

Interactive comment on “Patterns in Woody Vegetation Structure across African Savannas” by Christoffer R. Axelsson and Niall P. Hanan

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The authors state: “Because of uncertainty in the accuracy of the woody properties derived from the delineated crowns, we do not focus on absolute numbers but on how they vary across environmental gradients.”

The study assumes that errors in the woody proportion estimation are either negligible or are the same across the environmental gradients and at the different African sites. What evidence is there for this ?

Tree crown morphology (roundness etc.) and remote sensing signal contributions (i.e., soil, understory and shadow) are unlikely to be the same across the African sites/gradients and so errors in the empirical crown delineation method are likely to be variable. Moreover, the tree crown delineation is applied to different satellite data

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(WorldView, GeoEye, Quickbird).

Without a quantitative accuracy assessment of the tree crown delineation across the gradients/sites and among the data used this interesting study is incomplete and potentially flawed - the results may be controlled by crown delineation differences.

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