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Interactive comment on "Sharp ecotones spark sharp ideas: comment on "Structural, physiognomic and above-ground biomass variation in savanna-forest transition zones on three continents – how different are co-occurring savanna and forest formations?" by Veenendaal et al. (2015)" *by* A. Staal and B. M. Flores

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We appreciate the feedback from the referees and the fact that they agree with our comment on Veenendaal et al. (2015). We are confident that by incorporating the referees' suggestions we will be able to improve our manuscript. A point that both referees raised is the simplicity/redundancy of our conceptual model (Fig. 2). Indeed, this

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figure in its current form is very simple and lacks some important components of the system dynamics, in particular the difference between functional types (savanna- and forest-tree species) in their responses to soil nutrient content and interactions with fire. Therefore, encouraged in particular by the literature brought forward by referee 1, we aim to update our conceptual model for a revised version of the manuscript. Our new conceptual model will include the different interactions that savanna- and forest-tree species have with soil fertility and fire. Furthermore, based on the suggestions of referee 1 we want to discuss these processes and how they could explain the multimodal tree-cover distributions that we show in Fig. 1.

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