protection, and thus granted legitimacy, whereas others have not. With forestry fitting nicely within this schema, the same cannot be said for pastoralism (FAO, 2022). This is largely because non-sedentary land uses have been classified as "pathological and subversive to good order" (Barfield, 2020, p. 22). The preference for a certain envisioning of development and land use brings attention back to inherited epistemologies, and the present-day realities that affect grazing practice and rights.

The persistent neglect of pastoral matters in contemporary development debates is a concern, as are governmental views about pastoralism as a liability to be replaced instead of being developed (Cabeza *et al.*,

¹⁴ Specific works of Cesaire (1950) *Discourse on Colonialism*; Cabral (2016) *Resistance and Decolonization*; Fanon (1963) *The Wretched of the Earth*; and Mignolo (2021) *Politics of Decolonial Investigations* provided significant inspiration.

2021; Krätli *et al.*, 2013; Moritz and Mbacke, 2022; Odhiambo, 2021). The relentless questioning of the place of pastoralism in the 'modern' world is one manifestation of how specific accepted standards and rationalities are reproduced through knowledge systems. Yet still, the post-colonial state is reluctant to appreciate pastoralism's logic, rationale, and importance despite the many decades of research (Dong, 2016; Johnsen *et al.*, 2019). Decolonial lenses are useful in examining whether or how inherited knowledge and practices challenge or continue to justify alterity and injustices (Noxolo, 2017).

It is worth clarifying that I do not intend to romanticize everything about the pre-colonial past, nor to intimate a total rejection of colonial sciences. Decolonial theory, in this regard, unearths the mechanics of colonialism on African knowledge systems while illuminating that pre-colonial African societies were not vacuums. These societies had histories, knowledge, values, and positive aspects before colonialism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013a, 2013b). In *Epistemic freedom in Africa*, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) rightly narrates how colonialism exiled Africans from their knowledge. Thus, since colonialism and resulting Western governmentality were, and are still, critical in re-writing histories of the colonized (Pels, 1997), a decolonial perspective is required to interrogate present-day struggles, discourses and narratives.

In *Critical political ecology: The politics of environmental science*, Tim Forsyth (2003) carefully unveils the intricate relationship between social-political factors in the framing of environmental science. He presents CPE as a tool for political analysis in understanding ecological reality. CPE seeks to reveal the latently embedded political processes in environmental sciences (*ibid.*). Hence, it proceeds to provide that the simplistic separation of science and politics breeds deficient environmental policies (Forsyth, 2003). Specifically, Forsyth provides two key contributions, in which I ground this study. Firstly, he exposes the "implicit social and political statements built into supposedly neutral statements" (*ibid.*, p. 19). In so doing, the hidden politics in scientific discourses of ecology are unpacked, thereby revealing the myths and generalizations in the framing of environmental science. The second significant contribution emphasizes that discussions about ecological problems ought to reflect the perspectives of different groups since there are multiple contexts and histories.

In explaining the cattle boom in Southern Arizona in the late 1800s, Sayre (1999) reveals the merits of CPE in understanding environmental changes and the resulting myths that emerge in capitalist societies. He argues that despite the relationship between pastoralism and nature, the practice, as it then was, was fundamentally at odds with the dominant industrial system of production (*ibid.*, p. 265). Ultimately, therefore, the boom served as a pastoralist-ranching hybrid that balanced the needs of ecological and capital interests. On the other hand, Benjaminsen *et al.* (2010) highlight the strength of CPE in being critical of dominant narratives, thereby presenting alternative or counter-narratives. This serves to showcase the multiple narratives that exist around different environmental problems. Finally, Goldman *et al.* (2018, p. 7, emphasis in original) in a climate-related study, reinforce the value of CPE in interrogating the "assumption that increasing the 'usability' of scientific knowledge is positive in all cases, and would rather ask the questions: Usable for what? Usable for who?" Scientific knowledge is revealed to be subjective and relative, thereby meriting scrutiny.

Mobilizing decolonial theory and CPE provides breadth and depth in the socio-political analyses and the historical and discursive construction of pastoralism-forestry relations. For example, Zanotti *et al.* (2020) write about the synergies of political ecology and decolonial scholarship in environmental social sciences, particularly on the power dynamics and historical legacies of human-environmental relationships. The production and reproduction of scientific knowledge is dissected below from a historical and socio-political perspective. The historical analysis uncovers the epistemic core of colonialism in constructing compatible practices and the excesses of the state in reinforcing them. Decolonizing environmental politics serves to interrogate and challenge what counts as the canon of scientific knowledge.

4. Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach to examine the discursive construction of grazing and participatory forests (VLFs). Firstly, I grounded the research on formative contributions to the historical construction of the forested space and the production of forestry knowledge for Tanganyika. The previous works

of Neumann (1997), Schabel (1990), and Sunseri (2005, 2007, 2009) were central in situating post-1998 developments within larger historical frameworks. Sunseri (2013) provided a relevant context on the origins of the livestock modernization drive in Tanganyika during British colonial rule. Finally, *Tanganyika*, by Hill and Moffett (1955), presents an account of the British colonial state's ideologies on forestry-pastoralism relations.

Secondly, data were collected through documentary reviews, from 1998, when the VLFRs were conceived following the new Forest Policy. This entailed reviewing and analyzing a total of 53 documents. These were 21 legislations, 12 sectoral policies, strategies, and interventions, 15 annual parliamentary ministerial budget speeches for the livestock and forest sectors from 2015 to 2022, and five parliamentary presidential speeches from 2015 to 2021.¹⁵ The focus on the institutional landscape was preferred for two reasons. Firstly, although discourses about participatory forestry focus on communities, de Jong (2012) notes that one rarely finds communities shaping discourses about their forests. The author argues that this is a function of powerful actors that dominate the process. Secondly, institutions are sites of discourse sedimentation (Leipold, 2014). It is thus worth analyzing the sites where discourses have stabilized and are henceforth institutionalized. The reviewed documents represent the institutional frameworks and the desired political trajectories on forestry and livestock-keeping within the country. Most of the documents, as one would expect, were from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) and Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries (MoLF). Whereas the former describes the forest space, the latter is focused on grazing practices (and people). However, it is essential to note that land-related ministries do not always operate in an environment of adequate coordination in managing land use (URT, 2017).

With the aid of NVivo, data were coded deductively, with emergent codes added in due course. From the textual data, it was possible to interpret meanings and the implications of language in shaping pastoral-forest relations. Also, the significance of the meaning was deduced from the recurring patterns of pastoralism and forestry separately and then when looked at together. With a particular focus on how pastoral-forest relations are portrayed, it was then feasible to unpack the construction and maintenance of reality surrounding the topic. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was then applied to examine how the interaction of language, ideology, and power resulting in the construction, reproduction, and legitimization of reality (Catalano & Waugh, 2020). Critical discourse analysis unmask and challenges the normalized views on different issues presented as natural. However, these result from carefully constructed social projects (Silva, 2012) centered around development and sustainability that are largely driven from Western organizations. This was important because how development is conceived directly classifies land uses and, therefore, contestations over land uses and livelihoods affecting pastoralism and forestry.

5. Homogenizing incompatibility

Pastoralism-forestry relations in Tanzania have been historically constructed as incompatible. A review of relevant policy and legislative documents revealed that homogenization serves to separate livestock from forests. Through homogenizing discourses, the post-colonial state succeeds in rendering grazing, and more so pastoral mobility, incompatible with forestry. Enabled by institutional ambiguities, different categories of forest reserves are homogenized as one and thus as non-grazing spaces. Furthermore, the othering and pathologization of pastoralists create conditions for the homogenization of pastoral activities, which are largely framed as redundant and in a modern state. Homogenization reinforces the vulnerability of forests, while also deeming pastoralists as threats to forest reserves. This section explains the homogenization in Tanzania's institutional scape and parliamentary rhetoric.

¹⁵ All the institutional documents accessed were in English. The Parliamentary speeches were in Swahili and thus, where quoted in the proceeding discussion, are based on my translation.

Institutional ambiguities for homogenous forests

The Forest Policy of Tanzania (1998), developed around participatory reforms, lays the foundation upon which grazing in VLFRs could be considered (URT, 1998). The analysis of the Policy, however, reveals that the way forestry was envisioned renders grazing in VLFRs incommensurate with other land uses. Firstly, the policy, despite the recognition of the institutions of management, situates forestry as having two motives: production and protection. A forest reserve, for example, is defined as "a forest area, either for the production of timber and other forest produce or protective for the protection of forests and important water catchments, controlled under the Forests Ordinance and declared by the Minister" (ibid, p. 5).¹⁶ Correspondingly, the policy statements are aligned with this thinking, even for VLFRs, as shown in Policy Statement No. 6. Although this Statement devolves some functions to the villages, it still retains traditional forest values.

Village forest reserves will be managed by the village governments or other entities designated by village governments for this purpose. They will be managed for production and/or protection based on sustainable management objectives defined for each forest reserve. The management will be based on forest management plans.

Policy Statement No. 6, National Forest Policy (1998, p. 16)

Despite the recognition of CBFM, it appears the Forest Policy upholds traditional principles of scientific forest management focused on the timber industry and products (timber, wood fuel, and artisanal wood-based products). Non-wood products explicitly mentioned are gums, resins, bark, tannin, aromatics, latex, natural dyes, fruits and nuts, fiber, spices, naval stores (e.g. resins), medicinal plants etc. Pasture or fodder are not conceived as a non-wood forest product, even though the policy in its glossary (URT, 1998, p. 5, my emphasis) defines forest land as "an area of land covered with trees, 'grass' and other vegetation but dominated by trees." The tone is hostile and alarmist whenever reference is made to grazing in the Forest Policy. Repeatedly framed along extremes – as overgrazing – the Forest Policy is uncompromising in its statement that "overgrazing is a prominent problem in public forest lands and impacts negatively on the living conditions and the survival of the wildlife populations" (URT, 1998, p. 23). This could 'rationalize' the actions of the state in the Chambogho and Ilunde forest reserves presented at the beginning of this article. To remedy this, Policy Statement No. 5 prescribes the need for clear ownership of forests to arrest uncontrolled grazing practices. This rationality resonates with the CBFM Guidelines, which regard participatory forestry approaches to better protect forests.

As every forester knows, our forests are under threat. Participatory Forest Management (PFM) is one of our main strategies towards securing as many forests as possible and bringing them under effective and sustainable management.

CBFM Guidelines (URT, 2007, p. ii)

Moving beyond the policy, the legislative framework equally aligns with the ideals of scientific forestry. Through the ambiguities in the Forest Act, the limits of villages' mandates to institutionalize use rights are manifested. It is worth noting that Sections 32-41 of the Forest Act empower villages to designate and manage VLFRs. Section 34 (4) (e), for instance, provides that a "declared VLFR shall be managed in accordance with customary rules and practices applicable to forest use and management within the area" However, a reading of the Act reveals that the institutional set-up gives and takes away mandates of villages to institutionalize rights fully. The Director of Forestry at the MNRT retains powers over defining appropriate values, which affects village councils' decision-making. For instance, Section 34 (6) stresses that when the Director of Forestry "issues notes of guidance to villages in respect of the management of declared village land forest reserves, the

¹⁶ The Policy conceives production to be around timber (wood products) or other forest produce, with protection of forests and water catchment areas.

village councils shall pay due regard to them." On the other hand, concerning by-laws of gazetted VLFRs, whereas Section 37 (1) (b) indicates that village councils are not bound to accept any comments or recommendations of the Director or the district council, part (c) proceeds to note, however, that a village council shall "not proceed to the making of any such by-laws until it has received and considered any such comments and recommendations."

To speed up the by-laws-making process for villages, while ensuring conformity to the principles of scientific forestry, village councils are advised in Section 37 (5) to adopt model by-laws developed by the Director of Forestry. Should they do so, village councils are exempt from Section 37 (1)'s requirements above. The mandate of villages, therefore, to fully institutionalize use according to customary use and practices is challenged. This denotes a tendency of recentralizing while decentralizing, which Ribot *et al.* (2006) observed grants little discretion to communities to choose as they please. In essence, Section 37 enshrines institutionalized rights according to scientific forestry. Not only do the model by-laws seem to advance black-and-white forestry policy, but they also imply resistance to participatory reforms based on customary practices. The institutional ambiguity of the claw-back clauses – giving and taking away rights – could also be read as a legal lacuna that consolidates centralized authority. Further, it sustains conceptions of communities as incapable of forestry activities – thus dependent on model by-laws – and justifies the state retaining powers over decision-making in villages.

The model-by laws and the claw-back clauses reflect the professionalization and privileging of certain forms of knowledge in Tanzania (Green & Lund, 2015). Professionalization, firstly, projects foresters as rightful holders of copyrighted knowledge, and secondly, sidelines and controls the real stakeholders: the communities. Ojha (2006) and Staddon (2021) highlighted that such challenges to participatory forestry are partly due to the techno-bureaucratic doxa that foresters uphold. Grounded by the belief that forestry requires professional expertise and that villages lack the technical know-how, the state validates penetrating decentralized decision-making spaces. Foresters' continual wielding of professionalization and bureaucratization presents a stumbling block towards achieving participatory forestry motives (Lund, 2015). Extending beyond forest governance, I highlight how, through such resistance, limits to grazing are discursively and institutionally imposed across forest spaces. In a way, participatory forestry, given the institutional ambiguities and lacuna, disadvantages customary practices that professional foresters deem to deviate from the doxa. So, whereas one could expect new frontiers to forest use and values, the institutional set-up, despite the participatory reforms, reinforces traditional checks on communities' freedoms over VLFRs.

The legislative control on villages' decision-making process is sealed by the Forest Regulations of 2004. The regulations, largely through a blanket prohibition, explicitly sanction grazing (URT, 2004). Regulation 14 (4) (a) provides that "No license for grazing or cultivation shall be issued in any natural forest." What's peculiar about this regulation is that it masks the categories of forest reserves and homogenizes them in the name of 'natural forests.' Chapter Four of the Forest Policy states that natural forests can be interpreted as naturally grown, distinguished from industrial plantations or farm forestry. With plantations accounting for less than 1% of the total forest and woodland area in Tanzania (i.e. 554,500ha of the total, 48,090,700ha), by extension, VLFRs, accounting for 45.7%, are encompassed by the 'natural forests' category (URT, 2015a). Including VLFRs in this regulation could be a recipe for forest scuffles when grazing happens. Moreover, it reinforces the logic that VLFRs are different only in the institutions responsible for management, but not in the biophysical attributes that define natural forests.

In summary, forest homogenization has a triple-edged effect. First, based on the biophysical attributes, differences between VLFRs and other forest reserves are obscured, thereby reducing them to a singular entity. Second, while reinforcing colonial-informed forest epistemologies, it creates conditions for stringent state interventions of oversight and control across all forest reserves. Lastly, institutionally, the extension of the authority of scientific forestry to the villages displaces community forestry irrespective of the spatial-temporal dynamics that exist. Homogenization reveals a vicious cycle that reproduces communities as incapable of forestry.

Homogenizing activities and pathologizing pastoralists

With forests discursively constructed as off limits for livestock-grazing, the second level of analysis was on pastoralists. The results revealed that, like in forests, homogenizing discourses were also influential in submitting all human activities in the livestock production process as a livestock problem. The policy statement on environmental conservation in the National Livestock Policy clearly articulates this. The statement conflates livestock impacts with human activities in examining environmental considerations.

Increased livestock populations and human activities related to livestock production in some areas of the country have resulted in over-exploitation of natural resources. This has led to overgrazing, soil erosion, deforestation, destruction of water sources and environmental pollution.

National Livestock Policy (URT, 2006, p. 37)

Although it is not explicitly made clear what the "human activities related to livestock production" are, studies have deduced some of the activities usually carried out primarily by (agro-)pastoral communities (even in forest reserves). These include crop cultivation, charcoal-making, and the establishment of settlements. Ndesanjo (2021), for example, articulates such intricacies in the aftermath of the pastoral communities' migration to Western Tanzania regions. He observed "forest clearing to open farms and allow the use of ox-ploughs, forest fires that are set to allow new pasture to germinate, as well as charcoal making and firewood harvesting for brickmaking and catering for household energy needs" as some of the human activities with adverse effects on forests (*ibid.*, p. 51). Literature generally ascribes such activities to agro-pastoralists, as distinct from 'pure' pastoralists. I, however, hesitate to focus on the pastoralists and agro-pastoralists dichotomy *per se* for two reasons. Firstly, it deflects the focus from activities to a group. Focusing on a group, albeit latently, reinforces pathologization and othering of the sub-group. Secondly, there is a thin line between the two groups. For instance, traditionally pure pastoral communities like the Maasai are increasingly engaged in crop cultivation. What is important, therefore, is understanding the activities in VLFRs leading to forest degradation or deforestation, irrespective of the agents. Separating livestock grazing from other human activities proves essential in establishing whether exclusive grazing is compatible with forestry. The conflating of grazing with other pastoral-related activities reproduces a dominant logic of deforestation in the livestock-forest relationship. The Ilunde skirmishes present a notable case where activities not directly related to livestock grazing were reported and presented as resulting from pastoralism.

Mobilizing discourses of homogeneity allows for the conflation of all pastoral activities, consequently masking the actual costs and benefits when grazing is done exclusively. Experiences from villages such as Olkitkit and Sunya that have institutionalized livestock grazing in forests for over 25 years while sanctioning farming and erecting settlements offer critical insight into such an analysis. Policy nonetheless renders grazing inseparable from these other 'human' activities. The conflating downplays pastoral knowledge of rangeland and forest conservation epitomized by traditional conservation practices such as *alalili* in Maasailand, *ngitili* in Shinyanga and *milaga* in Dodoma (Mwilawa *et al.*, 2008; URT, 2021).¹⁷ It also eclipses the diverse benefits of exclusive grazing for forest conservation, such as high plant species diversity in moderately grazed forests (Kikoti *et al.*, 2015), sustenance of herbaceous plants or tree cover (Ruvuga *et al.*, 2021) and reducing fuel load and flammability (Blackmore & Vitousek, 2000; Xanthopoulos *et al.*, 2006).¹⁸

This policy-practice mix-up raises questions about whether this is by design or default. Irrespective of the motive, it reflects the workings of the state to conflate and naturalize in a bid to shape and control actions.

¹⁷ These are traditional strategies of forage conservation, usually in forested landscapes, in which a portion of land is reserved for dry season grazing.

¹⁸ I must stress, however, that costs or benefits are a function of several factors, such as geography, grazing season, history, and intensity, and should thus be taken as context-dependent. Literature reveals that pastoral grazing in forests has negative, neutral, and positive impacts.

Boda (2017) observes that such policy blind spots are intentional and serve to selectively define problems and solutions. Alongside a problematic pastoralism, the concerns about forest sustainability gain momentum, justifying the deployment of suitable technologies of rule. In the long run, governing the environment is vital to achieving "development" (Zhang, 2018, p. 375, emphasis in original). Through such conflation, a homogenous pastoralist is born.

Once a homogenous pastoralist is born, the (re)production of 'otherness' becomes effective. The othering of pastoralists reinforces the dangers of pastoralism to forests. My reading of parliamentary speeches delivered by different presidents and ministers for MoLF and MNRT from 2015 to 2022, revealed an extreme representation of pastoralists as the 'other.' The speeches presented pastoralists variously as criminals, unproductive invaders, conflict instigators, and environmental degraders (see Table 1).¹⁹ The political framing highlights what Lord (2018) described as the politicization of debates, thereby granting the state more authority to define pastoralists in this way. Othering, however, hides the fact that over 90% of beef and milk production in Tanzania is from pastoral production (URT, 2006; 2015b). Further, it presents the horrors of pastoralism to forests and 'modern' life in general. The pastoral production system is recurringly presented as both archaic and anti-development.

With the othering of pastoralists, the possibilities of pastoralists accessing VLFRs are diminished significantly, given the dangers of pastoral mobility. In the Inaugural Parliamentary speech of the incumbent President (April 22, 2021), it was categorically stated that "the current uncontrolled movement leads to environmental degradation and instigates conflicts between them [pastoralists] and farmers."²⁰ Moreover, whenever reference is made to pastoral mobility or movement, the Livestock Policy presents it as uncontrolled and undesirable with adverse effects. The Policy intimates that "communal grazing encourages free and uncontrolled movements of livestock from one area to another in search of pastures and water" (p. 15). The Policy perhaps makes one of the most critical assessments of mobility by extending that herd movement, in its wake, leads to (a) the spread of animal diseases, (b) social conflicts, (c) social delineation, and (d) environmental degradation and pollution (URT, 2006, p. 16). The National Livestock Identification, Registration and Traceability Act (URT, 2010) therefore serves as an antidote to movement. Envisioning grazing in VLFRs, therefore, could be seen as encouraging "free and uncontrolled movement" with dire consequences, defeating the purpose of the overarching modernization initiative (URT, 2015b). Views of pastoral irrationality have nonetheless been challenged by long-term researchers on East African pastoralism like Scoones (2020), who appreciates pastoralists ability to live with and from uncertainty.

Generally, in official documents, mobility is defined solely based on the common denominator of irrationality. This irrationality means that accessing communal grazing spaces, such as VLFRs, should villages institutionalize grazing, will lead to more problems. The representation of irrationality underscores the prevalence of colonial logic shaping Tanzania's livestock sector, reproducing notions of an archaic pastoral system and silencing the positives, particularly for households and local authorities.²¹ The state, therefore, succeeds, at least discursively, to demonize in order to modernize. Pastoralists continue to be discursively constructed as a homogenous 'other' with a litany of negatives. Therefore, a reluctance to consider pastoralism as a viable land use in some landscapes with trees and as a vital livelihood was unsurprising. The state's view of pastoral production and mobility as an irrationality can hardly be separated from observations by the British authorities, as detailed by Hill and Moffett (1955).

¹⁹ Such sentiments are also reflected in the charcoal sector, with over 55,000 bags of charcoal impounded between 2015 and 2023, as presented in the MNRT Parliamentary Budget Speeches. Further, the sector is equally presented as an environmental burden and a threat to forests.

²⁰ It is worth highlighting that there are contested positions on pastoralism, as revealed in the contributions of Members of Parliament, depending on the constituency one represents. Political rallies also reflect this, especially in election times, revealing the need to win or protect votes.

²¹ For instance, records show that a quarter of Kiteto District Council's annual revenue is from the livestock sector.

Portrayal	Statement/Remark	Source
Criminals	Referring to the MNRT Wildlife and Forest Crimes Task Team, the Minister stated: The Ministry carried out a total of 349,102-day patrols that successfully apprehended 7,085 suspects ...48 weapons of war, 150 civilian weapons, 1,058 ammunition ... and 79,831 cattle.	MNRT Budget Speech 2017/18, p. 6
	The Agency [i.e. TFS] has continued to remove invaders from the reserves ... Until March 2018, invaders were removed from 33 forests, and 3,834 criminals and 33,544 livestock were apprehended.	MNRT Budget Speech 2018/19, pp. 26-27
Unproductive	... As you know, our country ranks second in African livestock populations. We have 33.4 mil cattle, 21.3 mil goats; 5.65 mil sheep ... nonetheless it's true that this sector has not adequately benefitted us.	Pres. John Magufuli Nov. 10, 2020, p. 31
	Despite being ranked second in Africa ... our cattle produce 3 liters of milk, whereas using modern technologies, they can produce 20 – 30 liters per day. Most of our cattle, on average, produce not more than 150 kg, whereas elsewhere in the world, they reach 500 – 600 kg.	Pres. Samia Suluhu April 22, 2021, pp. 24-25
Invaders	... pastoralists' invasion into reserves and government ranches causing severe environmental degradation and the spreading of diseases between livestock and wildlife.	MoLF Budget Speech 2020/21, p. 41
	Furthermore, human activities such as farming, livestock, and settlements have persisted in invading wildlife, forests, bees, and antiquities conservation, adversely affecting conservation.	MNRT Budget Speech 2021/22, page 103
Conflict Instigators	Likewise, we intend to increase the grazing area from 2,788,901 ha to 6,000,000 ha. The aim is to reduce the current uncontrolled movement that leads to environmental degradation and instigates conflicts between them [pastoralists] and farmers.	Pres. Samia Suluhu, April 22, 2021, pp. 24-25
Environmental Degraders & Unsustainable	... the Ministry has continued education campaigns on the need to change from traditional to modern, sustainable and productive livestock keeping that conserves the environment.	MoLF Budget Speech 2022/23, p. 50

Table 1: The political framing of pastoralism. Sources: Websites of the Parliament of Tanzania, MoLF, MNRT

Seeing mobility as a problem to be solved unearths the challenges of mosaic land-use planning vis-à-vis pastoral continuities across the landscape. The normalization of boundaries on parcels of land has been interrogated by Kameri-Mbote (2013), who argues that the post-colonial state's institutional restructuring has failed to recognize and provide for pastoral production. Others, such as Robinson and Flintan (2022), amplify the costs of land-use planning along subdivided mosaics that fail to appreciate pastoralism and hence create limits to mobility. One might ask, why should the beginning of a forest mean the end of rangelands or pasture? This question challenges entrenched 'science' that ignores context-specific lived experiences. By quietening lived experiences, the state manifests its copyright on modernity truths. However, as Langdon (2013) notes, such a singular view of development as modernity only normalizes coloniality.

Despite the dominant trend in the negative portrayal of pastoralism, it is worth pointing out that there is generally an alternate, yet less pronounced, presentation of pastoralism. Tanzania's National Livestock Modernization Initiative (URT, 2015b), for instance, albeit modestly, highlights the value of pastoral mobility in harnessing the full potential of the arid and semi-arid lands. The initiative notes "[i]n history and theory, extensive livestock production systems are often the most compatible agricultural enterprise with wildlife conservation" (URT, 2015b, p. 30). This statement presents pastoralism as compatible with wildlife conservation. Another seemingly positive presentation on the contribution of pastoralists, although in a single occurrence, was given by President Magufuli in his speech to Parliament on November 13th, 2020.²² In his remarks, the President stressed that pastoralists are a wealthy group and that proper mechanisms should be implemented to ensure that livestock rearing does not burden pastoralists.²³ His remarks redirected the discourse that perceived pastoralists as poor people without economic rationality, just interested in herd sizes. Nonetheless, hostile rhetoric remains overwhelmingly intact in Tanzania.

6. Discussion and conclusion

I began with narrations of what transpires in Tanzania's forest reserves and the excesses of the post-colonial state in arresting pastoral grazing in forest reserves. Looking back at the evidence, we can infer that, in the prevailing institutional and discursive environment, grazing in VLFRs is unthinkable, particularly to political elites, experts and academics, despite the realities present in villages such as Olkitkit and Sunya where seasonal grazing occurs. Whereas homogenizing discourses are mobilized in presenting grazing as anti-forestry irrespective of the reserve categories, the institutional ambiguities and legal lacuna empower the state to control villages' decisions over VLFRs on what values could be institutionalized. Furthermore, pathologization discourses are instrumentalized to control pastoral mobility. In investing in 'colonial sciences' – scientific forestry and animal husbandry – the post-colonial state validates and naturalizes their incompatibility. Detaching such thinking to suit the diverse on-the-ground present-day, context-specific realities proves to be complex and challenging given the current institutional landscape. Within such a framework, VLFRs could potentially be theatres of scuffles between forest officials and pastoralists, should the Director of Forestry decide to issue notes of guidance that could criminalize grazing in VLFRs where it is either a customary practice or has already been institutionalized as a right.

All things considered, participatory forestry and pastoralism seem to oppose the post-colonial state's envisioning of conservation and development. In the name of development-modernity, technologies of control are deployed: on the one hand, to replace traditional pastoralism, and on the other to retain traditional forestry. 'Tradition', therefore, is quite fluid, reflecting the mechanics and power of the state to classify people and practices along a schema of development-conservation. Through a decolonial analysis, new limits to thinking and practice around (rural) communities and natural resources could be imagined. This requires decolonizing the normative foundations of knowledge and thereby "rethinking thinking itself" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018, p. 72). Rethinking forestry and pastoralism would produce a novel understanding of land use, livelihoods, and development which recognizes that pre-colonial societies were epistemologically grounded in their relationship with nature.

The decolonization talk, nonetheless, is meritless if the institutional environment remains unchanged. I do not wish to intimate that I have an antidote for this, nor do I intend to make definitive practical solutions. However, a good starting point could be the revision of the National Livestock Policy. Firstly, a change in the recurring hostile rhetoric about pastoralism is necessary. This would de-pathologize pastoralists and acknowledge their unique histories and contributions to economies and livelihoods. As it is, the present hostile rhetoric reinforces the need to replace or fight pastoralism, with dire repercussions. This then leads to the second policy change. There is a need to acknowledge the logic of pastoral mobility in taking advantage of variability

²² Hansard of the Parliament of Tanzania.

²³ Address by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Hon. John Pombe Joseph Magufuli during the Official Opening of the 12th Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania, Dodoma, November 13, 2020.

and uncertainty in the drylands. The synergies of pastoral knowledge and modern science would enrich improving pastoralism on its own merit. This is justified given more than a hundred seemingly futile years of misunderstanding pastoralists in mainstream views.

Institutions surrounding forestry – particularly the Forest Act and Regulations – could benefit from more clarity. Firstly, the boundaries in the mandates and rights of villages to prescribe forest use should be specified. This will smooth the process towards realizing fully decentralized community forestry. In a way, this would permit villages to rewrite and shape discourses about their relationships with forests. The changing VLFRs-charcoal production relationship reveals that this is conceivable. It is, therefore, possible to change the singular envisioning of forests, which renders invisible the rich history of community-forests relationships that predate both colonialism and scientific forestry. By extension, policy should reflect practice and recognize pasture or fodder as a non-wood product that is critical and invaluable to pastoralists. Secondly, caution needs to be exercised in explaining forest degradation or deforestation. In principle, a decoupling of the diverse pastoral activities provides the basis for examining the impact or value of exclusive grazing when other activities have been arrested. Attention should be paid to the activities and not the community or group.

The critical question at the end is: Can livestock-grazed forests remain productive and protected? The differences between and within communities and VLFRs are so enormous that a generalized proposal would be hasty and flawed. However, I submit that it is fundamental for experts at the MoLF and MNRT to touch base with villages and appreciate the pluriversity of existing realities and relationships. Actual grazing practices in VLFRs present counter-narratives to pastoralism-forestry relations. Based on the diverse experiences on the ground, sustained for decades, a reimagination of values and uses of forested landscapes is conceivable. This reimagination should be informed not just by scientific approaches, but also by the diverse situated contexts and histories found in Tanzania. Appreciating history centers pastoralists' struggles as they traverse the landscape, struggles that primarily result from colonialism. Altogether, such efforts will help to debunk the either-or rationality, thus unveiling the multiple values of landscapes, with trees rendering forest reserves safer spaces.

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