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BEGIN TRANSCRIPTION

[00:00 - 02:58] Moderator: You're here, as I have said, probably too many times for the Center for Collaborative Conservation Seminar series on Indigenous Peoples and conservation. And if you didn't intend to be here, you should stay, because we're going to have a great time today and in the future. Before I introduce Dr. Marvel, soon to be Professor Marvel, I think. I mean, not too maybe so soon, but she is a professor. But never mind. We won't go there. [Laughter] Sorry, I can put my foot in almost anything and it will come out dirty. So, next, in two weeks, we're going to have Lee Sharpe, who's sitting right here. Who's going to speak to us about indigenous landscapes of mind, spirit and place. Please come to that one. And then on October 18th, which is two weeks after that, Kathleen Sherman and Richard Sherman are going to talk about the indigenous stewardship model, learning the language of collaboration, and that's very cool. Then our own Kim Skylander is going to talk about The People's Way Project on November 15th, how traditional ways of knowing the land led to the creation of the most extensive wildlife sensitive highway in North America. You'd think she used to be an editor at the Forest Service. What kind of wordy title that was but [Laughter] Kim is an new associate director of CCC. She actually has to work with me and that's really a problem.

[Background Laughter] So but then November 29th, a party from a villager will talk about supporting community based conservation. This series is designed so that we can start thinking about indigenous peoples and conservation in the center because we will probably be moving in that

direction to a certain degree. So you're welcome to have input into where we're going as well. So today we have the great privilege to have Dr. Marvel then having Mar J. Goldman, having driven down or up, depending on how you are in the map. Is New Zealand up? She drove down. But anyway from I'm sorry. [Laughter] What happened? What did I drink? I don't know what it was, but it was good. [Laughter] And I've known Ma for a long time. She's an assistant professor in the Department of Geography at Boulder. She's also and I'm going to read this for a second. She's also at the Institute of Behavioral Science as a research associate in Environmental Society program. And there's a number of very smart people who have done that dual thing where they're part of a department and part of this research group. So it's a very vibrant group down there. And Mar, I don't actually know when we first met, but we met some time ago. And so when I was living in Africa, she would come in and set me straight about a lot of things in my office there. And occasionally I'd see her in Tanzania and things like that. But today she's going to talk to us about empowering or alienating communities. Conservation in Maasai Land in East Africa. All right, thank you so much for coming all this way. Really appreciate it. I know how busy you are and take it away. And if you want to start short, there'll be lots of questions, but it's up to you how you want to.

[02:58 - 04:43] Dr. Marvel: Thank you and thanks for so much for having me. I'm going to try and keep it short for questions, but at the same time, I sort of tend to kind of throw everything in. [Chuckles] And so there's a little bit of that. And you know sort of Robin just made the joke about the titles. And so I have a particularly, I think, provocative title, and I sort of did that on purpose, as I'm sure Robin wouldn't be surprised, this notion of being, you know, empowering or alienating communities. And I think that's because on the one hand, I mean, social scientists have already pointed out how conservation is and has been quite alienating in lots of ways in lots of places for indigenous communities, for local populations. But I'm not supposed to be talking about that today. This is supposed to be a conversation about sort of how indigenous communities can be involved in conservation. And so that's sort of the empowering component because there's been a huge shift over the last couple of decades about conservation outside of the alienating model, outside of the national park model, community based conservation. Conservation, that even in some instances actually does claim to be empowering local communities. And what I want to suggest sort of with this provocative title is that we'd be really careful about analyzing what those two words mean and how they're used, and that we take the word empowering seriously, both in our critique of projects that claim to be empowering, but also in ways of thinking about how conservation can be more empowering. So I promise it won't always be a critique. [Chuckles] And so this is a map that Robin was so kind to give me a couple, I think a couple of years ago. And it's getting lots of use. [Chuckles] And this is just sort of, it shows where the work is going to be coming from, which is Tanzania and Kenya.

[04:43 - 06:28] And this is an insert of that area. The red outline is what gets sort of broadly discussed as Maasai Land or land that was historically claimed by Maasai and is today predominantly in certain pockets, managed and run by Maasai. And then the yellow squares are these different case studies areas that were a target of this project retoreto that came out of the area where Robin was before coming here, where I had the pleasure of meeting her and then was able to work specifically in some of these. My own research is mostly in the [Unconfirmed Name] area in Tanzania a little bit now, also in Longido. And then I'm going to be drawing some research from Amboseli as well. And then I also have some stuff from Kitengela. But what should come across from these areas, all of them, except for Longido are actually named after world famous National Parks. So Amboseli, Maasai Mara, Tangier or Kitengela is actually Nairobi National Park. And so this highlights sort of the relationship that Maasai have with conservation. And all of the parks are of course, sort of the first step in the conservation process, the institutionalized conservation process of sort of taking land away and alienating local people. But in all of these areas, there's been an ongoing sort of plethora of multiple kinds of conservation projects to try to in one way or another include local people in the process. So before I get into sort of the specifics, I want to just give a little bit of background on sort of the Maasai conservation nexus, in addition to that map which highlighted some of it. And so I have up here the sort of overlap in space. So historically, Maasai are predominantly-- their predominant livelihood is as herders, pastoralists herding cattle, sheep and goats mostly, and donkeys.

[06:28 - 08:14] There's been a great deal of diversification and so Maasai, almost all Maasai also farm have people working in the city, mines in Tanzania and sometimes rent out their land for large scale farms and in some places make money off of conservation. But they're still predominantly pastoralists, and particularly in terms of identity, but also by raising livestock in areas where livestock also roam. And so historically, they actually overlap tremendously in space, and that was sort of disrupted and bifurcated by creating national parks and creating basically places that were only for wildlife. And these places were created around permanent water sources as well [Background Coughing] as permanent sort of dry season grazing areas. And so in many ways, this sort of, these alienated Maasai, in terms of having access to land that either they officially lived in or that they utilized during particularly hard times for water and for dry season resources. But none of the parks are actually fenced except for Nairobi, but that's only fenced on the Nairobi side. The side that sort of that borders Maasai communities is unfenced. And so that means that during a good part of the year when there's actually resources, water and grass, because of rainfall in Maasai areas, a lot of wildlife in fact migrate outside of the national parks and into land that's also utilized by Maasai. So there continues to be an overlap in space and time. And this is a picture from Tanzania inside a village, and this is there's a Boma, Maasai homestead right over there, and that's right outside Maasai Mara.

Okay. So there is a history of land loss, a history of elimination, of continued overlapping space of use of these resources, though, leading to some degree of politics in terms of of control. So before I get into the specifics of, the specific examples, one of the things I wanted to do is just outline what I mean by these terms.

[08:14 - 09:49] And so this is just-- I came up with these definitions after a quick search online. So the first one is the Oxford English Dictionary that we're defining alienation as a state or experience of being isolated from a group or activity. And I added in or place, if you can think about parks. To which one as an individual or as a community should belong to or which one should be involved in. And that's my italics, understood. The transfer and also can refer from a legal sense to the transfer of ownership rights and property rights. And this is something that clearly comes across if we think about what happened with the creation of many national parks. The another definition is the withdrawing or separation of a person or a person's affections from an object or position of form or attachment, estrangement. And I think this is really useful for thinking about some of the causes or the sort of the outcomes of physical alienation. So we can think about this as a physical and a legal alienation and as this is a more emotional And so an interesting thing that comes up if you look at the synonyms for the word alienation, we have estrangement, disaffection, disgruntlement, souring, things that anybody that's done research on how people feel about conservation when they've been alienated from resources that they considered theirs, these are almost all the terms that come up in the process. And I think I put up here creating outsiders because we need another way to think about alienation is sort of creating outsiders from a group, from a place. So it's turning a situation into insiders and outsiders, particularly in terms of control and ownership. So empowerment, you might think, is just the opposite. Sort of creating outsiders than we have creating insiders. But it's a little bit more than that.

[09:49 - 11:50] It's strengthening as insiders, empowerment is a much more difficult word to define. It's highly contentious and it's being defined differently by different groups and different academic areas, particularly within development and feminism, feminist studies as well. But the Oxford English Dictionary defines it as giving someone the authority. Well, this is in power. It's usually defined as the verb; to give someone authority to power or power to do something. To make somebody stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights. So it's about this transition to being able to control and change their own life in the surroundings. To invest with power, especially legal power or official authority. To equip or supply with the ability. So I highlighted, enable. It's basically not just sort of giving power to, but enabling them to use that power to further improve the situation and improve their lives. And a really important thing to think about with empowerment is that it's actually a process and an outcome of change. And again, this is something

we can talk about. It's a kind of difficult word to pin down, but this is my main point. So then how do these words relate to conservation? How can we think about these in terms of conservation? So we can think about authority as being really important. In terms of authority over management, over decision making processes, over the use of funds, over planning. Okay. And this is a big thing that's come out in terms of, you know, the difference between different kinds of community based conservation projects. Do people just receive benefits or do they have authority over decision making processes in this area. To make stronger and more confident, so sort of enabling, creating, enabling environment means that we need to respect local knowledge, but not just as an end, like, oh, let's just sort of extract all the knowledge that local people have so that we can then as managers, use it to create, make decisions, but to understand that local knowledge is a process and that the ways in which people learn and the ways in which knowledge is shared and the ways in which people communicate is also important and they've sort of simplified that by writing in means.

[11:50 - 14:25] Invest with power. So providing them with knowledge as well. And so we there's sort of this respect for local knowledge, but also an understanding that potentially, let's say herders are particularly good at managing their landscape, but now they need to deal with outside organizations, they need to set up a bank account, they need to deal with tourists. Maybe they don't have that kind of knowledge and those kind of skills. And so that's where the investment would come in. And then providing an enabling context. And this is something I'm going to talk a lot about at the end. But this idea of respecting local forms of communication. And this in some ways all comes down to the notion that knowledge is power. But in order to actually access knowledge, use knowledge, exchange knowledge and share knowledge, then we also need to put a focus on communication. And so that's what I mean by understanding local forms of communication as well as local forms of knowledge. Okay, so. Now onto the beef of the matter. This is so how can we talk about different kinds of conservation areas as being empowering or alienating? So obviously the first one, National Parks is based on enclosing a piece of land, setting up fines. It's enforced through the state and so it's sort of the prime example of an alienating form of conservation. There are most national parks have in fact started to have outreach to communities, some of which they call community based conservation. But these in many ways, if you can think about those synonyms, right, souring estrangement, the outreach are really ways of just kind of sort of trying to deal with those those outcomes of alienation rather than changing it from alienation. And sort of paying people to accept the alienation. And so we're not going to talk about national parks. [Chuckles] I'm really going to focus on community based conservation, which is a really big term to encompass lots of different things. But wildlife management areas, for instance, in Tanzania, which are incredibly problematic and I'm not going to talk about them, but I'd be happy to answer questions about them because in many ways they are just sort of recreating boundaries and recreating new, alienating spaces. But

they are designed as a community based conservation product from the state community, natural resource management areas that get support, let's say from external donors or the state, conservation trusts and then land conservation or competition programs, is just one example of other forms of sort of research and outreach that might happen in areas surrounding national parks. And then payment for ecosystem services is often thought of as part of community based conservation. I think it's sort of growing and big enough on its own that we should think about it as something separate, even if it works with different forms of community based conservation. And I think here there's some really interesting things to talk about, but unfortunately I probably am not going to have time to get to it.

[14:25 - 16:17] So I'm just sort of, my focus for today is going to be on the community based conservation and on these two sort of products from that. And so what I'm going to do for most of the rest of the talk is to basically draw on these two different examples, drawing on my own research and some that I've done with other people as well as at some point, if I get to it, some of the research that Robin and her colleagues have done and talk about these forms of conservation as in fact being promoted as empowering. But what happens when we sort of look a little bit closer and get to the question of how they're empowering or alienating and what we can do to lead towards more empowerment. So the first example, I'm going to go backwards, is land conservation projects. And so this is work that I've done together with Johanna you know from here, as well as Jennifer Perry from Boulder. And this is a picture that Johanna took and it's about. So if you remember the picture I showed earlier, the overlap in space. So Maasai spaces overlap with wildlife spaces. That means, that in addition to herbivores, there's also lions that tend to come in around Maasai areas and Maasai tend to-- lions tend to prey on livestock when they get the opportunity. And while Maasai have historically recognizes not really hunting wildlife to a great extent, lions are an exception to that rule. Lions are actually officially hunted in a practice called Alamein, and we have one paper written on this, another one in the work, because if anyone's interested, I'm not going to go into that much detail about it. But basically it's a practice where young men called Moran in Ma go out on organized lion hunts. Now, needless to say, this particular activity is not looked upon fondly by conservationists.

[16:17 - 17:54] And with the growing sort of concern of a lion populations in both countries, particularly in Kenya, there's been a lot of effort put into trying to understand why and how Maasai hunt lions so that there can be interventions to stop it. And people in Kenya are actually claiming that Maasai lion hunting is putting the lion population at risk of extinction. And so the two most common interventions used are comp-- starting with compensation. Compensation is based on the notion that Maasai kill lions, mostly because lions kill livestock, and so they're just retaliating. And so if we paid

lions-- we paid Maasai for their lost livestock, then maybe they wouldn't kill the lions. And this is done in a way that sort of a reward and punishment. So you get rewarded if you don't go out and kill the lion but if there's been any attempts by anyone in the community to kill a lion, then you don't get your compensation. This usually goes along with or sort of with education and or education comes in as a more interactive kind of interjection. The idea of basically teaching Maasai to build more fences, better fences to keep, this is actually for the goats, because Maasai are more concerned about hyenas at night than they are about lions. But to build improved fences that supposedly lions can't get over, teaching Maasai how to herd better so that they don't lose to lions. [Laughs] Yeah, I know. It was a pretty disturbing experience watching this video being shown to a group of elders. Particularly there was an an instance in the video where they taught, they literally used sort of veterinary help to show what that cow was getting so old that it wasn't going to actually be able to produce value.

[17:54 - 19:00] And so they should have sold it earlier, not recognizing that perhaps the Maasai made a decision to not sell the cow that had nothing to do with the economics and that most of them likely know the deterioration of the cow that's happening. [Laughs] So then there's a third project that was that some of you might have heard about called Blind Guardian that comes from this NGO called Living with Lions. It's been getting a lot of press lately, and it sort of was designed in some ways in realizing that compensation was quite limited and problematic. And so it's supposed to be more productive, more participatory, and it builds on the Moran structure, recognizing that they are the ones that mostly hunt the lions and trying to turn them into protectors instead of hunters of lions. Provides them with employment, but it continues with the education. The video actually mentioned was from that organization. But the Moran are supposed to sort of protect the society and provide help with lost livestock and monitor the lion population. So there are limitations to each one of these approaches. Compensation assumes that killing is always primarily economic. It doesn't actually recognize non economic ways of interacting with livestock that is quite common for Masai, which is emotional reactions. It also equates cattle with money. Neither does it incorporate Maasai knowledge about why they would react, why the killing is, why they hunt the lion. If it's that it's not necessarily just a reaction, but Maasai will talk about it as being teaching the lion. They also there's very little involvement of Maasai in terms of even determining how the practice should work and what the price should be. There's an exception for a project that's being built right now in Tanzania, but normally Maasai are pretty excluded. So I would say that it doesn't get anywhere near being empowering. Education and improved husbandry similarly sort of ignores Maasai knowledge regarding cattle, regarding husbandry, regarding predators. It ignores any notion that they might in fact have positive feelings about lions to begin with. And it assumes that poor Boma structure and

herding practices are due to their not having knowledge to do it any better as opposed to the fact that they don't have labor, they don't have the materials, they don't have the money.

[20:00 - 21:34] There actually has been projects where people whose organizations are bringing in subsidized fences and most Maasai will take the fences in Tanzania, though they use them to cover their goats and not their cows. And the lion guarding is much more participatory. And this is a sort of project that's getting a lot of good press about being more participatory, about being empowering. It's empowering young men to be protecting lions instead of hunting them. But it doesn't. It ignores the complex relationship that must have with lions and again, begins with the notion that Maasai need to learn why they should protect lions, assuming that they all hate lions. It also doesn't recognize the complex ways in which Moran fit into the society and that they don't hunt lions in isolation from the rest of the society, including women and men. And again, I have a lot of data on this. I'm just going to put two quick slides to show what happened when you sort of step back and say, well, maybe the parameters that we have for understanding these relationships are not the only way to understand these relationships. How do Maasai really understand and feel about lions? Well, it's not only Moran, our data included interviews with women and elders. This is a Moran from the Amboseli area. And when we started to ask questions about how they feel about lions and didn't necessarily have to box it into western categories of like and dislike, you find complex reactions usually liking and disliking in the very same sentence. It's the most liked carnivore. Lions are more appreciated than some other animals such as elephants and highly much more than other carnivores.

[21:34 - 23:11] There's a great deal of respect for lions. The part of the hunt is actually a hunt between two equals, the sort of, you know, the the warriors of both of the groups. There's a great deal of knowledge about lion behavior. And included in that is the notion that if you don't come to the lion that killed livestock, then you won't ever stop the hunting of livestock and that lions need to learn behavior and that other lions will learn from what happens to this particular lion, and then that maintains human-lion relations. So what would an empowerment conservation intervention look like? It would take some of these into consideration, and it would begin with asking and understanding how Maasai already relate to lions, as opposed to trying to teach them that conservation of lions is important. And then also would understand why they hunt. And I'm not going to go through this detail, but this is just our attempt to say that they hunt lions for different reasons that can't really be boxed into sort of retaliation or just sort of random cultural. Some of these are actually ecological, some of them are about teaching the lions. Some of them are about social responses and that we need to start with understanding this in order to understand how to protect the lions and to intervene with hunting. We also need to understand that hunting is mediated by the elders. The elders can institutions stop the warriors from-- the Morans from hunting. And so by focusing only on the Moran,

you're sort of you're disempowering the elders in a way and ignoring the complex situation. And then also I mentioned that sort of knowledge, understanding knowledge as an end is important, but it's also important to understand how knowledge is created and passed on. So how can we find out? How do Maasai know about lions?

[23:11 - 24:52] Well, in lots of different ways, including stories. And they have stories that are handed down from generation to generation that are told mostly by women. I've literally had the men tell me, Oh, yeah, we have those stories. But, you know, I don't really know them. You have to go talk to the women. So if you're only interviewing a Moran and you're asking them questions about how they feel about lions fitting it into some sort of statistical program, you're not going to find out about the stories. And what the stories tell us is that bad lions need to be hunted to teach them, but that they're also good lions and good lions need to be spared. And so it teaches the positive potential of relationships between people and lions. There are several stories about women being not only spared, but protected by lions. And then those lions not only being spared, being from being hunted, but being rewarded by giving sort of a goat. And this was a sort of positive potential that could be used for empowering conservation projects, for saving lives, starting out with reminding people about the positive feelings that they already have. And then these are just some other forms of knowledge. And one of the important ones is hunting. Sort of part of the relationship with lions is maintained through hunting. And so this suggests that an empowering form of land conservation might in fact have to include some degree of hunting. And there's been some data from Tanzania that suggests that illegal hunting from or overharvesting from the legal hunting in Tanzania is much more damaging than any sort of Maasai hunting might be. Kenya is a different story, but it does sort of raise the point that respecting hunting as an actual practice, understanding how complex it is, and that it's not just the Moran, but the entire society of women and men that contribute to that might in fact enable discussions about more responsible hunting in particular places.

[24:53 - 26:19] Okay, so now what about the second example? What about community based conservation areas? So the example I just gave was about community sort of conservation interventions in villages outside of parks. But what about when we sort of try and set up a new area and call it a community based conservation area or community based trust? [Coughing] So this is example number two and I'm going to probably race through it just to, but I'd be happy to answer questions. I've done a lot of research in this area. This is a large map that shows the entire sort of part of Tanzania and part of Massai Land broken up into different categories by the African Wildlife Foundation. They call this area the Maasai Steppe heartland, which assumes sort of put forth the notion that it's a people centered program. And if you read any of their literature, it's all about empowering local communities. And if I have a chance, I'll talk about some of the stuff that's

happening in Simanjiro, which I think is a little bit more empowering. It's not being done by AWWF. I'm going to talk about this area in the middle. But what's important about this map is that what they've done is sort of highlight important conservation areas according to them and boxed in some of them. And so the area I'm going to talk about is this Manyara Ranch, which is right up here, and it's in the middle of Tanganyika, like Manyara National Park. It's supposed to fill this sort of important wildlife corridor area. Again, remember, wildlife don't stay inside the parks. They move. There's a migration that goes from here to there.

[26:20 - 28:46] So this is supposed to sort of protect part of that corridor. It used to be a state run cattle ranch, which is why it's called the Manyara Ranch. There are serious local claims to ownership. So back to the notion of alienation. These two villages, [Unconfirmed Name] used to own the ranch to long story that was given away before, during the colonial era. And then it became a state run cattle ranch and so they actually asked for it to be given back to them when it was going up for sale during liberalization. there was a lot of concern that they wouldn't use it properly as a conservation area and there were all these threats going on in the surrounding area. So a trust was formed. Through the promotion of AWWF, but also with some government officials, and they created the Tanzanian Land Conservation Trust and got a 99 year lease on the property. There's all kinds of issues involved with transparency and so forth. But if you read the documentation coming from Manyara ranch, the area is supposed to be a trust to protect wildlife and resident wild, the local communities in fact traditional pastoralism. So the local communities are supposed to be involved in multiple ways. It's cattle ranch and so they get to benefit from having access to the bulls for breeding. They get special access to steers for sales. There's been a couple attempts to work that out and the local villagers are hired to herd the ranch cattle. They're supposed to benefit from the wildlife conservation component through tourism, which is questionable. There's actually a whole new the area is now being run by a tourism concession, really extremely high end tourism, and villagers are quite unsure about their role in that process as of yet. But they were also hired way before that as game scouts and trained in local, in sort of game scout techniques. And they're supposed to have access to the area as a dry season grazing reserve. And this is a picture. This is actually illegal grazing, though. [Chuckles] But because it wasn't at the time period when they were supposed to be let in. And they're supposed to be actively involved in management through the steering committee. And so there's a steering committee made up of representatives from each village, and they come-- they're supposed to be working with the management of the ranch to sort of manage the ranch on a daily basis. This is a picture of a meeting that was disrupted by some elephants. And so these are all suggest and these are all things that are put out there by Manyara ranch to say that this is empowering for local communities.

[28:46 - 30:16] They also suggest it's empowering because there's a school inside that local Maasai children get to go to and local communities do get preference. But there's all kinds of problems with the ranch. There's a serious lack of transparency in terms of the initial transfer of the land. And so there was a massive alienation when people realized that, in fact, the land was no longer theirs. They had been told that it had been given back to them. But in fact, there was a 99 year lease signed to the trust. So that's just a typical issue of transparency, and it's not necessarily particular to this place. This is just a really good example. And there's a lack of participation. So, well, that seems a little bit more problematic. We have the steering committee. The steering committee is made up of representatives. Steering committee meets. When I was there during my dissertation work, I was there for two years and I went to the steering committee meetings and there were every six weeks on a regular basis. After that that stopped and then you would have a whole six months when they didn't meet at all. But there were all kinds of problems with sort of enabling participation that I'm going to get to in a minute. Part of it has to do with, well, here communication issues, sort of how participation was performed and the fact that it didn't fit the ways in which Maasai actually defined participation or how they communicate. And so even in the very beginning, when I would say there was to some extent a desire to really make this participatory and really make empowering, I mean, I knew the first manager, he at least was really concerned and wanted to do this properly and yet still just just didn't work. Part of that, too, though, included a complete lack of respect for local knowledge, even by for wildlife.

[30:16 - 31:47] And that makes sense. You know, people say, well, what do Maasai know about wildlife? You know and that always amazes me because, I mean, they live with them, so they know a lot about them. And that was a big part of what my dissertation was about, but nobody ever talked to them about that. Or local ecology, including the history of the area, including herding patterns. There was a big debate about fire and Maasai thought that the area should be burned to actually make it more habitable for a certain wildlife like wildebeest, and the manager did not think that should be the case. And then there were issues, even livestock, you can actually incorporate their knowledge about livestock and then of course, communication issues. Okay. So I'm going to try and go through the rest of this pretty quickly so that I can have some time for questions. But so communication issues, I mentioned that there was a desire for participation, but it never happened. And one of the main reasons is the lack of respect for local knowledge, which already sort of puts a stop on how much participation you can have, but then also sort of different ideas of communication. So Maasai have lots of different ways of communicating, obviously, but one of the foundational ways in which they make decisions. And so whenever there's a big decision that needs to be made, whether it's about paying a fine for a particular age set or sort of big dispute between a family or its age sets or about a development at the community level, they have meetings. And the meeting is

called in Iguana in Mar, which also means meeting, consultation, discussion. Sometimes they call it al-Thani, which literally just means tree, because the meetings are usually held underneath the tree.

[31:47 - 33:12] And this is a picture of the Kosongo Maasai in Tanzania. This is a picture of a Kaputei Maasai in Kenya. So even when they don't wear their red shukas, they still sit down in the grass and have meetings under a tree. And they call it *entumo which literally just means meeting or gathering. And I spent a lot of time researching this to try and understand how decisions are made here and how participation occurs here. Because Maasai talk like crazy at these meetings but never spoke at the steering committee meetings. And so this is a little bit of sort of indigenous knowledge about communication. The agenda is always open and so there's only like an item is put forth for discussion, but the agenda does not include the possible vote. And this might sound simple and straightforward, but if you think about it, if you start paying attention when you go to meetings, it's never the way our meetings happen. You know, you would say something, as simple like, well, today we're going to discuss the school. It's not today we're going to discuss whether or not the school should be built. Today, we're going to discuss a proposal that was put forth by the so-and-so to fund the school and whether we want to support that or not. It's just the issue. And so it's really wide open. And then everybody has the freedom to speak unconstrained, which means that it can go on for a really, really long time. It can seem like somebody is talking about something that has nothing to do with the topic at hand, but they basically have the right to do that. And then the meeting only finishes when a consensus has been reached. And this is an English word that I don't really think is the best translation, but it's difficult to come up with one.

[33:13 - 34:23] And I'm happy to talk more about this in the questions period. But I think it's it's basically this idea that the meeting can last for a really long time and it doesn't stop until there's really nothing left to say. And everything that is said can sort of together, you can figure out there's a place to go. There is no voting. There's no sort of raising of hands. The people usually feel confident enough that their opinion or their perspective was heard. And so even if they don't agree with the final outcome, they agree that it's an okay outcome. And so that's sort of a way of thinking about the consensus. But that's not the way that meetings were held in Manyara Ranch, nor is it the way that meetings are held anywhere. NGOs, government. These are two Maasai NGOs that were holding meetings that I participated in. Okay. And so when I talked to the Manyara Ranch manager about the style of the meetings, he said, well, it's not me, it's Tanzania. Everybody does it this way. So there's always a front table where the person in charge is, and there's usually a flip chart and this is a poor guy, this is he does really, really great work, but I'm using [Chuckles] him as-- Well, this was a seminar. People usually sit in rows looking up at the front table. They're set agendas.

[34:23 - 36:03] And there's usually a time constraint. And this causes all kinds of problems for enabling participation and basically doesn't. And so there are several constraints. One, the foreign language and I don't necessarily mean English or Swahili versus Maa, I mean, sort of talking about things that are different. And so that already is going to bring on a constraint in terms of people feeling comfortable to participate. But then if the meeting is set up and let's say you have, you know, a the person that the manager sets the agenda and he's sitting at the front table, he's white, he's the manager and he's an elder. So three reasons to actually respect him. So he says, okay, well, this is the agenda. This is what I think we should do, but I'm open to everybody's opinion and I want to know what everybody says. Well, according to everybody, the Maasai, the meeting has just ended because the person who started the meeting and is a respectful elder has told you what the outcome should be. You can't refute that. So there's no way that they can speak. And that's how they discussed it. They would literally say there was no space to participate. And that's quite different than if that same exact person just said, okay, today we're going to talk about this topic. And then he gave his opinion within the setting of the meeting. Then he would just be yet another person providing his opinion. Obviously, there's all kinds of power issues involved. There are certain people that would feel uncomfortable speaking after him. And I'm not suggesting that it works really. You know, that it always works perfectly, but that it provides a context, in fact, for people to feel more comfortable to speak. And that, I found, was a really, really simple thing that caused that really sort of put a block on participation and how it can happen in certain places.

[36:04 - 37:03] And so if you talk to Maasai about how a successful exchange occurs, they would talk about respect. [Foreign word] is a complex Maasai word that can both inhibit participation. So if they have too much respect for the person in charge and the person in charge leads it in a certain way, they're not going to be able to speak. But a meeting without respect just isn't even worth speaking at. And so that's the other sort of thing that inhibits participation. If there is no respect for the ideas and knowledge that people have brought with them, they're going to feel much more inhibited to speak then. And I use the word exchange because I'm not only talking about meetings, but about relationships and about feeling comfortable, exchanging knowledge in multiple ways. Trust based on mutual respect, this notion of unity and that's tied to that notion of consensus. Oftentimes, people will walk away from a meeting feeling good, even if the decision was something they don't agree with, they're not happy with personally, but they're happy because it shows that they, together as a group, were able to come together with a decision and they support the decision.

[37:04 - 38:40] Truth listening to each other. And then this other point is sort of this idea, obviously nothing runs perfectly. And so there are groups that will feel more inhibited at a meeting like women, and they're as long as they feel like they're brought up to speed, they're given information

beforehand, they're given a specific time to speak, they're sort of a space is made for them. It's much more enabling in terms of creating participation for them. So how would this play with outside groups? And this is something that I want to say. I actually borrowed, but a lot of this is something that I saw in observing the work that Hillary was doing in Kitengela, sort of creating a sense of there was a little bit more sense of unity and commonality. So not having outsiders come in as outsiders trying to sort of reduce that sense of alienation. These are the educated ones. They're the ones sitting at the table wearing a suit and shiny shoes and coming in a nice car and realizing that sort of knowledge exchange needed to go in both directions and that in order for that to happen, there needed to be long meetings. I'm going to sort of rush this because I don't have time. I want to finish up, but I just want to say, well, are there examples of empowerment so that this is not you know, these aren't just processes, can it happen in certain ways? And what about payment for ecosystem services? I'm actually not going to talk about this. But again, I can I can answer questions about it. I think just like the one example I've given, it depends on, you know, on whether or not participation is enabled, whether a particular kind of context is created. And so that's where I think it's more useful to talk about just empowering people through conservation by having certain sort of certain examples of processes as opposed to particular examples.

[38:40 - 40:10] And so respect from Maasai Land in all forms, you know, spatially, how do people talk about the places they live? How do they draw the maps? How do they think about the ecology? What do they know about wildlife, respect for how they understand and share that information. And I've already mentioned this stuff about meetings. And so just to give some examples, this is a map that I made so that I could talk to Maasai about-- So this is how they organize their space, which was quite different from the maps I was coming across. They couldn't participate in conversations about how they use their space if they couldn't use the names. And then I was able to use this map to talk about wildlife and livestock overarching. And then this is just an example of some of the work that was done in Kenya with the group, basically including people at multiple stages. And so having knowledge exchange going in both ways all the time, knowing that people couldn't do sort of the research organization, couldn't understand the area without local involvement, local involvement was in was improved by having local people understand some of the techniques like maps and GPS and so forth. And so in the end, I just want to close up by suggesting that there are ways that we can think about this relationship in a sort of more positive light. Financial benefits are not enough. They don't address alienation at all. They don't empower. They just sort of smooth over alienating processes. And they often don't address local needs at all. So the needs might be hurting and they're providing a school. Not the financial benefits aren't important, they definitely are.

[40:10 - 41:15] But respect for knowledge is both means and ends. But that knowledge also needs to be communicated. And so there needs to be an ability to encourage dialogue and respect difference. And that this all ties into this notion of relationship, open communication, trust and respect. And so again, I said, I can give you some examples of different processes that I think are working out well, but it's not necessarily because it's a payment for ecosystem services instead of a community outreach. It's because of the ways in which the relationships were built on trust, respect [Inaudible] And so since I've already gone five minutes over, I'm going to end. And if I don't oh, I'm sorry. I have one more line at the bottom of, that's the problem, I guess. Obviously participation, but I mean participation in a really sort of critical way, in an empowering way. So not just adding people and stirring, but at every step of the way in terms of research, management, decision making. And then there's my thank you side, which is probably people on here I didn't thank including Joanna for research. I think it's an old slide [Laughter]. Recycling some of this stuff. So thank you. [Applause]

[41:20 - 41:24] Moderator: Okay. We must have some questions for Mara, and I'll let you field your own questions.

[41:31 - 44:19] Interviewer 1: [Background] As a Maasai I must stand to speak. [Laughter] I am not intimidating anybody, it's our way of speaking. First of all Mar, how did you get the name Mar and you're not Mar. That's my first question. [Laughter] Number two, I'm extremely elated and happy by your presentation. Physically I am just here but all my thinking have already and I'm actually chatting and two more. It just makes me think about the kind of meetings I've been attending, the procedure, how the meetings are held, and you really put in perspective what takes place. My only concern is when you look at the decision making analysis as a social science, I think the Maasais have an agenda. And from my own experience, not from reading anybody's book, my own participation, every time there's a meeting, that meeting has to be convened. And what I must say is down at the tree, who ever chairs the meetings we're, okay, what did we decide last time? So there's no monthly matters arising in every meeting, meaning there's something to be discussed in that meeting and then somebody comes. Okay. Last time we talked A, B, C, D, and if somebody gives us a point, somebody say, okay, please know that this is what we said. And before they move ahead with the agenda, of course they are not as in Western way of thinking of 1, 2 or 3, but there's an issue that has to bring these people under the tree. And so to me, probably may need to revisit what you mean by they don't understand it in terms of agenda. But to me, I think it's an issue that we discussed and that's when you said the meeting is adjourned when there is a consensus, which means there was an agenda. That's where the consensus is with. And in terms of freedom, yeah, everyone has to be able to speak. But those guys must be very clever, bright and intelligent people. When you talk and you miss a point, somebody say, can I hit your knee? Can I hit your knee? In other words, you have

missed the point. And so you have to sit down. And so you can't just continue talking when you've [Laughter] missed the point. You say, hey, can I hit your knee? And everybody, yes, hit him. And of course, yes, down. And that's how somebody who was hitting your knee would speak and because already you've missed agenda or you miss what we are heading for. So those are my few and brief comments about, otherwise I'm very happy. And I used to seeing really because I must work on my area and mostly the issue of analyzing decision making in terms of climate change. Thank you.

[44:19 - 45:59] Dr. Marvel: Well, thank you so much. That was really great comments. And you're absolutely right. I mean, this is these are like bullets from a couple of different research projects. And I'm actually still working through and struggling how to really talk about the decision making in a way that provides sort of examples from what I think are much more enabling context for participation without romanticizing it as being always ideal. And so what I sort of laid out there are sort of what I consider to be the ideal format. It's the context in which frames the discussion. It doesn't always play out exactly like that all the time on the ground. And absolutely, you know, somebody can speak and go off course and they're told to sit down. I've seen that many times, usually when somebody is drunk. But I've also seen somebody going off course and someone saying telling them to sit down and then somebody else giving, no, no, no, wait. And eventually it'll get there, which you might not think it will. There's you know, I brought up issues of women and other groups or but I think that, that it's still sort of more enabling in the sense of the way the structure works. And so whether, the notion about agenda. Yeah, I mean, obviously not only is there an agenda sort of in mind, but you often have camps that have often done sort of their own planning and they come together with an agenda of how to make the meeting run a certain way, but by not by laying it out in the structure that it is sort of theoretically you have the space to be able to jump in because it hasn't been pushed off the agenda, which is different than when the agenda includes options. So it's not that there is no agenda, but that it's not actually listed in the beginning to alienate other people.

[45:59 - 47:21] And yes, you can have oh, the meeting was discussed, but that can also be challenged, I think. So I think you're totally right. You bring up some really, really interesting points and I'd love to talk to you some more about this. But I think my main point here is that it's sort of I think there's two things. One, I do believe that the structure provides a slightly more enabling context for participation than the Western format of options, but also that it's a matter of two different kinds of different forms of communication meeting each other, and that when you have Maasai that are feeling a particular sort of sense of respect and or intimidation that when they are met up with a meeting and, you know, a certain kind of framework that reinforces that sense of respect and intimidation by putting somebody up front and stating what the options are, that that causes more, constrained more the options that can be discussed. And that in this case, I talk about this a lot from

a theoretical perspective and how I'm going to sort of bring you together. It's a context to bring together different kinds of knowledges, and the assumption is always that we need to take any other knowledge and bring it into a Western format. And I explained the problem with that, with the line research, and it's the same here. So if we're going if an organization is going to a Maasai community to talk about a conservation project, why should they not use the Maasai format? So there's that very political statement as well as opposed to just a methodological.

[47:24 - 48:26] Interviewer 2: I really appreciate the emphasis that you put on language and communication and actually defining some of the terms that you're talking about that it's really helpful. And I think it's important to do in any case. And my question has to do with what you just finished off, you kind of trailed. [Laughter] You were trailing at the end about knowledge systems because when you started out, you said you mentioned something about knowledge is power. Well, you know, and how important communication is to transfer that transfer that knowledge. Almost the like that saying knowledge is power, isn't that alienating in and of itself in terms of not recognizing the different types of knowledge, known to exists and then how those knowledge systems interact. And so I was hoping that you could talk a little bit more about that in terms of anticipation, how those knowledge systems come forth in the participation or in the alienation.

[48:28 - 48:32] Dr. Marvel: Really good point. Yeah. And I think sort of the no [Laughter] just big.

[48:32 - 48:33] Interviewer 1: That's a long conversation.

[48:34 - 51:20] Dr. Marvel: It is a long conversation. But I'm happy to try and do my best work. On a couple of things about it. I think, Well, knowledge is power for me is twofold. Well, it's even more than that. It sort of, yeah, having access to knowledge is power, but that very phrase assumes that only a particular kind of knowledge is affiliated with power. And so the importance of sort of recognizing of all knowledge as being equally valid in its own right challenges that very assumption that, so I mean, a typical translation of that would be, okay, well knowledge is power and the scientific knowledge is the most powerful knowledge in the world right now. And so a powerful, Maasai community would have access to that knowledge. And so good participation would enable them to have access to it. But by turning by suggesting that so, well, maybe it's important to open up the pool of what do we mean by valid, recognizable knowledge? And it's not just scientific knowledge, whether social science or hard sciences, that there's other ways of knowing and understanding the world and that that knowledge is equally valid to come to the table, then that knowledge is also recognized as being powerful. It needs to be recognized as being powerful. And so part of my I mean, I don't even like to actually use the word knowledge systems because it automatically assumes that they're in fact different systems. And I think it's more complicated than

that as well as simpler. I mean, I think that there's sometimes there's a great deal of overlap and that when you start to think about them as being entirely different systems, then you're then there's an alienation because they can't in fact meet. Whereas when you think about different ways of knowing and you can start to think about I talk about hybrid knowledge as the real. So the Game Scouts, for instance, are a good example on Manyara ranch. They feel powerful, they feel privileged, they feel happy because they have learned the techniques of wildlife management. They've been to the school, the official training. They have the instruments and they can collect data. But they would also get excited when I talk to them about their knowledge, what they call home knowledge, knowledge from home. And they would explain to me the ways in which this knowledge that they learned at the institute was really useful. But also if they could use their home knowledge, knowledge they learned at home, it's different. And then they would explain to me that and how much more empowered they would be in their position if they can, in fact use both. And so it's not suggesting that one is necessarily always better than the other or that they always that they don't. I mean, any Masai that spent a good deal at a time at home as a kid is going to use that knowledge, whether they're doing it consciously or not when they're using scientific knowledge. And so it becomes a hyper production nonetheless. So I don't know if that --

[51:27 - 52:21] Interviewer 3: These models for conservation or western models. Do you have any practical advice about how and a lot of these conservation models are run by NGOs and Western NGOs and various groups. Do you have any practical advice about how you get this issue of Maasai knowledge and Maasai sideways of decision making. Into that model so that maybe there would be a more productive interaction there. Is there I mean, have you done that in the sense of work with that? You know, you've got all this information about how the Maasai, how their decision making. Is there a way of moving that Maasai decision model into this Western model in a way that's really useful.

[52:25 - 54:07] Dr. Marvel: That's the challenge. And I gave-- I had a talk that some of this in it that I actually gave to a group of practitioners in Tanzania, Maasai or the Maasai NGOs, and then similarly to a group in Kenya. And I got really good responses from them all. It was really talking about intimidating. Here I was telling a bunch of Maasai, like how I think they think. But, I had people say to me as well, I mean, these are Maasai organizations, but, you know, they're trained and they get funding from the West and it's the same model. They're all using the same models and they all tell me, Yeah, we know this, but we don't do it. And we go to our and that's part of the sort of one guy says, well, there's this challenge if you're talking about foreign stuff and I don't know how to use that model to talk about science and conservation and but there was a lot of discussion about why it would be useful, but that it's something that they need to plan into the grant. They need to have

more time. I do know one organization that I think is doing a really good job. They still hold their meetings with the front table, but their approach is actually to recognize and to train local leaders in legal and local sort of national law regarding land and wildlife so that they can then play a role that they know and have meetings and they actually are doing it in such a way that they're bringing in women as well. So recognizing what's wrong with the structure and tweaking it a little bit, but using the structure itself to empower this particular group to then be able to stand up for their communities in terms of land conflicts, but to also to enforce more sustainable land use.

[54:07 - 56:33] Right? So that's one way. And it's a really small, I think at hold meetings like this. You know, I tried in the ranch, I remember I kept saying we need to change when I realized this, we need to change the meeting. And he would say, Oh, we don't have time. We don't have all day. And then once the meeting is going to end, you know, they always lasted all day anyway. So he finally said, okay, you know. [Laughter] And so that would be one way. And then I think the other is, I mean, part of my critique about the lion stuff is there was just a recent, how many people saw the recent exchange in Oryx magazine about conservation, about social science and conservation? Kent Redford wrote this whole piece about how, you know, social science is actually really contributed and changed conservation for the better, but we need more productive exchanges as opposed to just critique. And part of the problem, though, is that, you know, a lot of social science, a lot of conservationists or conservation biologists are afraid of social science because of the critique component and so they hire their own to do the social science. And so that's the problem with the lion research. There's all the research that's been done on Maasai lion hunting has been done by conservation biologist. They're not. So there's a limit in terms of how they can do that. The work that we did was myself and Joanna is based on two years of ethnography in that area and that kind of thing would be around, I think, in almost any conservation project. So more serious interaction in terms of. Being able to let the social scientists really help to not just say, okay, can you take this little part of the problem and tell me like, you know, but how to get them involved in sort of how the particular problem is even being framed? Because I think that's part of where the. So I just answered your question even more than I think you asked, but I think it's going to start one on the research end and then also on the the meeting end. And I don't-- I'm not saying it's easy. I think the meetings, even Maasai themselves would be surprised and not necessarily inviting of having a meeting in a different way because they're used to doing things a certain way. But I think eventually they would be open to it and some of the suggestions for how to include women in that sort of came from having interviews with people about how to do that. [Background Laughter] Yes, sure. And I just sort of, at least coming from a research perspective, I think it's entirely not how what kind of grants

[56:36 - 56:37] Interviewer 4: It's entirely at what in our [Inaudible]

[56:37 - 56:37] Dr. Marvel: It's not entirely a what?

[56:38 - 57:20] Interviewer 4: It's not in empowering the mall, funding and procedure and it seems to me to be partly from our retro experience and since then. Yeah. If there was a co-created, we can slow down the conversation. Slow down and enrich our conversation I think with Maasai leadership. Yeah, I think it's very possible, and I don't know if it would really influence angiography, but if there were something that were very much involving them, then you know, an experiment. I think this is the idea is very much [Inaudible].

[57:23 - 58:24] Dr. Marvel: I mean, I've been you know, I've spent a lot of time helping out and observing that one organization. I said, I think they're actually they're doing things right, but they're doing it right in the sense of what the project is. But I mean, I've been with them when we have, you know, two days to cover a huge amount of ground. And we, you know, it's like you have to drive all we have to Kitengela. It's going to take you six hours to get there on a horrible road. There's no place to sleep there. So then you have to get to the next place and you have two hours to sit down and have these conversations that really should take an entire day. And part of that is because of the funding they don't have the proper funding. And they know and I you know, but so it's not even just at the level of the sort of university professor that comes in and wants to do the project fast. I mean, these are this is they have they got some funding from Ford Foundation and other stuff. It's hard to find to get funding for sort of these kinds of things. But I think also in terms of the research, our funding, I mean, we all know that like we get funding from NSF and it's you write in what you have to do, but then how that gets done is entirely up to you when you're in the field.

[58:25 - 59:31] It's just, you know. Well, it's hard to be out there for that period of time and you want to come back into Nairobi. And it's, you know. And it's uncomfortable. I've only met two other there are very few people that can sit through a Maasai meeting. And even for me, like, you know, you're talking about hours and hours and not eating anything. [Laughter] But again, that can be facilitated. Okay? We can tell, okay, we're going to be here for eight hours. Let's slaughter a goat and put that in the ground and different kinds of things. But it's also hard to follow. I mean, I had somebody once tell somebody, Maasai guy explained to this you know, white sort of he had a tourism camp in the village because you could just see how flustered he got in the meeting. No, this is how it's happening. You know, this is how it goes. And so I don't think it's easy and I don't have any answers in that way. This was more about just, I think, a different way to start to think about it. And I think we've been way too sloppy with how we use the word empowerment. And that we can be critical of conservation projects that use the word and not just to sort of slap them and say, oh, it's for trust

conservation all over again, but to say, okay, well, you're on the right track, but this is what's wrong and this is how we can potentially work to make it better.

[59:36 - 59:46] Moderator: Let's thank her again. Thank you very much. [Applause] I know, I know. She probably needs to head to lunch. You have more questions, just grab a microphone.

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