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BETWEEN TRADITION & TRANSFORMATION:
A FEMINIST INVESTIGATION OF THE ROLE OF PASTORAL WOMEN WITHIN
TANZANIA'S INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT LANDSCAPE

By

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Bachelor of Arts, Journalism, University of Missouri, 2009

Thesis

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Science
in Resource Conservation, International Conservation & Development

W.A. Franke College of Forestry & Conservation
The University of Montana
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Abstract

Rogers, Kelli, M.S. Spring 2023

Resource Conservation

Between tradition & transformation: A feminist investigation of the role of pastoral women within Tanzania's integrated environment & development landscape

Chairperson: Dr. Sarah J. Halvorson

Pastoral women hold pivotal social and environmental roles within their communities. Equally and actively engaging pastoral women in processes to conserve and sustainably use rangeland resources has therefore become an important focus for integrated environment and development intervention. In northern Tanzania, pastoral women find themselves at the center of gender equality efforts, which attempt to translate gender and environment theory into conservation action that elevates pastoral women's historically unheard voices. Along the way, particular global narratives have positioned pastoral women alternately as passive beneficiaries or as powerful allies in biodiversity conservation and natural resource management. Although the importance of integrating gender considerations into conservation work is now widely acknowledged, there remains a pressing need to examine how pastoral women are understood and meaningfully engaged in a contemporary environment and development landscape. My research attends to this need by investigating how pastoral women are engaged as actors within the integrated environment and development agenda in Tanzania. The first part of the study uses critical discourse analysis to interrupt dominant global narratives and explore local discourse that tells a multifaceted story about pastoral women and their environment. Placed in the broader context of the politics of integrated environment and development, my analysis indicates that local organizations actively resist specific limiting global discourses to create space for pastoral women to define their own identities and roles in natural resource management. In the second part of the study, I draw upon semi-structured, in-depth interviews with leaders and staff of both local and international organizations operating in northern Tanzania's rangelands to investigate how the voices and knowledge of women pastoralists are invited to influence their environment and development work. The findings suggest that organizations operating in northern Tanzania have embraced the complexity of the role of pastoral women but have yet to match this truth with strategies to engage women across social categories and robustly measure the impacts of their involvement. Jointly, data from this study demonstrates a consistent push and pull between tradition and transformation, ultimately inviting actors to break away from dichotomous world views to design integrated social-ecological projects that more successfully honor today's pastoral women. I conclude with recommendations for how 'new' conservation interventions could also incorporate new frames of work that are more responsive to local perspectives on pathways toward greater sustainability and equity.

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I would like to begin by acknowledging the many individuals who contributed to my growth during this transformative journey.

A heartfelt thank you first goes to my advisor and committee chair Sarah Halvorson for her belief and trust in me throughout the research process, particularly during the many hours we spent in her office as I worked to redesign a research project that could be conducted remotely. Sarah's ability to listen to my jumbled thoughts and string them into thoughtful, meaningful sentences has been a gift. I am immensely appreciative of my committee members Brian Chaffin and Kimber McKay for bringing their passion, diversity of experience, and mind-expanding comments to this research.

This project would not have been possible without inspiration from Cheryl Margoluis, who from very early conversations made me feel like I was on to a worthwhile idea and who so generously shared her time and contacts with me. I want to send a big hug to my former boss and forever mentor Deborah Charles, who reminded me during our regular conversations that I am capable of more than I know. I extend the deepest gratitude to each of my interviewees in Tanzania, who so graciously granted their time to a stranger in Montana.

My graduate school journey has been longer than anticipated — and full of twists and turns. Having begun graduate school during the COVID-19 pandemic, I accepted that my research would be conducted remotely and redesigned my thesis accordingly. Ultimately, the David L. Boren Fellowship changed my trajectory and allowed me to spend 6 months learning Kiswahili in Arusha, Tanzania. I will never be able to fully express the gratitude and love I feel for my Tanzanian host family — my host mom Shufaa, my host brother Louis, and my host sisters Katherine and Nancy. I spent 3.5 months in their home, and the constant invitations I received to step deeper into Tanzanian culture not only improved this research, but also transformed me as a person. Learning a new language is endlessly humbling, but I speak Kiswahili now thanks to the help and encouragement of countless Tanzanians. Mwalimu Edward Nnko and Mwalimu Jessica Upendo — your constant encouragement and enthusiasm for teaching is what allowed me to unlock new levels of language confidence. The entire team at NGO Oikos East Africa also deserves acknowledgement. I spent my last three months in Tanzania as an intern at Oikos. The insight I gained into the daily difficulties and joys of conservation work in northern Tanzania could never be learned in a classroom or from a book. *Nashkuru sana.*

I feel lucky to have been inspired and cheered on along the way by my graduate student peers who are equally invested in improving international conservation and development.

And finally, I thank my family for their patience, love, and open minds. I would not have made it here without the steadfast support and beautiful humor of my partner Philip. A special thank you goes to my mom, Jill, whose encouragement through this and every difficult journey I've embarked on has made me feel like I can fly.

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

Pastoral women hold pivotal social and environmental roles within their communities. Their position—often as livestock keepers and healers, natural resource stewards, family caretakers, and more—means that equally and actively engaging women in processes to conserve and sustainably use rangeland resources has become an important focus for international conservation and development policy and intervention (Leach, 2007; Goldman et al., 2021; Fernández-Giménez et al., 2022). Along the way, particular global narratives have positioned pastoral women alternately as passive beneficiaries or as powerful allies in biodiversity conservation and natural resource management. These narratives, and the actions they influence, have implications for how women are perceived and engaged within an evolving integrated social-ecological agenda. Although the importance of integrating gender considerations into conservation work is now widely acknowledged—a feat largely credited to feminist political ecologists (Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2008; Nightingale, 2017)—there remains a pressing need to examine how pastoral women are understood and meaningfully engaged in social-ecological projects today.

Globally, the social-ecological agenda has faced several decades of documented failure and critique (McShane & Wells, 2004), followed by calls to abandon the term ‘integrated conservation and development projects’ (ICDPs) altogether, a task that appears largely complete (Blom et al., 2010). Considering the waning of the term ‘integrated conservation and development project,’ in this thesis I use ‘integrated environment and development work’ and ‘social-ecological work’ as umbrella terms to refer to any work that combines ecological goals such as rangeland or wildlife conservation with social goals such as improved human health, education, and livelihoods. The recognition that the health of humans and the environment are deeply intertwined and must be addressed holistically has

only gained momentum, now most commonly under the umbrella of ‘community-based conservation.’ (Brooks et al., 2013). This latest integrated agenda has been reimagined with a particular focus on women (Lawless et al., 2022; Goldman et al., 2021; Honzak & Margoluis, 2020). Pastoral women—as pastoral people who have traditionally relied on livestock as their primary source of income (Benke & Freudenberger, 2013)—now find themselves at the center of gender mainstreaming efforts that attempt to translate feminist political ecological theory into conservation project implementation (Goldman et al., 2021).

Still, two enduring critiques of the integrated environment and development approach revolve around inclusion and the intention behind that inclusion. The approach has come under fire for the uneven treatment of local communities, particularly uneven participation of women (Goldman et al., 2021; Thompson & Homewood, 2002), who are often at the center of rural livelihoods and resource use at the local scale (Flintan, 2008; Hughes & Flintan, 2001). Project failures resulting from lack of inclusion have been documented (Costa et al., 2017; Hughes & Flintan, 2001; Noe & Kangalawe, 2015). In the meantime, calls from activists and scholars grow louder for international organizations to elevate and center the voices of pastoral women, who have been historically devalued and disenfranchised by development projects in Tanzania (Hodgson, 2000; Kihuu, 2018; Goldman, 2016). Scholars and development practitioners have cast doubt on the intention of integrated programs (Igoe, 2006; Parkipuny & Berger, 1993). Some have questioned whether environmental INGOs are looking to involve women and other marginalized populations for the benefit of the population (Lawless et al., 2022) or to simply recruit greater numbers of participants for previously planned conservation projects (Singleton et al., 2019). This critique is closely associated with the colonial legacy of protectionist conservation in Tanzania, which displaced Indigenous peoples and degraded local knowledge and practices (Brockington et al., 2008; Igoe, 2006). Changing the above-mentioned trajectory of human rights abuses will require

transformative changes in the ways integrated social-ecological projects view human-environment relationships. In recent years, momentum has grown around the concept and action of ‘decolonizing’ conservation and development, which refers to the need to confront colonial dynamics and assumptions that continue to underpin environment and development projects in the global South and the global North and to elevate the voices of Indigenous peoples to determine how environmental and social problems are understood and addressed (Domínguez & Luoma, 2020; Mabele et al., 2021; Sultana, 2019). Discussion and research around decolonizing conservation is picking up speed in sub-Saharan Africa, ranging from addressing the systematic exclusion of poor communities (Schürmann, 2017) to the ways colonial legacies interact with contemporary market-based conservation efforts (Collins et al., 2021).

Northern Tanzania’s pastoral women are one example of a population that has experienced the impact of changing global narratives and iterations of integrated environment and development projects. Among ideas put forward to build an integrated social-ecological agenda in Tanzania are rangeland conservation projects tied to girls’ and women’s education, livelihoods, and the provision of health services (Patterson et al., 2021). At the heart of these projects is the engagement of women. Scientists and practitioners have argued that without gender-equitable participation, conservation and livelihood efforts risk overlooking root causes of biodiversity loss and the plurality of viewpoints necessary to design sustainable solutions (Bechtel, 2010; Domínguez & Luoma, 2020; Matulis & Moyer, 2017). This turn toward gender equality within integrated environment and development work (Goldman, 2021; Lawless, 2022) is reflected in nongovernmental organization (NGO) and international NGO (INGO) mandates and activities in biodiversity-rich Tanzania. There, an integrated approach is implemented in several forms and at various scales to address social and ecological objectives. One social goal gaining prominence includes gender equality within

pastoral populations (Alcorn et al., 2002; Honzak & Margoluis, 2020), which in this case refers to “the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys” (UN Women, n.d.).

Gender equality is an established objective now visible in everything from the mission statements of Tanzanian NGOs to the global Sustainable Development Goals. It is from here—in the spaces between local and global—that I enter this conversation. There remain bridges to be built between local and global narratives of Tanzania’s pastoral women and their gendered relationship to rangelands, which shape the ways organizations perceive and engage women in integrated social-ecological projects (Lawless et al., 2022; Leach et al., 2018). Gaining greater insight into both discursive and participatory practices in northern Tanzania can help conservation and development organizations embrace a diversity of gender knowledges and feminist traditions, solidifying integrated projects as a worthy tool for equitable social and ecological transformation. In a region threatened by climate change and poverty, it is crucial to know how gender equality and other gender considerations are taking shape within environment and development efforts in northern Tanzania. An agenda that aims to address both human and environmental health and well-being becomes particularly pressing amid ongoing conflict between conservation and land use priorities and Indigenous pastoralists in various areas in Ngorongoro district in northern Tanzania (Indigenous Peoples Rights International, 2022; Mittal & Fraser, 2018). Additionally, Northern Tanzania is particularly well suited for this investigation due to a long history of internationally led environment and development projects, a strong network of local NGOs, a rural population vulnerable to a changing climate and the highly political nature of conservation, and a history of oppression and misunderstanding of women pastoralists despite their roles in the local economy and in the care of the environment.

It is clear that there is room to improve upon our grasp of the ways both local and INGOs understand and engage pastoral women in integrated rangeland conservation projects today. Rich and varied research has been undertaken to examine the changing realities of pastoral women (Galvin, 2009; Hodgson, 2000; Hodgson, 2017), the impact that gender-equal participation has on conservation project outcomes (Leisher et al., 2016; Westerman, 2021), the difficulty of implementing and measuring the success of various forms of integrated approaches (McShane & Wells, 2004; Singleton et al., 2019), and local perceptions of the value of integrated approaches (Marcus, 2001; Khumalo & Yung, 2015). Further, Goldman and Milliarly (2014) offer an in-depth case study examining the politics of participation between development actors and Maasai in northern Tanzania's Monduli District. However, there is a lack of qualitative work concerning how both local and INGOs operating across northern Tanzania perceive pastoral women and invite pastoral women's voices and values to shape integrated social-ecological projects (Fernández-Giménez et al., 2022; Westerman, 2021), which continue to evolve as a popular approach in the country and throughout East Africa. Considering that a gender-informed, integrated approach appears only to be rising in importance within conservation, I seek to investigate the discursive constructions and participatory practices that shape how pastoral women experience the integrated environment and development agenda in Tanzania. Additionally, Tanzania holds "a particular history of being subjected to globally constructed ideas of what nature is, and how humans can 'fit' – or rather not fit – this (idea of) nature in order to conserve" (De Wit, 2018, p. 30). The overarching objective of this study, therefore, is to better understand how NGOs and INGOs frame the identities of pastoral women, and how and where pastoral women and their knowledge currently fit within northern Tanzania's evolving pastoral social-ecological landscape.

Theoretical background

I remain cognizant that there are a multitude of assumptions about the lived realities of pastoral women on the African continent. McCabe et al. (1992, p. 1) warns of the “danger of designing policy based on a stereotypical image of a pastoral population” while Homewood et al. (2009, p. vii) urges a refocus on the role pastoralists play in the greater savannah ecosystem “rather than repeating the presumptions and misassumptions that have shaped land use and conservation policies and practices.” I have designed my study in hopes of addressing these assumptions head on.

Presumptions and misassumptions—and the present situation they have helped produce—must be examined before one can properly consider a more feminist, intersectional, justice-oriented approach to integrated environment and development work of the future. It is for this reason that I draw on feminist political ecology and feminist decolonial theory to underpin my research and research questions. I elaborate further on feminist political ecology later in this thesis, but here I will expand on the logic behind my use of decolonial theory. Although both decolonial and postcolonial theory are concerned with how the West imposed ‘modernity’ on other parts of the world through colonial governance (Bhabra, 2014), the usefulness of postcolonial theory for the African context is contested. Some activists and scholars argue that it is a theory too embedded in the ivory tower to accomplish solid work on the ground (Ogunyankin, 2019). Others posit that the *post* in postcolonial theory is premature, considering that “development” on the continent continues to happen according to foreign interests, while natural resources continue to be “plundered by outsiders” (Hitchcock, 1997, p. 234). For these reasons, this research engages with decolonial theory as led by Argentinean feminist scholar Lugones (2010). Decolonial feminist theory engages with debates pertaining to coloniality, modernity, and Western representation of the ‘other’ as an

object of knowledge (Said, 1978), while providing a space for the voices and lived experiences of silenced, ‘othered’ women (Manning, 2021).

Several factors interconnect to inform this research and warrant a decolonial feminist framework. First, the broader field of environment and development remains a largely White, privileged space with deep colonial roots (Agrawal & Redfordl, 2009; Dominguez & Luoma, 2020; Jones, 2021; Shiva, 1992). Second, women have been historically marginalized and misrepresented by development projects, and meaningful inclusion of pastoral women’s voices and values may help transform some problematic aspects of the integrated environment and development approach (Hodgson, 1990; Hodgson, 2000; Singleton et al., 2019). Third, integrated projects can provide positive, transformative experiences and capacity building for participants and have the potential to contribute to empowerment (Hodgson, 2000; Horwich & Lyon, 2007), so are therefore worthy of critical development.

Research questions

My study aims to address a gap in the literature on gender, conservation, and pastoralism, as well as add to the growing literature on what it means to decolonize environment and development work. Additionally, there is a pressing concern to identify viable ways of supporting pastoral women, who are among those hardest hit by social and environmental change. In this thesis I address the broad question:

How are pastoral women engaged as actors within Northern Tanzania’s environment and development landscape?

To investigate this overall question, my study examines the following questions:

- 1.** How does the environment and development agenda in Northern Tanzania frame and influence the identities of pastoral women?
 - 1a.** How are INGOs conceptualizing the environment and development agenda?
 - 1b.** How are NGOs conceptualizing the environment and development agenda?
 - 1c.** How are NGOs embracing or resisting environment and development concepts?

2. How does the environment and development agenda in Northern Tanzania frame and influence the involvement of pastoral women?

2a. How is women's participation perceived and measured by INGOs and local NGOs?

2b. How is decolonization understood and practiced, if at all, by INGOs and NGOs?

I explore these questions in two research parts. The first includes a critical discourse analysis of Tanzanian NGO documents and websites, using a framing method designed to detect evidence relevant to how pastoral women are represented, how their identities are shaped, and how their involvement in environmental issues is articulated. The second part includes semi-structured interviews with key informants, including staff and leaders from local and international NGOs operating in northern Tanzania. This part of my research addresses another empirical gap through an exploration of framing and participation of pastoral women in environment and development work, using interview data collected from project staff and leaders.

In summation, by critically analyzing language and images from local NGOs engaged in integrated social-ecological work in northern Tanzania, I shed light on areas where local and international discourses diverge. I draw much needed attention to local discourse, in particular, to center local voices and offer clarity on how certain global concepts of pastoral women and environment are resisted and reframed. Then, using key informant interviews, I investigate how both local and international organizations invite pastoral women's physical and intellectual participation within the environment and development agenda in northern Tanzania.

Positionality

The decade I have spent as a journalist has convinced me that it is not the journalist who is objective. It is within the reporting method—the disciplined craft of the reporting process—where a journalist must guard against bias. Similarly, I recognize that it is not the

researcher who is objective. I have followed best practices and grounded my research in existing literature and theory, yet an inherently relevant part of this research still lies in who I am, or in the identities I hold. I write from a positionality of a white, non-native, settler-colonizer (Tuck & Yang, 2012) and have worked to study intersectional feminist and decolonial ideas and practices from a standpoint of solidarity. I identify as a feminist, but I recognize that there is not just one global understanding of feminism, as affirmed by a large body of literature. Definitions of what constitutes feminism vary depending on the philosophical and political stance of the person defining the term. In fact, I and many other scholars and researchers prefer to use the term ‘feminisms’ to capture this diversity of philosophies (Cornwall et al., 2007; St. Denis, 2013). For the purposes of clarity for this research, I define feminism as a complex set of ideologies and theories, that at its core seeks to achieve equal social, political, and economic rights for women (Arat, 2015).

Pragmatism, social constructivism, and critical approaches shape my worldview and inform my research. The pragmatic paradigm is problem-driven and outcomes-oriented (Wescoat, 1992), underlining that research occurs in social, historical, and political contexts while urging the use of all approaches available to understand the problem (Creswell, 2009). In an attempt to understand the role of pastoral women in integrated environment and development work, I will collect a complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories, which is how Creswell (2009) defines social constructivism. Both philosophies commit to the need to seek out many perspectives in social settings where decisions are being made. Critical approaches similarly value experience, understanding, and subjectivity, but also recognize that power dynamics and resulting discourse help shape experiences (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Power is an important component to consider within my research, considering the power that environment and development practitioners can hold over communities in which they are working.

My way of learning, understanding, and relating to the world is a byproduct of both Western knowledge production and the Western scientific paradigm. But I have also challenged this paradigm and spent time unlearning certain ‘truths’ conveyed to me in early schooling. I have spent nearly half of my professional career living outside the United States, first in Costa Rica, then Kenya, then in Thailand. For an additional year, I traveled the world, living in and reporting from 11 different countries. I am a writer and a creative, and I value learning about people and places through language, art, food, and connection. I recognize there is immense privilege that accompanies my social location as a White, American, academic woman, but I do not assume that this privilege automatically translates to me being in any way better or better off than the many people I have interviewed and learned from in so-called ‘developing’ countries in the so-called ‘global South’ over the years. As both a journalist and a researcher, I have continuously been plagued with the ponderance of whether others’ stories are mine to tell. Yet I am also aware of the dangers of white feminism (Beck, 2021) and believe that ignoring certain contexts because I am not a member of a community could similarly reproduce my privileged position and fail to draw attention to or challenge systematic inequality that I may unknowingly be complicit in. It is with these thoughts top of mind that I tackle this thesis.

Importantly, I bring deep cultural awareness of the country of Tanzania and advanced Kiswahili language skills to this research. In 2021, I was fortunate to be selected for the competitive David L. Boren Fellowship, an initiative of the U.S. Defense Language and National Security Education Office. The Boren Fellowship funds research and language study proposals by U.S. graduate students in world regions critical to U.S. interests. With Boren funding, I spent two months in an intensive Kiswahili language learning program at the University of Florida, followed by 3.5 months living with a Tanzanian host family and undergoing intensive Kiswahili language training in Usa River, Arusha, Tanzania, from

August 2022 to November 2022. Following the completion of intensive language training, I secured a 3-month internship with Tanzanian conservation NGO Oikos East Africa. Although this language training and internship took place after I had remotely conducted research for this thesis, it allowed incomparable insight into Tanzanian culture and conservation work. My personal experiences and the knowledge I gained in Tanzania while living there for six months has thus shaped the writing of this thesis.

Thesis structure

This thesis is organized into five chapters. As the previous paragraphs demonstrate, I introduce thesis topics, research questions of interest, theoretical underpinnings, and my own positionality as the researcher within Chapter I. In Chapter II, I share a literature review exploring existing environmental and social concerns in Tanzania, important historical background on Tanzania's pastoral women, as well as a brief history of the integrated environment and development approach. Following this discussion, in Chapter III, I delve into a critical discourse analysis of local organizational materials to shed light on how pastoral women and the environment are perceived and understood within the local and global environment and development agenda. Within Chapter IV, I explore and discuss results from the semi-structured interviews conducted with staff of both local and international organizations operating at the nexus of environment and development in northern Tanzania. This chapter serves to illuminate whether and how NGOs and INGOs invite pastoral women to meaningfully participate in project design and implementation, and how pastoral women's values and knowledge do or do not factor into the environment and development agenda. In Chapter VI, I synthesize findings from both the critical discourse analysis and semi-structured interviews and relate them to each other, discuss research limitations, provide suggestions for potential future research, and emphasize how this research has contributed to the integrated environment and development field and research

literature more broadly. Additional appendices include the samples examined for the critical discourse analysis and the semi-structured interview guide used for interview

CHAPTER II:

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND: INTERTWINED ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL CONCERNS IN TANZANIA

Northern Tanzania's iconic savannah landscapes, home to impressive cultural and biological diversity, encapsulate many of the challenges and opportunities facing integrated environment and development work today. The largest country in East Africa, Tanzania spans over 900,000 square kilometers of diverse terrestrial, marine, and freshwater ecosystems. The country also counts the second largest livestock population on the African continent, with the livestock sector employing about 50% of the population (United Republic of Tanzania, 2017) — although a more current count of livestock is needed. Most of these livestock are managed under traditional rangeland pastoralism (Seid et al., 2016) or agro-pastoralism (Lane, 2007). More than 67% of the total population of the country lives in rural areas and depends on agriculture and agriculture-related activities as their primary employment and source of food (Alphonse, n.d.). Rangelands are the most widely distributed terrestrial ecosystem type, covering nearly half Earth's land surface (Reid et al. 2014; Sala et al. 2017). Extremely ecologically important areas of high species diversity, rangelands are usually characterized by shrubby vegetation and grazed by both wild animals and domestic livestock (Anderson, 2005). Globally, extensive livestock production, including pastoralism and ranching, is the most wide-spread land use, supporting some 500 million people (Mbow et al. 2019). Pastoralism and ranching can be grouped under the broad umbrella of livestock-dependent livelihoods (LaRocque, 2014), but in this thesis I recognize the distinction that pastoralists traditionally guide and feed their animals through diverse landscapes such as prairies, savannas, or tundra (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2021) and are defined by unique features of mobility and communal resource management. Ranching, on the other hand, is mainly defined by the commercial nature of production and the breeding pedigree of cattle targeted for a competitive market (Mwangi et al., 2020).

Tanzania’s northern savannah rangelands support the lives and livelihoods of thousands of pastoralists and hunter-gatherers. However, the future of the rangelands and those who depend on them is uncertain due to a combination of challenges including climate and land-use change, degradation, demographic shifts, underinvestment in public services, and increasing barriers to pastoral mobility, among other issues (Galvin, 2009, Reid et al., 2014).

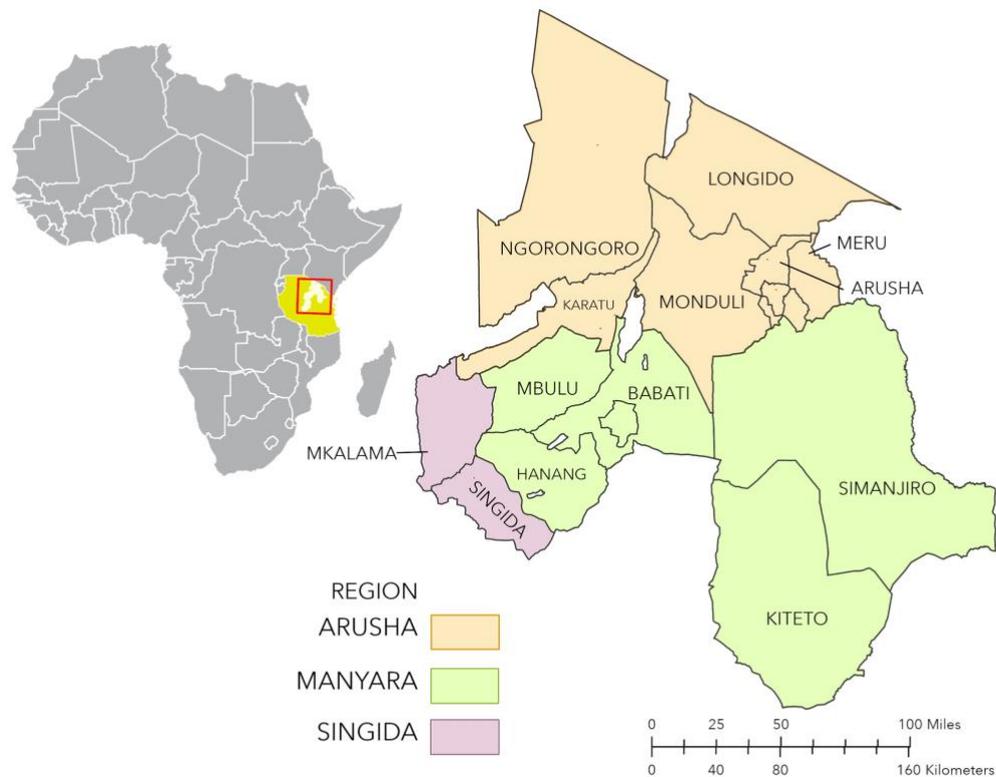


Figure 1. Map of geographic area of focus: Tanzania’s northern rangelands. Created by Hannah Shafer

Climate change continues to pose a threat to pastoral communities. Sub-Saharan Africa in particular ranks among the most vulnerable regions to climate variability and change (Boko, 2007). In Tanzania, a mean annual increase of temperature of 1.0 °C was recorded since 1960 with decreasing rainfall at an average of 2.8 mm per month or 3.3% per decade countrywide (Magita & Sangeda, 2017). Tanzania is currently experiencing the

adverse impacts of climate change in all sectors of the economy, including livestock production (Sangeda & Malole, 2013). Climate change, therefore, is already deeply impacting rural livelihoods (Joseph & Kaswamila 2017; Sangeda & Malole, 2013). According to U.K. Department for International Development figures, there is an estimated need of between U.S. \$100 million and \$150 million per year in Tanzania in order to build adaptive capacity and enhance resilience against future climate change to address potential threats to coastlines from sea level rise, energy supply and demand, health, water supply, agriculture, and infrastructure (DFID, 2011).

At the same time, conflicts around land use, access, and tenure remain prevalent in the country. In contrast to many other African countries, Tanzania's 1999 land reforms provide full legal recognition of customary land rights, which are administered through elected village councils (Nelson & Sinandei, 2018). Still, communities, and especially women, face challenges in exercising their rights even when they are nominally granted under the law, particularly as land values rise due to commercial agriculture, wildlife tourism, and expanding urban areas. The relocation of pastoralists and promotion of agriculture and a sedentary lifestyle in the area at the behest of the Tanzanian government dates back to the days of British colonial rule (De Wit, 2018). Today, conflict continues due to displacement of local peoples to make way for industry and protected land areas.

Both local and international NGOs conduct work at the intersection of environment and development in Northern Tanzania, and specifically in Maasailand, which refers to a predominately semi-arid savannah landscape that historically stretched 150,000 km² from northern Tanzania into southern Kenya, where the rural population became dominated by Maa-speaking people (McCabe et al., 2010). Northern Tanzania, which includes the large swathe of land covering the heart of Tanzania's Great Rift Valley, spanning south of the Ngorongoro Crater and across Tarangire and Lake Manyara National Parks, is internationally

renowned for its natural wonders and is part of a longstanding legacy of the creation of national parks. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this region has also been a particular locus of conflict between pastoralist communities and the region's protected areas established with the help of international conservation actors for wildlife conservation, which have historically displaced and marginalized local people (Brockington et al., 2008; Igoe, 2006). Recently, for instance, a four-year investigation by policy think tank Oakland Institute revealed that groups of Maasai in the Loliondo division of the Ngorongoro district of Northern Tanzania have been denied access to their lands so that wealthy safari-goers and foreign royalty can be granted access to East Africa's iconic wildlife (Mittal & Fraser, 2018). Tanzania has 840 protected areas covering 361,594 km² of the land and 7,330 km² of the ocean (IUCN ESARO, 2020). According to various sources, between 38% to 54% of Tanzania's terrestrial and inland water areas are devoted to conservation (IUCN ESARO, 2020; Homewood et al., 2020). Aside from national parks, there are more than 22 wildlife management areas in operation, with dozens more planned to cover a further 14%–15% of Tanzania's land area, directly and indirectly affecting several million people (Bluwstein, 2018).

Who and where are Tanzania's pastoral women today?

Pastoralist lives and livelihoods are changing rapidly around the world, and the prevailing environment and development narrative does not always serve to capture this story. In fact, the role of pastoral women in agriculture and livestock production has historically been so ignored and undervalued that one publication refers to pastoral women as “invisible guardians” (Köhler-Rollefson, 2012, p. 1).

Tanzania boasts rich cultural diversity and is home to more than 120 ethnic groups (Legere, 2012). Among the ethnic peoples who call northern Tanzania home are the Hadzabe and Akie, two of the last hunter-gatherer peoples in the country, as well as the pastoralist and agro-pastoralist Barabaig, Batemi, Datoga, and Maasai. I focus largely on the Maasai in this

thesis due to the fact that much of the integrated environment and development work occurring today in northern Tanzania is led by or involves the Maasai, an ethnic people Indigenous to the northern rangelands who are by far the largest of the pastoral groups in Tanzania today. Although the exact number of Maasai in Tanzania is unknown, the population living in the Rift Valley region of Kenya and Tanzania is estimated to be more than 400,000 (Minority Rights Group International, 2018). Occupying an area that stretches approximately 100,000 square kilometers across the Tanzanian-Kenyan border (Talle, 1988), the Maasai are a predominately pastoral people whose traditional way of life is centered on cattle. Yet they are facing numerous challenges, including worsening drought, land fragmentation, and loss of land ownership due to establishment of new conservation and administrative areas (Kimaro et al., 2018). The perception that pastoralism is unsustainable (Kipuri & Ridgewell, 2008), as well as rapid commercialization, climate change, and ongoing conflicts, have served to disrupt traditional governance systems (Kaoga, 2021) and in many cases, forced pastoralist families to turn to a more sedentary lifestyles to survive. This trend leaves women with a bigger role in livestock raising, as men seek employment in urban centers or in neighboring countries.

Much research has been undertaken over the past few decades to understand how Maasai livelihood and culture is evolving, although the full impact of the above challenges is still not well understood. Women continue to play a pivotal role in the pastoralist way of life, assuming diverse responsibilities with regard to livestock, land, and the household. Maasai women are expected to concentrate on building and repairing houses, fetching firewood and water, and milking animals. Women monitor animal health and nutritional status through their close contact with lactating cows, and income from milk is often controlled by women, with most spent at the household level, which presents a window of financial flexibility for Maasai women (Homewood et al., 2009). Homewood et al. (2009) point to huge disparities in

wealth and opportunity among Maasai; cattle-rich families have herds that can help educate their children and broaden their prospects, while cattle-poor families must diversify out of necessity and lose herds in the process. Overall, most pastoral families no longer depend solely on livestock and have diversified their livelihoods by incorporating agriculture cultivation or selling livestock, milk, or beadwork in local urban centers (McCabe, 2014).

Another pressing challenge for Maasai women is the overall lack of national data disaggregated by ethnicity or livelihood, which often makes Maasai women—and pastoralists more broadly —‘invisible’ to policy makers and researchers. This evidence gap acts as a barrier to interventions that could more successfully address their specific needs (Lawson, 2014). Available data does reveal that Maasai women are socially, politically, and economically disadvantaged as compared to Maasai men and people of other ethnicities within the country when it comes to key areas such as land and asset ownership, food security, health, and education.

Among the Maasai, land is mostly owned communally, not individually, and it is most often men who decide how that land will be used. According to a recent report from Indigenous Navigator (2020), Indigenous women in Tanzania hold 20% less title deeds to land than the Indigenous male population. Although women now hold nearly 37% of the seats in Tanzania’s parliament thanks to an established quota (IPU Parline, 2021), Maasai women remain largely unrepresented in local land-related decision-making bodies, and the few women who form part of those bodies often have limited literacy and little knowledge of related laws, policies, and processes. As a result, the interests of Maasai women have largely been absent in village and district development land planning (Scalise, 2012).

The health of the Maasai can also be considered disadvantaged relative to the wider population. Findings from Lawson and colleagues (2014) show that four out of five Maasai households face severe food insecurity, with more than 80% of Maasai categorized as

severely food insecure as compared to no more than 50% in neighboring ethnic groups. The same study found that nearly 60% of Maasai children are chronically malnourished, as compared to between 20-40% of children in neighboring ethnic groups. Additionally, in a country with one of the highest maternal mortality ratios in the world (Gailey & McMillan, 2019), studies show that Maasai women have minimal understanding of preventative health services and seek health care only once very ill, which, along with lack of access to health care, contributes to poor health outcomes (Lidofsky et al., 2019). Early marriage (Muigai, 2023), high rates of fertility, high rate of unintended pregnancy, and low rates of family planning use characterize the Maasai community in both Kenya and Tanzania (Stats et al., 2020). Although the Demographic Health Survey of Tanzania does not break down data by ethnicity, the 2016-17 report shows that both women and men in rural areas are more likely to marry earlier than their urban counterparts. For women aged 25-49, the median age at first marriage is 1.7 years earlier among rural than among urban women (Tanzania Ministry of Health, 2016). Additionally, teenagers in rural areas are considerably more likely to have begun childbearing than their urban peers: 32% of rural teenagers have had a live birth or are pregnant, compared with 19% of urban teenagers (Tanzania Ministry of Health, 2016). High fertility rates among Maasai can also be traced to culture and beliefs. Any cause of infertility is described as a manifestation of wrongdoing in Maasai society, especially of women. If a Maasai woman cannot bear children, she undergoes rituals to render her “clean,” after which she can be banished from society if infertility remains (Haulle & Njewe, 2015). On the other hand, when a woman bears children, she assures herself of stronger access to community rights and responsibilities (Stats et al., 2020). Yet another health concern for Maasai women is the practice of female genital mutilation, which, although banned in Kenya and Tanzania, continues to take place as a rite of passage to becoming a wife and mother for Maasai girls (The New Humanitarian, 2005).

Maasai women's access to information and ability to respond to economic opportunities, meanwhile, remains inhibited by a patriarchal society that requires representation by a father or husband, does not value education for women (Kandusi & Waiganjo, 2015), and views women as children who cannot contribute when 'adults' are discussing and making decisions (Akaranga & Ongong'a, 2013). In Arusha and Manyara, two regions in Tanzania in which many Maasai reside, 23% and 29.9%, respectively, of the female household population age six and older has no education (Tanzania Ministry of Health, 2016). Indigenous Tanzanian participants in a study utilizing Indigenous Navigator (2020)—a framework and set of tools for and by Indigenous peoples to systematically monitor the level of recognition and implementation of their rights—reported that while over 60% of Indigenous boys completed primary school, only a little over 40% of Indigenous girls were able to do the same. Lack of education has many knock-on effects, as women in Tanzania with a secondary education or higher are more likely to independently control their cash earnings, at 44%, than women with no education, at 31% (DHS, 2016). Additionally, women in the country with at least a secondary level of education marry much later than women with no education, at 23.6 years, and 17.8 years, respectively (World Bank, 2022).

Tanzania has a progressive legal framework when it comes to gender equality. Gender equality is integrated into the National Five-Year Development Plan and the Tanzania Development Vision 2025 emphasizes a commitment to promoting gender equality in social, economic, and political contexts (World Bank, 2022). When it comes to women's land rights and women's participation in land governance, the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania recognizes equality to own property for all citizens. The 1999 Land Act, revised in 2019, also establishes several principles that help to protect women from discrimination, while the 1982 Local Government Act requires that a minimum of one-fourth of village council members be women (Nchimbi, 2021). Still, the country lags on recognizing

Indigenous women's rights and has consistently failed to accept recommendations on the rights of Indigenous peoples—with dire results (Cultural Survival, 2021). There are consistent reports of the government restricting land use or forcibly evicting Indigenous peoples from their traditional lands (Cultural Survival, 2021). A recent fact-finding mission conducted by the Pastoralists Indigenous Non-Governmental Organizations' Forum, or PINGO's Forum, in Ngorongoro Conservation Area sought to understand Indigenous girls' and women's experiences living in the protected area (Ndaskoi, 2021). Nearly every interviewee commented on hunger, lack of livelihood opportunities, and a tourism sector that values dollars over their lives. One interviewee had this to say (Ndaskoi, 2021, p. 5):

We, Ngorongoro residents, do not have food. We are permanently starving because of bad policies. Driven by hunger and poverty women and youths are leaving Ngorongoro because hunger is no longer bearable. In distant lands women and children are victimized by criminals. Some women have died of hunger. It is genocide against Ngorongoro pastoralists. I ask the Government, specifically the President, to intervene without further delays.

Environmental and social challenges in getting from gender equality policy to practice have led organizations and researchers to call for social change agents—including feminist women leaders—to build resilience as they engage in the risky work of shifting power dynamics and repairing severed ties between people and planet (Wakefield & Zimmerman, 2020; Honzak & Margoluis, 2020). Maasai activists working on behalf of Maasai women have drawn attention to the harmful effects of female genital mutilation (Olekina, 2010), lack of access to education (Nkoile & Simeone, 2018), and women's desire for and need of greater land rights (Kassa, 2022; MWEDO, n.d.). Additionally, over the last two decades, both local and INGOs have stepped in and devised an integrated environment and development agenda to offer training for pastoral women in land rights and entrepreneurship and provide reproductive health services and educational and employment support. Between 2011 and 2016, for instance, a partnership between UN Women and the Maasai Women Development Organization sought to empower hundreds of Maasai women to acquire land, find additional

employment and diversify their economic activities to supplement their families' income (U.N. Women, 2016).

Tanzania's pastoral women and colonialism

Reviewing the literature about women in pastoral societies reveals a multitude of references to their marginalized roles, their oppression, and their lack of power as opposed to men's domination and power (Eneyew & Mengistu, 2013; Rota, 2010). Gender relations prior to the political and economic structures constituted by the colonial encounter are not well known, as Maasai sources detailing this time are largely nonexistent. However, some researchers suggest that traditional and pre-colonial pastoral communities were more egalitarian (Guyo, 2017), with women actively involved in and having great influence on decision-making processes and pastoral livelihood practices (Hodgson, 2000). Dorothy Hodgson (1999), in her seminal work on Maasai and gender in Tanzania, argues that outside influences such as male-dominated colonial powers, monetary-focused economies, and the historical targeting of men in development interventions led to the separation of men's and women's spheres of activity; women's activities were gradually restricted to private service, followed by a marginalization of women's means of commodity exchange, their roles, and their authority (Hodgson, 2001; Joekes & Pointing, 1991).

In Tanzania, which experienced a lengthy period of colonial rule that ended in the early 1960s, both colonialism and the ensuing post-colonial nation-state reinforced the status of men and undermined pastoral women's power and standing. Although pastoral women appear to have contributed heavily to herd management throughout the country's history (Hodgson, 2001), they were not recognized as livestock owners by British colonial administrators or later by Tanzanian government elites. Instead, Maasai men were deemed "taxpayers" and "household heads" (Hodgson, 2001, p. 107) and taxes were demanded from men based on the number of animals they held. When missionary and government schools

began to be introduced in the first half of the twentieth century, it was boys who were enrolled. Development projects such as dairy cooperatives have also tended to assume that men own and control resources. Among the Maasai, this assumption resulted in dairy herds being formally registered to male household heads, who in turn collected payment from collection points, irrespective of the fact that it was largely women who acted as milk managers and undertook the production and sale of milk (Hodgson, 2001).

Prior to the intervention of government and non-government development projects during the second half of the twentieth century, pastoral women overall held a more equitable position in their households and communities, a point made clearly by Hodgson (2000, p. 98), who argues that “it was during the early period of British colonial state formation that the parameters of male Maasai power expanded to embrace new modes of control and authority, becoming something we might call ‘patriarchal.’”

It would be oversimplification to point to the political-economic forces of colonialism as the sole power to shape pastoral women’s gendered experience. Patterns and identities established long before colonialism also influenced the colonial experience and continue to be a powerful force shaping ‘postcolonial’ Africa. Relations between women and men in Maasai society are historically regulated by the ‘age-set’ system, which is based upon the division of the male population into age groups that privilege male seniority. This social system also structures sexual and gender relations and forms the foundation of the Maasai patriarchal society (Talle, 1994). Extensive Maasai myths and oral histories also shape the identities and rights of Maasai women. For example, one story tells of a Maasai man who died and sent his apparition back to his people in the form of a snake (Mwanzi, 2013). While most people ran from the snake, a woman saw it and decided to share with it some of the milk she was carrying. Within this myth is the idea that women’s courage is to be respected, as women are feeders of spirits of departed elders and medicine men (Mwanzi, 2013). The

Maasai patriarchal society and women's lack of access to the same rights enjoyed by men are also encapsulated in myth. One important myth passed generationally reveals much about the current social structure of the Maasai, particularly concerning the relationship between men and women. This myth holds that the Maasai descend from two equal tribes, one made up of women, and the other tribe made up of men. The tribe of men, known as the Morwak, bred goats and sheep; the tribe of women, known as the Moroyok, raised antelope (Bentsen, 1989). Men and women from the tribes met in the forest, and children born from their unions were raised by their mothers, although boys would later move to the village to join their fathers. A problem arose one day when, while the women bickered and quarreled amongst themselves, they lost control of their herd of antelope, which took off for the savannah (Bentsen, 1989). Consequently, women were forced to seek support from the male tribe. In doing so, they gave up their freedom and equal status and were—and still are—expected to respect male authority.

A brief history of the integrated environment and development agenda

Women have been a focus of global development since it began as a field, from health, to education, to natural resource management. This study will focus on the integrated environment and development approach. To grasp the current widespread interest in inclusion of gender considerations into integrated work in northern Tanzania requires an understanding of at least some of the colonial history of the concept's use and spheres of interaction and influence. Such a history shows the ways in which integrated projects have evolved and prompts caution in accepting women's physical participation as a panacea to problems concerning power over the conservation of natural resources.

Tanzania has since colonial times been the focus of intensifying conservation intervention, which often involved denying local pastoralists and hunter-gatherers access to their traditional resources and lands to satisfy the desires of a powerful European elite

(Mkumbukwa, 2009). The history of invisible pastoral women, first understood with accounts of the colonial gaze, continued with a new kind of integrated conservation and development project that ignored or, in some cases, deepened gender inequities. As fortress protected area projects came under fire in the late 1980s for human rights violations — such as expropriation of land, forced displacement, and lack of access to livelihoods (Brockington & Igoe, 2006; Siurua, 2006) — international development donors and practitioners promoted integrated conservation and development projects as a way to increase community involvement in conservation and provide socioeconomic development opportunities alongside conservation projects (Population, Health, and Environment Toolkit, 2019).

Horwich and Lyon (2007) argue that the distinction between integrated conservation and development projects (ICDPs) and other projects, such as community-based conservation, can be defined solely by the scale of the project. Others, such as McShane & Wells (2004, p. 3) contend that ICDP is a ‘collective label’ for a variety of efforts to simultaneously address the promotion of socioeconomic development and conservation of nature, including community-based natural resource management, wildlife management areas, and population, health, and environment (PHE) projects. Today, integrated environment and development is an evolving concept and looks different among local and international NGOs. Local NGOs have never used the term ICDP to describe their work, and international conservation initiatives are no longer labeled as ICDPs, although many projects continue to draw on ICDP principles (Blom et al., 2010).

The integrated approach remains prevalent in northern Tanzania, where a multitude of projects aim for some win-win combination of natural resource management, climate resilience, livelihoods, health, women’s empowerment, and education programming (IUCN, 2019; Thaxton, 2007). The Northern Tanzania Rangelands Initiative, for example, counted on

over nine partner organizations to deliver on integrated objectives (Northern Tanzania Rangelands Initiative, n.d.):

We see a tremendous opportunity to bring together conservation and development actors that have been working in this landscape for years. We've seen results and impact, but we've been often working in isolation. Now we're coordinating our efforts through this collaboration, hoping to build upon each other's strengths and skills, fill important gaps, and work towards achieving a shared vision and objectives.

But overall, linking biodiversity conservation with local social and economic development was, and remains, messy. Both conservationists and social scientists spent decades harshly criticizing ICDP initiatives for failure to meet stated objectives (Wells et al., 1999) — particularly when it comes to gender equality, if gender was considered at all (Flintan, 2003; Singleton et al., 2019). It proved difficult to simultaneously achieve conservation and development objectives, and many ICPD initiatives were flawed in their core assumptions and planning (Brown, 2003; Wells et al. 1999). A number of reviews suggest that ICDPs were unable to reconcile conservation and development agendas, yet the allure of integration remained, given the interdependence of problems facing rural communities. Eventually, many conservation organizations recognized that without addressing issues of women's health and gender, their environmental goals were at risk of falling flat (Oglethorpe et al., 2008; Edmond et al. 2009).

A renewed focus on women was seen in the Population, Health, and Environment (PHE) approach, which gained momentum in the 1990s as a service delivery model for providing integrated health and conservation activities (Oglethorpe et al., 2008) and is largely seen as inhabiting the second wave of the ICDP approach, along with community-based natural resource management. I explain PHE here because it is an approach currently undertaken in northern Tanzania. Contemporary PHE projects view women as crucial to rural futures, as rural women play a key role in agriculture, food security, and managing natural resources (Edmond et al. 2009; Hunter, 2008). The approach emphasizes bringing

conservation and health services to communities that both need and want them — particularly those who live on the edge of some of the world’s most endangered natural ecosystems, such as pastoral women. PHE work can look different depending on the context (Dolins et al., 2010; Population Reference Bureau, 2007), but for the purposes of this research, they are initiatives that seek to holistically address concerns around poor health outcomes and environmental degradation in collaboration with local resource users through a combination of improved health services, sustainable livelihoods, training in sustainable natural resource management, and creation of women’s savings and loans groups.

PHE projects most commonly focus on women’s sexual and reproductive health, extending family planning services to rural women who lack access. Two recent studies examine the role of reproductive health within PHE projects (Singleton et al., 2019; Hardee et al., 2018). However, integrated health and conservation efforts are not limited to family planning. In fact, some experts argue that the term PHE does not capture the range of potential partnerships across sectors (Clarke, 2010). PHE can accommodate other sectors, such as education, and be applied to achieve a range of development goals, from poverty reduction to gender equity (Population Reference Bureau, 2007). Research has pointed toward the importance of promoting PHE interventions within the framework of livelihood improvement, for example, as people often view and understand their relationship with their environment through the lens of their livelihood (Ervin & Lopez-Carr, 2017). One suggestion has been to rename PHE to “HELP,” or Health, Environment, Livelihoods, and Population, in order to capture the full breadth of work integrated within the approach (Clarke, 2010). It is also essential to note the historic and current attention on integrated conservation and development projects both on the African continent and within Tanzania. A concentrated number of integrated health and conservation projects occur in East Africa (Population Reference Bureau, 2019), where several PHE consortiums also exist for groups to share

challenges and best practices. The popularity of integrated projects in the region can be traced to “a huge natural resource base upon which its inhabitants depend for their livelihoods” (East African Community, 2015, p. 1). The government of Tanzania has developed a National Five-Year PHE Strategic Plan, and the University of Dar es Salaam has recently launched a curriculum for its Master of Arts program in PHE (Mshighati, 2019).

Overall, the environment and development agenda in Tanzania has evolved from early attempts to link community well-being and conservation to a more holistic approach with a particular focus on gender equality, women’s health, and sustainable livelihoods. Yet women pastoralists continue to face social, political, and economic marginalization at local and national levels. Amid a changing climate and a fraught political climate, local and INGOs have an important role to play in building a more feminist, intersectional, justice-oriented social-ecological agenda in the country, and particularly in Tanzania’s northern rangelands.

CHAPTER III:

REFRAMING TANZANIA'S PASTORAL WOMEN & ENVIRONMENT: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Introduction

Narratives about people and place drive the ways that environment and development projects get done. Labels, language, and discourse in general have an outsized role in shaping women's legitimacy as leaders and in influencing where donor dollars are directed. In the environment and development arena, women and gender have become a highly visible discursive presence amid global attention on gender equality and the holistic approaches necessary to achieve it (IUCN, 2018; Lau, 2020; WWF, 2022). But while dominant discourses can dilute gender and environment concerns, making them so simple or common that they lose meaning (Connelly et al., 2000), a willingness to understand hidden or competing discourses can unlock new frames and new futures for society and nature (Jepson, 2019). Applying this logic to northern Tanzania—a region renowned for astounding biodiversity and humming with local and international organizations eager to conserve it (Brockington et al., 2008)—it becomes vital to sift through dominant narratives to discover local discourse that tells a multifaceted story about pastoral women and their environment.

Conservation and development practitioners have engaged with various feminist and gender theories in order to demonstrate how women face restricted access to and control over land, water, forests, and other environmental resources and to determine how to involve women in integrated social-ecological projects (Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2008; Rocheleau et al., 1996). The current construction of the identity of the pastoral woman and her relationship with the environment has roots in the ecofeminist movement of the 1980s and 1990s, which posits that women have an inherent connection to nature and an essential, unchanging knowledge of ecosystems (Leach, 2007). It is a narrative into which many international organizations still lean as a means to neatly fit women into ambitious, integrated environment

and development projects. Yet ecofeminism and other global feminist discourses reinterpreted within the development context also contribute to the stereotyping of pastoral women as 1) environmental victims in need of assistance or 2) sustainability saviors whose labor can be used to save the planet (Leach et al., 2016).

Scholars have not shied away from sounding the alarm on simplified stories that reveal only a partial picture of the realities of rural women (Dogra, 2011; Hodgson, 2000; Rocheleau et al., 1996; Singleton et al., 2019). Feminist scholars and practitioners call for the historicizing and politicizing of the layered, complex, gendered lives of women, drawing attention to tokenistic approaches to gender equality (Lawless et al., 2022); questioning whose knowledge is centered in integrated projects (Goldman et al., 2016; Hodgson, 2001); and contributing ideas as to what would lead to more equitable and effective environmental governance (Leach et al., 2018). In this chapter, I heed the Sumberg et al. (2013) admonition that development's shift toward participation and empowerment has been largely discursive and Goldman's (2003, p. 834) warning that promises of a 'new,' more participatory conservation have fallen short in Tanzania, where communities "remain peripheral to defining the ways in which conservation is perceived and nature managed."

I seek to respond to concern about the ongoing sidelining of pastoral women's identities and centering of Western objectives within integrated environment and development in Tanzania by making space for underrepresented points of view (Matulis & Moyer, 2017). I do this by applying critical discourse analysis to language and images from the websites of three local NGOs. By local, I refer to organizations with 'headquarters' local to northern Tanzania, which were founded and function on a local level, have intimate knowledge of the local context, and seek to be accountable to local populations (International Institute for Environment and Development, 2010). In the case of northern Tanzania, I focus on the Pastoral Women's Council (PWC), the Maasai Women Development Organization

(MWEDO), and Ujamaa Community Resource Team (UCRT). Details on these focus organizations are provided in Table 1.

I concentrate on local organizations for three reasons. The first is to help fill a lacuna in the focus of critical discourse analysis. Practitioners of the approach, which I define at length later in this chapter, have noted that it “often chooses the perspective of those who suffer, and critically analyzes the language use of those in power” (Wodak, 2001, p. 10). This is not surprising considering the emancipatory agenda of critical discourse analysis, but this practice can serve to polarize subjects of study into simplified categories—namely, those people or systems who wield power over others and those who experience the consequences of that power. To create this dichotomy here would be to assume that discourse constituted by INGOs is automatically dominant or more powerful, when in fact local NGOs such as PWC, MWEDO, and UCRT are powerful forces in northern Tanzania in shaping the identities of pastoral women, their relationship to the environment, and their position in the larger world of global development and environment work. The existing critical discourse analysis on women as a non-dominant group has focused mainly on under or misrepresentation of women in dominant discourse (Power et al., 2019) and less on the voice and agency of women, including their resistance discourses, group solidarity, and how they construct a positive identity for themselves. In other words, there is a need for analyzation of discourse of those deemed less powerful, which is far less often analyzed than the discourse of those assumed to hold power.

Secondly, and relatedly, I am interested in understanding what a movement to decolonize international conservation and development would look like, an objective I discuss at more length in Chapter IV. An appropriate place to start is with local organizations concerned with elevating the rights and roles of local peoples to find out how they define pastoral women and nature-gender linkages. This approach will serve to foreground the voice

and agency of women and of Tanzanian organizations rather than contributing to assumptions about pastoral women and pastoral life in East Africa. And thirdly, ecofeminist discourse and its role in both empowering and limiting the empowerment of women has been discussed at length in the literature (MacGregor, 2004), revealing and problematizing ‘gender myths’ (Leach, 2007) and essentialism (Gaard, 2011). What is less explored is how local organizations adopt, further define, or reject this discourse, how they do so, and the implications this may have for pastoral women and integrated environment and development projects moving forward. Specifically, I seek to answer:

1. How does the environment and development agenda in Northern Tanzania frame and influence the identities of pastoral women?
 - 1a. How are INGOs conceptualizing the environment and development agenda?
 - 1b. How are NGOs conceptualizing the environment and development agenda?
 - 1c. How are NGOs embracing or resisting environment and development concepts?

The purpose of this chapter is to challenge problematic or diluted international narratives by shedding light on discourse produced by local NGOs. Grounded in feminist theory, I analyze the ways in which the discourse created by local NGOs extricates the pastoral woman from simplistic realities that limit her to either vulnerable environmental victim or change agent. Ultimately, this analysis provides insight into pastoral women’s role in shaping northern Tanzania’s environment and development landscape.

Locating the gender-environment nexus in feminist development scholarship

Our understanding of discourse shaping the identity of pastoral women and Tanzanian rangelands requires us to step back, if only briefly, to look at feminist discourses more broadly. Although the concept of discourse is understood and applied in a variety of ways, in this research I understand it as “an area of language use expressing a particular standpoint and related to a certain set of institutions” (Peet & Watts, 1996, p.14). In this view,

commonly held by political ecologists and other critical scholars, discourse is constituted through language, stories, and terminology, as well as images.

I begin by situating my analysis within broader literatures on women and gender in development. The examination of gender and environment and their relation to one another has long been a part of broader environmental scholarship and has evolved considerably over time. For the purposes of this study, gender is dynamic and negotiated through norms and values, intersecting with other social categories in different ways in different environments, and at varied moments in time (Nightingale, 2006). As such, gender may be thought of as the “sociocultural layer that sits atop biological sex differences” (MacGregor, 2017, p. 3). Importantly, gender is not a synonym for women (Carver, 1996), although the focus of this study is indeed on pastoral women. It is beyond the scope of this study to examine each gender, development, and environment discourse throughout history in depth, but this section serves as a foundation for several prominent schools of feminist thought as they relate to conservation and development, with a particular focus on feminist political ecology. I review the concept of discourse in understandings of women and the environment and provide a foundation for unpacking the discourses found in contemporary local organizational documents and websites that serve to shape or reshape the identity of the pastoral woman and the meaning of nature and environment in Tanzania.

Ecofeminism, which emerged in the 1980s, is founded on the premise that forms of oppression are connected. It attempts to establish a connection between environmental degradation and the oppression of women by investigating the gendered division of labor and environmental roles in areas like land titling and women's rights to resources (Agarwal, 1992). The ecofeminist idea that women have essential knowledge of ecosystems and environmental protection that differs from men's knowledge because of their inherent connection to nature (Shiva, 1988) was instrumental in actions such as Wangari Maathai's

Greenbelt Movement in Kenya (Salman & Iqbal, 2007). But when applied to externally funded conservation and development efforts, it also served to burden women by treating gender in isolation and targeting women as a homogenous group, adding new environmental “care” roles to existing women’s work that worsen gender injustices (Elmhirst, 2015, p. 521). Ecofeminist discourse in the early 1990s, or what Leach (2007, p. 71) refers to as “ecofeminist fables,” supported a view that organizations should identify women as allies or change agents in resource conservation projects, but it also served to fix women, often as a homogenous group, in a static, ahistorical relationship to the environment (Leach, 2007).

Feminist political ecology emerged as one way to reckon with a discourse that burdened women or positioned them as victims. First recognized as a subfield of political ecology in the 1990s, feminist political ecology can be traced to influential scholar Dianne Rocheleau and others who invited political ecologists to take a closer look at gender in their considerations of politics and power. Elmhirst (2015, p. 521) describes that feminist political ecology “slipped from the agenda” at the end of the 1990s, due in large part to backlash about the broader Women in Development, or WID, approach at the time, which was concerned with ensuring women benefitted from economic development (Rathgeber, 1990). Feminists and gender studies scholars have criticized WID for devaluing unpaid care work performed by women and failing to address non-economic aspects of inequality, such as gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights (Rai, 2011).

Feminist political ecology has continued to evolve and reemerge in the years since, drawing from theories of embodiment and intersectionality to explain how multiple social differences — not just gender — can be reproduced through everyday practices. Intersectionality, a concept coined by lawyer and activist Kimberlé Crenshaw (Crenshaw, 1991), originally encouraged an approach to feminism that interrogates the interconnections between gender and race. Modern feminist political ecologists have built on Crenshaw’s use

of the term and today, intersectionality encompasses the interplay among various dimensions of social relationship and subject formation (Elmhirst, 2015)—including age, class, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability, or religion. Intersectionality has been used to explore the intersectional impacts of sustainable livelihood efforts, for example, and how women have negotiated or resisted these impacts (Toumbourou & Dressler, 2020).

Overall, gender and environmental scholarship is shifting from a focus on individual agency—as seen in WID approaches—to power relations and complex socioeconomic structures, moving from women in/and environment to a ‘gendering of’ human-nature relations (Jerneck, 2015). Feminist political ecology has recently been used to interrogate the social inclusivity of restoration agendas (Elias et al., 2021) and the gendered dimensions of wildlife crime (Massé et al., 2021). Current work in the field has also attempted to understand gender-environment relations through Butler's (1988) concept of performativity, or the embodied practices through which gendered subjects are constituted (Harris, 2006). In the meantime, other theorists have interrogated how social categories such as race are created through social practices, “many of which are intricately linked to particular environments and ideas about nature” (Sultana, 2011, p. 238).

Discourse around conservation and environment has shaped how and why nature is valued and for whose benefit the environment is (Doyle et al., 2015). Tanzania, which has been the focus of intensive international conservation activity since colonial times, saw the introduction of Western conservation ideals through projects that disenfranchised women and elevated the status of men (Flintan, 2008; Hodgson, 2001). Although integrated environment and development projects have since emerged as a way to address social and economic development, the result is an existing and growing tapestry of protected areas and integrated projects that continue to impact the lives and livelihoods of pastoralist men and women and the gendered spaces they share. Pastoralist women such as the Maasai are socially,

economically, and politically marginalized (Indigenous Navigator, 2020; Kipuri & Ridgwell, 2008; Lawson, 2014). Yet, pastoral women make significant contributions to national economies, to the achievement of development goals, and to the maintenance of rangelands. Identified as both vulnerable and knowledgeable users of rangelands who are reliant upon the environment—in other words, as both victims and change agents—the question becomes which, if either, reality is constructed or resisted by local Tanzanian organizations.

Locating pastoral women within international discourse

“Investing in Women and Girls Is a Conservation Solution” is bolded on a Nature Conservancy web page, introducing one section of a blog on “why ensuring women and girls have equal access to knowledge and resources has the power to transform the landscape” in Africa (The Nature Conservancy, 2021, para. 3). Constructing women as an underutilized population with the potential to deliver on environmental goals aligns with an enduring discourse within international development that emphasizes women as a smart economic investment (Bloom et al., 2017). The neoliberal logic behind this discourse is summed up well here: “Creating opportunities for women can help not only to empower women, but also to unlock the full economic potential of their nations (Ellis et al., 2007, p. xi). The international conservation community has added ‘but also to protect biodiversity’ to this argument.

The Nature Conservancy article and other blogs on the INGO’s website tell the story of East Africa’s pastoral women as suitable saviors of valuable rangelands, but the message quickly becomes muddled. Who are women saving the landscape for? Who benefits from the projects tied to its salvation? Across the organization’s website, pastoral women are simultaneously powerful and powerless, seemingly both part of the problem and the answer. Keeping the rangelands they inhabit healthy appears to be just out of grasp, an endeavor requiring new, superior science and management techniques. “A new grasslands management

program is helping pastoralists manage their lands well — for themselves, their livestock, and wildlife” (The Nature Conservancy, 2020) states the accompanying text of a photo essay.

The broad narrative is one largely divorced from a complicated conservation and development history (Hodgson, 2001), depicting an imperiled rangeland landscape in need of progressive environmental practices and an expectation of whose shoulders the transformation seems to rest upon. “All across Africa, women are doing it all” suggests another line of text on the organization’s webpage (The Nature Conservancy, 2021, para. 2).

Gender and environment discourse is always evolving. While an ecofeminist outlook powered much of the global development community’s interaction with women and environment in the 1980s and 1990s (Buckingham, 2004), feminists are grappling with where the critical tradition of feminist theory has led our understanding of gender and environment today (Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2021; Sultana, 2011). For example, some scholars posit that ecofeminism is misunderstood (Carlassare, 1993), while others consider that ecofeminism’s problematic essentialism (Gaard, 2011) is largely in the rearview. Leach (2007, p. 78) argues that ecofeminist ‘myths’ “appear no longer to permeate, even implicitly, the environment and development policy and action statements of donor agencies, governments and NGOs.” When this language does appear, Leach (2007, p. 78) contends, the message “appears to be cast in more relational, rights-based terms.” But even a quick look at the websites and blogs of The Nature Conservancy and the African Wildlife Foundation, both of which engage in integrated approaches in Tanzania, reveals otherwise. Ecofeminist discourse remains prominent in statements produced by both organizations today. Another example, this time from the African Wildlife Foundation (n.d., para 1), aids in further sketching out this point:

Not only do women joining conservation double the number of able people protecting biodiversity, but they also get the opportunity to capitalize on the unique relationship that they have with the natural environment.

The word ‘capitalize’ reminds us of the profit to be gained from women’s participation. In the resulting discourse, women and gender become instruments for environment and development interventions. In both The Nature Conservancy and African Wildlife Foundation examples, it is unclear whether women’s participation is a worthy intent and endeavor on its own, or rather a more efficient way to capitalize on additional labor to deliver on organizational mandates and strategies. This discursive construction of women in development, structured around efficiency and economic growth, has been investigated across several other fields, including recently in energy (Listo, 2018) and climate change (Acosta et al., 2020).

Examples could also likely be found to support Leach’s (2007) hypothesis that global gender and environment discourse is moving to adopt rights-based language, following a stronger commitment to rights-based, gender-sensitive approaches overall (Bee et al., 2013). To be clear, it is not my intent to critique the work of The Nature Conservancy or the African Wildlife Foundation. Rather, I offer the examples above to ground the reader in a powerful global discourse that has and continues to have a role in centering Western intervention and in shaping the identity of pastoral women and their ‘worthiness’ for investment, empowerment, and control over land and natural resources. Providing this necessary cursory glance at gender and environment discourse that has dominated INGOs and moving instead to focus on local organizations will allow a more complete picture of how pastoral women are represented in integrated environment and development work, how this impacts the agenda of environment and development work, and who or what is said to benefit from integrated environment and development work.

Methodology

For this research, I employ critical discourse analysis. Content analysis, a broad term used to describe diverse research approaches under which critical discourse analysis sits, is a

method that uses a set of procedures to analyze written, oral, or audio-visual evidence and answer specific research questions (Frey, 2018). Among the uses for content analysis pointed out by Berelson (1952) is to reflect cultural patterns of groups, institutions, or societies and reveal the focus of individual, group, institutional, or societal attention. Critical discourse analysis is a strand of the method particularly concerned with the relationships between power, language, and ideology (Wodak, 2001). I apply critical discourse analysis due to its alignment with feminist political ecologists' desire to better understand how gender-environment relations both symbolically and materially impact how environmental resources and responsibilities are distributed and how nature is understood (Sultana, 2011).

Language is a common social behavior with which people and organizations can share their views of how the world works. As a result, our social realities are achieved through talk and text, or as Nikander (2008, p. 415) puts it, are “talked into being.” Texts, language, and communication, therefore, should always be considered within social context as they both shape and are informed by wider processes within society. Critical discourse analysis allows for vigorous assessment of what is meant when language is used to describe and explain. Nietzsche, as cited in Bleiker & Chou (2010, p. 9), puts it this way:

When we say something about the world, we also inevitably say something about our conception of the world – something that is linked not to the facts and phenomena we try to comprehend but to the assumptions and conventions of knowing that we have acquired over time and that have become codified in language.

Discourse analysis is not merely an exercise in abstract theorizing, but helps explain how ideas and ideology, as carried implicitly in discourse, affect material reality. Texts can therefore be understood as “sites of struggle” in that they can reveal hints of differing discourses and ideologies struggling for dominance (Wodak, 2001, p. 11). A central theme in critiques of discourse is attention to the relationship between language, knowledge, and power. Critical discourse analysis is ‘critical’ in that it often seeks to advocate for marginalized people and critique structures of oppression (Wodak, 2001). Nikander (2008, p.

414) explains that critical discourse analysis “aims at explaining processes of power from the outset-how power is legitimated, reproduced, and enacted in the talk and texts of dominant groups or institutions.” But language and the discourse it produces can also be used to challenge, reshape, or resist power (Putnam et al., 2005). This critical agenda is consistent with my own feminist research framework, as I am interested in understanding patterns in how local organizations resist, shape, or reshape existing narratives of who pastoral women are as well as what their relationship to environment is.

Critical discourse analysis is not a monolithic construct and can instead be considered a multidisciplinary perspective drawing upon diverse approaches. Van Dijk (2001) encourages practitioners to embrace the approach’s eclectic nature, drawing on expertise of multiple researchers. Accordingly, this thesis builds on a combination of critical discourse analysis theory and methodology developed by Fairclough (2003), Jager (2001), Machin & Mayr (2012), and Van Dijk (2001). The authors of these referenced sources often refer to each other’s work, both theoretically and methodologically, thus making them not only compatible but complementary. In approaching analysis, my study also recognizes the work of Baxter (2008) and Lazar (2007), who have foregrounded feminist theory within critical discourse analysis. Baxter (2008, p. 3) encourages analysts to embrace female subject positions as “complex, shifting and multiply located” and suggests that the “ceaseless interaction of competing discourses means that speakers will continuously fluctuate between subject positions on a matrix of powerfulness and powerlessness”—an approach I find valuable to this investigation.

There are several key tools common to critical discourse analysis that I lean on for this research. I borrow from Jager’s ‘analytical toolbox’ (Jager, 2001) as well as from Machin & Mayr’s (2012) multimodal approach and Lazar’s (2007) feminist slant to design my own critical discourse analysis toolbox. Broadly, this involves analyzing semiotic choices such as

word choice and verb processes, and using this analysis to understand representational strategies, social actors, and the buried meaning and reality they convey. Additionally, I pay particular attention to frame. Robert Entman (1993) has contributed to the conversation on framing, defining the process as the representation of certain aspects of a perceived reality. This representation, therefore, promotes a “particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Such an explanation is useful when understanding how discursive frames form the cultural resources that shape, motivate, and give meaning to collective action (Benford & Snow, 2000). Thinking about how discourse is contributing to certain frames, or realities, is of paramount importance when investigating how discursive practices are situated. Interestingly, Crenshaw, who coined intersectionality, also speaks in terms of frame (2016, 4:26-4:44):

Without frames that allow us to see how social issues impact all members of a targeted group, many will fall through the cracks of social movements, left to suffer in virtual isolation. But it doesn't have to be this way.

Similar to other methods of analysis in qualitative research, critical discourse analysis requires repeated review, examination, and interpretation of the data in order to gain meaning and empirical knowledge of the construct being studied. In order to conduct critical discourse analysis, Fairclough (2003) suggests a first structural analysis of the context, followed by a second, closer analysis that focuses on linguistic features such as agents, time, tense, modality, and syntax (Meyer, 2001). In addition, when conducting critical discourse analysis, “we must make choices, and select those structures for closer analysis that are relevant for the study of a social issue” (Van Dijk, 2001 p. 99). Due to the focus of this research, I paid closer attention to elements of text pertaining to the participation of women pastoralists or issues of gender equality.

There is no suggested number of texts or visual pieces that constitutes a critical discourse analysis, as some researchers choose to deeply analyze just one piece of text while

others attempt to analyze a greater number, or corpus. Critical discourse analysis can be used on all types of communication no matter where the material comes from. Although it is commonly used to analyze news and media (Machin & Mayr, 2012), I have chosen to apply critical discourse analysis to materials from the websites of three local organizations engaged in gender and environment work in northern Tanzania.

Table 1. Local organization background information

Organization	Year Founded	Staff size	Focus of work	Geographic focus	Populations worked with
Pastoral Women's Council (PWC)	1997	36	Education, economic empowerment, health and wellbeing, women's rights & leadership	90 villages across Ngorongoro, Longido, Monduli	Batemi, Datoga, Maasai (serving 200,000 people)
Maasai Women Development Organization (MWEDO)	2000	45	Education, economic empowerment, maternal health services, land ownership, promotion of human and cultural rights	Arusha DC Kiteto Simanjiro Monduli Longido	Pastoralist women and girls in geographic areas of focus
Ujamaa Community Resource Team (UCRT)	1998	32	Local land governance, nature-based livelihoods, community land tenure, community natural resource management, social empowerment	109 villages across Simanjiro, Longido, Monduli, Kiteto, Hanang, Mbulu, Karatu, Mkalama, Ngorongoro	Akie, Batemi, Barabaig, Datoga, Hadzabe, Maasai (serving 370,000 people)

In late January 2022, I began gathering content publicly available online from PWC, MWEDO, and UCRT. In this part of my research, I utilized 'naturally occurring' texts, as opposed to researcher provoked texts such as interview transcripts (Nikander, 2008). This

included organizational mission statements, ‘about us’ statements, blog posts detailing programmatic work, and annual reports if available. These materials were selected for the insight each might provide into an organization’s approach to the nexus of gender, environment, and development. I chose at least five pieces of content from each organization to attempt even representation of organizational ethos, although MWEDO offered the least amount of available text online. I limited my study by examining content published between 2017 and 2021, as I am interested in how the identity of pastoral women is constructed in the present and text published in recent years was more readily available online than archived reports. In total, I gathered 22 pieces of content (each ranging from 2 to 23 pages) from three local organizations to analyze. Each piece of content analyzed can be found in Appendix A.

After building this archive, I applied a systematic and rigorous analysis searching for themes. A key heuristic I used in analysis was how communicators decide to represent individuals and groups of people, who in critical discourse analysis are often referred to as “social actors” (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 77). In all language there exists no neutral way to represent a person, and the classification of social actors by using individualization versus collectivization, for example, can offer clues as to the reality on offer. Furthermore, a cornerstone of Fairclough’s (2003) approach is to remember that what is missing from the text is just as important as what is present; I apply excessive use of certain terms and lack of use of certain terms in order to uncover buried meaning. These tools allowed me to develop several themes through close reading and analysis of collected evidence. Employing these inductive techniques through the process of slowly examining and re-examining the data, I eventually developed a coding scheme, merged codes of specific instances in text and other materials into larger, more abstract frames, and built my analysis from this organization. In other words, the codes emerged from the data. I achieved this by reading a sample of the

data, creating codes to cover the sample, then reading a new sample of data and applying the codes I created, noting where codes didn't match or where I needed additional codes.

Critical discourse analysis depends on researcher reflexivity. In the critical tradition, the approach assumes that the world is characterized by imbalances of power which may appear 'given' or 'natural' in discourse (Wodak, 2001). In light of this, I acknowledge that my own subjective biases inform this research. By examining discourses constituted by local organizations as they relate to pastoral women and gender-nature linkages, I selected the interpretive context (Gill 1996), or the elements I found relevant to interpreting the data. Another researcher could select other factors as the relevant interpretive context and construct a distinct analysis. As Gill (1996, p. 147) explains, "To put it bluntly, our own discourse as discourse analysts is no less constructed, occasioned, and action oriented than the discourse we are studying." Despite inherent and acknowledged subjectivity of this research, by keeping analysis closely tied to the data and interpreting it in the context of established theory from other scholars, I hope to provide one meaningful and illuminating way of understanding the evolving identity of Tanzania's pastoral women and the environment they inhabit.

Results

Paying close attention to complexities of language promises to demonstrate how a model of seeing and understanding how the world is broadcast. By withholding the assumption that language simply reflects reality, we can start to see how particular views of the world and ways of being are highlighted and celebrated while others are minimized or resisted through discourse. Close attention to discourse constituted by PWC, MWEDO, and UCRT shows how Western perspectives of pastoral women, conservation, and environment are resisted and reframed within blogs, statements, and images produced by local organizations in northern Tanzania.

In this section, I present the major themes uncovered through a critical discourse analysis of materials from three local organizations operating at the nexus of gender and environment in northern Tanzania. In this analysis, I show how discourse found across organizational texts and images offer at least three frames with which to understand women, conservation, and gender-environment linkages in northern Tanzania. The discourse analyzed frames pastoral women as holders of power and leadership potential by diverting attention away from simplistic gender assumptions and toward social norms change; reintroduces semi-arid savanna landscape as the home of local peoples and reinforces ideas of holistic conservation; and complicates the dichotomy between modernity and ‘traditional’ knowledge of pastoral women, painting a picture in which international NGOs can act as key support to local-led solutions. In the following sections, I will elaborate upon each frame with specific textual cases.

Frame: Pastoral women are holders of power and leadership potential

In discussing discourse that shapes the identity of pastoral women, it is worth acknowledging that ‘representational strategies’ (Van Dijk, 1993) allow communicators to place people in the social world and to draw attention to certain aspects of identity. In the case of materials produced by PWC, UCRT, and MWEDO, representational strategies reveal repeated efforts to resist and redefine narratives that may serve to devalue pastoral women as individuals, to relegate them to the periphery of society, or to place value upon a collective ‘women’ solely for their potential contributions to conservation and economic development projects. Instead, my findings and analysis reveal a frame, or a version of reality, that seeks to actively historicize and politicize pastoral women living within the constraints of a patriarchal society as social, economic, and environmental leaders and decision-makers worthy of greater control over their lives and their environments.

Before diving into support for the above findings, I first point out that the Maasai are dominant throughout the sample namely because all three local organizations work with Maasai. But northern Tanzania is ethnically diverse, and depending on the district, the NGOs also work with Akie, Batemi, Barabaig, Datoga, and Hadzabe populations. I recognize that each of these peoples are culturally distinct, and that there is deep history that explains their identity politics and why Maasai have established greater global notoriety and connections (Igoe, 2006), although it is beyond the scope of this study to examine this history in depth. Despite their differences, these peoples also share commonalities, such as their strong attachment to land, unique cultural identities, and ongoing struggles of marginalization, poverty, land tenure insecurity, and inadequate political representation. Also important to note is that four of these ethnic groups—the hunter-gatherer Akie and Hadzabe and pastoralist Barabaig and Maasai—have organized themselves around the international concept and movement of Indigenous peoples. Despite an active civil society that advocates for Indigenous recognition, the government of Tanzania does not legally recognize the concept of Indigenous peoples (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2011).

The degree of engagement with women and gender is high throughout the sample, which is unsurprising considering two of the local organizations (PWC & MWEDO) have mandates directly tied to amplifying the rights and voices of pastoral women. Intertextual linkages among the materials in the sample produce a characterization of pastoral women as either current or future leaders held back not by internal faults but by the repressive social norms that govern their society. It is a reality constructed by repeatedly associating women with words such as “positive,” “confident,” and “strong” as well as by utilizing active sentences, where women responsible for the action are foregrounded, as in the two examples below:

- (1) Now women stand and speak directly to the meeting about matters that they think should be discussed, or make arguments for their views to be considered, or present

issues that they have decided on. This effects a positive change, especially in regard to the community regaining control over the land and trying to own it. Women are particularly strong on this, stronger than men. (M, para. 9).

(2) As a woman on my own, before I felt shame. But now I am an independent woman. I feel confident and strong and I am proud to be able to provide for my family without need anyone else. (L, para. 7).

Extract 1 is attributed to a Maasai woman named Merwoyo, while extract 2 is attributed to a Maasai woman named Naomi. A generic category of pastoral women, repeated throughout the organizational materials, could have served to frame the population as a homogenous group, serving to play into existing assumptions (Homewood et al., 2009), ‘other’ them, or cast doubt as to whether leadership and greater control over decision-making is desired. Instead, frequent personalization throughout the sample is used to give extra weight to individual expressions of strength, freedom, and independence. Here, it is important to note what kinds of social actors are individualized. In this case, select women—such as Merwoyo and Naomi, in the extracts above—are given space to describe their experiences participating in Women’s Rights and Leadership Forums, in which women are supported to advocate for their rights to own, utilize, and benefit from land and property. Being named, Merwoyo and Naomi are thus individualized, which serves to bring the reader closer to them (Machin & Mayr, 2012). In another example, Maasai woman Vailet Elias offers this advice:

(3) I would advise women not to be afraid but to be confident. Don’t believe the negative cultural perceptions that women can’t be leaders. That is not true. Let women know they have rights, including the right to be a leader. Let them support each other and support those who stand (P, p. 20).

In 2019, Vailet was elected as a village chair, a position previously always held only by men. The journey wasn’t easy, and Vailet shares that men harassed her and discouraged her from running for election. But an accompanying image of Vailet (P, p.19) acts as a visual foil to a global discourse that often defaults to the oppressed, victimized, one-dimensional pastoral woman, who becomes relevant only due to her suffering. In contrast to the “average

third world woman,” (Dogra, 2011, p. 335) so often depicted as a distressed nurturer, Vailet demonstrates freedom and independence by casually standing alone outside. She invokes joy—which is described by American poet Toi Dericotte (2008) as an act of resistance against oppression—by smiling in such a way that makes it easy to imagine the sound of her laugh. This representation serves to invalidate the argument that women are “ideal victims” (Dogra, 2011, p. 335), disrupting embodied practices that have limited Maasai women to nurturers and carers and replacing them with the idea that women can be worthy carers *and* worthy political leaders.

A key feature of the worldview put forth by organizational materials is that women’s leadership in natural resource management is a right and a choice, rather than a requirement or obligation. The dominant strategy of argumentation across the sample presents women as valuable to the landscape not because they can support certain projects or contribute to saving the environment, but because their voices are assets to their own futures and the future of their communities—all of which are deeply interwoven with the rangeland landscape they call home. It is a journey that begins with ensuring women receive education of their legal and human rights, with PWC explaining it this way: “When pastoralist women know and understand their rights, they can defend themselves, protect their families, and support their entire community” (M, para.1). It can be inferred that it is women, then, who can decide how to harness knowledge to challenge or combat oppression. As Leach (2007, p. 78) advocated, this message indeed “appears to be cast in more relational, rights-based terms” than the ecofeminist discourse that dominated development and conservation language the 1980s and 1990s.

Buried within the discourse is a definition of women’s empowerment that cuts through the “diluted” understanding created by the broader international development community (Cronin-Furman et al., 2017, p. 3). Women’s empowerment was initially

conceptualized as part of the rights-based articulation of gender parity, but it very quickly became limited to technical ‘fixes,’ such as the provision of sewing machines or chickens as a way for women in the global South to participate in the economy (Cronin-Furman et al., 2017). In ensuing years, feminist scholars have critiqued this drift in focus and emphasized that empowerment and equality cannot be done to or for women but is rather an internal process that must start within and be led by women (Batliwala, 2015).

The discourse created by PWC, MWEDO, and UCRT emphasizes a women-led process with excessive use of the word “empowerment” together with “women” and “control.” These words create a ‘chain of equivalence,’ or a string of words that “work together to evoke a particular set of meanings” (Laclau, as cited in Cornwall & Brock, 2005, p. 1047). Configuring “women” with “control” serves to differentiate the empowerment narrative from a global discourse that has advocated the act of empowerment with little explanation of who is bestowing that power and where empowerment leads. Instead, the words “women,” “control,” and “empowerment” become drawn into a chain through repeated intertextual association, coming to signify each other automatically (Cornwall & Brock, 2005). PWC states it plainly here: “The Pastoral Women’s Council is a membership organization that empowers women at the community-level to take control of their own development” (I, para. 1). According to PWC, “women are able to control their economic status by improving their livelihoods to meet their daily needs” (K, para. 2). Implicitly, then, local organizations have reclaimed the term empowerment and realigned it with what many scholars understand to be its original purpose: helping women gain control of their daily needs and thus their futures.

Throughout the sample, the concept of women in control is directly associated with positive outcomes, as is demonstrated with Merwoyo’s earlier description in extract 1 that women standing and speaking in meetings “effects a positive change, especially in regard to

the community regaining control over the land and trying to own it” (M, para. 9). The discourse signals that not only are women strong, but their strength and leadership lead to good for other women and girls, the greater community, and the environment. Such implications, divorced from a neoliberal logic of women as instruments for external political or economic agendas (Dogra, 2011), allow the possibility for women to be valued for their agency or for making meaningful contributions to rural households and village or district policy through their leadership and work.

The repeated use of the phrase “take control” invokes the question of who women are taking control from. Because the discourse analyzed operates on the basis of a gender binary, it can be surmised that women must still negotiate for control over natural resources with men. This contrast can be seen in the following example, as stated by a Women’s Rights & Leadership Forum member:

(4) Men now recognize the part we play in the family. Now women are being appreciated by men. Men give us the chance to contest for leadership positions and to talk in meetings. We are now included in land plot distributions. Men ask women for advice before selling cows (H, p. 11).

The frame constructed by local organizations does not present pastoral women as existing outside or independent of a society with diverse gender relationships, or above the challenges presented by it. Instead, local organizations make visible systematic gendering of privilege and inequality, including violence against women and limited educational opportunities. Although men are regularly named as actors throughout the discourse, their role as oppressors is at times backgrounded. The excerpt below, for example, does not name men as conducting acts of violence:

(5) Girls in pastoralist communities are at a high risk of violence especially around female genital cutting, forced and early marriage, domestic violence, and teenage pregnancy. In Ngorongoro district for example, 584 GBV cases were reported between March and September 2020. (H, p. 21).

One reason for this treatment of men could be the wish to recruit men as allies in transformation. In the broader development discourse, the depoliticization of gender has led to externally identified investments in women-specific projects, sometimes at the expense of supportive social and governmental structures and norms work to dismantle harmful patriarchal practices (Farhall & Rickards, 2021). It is an oversight in gender and environment work that is addressed explicitly by UCRT: “So often development workers within Maasai communities cite intransigent patriarchal attitudes as barriers to gender equality and progress” (V, para. 1). In contrast, language throughout the local organizational materials points to complex social, political, and economic norms, including conflict, as a limiting factor to women’s independence and leadership, and emphasizes the need for both women and men to assume roles in transforming gendered power relations and norms, as demonstrated below:

(6) We continue to do remarkable work around pastoralist communities and stand against harmful social norms and beliefs. Norms are changing in our target communities. Just recently, 250 women have been allotted land and title deeds by village governments. Changing harmful norms can be complex, requires consistent dedication and is quite time-consuming but we remain committed to the process (H, p. 4).

(7) I am a 55-year-old man and I have two wives and 16 children. I am an anti-violence champion and I am ready to stand against those who violate women rights in my community. I urge my fellow men and community that change is here with us and we should accept it (H, p. 12).

(8) To date, more than 350 women have applied and received plots of land, increasing food security for families and challenging cultural norms about women’s ownership of property. (M, para. 8).

The extracts above show that the ‘fixes’ put forward by the local organizational materials are rarely technical, and instead involve deep community understanding and engagement in the shape of community forums, the communication that takes place within them, and the process of building stronger ties between national policy and local rights. In this emphasis, land becomes the place of women’s empowerment, essential to claiming rights,

and an indication of greater gender equality. The prevailing message is that women are powerful or gaining power, and that women's ownership of land is the solid material foundation upon which both men and women will help establish new social norms.

Support for women's land ownership goes far beyond a local Tanzanian context. A raft of international standards and guidelines, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, stress the need to achieve equality in the enjoyment of land and property rights on the road to sustainable development (United Nations, 2017). Buried within the analyzed local discourse is the notion that women's and men's relationship with nature needs to be understood as rooted in their material reality and in their specific forms of interaction with the environment. In this case, the emphasis is on the ability to own land and thus make decisions about how it will be used, as shown in extract 9 below. As Goldman and colleagues (2016, para. 5) argue: "More than ownership rights to land, various forms of access are leading to empowerment among these women—access to land, but also to knowledge, social relations, authority, and political processes." Extract 10, also below, narrows in on the power to make decisions about land use by strengthening Indigenous peoples' connection to national and international bodies that can aid in putting them at the center of broader conversations.

(9) As part of efforts to economically empower pastoralist women through enhanced access and control to productive resources, PWC partnered with the department of lands of the Longido District Council in 2020 to facilitate 250 pastoralist women to acquire individual land title certificates. This move ensures that women are able to make decisions concerning the use of land and are not left out of development decisions. (H, p. 10).

(10) In November, PWC's application to join the International Land Coalition (ILC) was approved. The ILC is a global alliance of civil society and intergovernmental organizations working together to put people at the centre of land governance. The shared goal of ILC's members is to realize land governance for and with people at the country level, responding to the needs and protecting the rights of women, men and communities who live on and from the land. (L, para. 4).

Particular phrasing is used throughout the materials, including those such as “finding their voices,” “claiming their rights,” and “gaining the courage.” These phrases indicate women’s moves toward greater power is an ongoing process. By emphasizing this action while backgrounding the discourse of women as submissive and oppressed, the constructed reality of pastoral women is breaking ties with assumptions while recognizing that women do face great material challenges in using their voices to influence natural resource and development choices. This worldview helps move discourse away from an unnecessarily narrow understanding of gender, a preoccupation with fixes that are immediately measurable, and a view of women in the developing world as victims of ecological crisis separate from the politics that determine their ability to manage natural resources (MacGregor, 2010).

Frame: People-centric conservation is the way forward

The model of the world offered by PWC, MWEDO, and UCRT resists a global discourse that romanticizes magnificent African rangelands as landscape only to be preserved and protected. Throughout the data, nature and environment are repeatedly represented as constituting the home and livelihood of women and men pastoralists, agro-pastoralists, and hunter-gatherer communities. Rangelands are not just to be valued as wildlife habitat or saved for the viewing pleasure of international elites (Mkumbukwa, 2009), but rather valued as homeland and saved for the future of northern Tanzania’s local peoples.

This is understood first and foremost in the broad emphasis on land rights and access to land found throughout the sample, as illustrated in the below excerpt:

(11) We focused on ensuring women and youth engage actively in all processes of securing, managing, accessing, as well as benefiting from land and natural resources through both informal and formal platforms, such as Women’s Rights and Leadership Forums (WRLF), village councils, and traditional leadership systems. (O, p. 2).

In extract 11, an emphasis on words such as “accessing” and “managing” associated with women and youth underlines where there is still work to be done within environmental decision-making at the local level. Also clear is the weight on both formal and informal

pathways that can help create lasting change, a trend consistent throughout the data. Additionally, absence of words like “deteriorating,” “imperiled,” and “endangered” and repeated use instead of the words “food,” “nutrition” and “agriculture” in the data leads to the creation of an environment that does not exist to be saved, but rather to be sustainably used for survival by peoples of northern Tanzania. As a result, the rangelands are discursively transformed from a would-be global commodity to storied landscapes and the natural home and provider of Indigenous peoples. This model of the world is further supported by visual elements in the materials. Rather than photos of vast rangeland landscapes devoid of people, almost every image of land present in the sample includes people, often at work or in a meeting, as in the example below:



Figure 2. A pastoralist women’s forum meeting in Longido District. (Photo courtesy of MWEDO).

Such displays of people and nature together is instructive when considered in context of the region's past, which holds "a particular history of being subjected to globally constructed ideas of what nature is, and how humans can 'fit' – or rather not fit – this (idea of) nature in order to conserve" (De Wit, 2018, p. 30). Humans have certainly not always fit into this global construction.

The rangelands of Tanzania are a bastion of biodiversity, harboring a multitude of ecologically and socio-culturally important animal and plant species. Charismatic megafauna such as lions and elephants captured the attention of colonial elites decades ago, and Tanzania has since colonial times been subjected to Western conservation ideals that served to further the misconception that local people must be forcibly displaced to preserve such valuable biodiversity (Dominguez & Luoma, 2020). The gazettement of Tanzania's Serengeti plains as a national park in 1951 marked the beginning of the process of pushing pastoralists from the richest grazing and farming land to make room for conservation activities (Kamuaro, 1996). A total of 29 parks had been established in the country by the early 1980s (Parkipuny & Berger, 1993). This process, inherited from colonial powers and sustained by the Tanzanian government, continues today as national parks or other designated conservation areas are created or expanded to protect wildlife and to enable lucrative ecotourism and tourist leisure activities, displacing or cutting local peoples off from key resources (Brockington et al., 2008; Igoe, 2006; Sutherland, 2022; Weldemichel, 2020).

This history of conservation and the development it did and did not allow has created vast differences regarding the innate value of the environment at local, national, and global scales (Doyle et al., 2015). In the Western view, land is to be conserved for its scientific, educational, recreational, and inspirational value (Parkipuny & Berger, 1993). Nationally, the Tanzanian government is largely concerned with land as a means to maximize foreign exchange in the form of tourism dollars, cash crops, and other industry (Brockington et al.,

2008). Against this backdrop, a local-led discourse that repeatedly represents northern Tanzania's world-famous rangelands as synonymous with the home, livelihood, and culture of local peoples—including marginalized women—can be understood as an act of resistance against both a national and global discourse that has in many cases attempted to erase Indigenous people and traditional practices from the landscape.

The sample does not shy away from representing land as a place of conflict, too, particularly concerning boundaries among Maasai and other ethnic groups (P, p. 8). Throughout the data, conservation as a concept takes a backseat to the importance of peaceful, local-led land governance. This trend contributes to the idea that pastoralist, agro-pastoralist, and hunter-gatherer peoples must have greater control over their land and development decisions first and foremost. In many cases throughout the sample, conservation is communicated only through the amplification of sustainable agricultural and livestock practices, again framing conservation within a world where pastoral women and their children depend on sustainable practices in order to continue their traditional, yet changing, ways of life. Consider, for example, the below extract:

(12) MWEDO will thrive to facilitate women and youth groups involved in agriculture activities/projects to have secured access to land of which will be utilized for their business enterprises, agricultural and livestock development activities. (D, para. 7).

UCRT is most explicit in its communication about how it approaches women and conservation, stating that “promoting equality and empowering women and other marginalized groups are crucial to gaining participatory engagement in decision making processes for effective natural resource management” (Q, p. 11). There are important semiotic clues to be found in UCRT language that contribute to the meaning of “effective natural resource management” and how it does or does not align with an integrated environment and development approach.

An integrated environment and development approach—popular among international NGOs in Tanzania and throughout East Africa—links the conservation of natural resources with human development, such as health services and education. Although it has been adapted since its inception in the late 1980s, the approach remains the target of criticism for pursuing an impossible win-win scenario and ultimately creating a paradigm in which conservation of the environment takes precedence over people (McShane & Wells, 2004). Scholars and development practitioners have cast doubt on the intent of such programs (Igoe, 2006; Wright, 1993) and questioned whether INGOs are looking to involve women and other marginalized populations for the benefit of the population or to recruit greater numbers of participants for planned conservation projects. Singleton & colleagues (2019, p. 2), in their recent investigation into the integrated health and conservation approach in Madagascar, observe that “a major motivation for conservation NGOs to promote development initiatives is to overcome local opposition to, and generate engagement with, their conservation work.”

UCRT, too, appears to elevate a win-win scenario by stating: “All our work aims to create a positive correlation between environmental sustainability, social justice, community empowerment and development” (P, p. 3). However, further examination of language shared by UCRT shapes a picture in which local people must not be counted out, displaced, or skirted around when it comes to decisions about land use—including conservation. In other words, projects can be valuable when they begin with the material participation of local people or help close what Goldman (2011, p. 6) calls the “participation gap.” This position is succinctly articulated by UCRT, which points out that “much conservation in northern Tanzania continues to be based on defunct and outdated paradigms, which stress hard boundaries and separation of people from the environment and wildlife” (T, section 3). UCRT executive director Paine Mako shares his vision for environmental practices moving forward: “We want conservation to be inclusive, not exclusive” (T, section 3). The

organization makes clear, even in the ordering of its priorities in extracts 13 and 14 below, that wildlife populations and healthy landscape are vital priorities, but solutions must be people-centric:

(13) UCRT’s high-level vision is to have a connected and healthy landscape that supports the resilience of people, livestock, and wildlife (P, p. 7).

(14) UCRT works dually to support the rights and wellbeing of communities and the flora and fauna of northern Tanzania (U, para. 4).

UCRT strikes a delicate balance, acknowledging that landscape and wildlife must be protected, but people must be respected at the same time “by facilitating village formulation of land use plans and natural resource management bylaws and building community capacity to manage the rangelands across village borders sustainably” (U, para. 4). If prioritization is essential to biodiversity conservation (Brooks et al., 2006), local organizations offer a version of reality in which the rights and well-being of local populations are first on the list of priorities.

Frame: Modernity is not at odds with pastoral culture

The world that appears through the frame of local organizations consists of both the traditional and the modern; the local and the global. Tendrils of tension reach throughout the discourse to reveal questions about the definitions of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ and whether the two can exist harmoniously in an envisioned age when all pastoral women enjoy greater rights and equality. A similar tension emerges in language regarding partnerships and knowledge exchange between local and international organizations working to advance both human development and sustainable environmental practices in Tanzania’s rangelands. In this section I analyze how local discourse embraces certain acts of progress in the name of gender equality and how local organizations invite international partnership—and change—on their terms.

(15) During this is a period of accommodation and exploration, as many Maasai are entering into trades and professions previously considered taboo or inappropriate. For

example, Maasai have taken jobs within the tourism sector, typically as game guards or as purveyors of “authentic” cultural practices. (A, para. 13).

The extract above resists objectification of Maasai culture and brings into focus the question of what is and is not “authentic” today within the lives of Maasai. Maasai pastoralists, like other pastoralists, have been changing rapidly. Frequent droughts, land privatization and fragmentation, and political and economic marginalization are among the key drivers of change (Homewood et al., 2009; Nkedianye et al., 2020). Opportunities for education, meanwhile, mean that family-supplied labor for herding decreases as more youth are enrolled in school (Nkedianye et al., 2020). Overall, pastoralists are turning toward livelihood strategies beyond livestock-keeping in order to survive, adapting their social norms and practices as a result. By using quotation marks around “authentic” in extract 15, local discourse normalizes the idea that Maasai pastoralists are not who they were decades ago. This construction reveals the continuation of a colonial gaze (Guyo, 2017) and external pressure that demands pastoralists perform certain “authentic” cultural practices that may no longer be authentic for those who have adapted their livelihood by entering trades previously thought to be taboo. Connelly et al. (2000) explains it this way: “Contrary to modernization models, no society has been left behind or stuck in the past, and there are no pure, traditional societies just waiting to evolve into modern ones.”

Throughout the sample, organizations recognize that the “independence” and “prosperity” of pastoral women—two words regularly used in the data—requires political, economic, and social change. The analyzed discourse positions the gains to be made from pastoral women’s leadership in such a way that specific acts of progress, such as education, health care, economic opportunity, and greater availability of social services, become logical or common-sense—and therefore legitimate. Consider this example: “Academic, vocational and 21st century life-skills are necessary preconditions for sustainable human development”

(H, p. 6).” Language like the above is paired with commentary on freedom enjoyed by women as a result of newly gained education and/or economic life skills:

(16) Before the project I just sat around at home after completing my daily homestead chores without the assurance of the next meal for my family. I was completely dependent on my relatives, and friends for my kids’ and my own necessities and though it bothered me, it was the norm and we were all used to it. Through the PWC womens’ group, I came to realize that I have the option of leading a much more independent and comfortable life while providing for my family. I am a business owner now, something I thought only Irmeek (Non-Maasai) women could do. (H, p. 15).

Present throughout this discourse is the nod that change in the name of gender equality is welcome. Yet there are what appear to be small ripples, or what one might call “sites of struggle” (Wodak, 2001, p. 11) within the language that cause breaks in the worldview described above. As Potter and Wetherell (1994) explain, inconsistency within a given discourse and/or the presence of competing discourses is a good starting point for analysis. In this case, tension can be found within language around modern technology and ‘unique’ pastoralist culture.

(17) Our work embraces and preserves the positive aspects of our unique pastoralist culture while incorporating modern technology and progressive thinking to overcome patriarchal practices that negatively impact women. (G, p. 7).

(18) At UCRT we ensure that in our approach we continually build the fundamental connection between strengthening Indigenous knowledge and practices, supporting rural economies and conserving biological diversity. We are committed to creating a positive change in people’s livelihoods, promoting environmental stewardship and enhancing a sense of community. All our work aims to create a positive correlation between environmental sustainability, social justice, community empowerment, and development. (P, p. 3).

Local organizations struggle to parse out the exact positive and negative aspects of traditional pastoralist culture. It becomes clear that not every puzzle piece that completes pastoralist culture is worthy of bringing forward into the future; the question is what those pieces are and who decides what gets left behind. For example, in extract 17, PWC weaponizes “modern technology and progressive thinking” only against patriarchal practices, while seeking to preserve the “positive aspects of our unique pastoralist culture.” The

condemnation of patriarchy is instructive since it is among a number of representational strategies that reinforce the need to establish new tradition, or a new frame, in which pastoral women are equal to men. In extract 18, UCRT equates “positive change” with building the fundamental connection among Indigenous knowledge, economic interests, and biodiversity conservation. Against a global discourse that has historically depicted local people, knowledge, and culture as backwards or exotic (Connelly et al., 2000), local organizations emphasize that traditional knowledge is neither, and that local know-how is valuable and worthy of use to improve holistic environmental practices.

The data analyzed reveals that approximately 20 years ago, when the three local organizations were established, the status quo, however “authentic,” was not acceptable for women and girls and remains limiting to this day:

(19) MWEDO was founded in 2000 when the three founding members committed themselves to the goal of improving the livelihoods of Maasai women in Tanzania. By 2012, MWEDO has grown into a well-known, member-based development player, which significantly contributes to the availability of basic human and economic services for marginalized women and girls. (A, para. 1).

(20) Many women of the pastoralist community remain uneducated and illiterate due to paternalistic attitudes that see women as less than men. Often women may not even be aware of their basic human rights, and those that are aware may find themselves in difficulties if they defy societal norms and seek justice for gender-based violence or discrimination. (G, p. 7).

(21) Through Women Rights and Leadership Forums, women are supported to advocate for their rights to own, utilise, and benefit from land and property. For particularly marginalized groups, such as the Akie and Hadza hunter-gatherers, UCRT helps grow their capacity to represent and advocate for themselves by supporting the education of youth. (U., para. 5).

The underlying theme is that pastoral women, who have often endured marginalization within their own culture and as a result of externally led projects, must have more control in shaping a modern identity. The discourse emphasizes that ‘local culture’ is not static and is not a single set of traditions that everyone in a community agrees with. Instead, attitudes and practices evolve over time. Thus, while paternalistic attitudes and lack

of knowledge of rights are constructed as constraining and marginalizing women, local-led initiatives such as Women's Rights & Leadership Forums are positioned as facilitating women's development by enabling their decision making and making room for their knowledge, and so a new frame is constructed. Consider the following extracts:

(22) As Datoga women, honey has always been an important part of their families' diet. It features strongly in traditional recipes and provides energy and reward to keep their many children well-behaved on even the longest days. (s, para. 2).

(23) The women now take turns caring for 50 modern hives as well as 30 traditional hives. The women's bee-keeping practices are now a unique mix of modern technology with traditional know-how. (S, para. 3).

Women and their cooking and other household practices are frequently presented as 'traditional,' and by implication, as outdated or as a marker of patriarchal oppression (Avakian & Haber, 2005). The construction of time, and 'tradition' set in opposition to 'modernity' have been shown by discourse scholars to be employed in development discourse to devalue people's lives and particular ways of living (Dogra, 2011). Western nations have in fact practiced labeling, by using terms such as 'backward' to delegitimize local practices and impose modernization (Connelly et al., 2000). But here, as demonstrated in extract 23, the discourse constructs a reality in which assumed enemies—the traditional and the modern—can coexist and even strengthen one another. In this example, a 'modern' approach together with traditional bee-keeping knowledge is linked to the outcomes of improving women's lives and freeing women's time. Such evocative explanation presents the relationship of women with modern technology as nuanced rather than a simplistic and singular way to achieve empowerment. After all, in the example below, it is women's 'traditional' knowledge upon which 'modern' practices are built:

(24) The trick in getting the bees here in the first place is a traditional Datoga one. This is the burachand plant, the bees love the smell. It draws them to the area and encourages honey production. We have planted it all around the hives, and we take turns rubbing the hives with it to keep the bees happy. (S, para. 7).

In a similar vein to the precarious line constructed between the traditional and modern, the analyzed discourse challenges the superiority of Western intervention over local-led programs, constructing a reality in which local and international organizations can and must work together under terms guided by local knowledge. Although the analyzed data was produced by local organizations, international donors and INGOs feature strongly throughout the sample, both explicitly and implicitly. One way of understanding this is through use of the pronoun ‘we.’ Use of pronouns like ‘us,’ ‘we,’ and ‘them’ can be used to align consumers of language alongside or against ideas; the use of ‘we,’ in particular, can be used to make vague statements or conceal power relations (Fairclough, 2000, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012). For much of the language analyzed, ‘we’ quite clearly represents the team members and staff employed by local organizations, as well as the women and men pastoralists they work with or who constitute their membership-based organizations. Yet it becomes harder to distinguish the ‘we’ when language loosely references the international donor and INGO community. Closer inspection reveals that through language emphasizing relationships with international organizations and donors, the discourse attempts to define—or perhaps redefine—what the collective ‘we’ could and should look like:

(25) Our celebration reminded me of the importance of the most positive aspects of our Maasai culture: that together we are stronger. We welcome your hand in joining our struggle and look forward to all the great things we can achieve together in coming years. Ashe noleng, asante sana, and thank you! (G, p. 6).

(26) This is only possible because we have dedicated staff, collaborative partners, donors, volunteers, and friends who believe when people have rights to the land they depend on to survive, powerful things happen; families benefit, communities thrive, and individuals have the opportunity to invest in their futures. (O, p. 2).

The above examples answer vital questions about whose knowledge counts in defining “the great things we can achieve together” and in shaping the pathways to get there. While international organizations and formal scientific knowledge have key roles to play in the environment and development sector, neither can claim political neutrality (Elmhirst &

Resurrección, 2021). Instead, there is emphasis once again on Indigenous culture and the idea that recognizing and nurturing Indigenous knowledges—including of people living in marginalized situations—are key in making “powerful things happen.” Elmhirst & Resurrección (2021, p. xxiii) describe a similar process in their emphasis on considering politics of knowledge: “In this view, transformation is not a neat, controlled process, but a more messy, emergent one, involving deliberation amongst plural pathways towards diverse, and sometimes contested, visions of sustainability and equity.”

Below, in extract 27, UCRT references “the right kind” of external support for local groups. In this reference, UCRT assumes agency and redefines language so often employed by international donors looking to achieve ‘localization’ (Gaye, 2019) by identifying ‘the right kind’ of trustworthy, capable local NGO that can be trusted with their monetary endowment.

(27) UCRT’s growth and achievements over the past decade also highlights the importance of local activists being willing to invest in building the organizations, relationships, and resources that can take their work to a greater scale of reach and impact. This kind of growth requires new- and sometimes uncomfortable- partnerships, stepping out beyond the local context to national and global arenas, and investing in organizational change, including at the leadership and board levels. It also illustrates the importance of the right kind of external support- financial, technical, and organizational-for local groups working under challenging circumstances to bring about change. (N, para. 5).

In these representations, the local people—not Westerners or parachute conservationists—are doing the saving and making the difference, looking for champions to support their work. Earlier in this analysis, the repeated use of the phrase “take control” invoked the question of who women were taking control from. Here again, it appears that local organizations are also looking to both legally and discursively take back control over their land and rights from a global discourse and material intervention that has attempted to transform northern Tanzania’s rangelands into a global commodity, belonging to visitors from around the globe.

Discussion

At its core, critical discourse analysis asks what semiotic choices communicators make, why they make them, and what the consequences of those choices are. The way pastoral women are framed influences strategy, action, and funding. Placed in the broader context of the politics of integrated environment and development, my analysis indicates that local organizations actively resist specific limiting global discourses to create space for pastoral women to define their own identities and roles in natural resource management. Through this analysis, three frames emerge: 1) Pastoral women are holders of power and leadership potential, 2) People-centric conservation is the way forward, and 3) Modernity is not at odds with pastoral culture. I discuss each below.

According to analyzed data, women's leadership and control over their lives will be the result of a time-consuming social norm shifting process led by women and supported by men. The specificity with which women are identified as individuals, and the fact that their names are mentioned, illustrates boldness and an openness of conviction in voicing critique against discourses, practices, and actions that maintain hierarchical gender relations (Lazar, 2007). Women are not explicitly named or framed as victims or change agents, which reduces the potential for a frame in which women are 1) environmental victims in need of assistance or 2) sustainability saviors whose labor can be harnessed to save the planet (Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2021). Instead, pastoral women's identities are "complex, shifting and multiply located" (Baxter, 2008, p.3), as people who inhabit a rapidly changing, gendered world alongside other people, in which they face ongoing conflict in holding power and making decisions. The emphasis on the need for local-led social norms changes throughout the data is consistent with Singleton et al.'s (2019) recommendation that international organizations interested in integrated projects must take a more comprehensive

human rights approach by reexamining their own power and investing in greater agency among community members.

A win-win social-ecological strategy is reimagined in local NGO discourse by leading with local land governance. There is danger in designing projects based on a stereotypical image of a homogenous pastoral population stuck in time, particularly for pastoral women, whose roles and power have long been denied, backgrounded, or misunderstood (Homewood et al., 2009). But examination of language shared by local NGOs reveals a reality in which there is also danger in the integrated environment and development agenda overall, if conservation cannot be reconciled with local rights to land, knowledge, and political processes. By distinguishing land as both a place of conflict and the place of women's empowerment, local NGO discourse seats ownership and care of ecological systems at the center of societal change, breaking down silos between conservation, health, and education and emphasizing a holistic environment and development approach that has proved so elusive in practice for international organizations (McShane & Wells, 2004).

The tension between global and local has always been a defining characteristic of the integrated conservation and development concept (McShane & Wells, 2004). This tension is mirrored in local discourse, which casts a vote for a vision defined by local people, one in which international organizations are encouraged to share in the work—but not to jeopardize it. Wright (1993, p. 191) puts it this way: “Solutions identified without local participation will be off-target, and projects that neglect self-reliance will ultimately be unsustainable.” Local organizations do not position local people as participants; instead, they are current or potential leaders drawing on traditional knowledge and defining their own ‘authentic’ identity. This narrative is instructive for international organizations as well as other grassroots activists struggling with the realities of managing complex partnerships that can achieve greater impact. Centering local-led intervention and self-determination results in a

pride in the social identity of women and of distinct pastoral cultures, one in which pastoral women “are proud to keep doing the work started by our mothers and sisters before us and to see our contribution towards women’s empowerment and gender justice being realized locally and across the globe” (L, para 1).

The discourse was linguistically realized by choices in clauses, pronouns, structures of social actors, arguments, and interactions among discourses, as well as by what was left out from the communication entirely. The resulting reality, as described in the above three frames, resists enduring global constructions of the oppressed pastoral woman, African savanna as the playground of elites, and the objectification or dismissal of traditional culture and knowledge. Altogether, these resistance strategies are aimed at effecting social emancipation and transformation, contributing to an overall frame in which pastoral women’s identities or pathways to land rights and sustainable land use cannot be led or defined by anyone but themselves.

Conclusion

I conclude by bringing the discussion back to the paradigm of linking environment and development work and direct attention specifically to construction of women’s identities within that paradigm. “Women and girls are a conservation solution” writes The Natures Conservancy (2021, para. 3). Yet local organizations complicate this reality, leading readers into a world in which some women continue to fight for the “chance to contest for leadership positions and to talk in meetings” (H, p. 11). This insight underlines that women must first be able to control their lives and their land before they can be asked to conserve it. Other intentions that do not align with this thinking are thus contrary to wishes expressed in local discourse. Examining local discourse conveys the potential of an environment and development agenda driven by local narratives, which portray a place not just as its biodiversity to be protected, but as land situated within a particular historical and political

context, and as the home and provider of interwoven human needs. It is clear that empirical research on the integrated environment and development approach must be further complemented by critical feminist theorizing of the discursive constructions and categories that shape our knowledge of pastoral women and culture today. Specifically for international organizations to work toward greater justice for and with pastoral women, they must be at the ready not solely with ‘new’ conservation interventions, but with a willingness to look through new frames replete with locally defined, sometimes messy, pathways toward sustainability and equity.

Crenshaw (2016, 4:26-4:44) warned that without frames that allow us to see how social issues impact members of a targeted group, many people will “fall through the cracks of social movements, left to suffer in virtual isolation.” In some ways, this summation reflects critiques of overly simplified environment and development projects that have failed to consider gender, politics, and cultural norms. Discourse from PWC, MWEDO, and UCRT offer three frames as a step toward Crenshaw’s complementary point, “...it doesn’t have to be this way,” suggesting an alternate path for the environment and development agenda that reflects the knowledge and desires of pastoral women.

CHAPTER IV:

PLAYING THEIR PART: HOW PASTORAL WOMEN PARTICIPATE IN TANZANIA'S ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT LANDSCAPE

Introduction

As gender equality becomes embedded in organizational goals, so does a commitment to meaningful and reflexive participation. Environment and development practitioners identify carefully planned and implemented gender-inclusive participation as a vital element of the integrated social-ecological agenda (Lawless et al., 2021; Leisher et al., 2016). Yet gender-inclusive participation requires accurate understanding of history, local power structures, and accountability to all community members—elements that have proven difficult in practice within the environment and development arena (Goldman & Milliary, 2014; Noe & Kangalawe, 2015).

Academics and practitioners have critiqued many participatory approaches within conservation and development as hollow and serving only to mask top-down project management. For example, some have questioned whether environmental INGOs are looking to involve women and other marginalized populations for the benefit of the population or to simply recruit greater numbers of participants for planned conservation projects (Lawless et al., 2022; Singleton et al., 2019). Other studies have shown that approaches to gender inclusion can vary greatly in practice (Lawless et al., 2021) and efforts to achieve gender equality can easily become tokenistic (Lawless et al., 2020, Razavi, 2016). Consequently, different world views and intentions may equate to differences in how NGOs and INGOs approach women's participation in environment and development work, and how they measure and perceive success. In northern Tanzania, where a multitude of both local and INGOs operate to meet pressing human and environmental health goals, it becomes vital to better understand rationales and pathways for pursuing pastoral women's participation in projects. Gaining insight into how NGOs and INGOs conceptualize and operationalize

women's involvement can offer greater clarity on how organizations can help build a more feminist, intersectional, justice-oriented environment and development agenda in the country.

Meaningful participatory approaches could also aid in goals of decolonization. Sumberg and colleagues (2013) warn that so far, the shift toward participation and empowerment within development institutions has been largely discursive rather than material, and projects generally remain hierarchical and modernist in alignment. Conservation goals, meanwhile, can serve to contradict target community goals (West, 2006). These critiques are closely associated with calls to decolonize conservation and aid in Africa, which refers to the need to confront colonial dynamics and assumptions that continue to underpin environment and development projects on the continent and to elevate the voices of Indigenous peoples to determine how environmental and social problems are understood and addressed (Dominguez & Luoma, 2020; Mabele et al., 2021; Sultana, 2019). One activist suggests that a key act of decolonization is to go beyond respecting the observations of people living in the area and to design a system to incorporate those observations into models (Gies, 2022). Goldman (2011, para. 12) similarly argues that participation of communities can and must be about building a system of active participation rather than pacifying pastoral people into accepting conservation projects:

Active participation in the processes of knowledge construction, decision-making, and management planning should be recognized as a basic human right, especially when outcomes have potentially far-reaching impacts on the lives and livelihoods of those involved.

In the last decade, both the conservation and the development sectors have been urged to consider long overdue issues of racism, inequity, and colonial legacies in their work. Some organizations have made strides in aiming for inclusivity and gender equality, but with the risk of decolonization being subsumed into or mistaken for other social justice work (Tuck & Yang, 2012), it is vital that we understand how INGOs can move from prioritizing pastoral

women's physical participation, to centering local women's voices and knowledge by encouraging dialogue across knowledge expressions and power relations.

There remains an underlying current that the integrated environment and development agenda must choose between environment and people. There is more to be done to move environment and development work out of this limiting dichotomy, stuck as it is in a colonial worldview in which nature must be separate from humans (Domínguez & Luoma, 2021), and toward an agenda that embraces human rights and local observations, beliefs, and strategies (No'kmaq et al., 2021). This study works from the premise that priorities and ethos of local and international NGOs dictate the ways in which these same organizations perceive and prioritize gender equality (Lawless, 2022). Thus, within this research, approaches to—and measurement of—pastoral women's involvement in environment and development work provide important clues as to how an organization views pastoral women's roles and knowledge, as well as its own role and knowledge, in the environment and development arena. A closer evaluation of how gender-inclusive participation operates in practice within organizations using an integrated social-ecological approach, how participation is measured, and whether and how these practices can serve goals of decolonization is required. The objective of this chapter is to bring clarity to the intention of the environment and development agenda in Northern Tanzania by examining the views and participatory practices of both local and international organizations that engage pastoral women in their work.

Specifically, in this chapter, I seek to answer:

1. How does the environment and development agenda in Northern Tanzania frame and influence the participation of pastoral women?
 - 1a. How is women's involvement perceived and measured by INGOs and local NGOs?
 - 1b. How is decolonization understood and practiced, if at all, by INGOs and NGOs?

Barriers and opportunities for women's participation

Reasons behind women's lack of participation in environment and development activities are multiple and varied. One reason is that they may be excluded from participating by those with access to greater power (Costa et al., 2017; Flintan, 2003). Another reason is because they do not feel empowered to speak out in their cultural contexts and efforts are not made on the part of organizations to better suit the desires and needs of women (Chambers, 2007). Yet other reasons could be that women are too busy with household chores or caring for their husband and children to attend, or that they did not understand the topics under discussion (Singleton et al., 2019). Each of these reasons are highly problematic for the integrated environment and development approach, which prides itself on win-win human-environment solutions. Importantly, while well-placed people in the community may benefit from an integrated approach, those marginalized by gender, ethnicity, political, cultural, or economic structures can be further disadvantaged, even by interventions purporting to improve their situation (Noe & Kangalawe, 2015; Bluwstein, 2018).

Various studies and reports reveal that not only is women's participation important but also how they participate—and how much (GEF, 2019; Linda, 2004; Radel, 2012; Sarker & Das, 2002). Scholars and practitioners have put forward a multitude of ideas on how development organizations can approach participation. Chambers (2005) suggests participation occurs on four levels: 1. Information sharing: People are informed so that collective individual action can be facilitated; 2. Consultation: People are consulted and interact with an agency so that they provide feedback; 3. Decision making: People have a decision making role on specific issues which they do on their own, or joint decision making with other people; and 4. Initiating action: people are proactive and able to take initiative on a certain issue or project activity. Mansuri and Rao (2012) further illuminate participation by outlining a distinction between organic and induced participation. Organic participation

includes social movements that fight for the rights of the underprivileged and attempts to build membership-based organizations to improve livelihoods and living standards. Induced participation, by contrast, refers to participation promoted through policy actions of the state—including external governments working through bilateral and multilateral agencies—and implemented by bureaucracies. This becomes particularly relevant in the case of internationally led integrated environment and development projects, which have long drawn critique for placing their own conservation agenda above meeting the needs or desires of communities (Goldman, 2011; Lawless, 2021). As Mansuri and Rao (2012, p. 31) note:

The important difference between induced and organic participation is that powerful institutions extrinsically promote induced participation, usually in a manner that affects a large number of communities at the same time. In contrast, intrinsically motivated local actors drive organic participation.

Evidence from several countries shows there are multiple reasons for conservation and development organizations to include women in natural resource decision making and governance, as doing so can lead to positive ecological outcomes. Positive outcomes are linked to women's Indigenous knowledge of the landscape, preference for collaborative relationships, and greater adoption of sustainable practices. For example, a comparative study in East Africa and Latin America found the presence of women in community forest governance structures to enhance responsible behavior and forest sustainability (Mwangi et al., 2011). Increasing women's representation in community forest governance institutions in Asia, meanwhile, has shown to improve resource conservation and forest regeneration (Agarwal, 2009).

Broadly, women's participation in development programs is supposed to achieve a process of equitable and active involvement of women in the formulation of development policies and strategic activities. It is, therefore, also important to understand how organizations measure participation or involvement of women in integrated projects and other gender and environment work. Karl (1995) observes that measuring participation usually has

two dimensions: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative measures look at how many people were affected by the project, although this measurement does not inform an organization of whether participants benefit, or how meaningful the participation was. Qualitative measures can better capture the quality of participation, for example whether women have increased access to make decisions or be involved in leadership.

Where participation meets culture and decolonization

Social and cultural barriers to women's full participation tend to be complex and embedded, requiring more attention than quotas of an NGO as well as a longer-term perspective that is hard to grasp within time-limited donor funded projects (Flintan, 2011). In the case of the integrated environment and development agenda in northern Tanzania, women's participation becomes extremely relevant, and particularly tricky, when working within a patriarchal Maasai society. Maasai women's access to information and ability to respond to economic or land planning opportunities remains inhibited by a patriarchal family structure that requires representation by a father or husband and a society that does not value education for women (Kandusi & Waiganjo, 2015). Not only are there are varying philosophical, spiritual, and moral views about nature depending on context and culture, but also about gender equality and women's rights. Maasai women activists have expressed desire for greater control over their lives (Pastoral Women's Council, 2020), while environment and development practitioners have determined that gender equality is a top agenda item (Lawless, 2021). As a result, both local and international environment and development practitioners find themselves navigating spaces where women's participation challenges culture.

When it comes to the environment and development agenda, Goldman (2011) argues that a 'participation gap,' or lack of participation by local people, is bad for conservation and for local communities. I argue that it is also bad for the broader integrated environment and

development agenda, which began as a means to reinvent top-down fortress style conservation and build sustainable development solutions that work for people and planet. Moves to materially make good on that goal must involve a plurality of viewpoints (Matulis & Moyer, 2017), an idea made clear by scholars and activists calling for conservation and development practitioners to take active steps toward decolonization (Domínguez & Luoma, 2020). The scarcity of information on what decolonization looks like in environment and development practice today is regrettable because this knowledge could serve to help organizations honor local wisdom and more successfully meet gender equality goals. Scholars and activists have suggested that acts of decolonization in the context of conservation and development include close interrogation of frames of thought and reframing away from Western-only or Western-dominant perspectives (Mabele, 2021) and engaging local and Indigenous communities to a greater degree than is typically practiced by large international NGOs (Gokkon, 2018). Mabele and colleagues (2021, para. 21) put it this way:

Engaging in decolonial conservation requires a radical shift in focus of conservation efforts towards the myriad of vibrant forms of engaging with and knowing the world around us that have been developed by a multiplicity of peoples and cultures around the globe that have, sadly, been much too often overlooked by Western-centric models of conservation and knowledge.

To place decolonization in the context of Tanzania's landscape, Yannick Ndoinyo, a Maasai man from Tanzania, has this to say (Survival International, 00:55):

Unless this Indigenous knowledge is recognized and taught as a way of managing these ecosystems, parks, and natural landscapes, you can be sure that conservation will continue to face challenges, it will continue to be a source of threats, and continue to be a source of violation of rights of Indigenous peoples...

Careful analysis of women's education and knowledge and their opportunities to take part in decision making at the local, regional, national, and international levels is an indispensable prerequisite for improving work at the intersection of environment and development. A closer evaluation of how organizations using an integrated environment and

development approach frame, prioritize, and define women's participation in northern Tanzania is a first step in that direction.

Methodology

This phase of the study includes 14 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with key informants, including project and executive level staff from local and international organizations I identified as active in the environment and development arena in northern Tanzania. Key informants are selected for their knowledge and role in a setting, their affiliation with an organization or community relevant to the research, and their willingness and ability to serve as guides or commentators for the researcher (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Bailey, 1994). To identify an interview sample, I made a list of local and international organizations applying an environment and development agenda in Tanzania. I chose interviewees based on purposive sampling, which allows researchers to gather data quickly by identifying groups of individuals who are well-informed in an area of interest, and thus has inherent sampling bias (Russell & Harshbarger, 2003).

I sought to ensure my key informant sample reflected the span of the environment and development agenda in northern Tanzania, as well as a mixture of organizational missions and international vs. local-led structures. By local, I refer to organizations with 'headquarters' local to northern Tanzania, which were founded and function on a local level, have intimate knowledge of the local context, and seek to be accountable to local populations (International Institute for Environment and Development, 2010). By international NGO, I refer to organizations with headquarters or offices in other countries in addition to Tanzania, even if the local affiliate is registered as an independent Tanzanian NGO. Drawing this line between local and INGO was often difficult, although necessary as a way to respect that gender equality priorities can be influenced by different understandings of the relationship between people and their environment (Mace, 2014; Jones et al., 2016; Lawless, 2022),

I began by reaching out to several Tanzanian organizations. My first interviews allowed me to engage in chain-referral sampling (Griffiths et al., 2010), as initial respondents helped me to identify other project and program staff in Tanzania. As noted above, the sample was broken into two broad categories: 1) Staff of local NGOs and 2) Staff of INGOs. I chose to interview staff of local NGOs because the practices and thoughts of grassroots groups allows important insight into rationales and pathways for pastoral women's participation. I interviewed INGO staff to gain insight into an additional, international realm of work and influence in northern Tanzania, and to be able to situate local perspectives within a varied environment and development landscape. Twelve of the interviews were conducted over Zoom video teleconferencing software or over WhatsApp, a free mobile messaging and voice call application, and took place between February and June of 2022. Two additional interviewees took place in Arusha, Tanzania in January 2023, for a total of 14 interviews.

Interview data collection

I used a semi-structured interview format for the key informant interviews I conducted for this study. A researcher will often use a semi-structured interview format with key informants, in which interviews are organized around a set of predetermined, open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewees. In contrast to structured interviews, which do not deviate from a standardized set of questions, semi-structured interviews involve a standard set of questions with room for follow-up questions, or probes (Rogers & Way, 2015; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). The purpose of key informant interviews is to explore a few issues in depth, and I formulated interview questions based on a review of the literature and focused on organizational strategies for pastoral women's involvement, measurement of women's participation, and current and potential decolonization efforts. For interview flow, I organized my questions

into sections of “women’s current participation,” “women’s future participation,” and “decolonization.”

Interview questions are vital to the interview process. Thus, I piloted my interview guide with two professionals working in East Africa who have knowledge of environment and development work in the region in order to test the questions prior to beginning interviews with my research subjects (Majid et al., 2017). The pilot interviews gave me the chance to ask interviewees if they felt additional questions were needed or if some questions should be excluded. Neither of the participants suggested dropping any interview questions, although I slightly altered the wording of several questions and added a question based on the suggestions of both interviewees. Following the pilot interviews, I felt confident that no major changes to my interview guide were required.

An interview is an important tool because it recognizes that individuals have unique and valuable knowledge about the social world that can be shared through verbal communication (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2017). The use of semi-structured interviews allowed for the flexibility to explore unexpected perspectives and new contextual information that emerged in the interviews, since the structure allows individual respondents freedom to express what is of particular interest or importance to them (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2017). Semi-structured interviews also served to provide comparable data across the sample, which allowed for a comparison of stakeholder perspectives (Creswell, 2009). Questions from the semi-structured interview guide are listed in Appendix B.

Although I had originally hoped to travel to Tanzania to conduct all interviews, the global COVID-19 pandemic made this impossible. Instead, I relied on Zoom and WhatsApp to conduct remote interviews. Interviewing platforms have evolved in recent years and virtual options such as Skype, Zoom, and Teams are an increasingly common, reasonable alternative to face-to-face interviews (Hanna, 2012), especially when participants are geographically

dispersed (Gray et al., 2020). My original plan was to exclusively use Zoom, but I pivoted to conduct 7 of the interviews on WhatsApp instead, in order to accommodate poor or spotty Internet connection of my interviewees, who were often working in or traveling to rural areas. Interviews ranged from forty minutes to just over one hour. To preserve anonymity, each of the 14 interviews was assigned a code corresponding to the order in which the interview took place and whether the interviewee was employed by a local (L) or international (I) organization (e.g., 7-L, 8-I, 9-L, and so on). I recorded 13 of the 14 interviews. One interview, when switching from Zoom to WhatsApp to accommodate a participant, was not digitally recorded, though I took diligent notes and captured direct quotations, asking the interviewee to repeat themselves to ensure accuracy in the data.

Table 2. List of interviewees

Interviewee	Gender	Employed by local or international organization	Role within organization	Organization priority areas	Northern districts of focus
1-L	M	Local	Program manager	Local land governance, nature-based livelihoods, community land tenure	Simanjiro Longido Monduli Kiteto Hanang Mbulu Karatu Mkalama Ngorongoro
2-L	F	Local	Program officer	Local land governance, nature-based livelihoods, community land tenure	Simanjiro Longido Monduli Kiteto Hanang Mbulu Karatu Mkalama Ngorongoro
3-L	F	Local	Program coordinator	Education, economic empowerment, health and wellbeing,	Ngorongoro Longido Monduli

				women's rights & leadership	
4-L	F	Local	Program coordinator	Education, economic empowerment, health and wellbeing, women's rights & leadership	Ngorongoro Longido Monduli
5-L	F	Local	Project coordinator	Education, economic empowerment, health and wellbeing, women's rights & leadership	Ngorongoro, Longido Monduli
6-I	M	International	Director	Healthy rangeland management, wildlife corridor conservation, communal land rights	Monduli Simanjiro Longido Kiteto
7-L	F	Local	Director	Education, economic empowerment, maternal health services, land ownership, human and cultural rights	Arusha DC Kiteto Simanjiro Monduli Longido
8-I	F	International	Director	Wildlife conservation, natural resource stewardship, sustainable livelihoods	Simanjiro Babati Monduli Longido Ngorongoro
9-I	M	International	Program manager	Improve sexual and reproductive health, boost climate resilience	Babati Monduli Kiteto Simanjiro
10-L	F	Local	Program officer	Education, economic empowerment, maternal health services, land ownership,	Arusha DC Kiteto Simanjiro Monduli Longido

				human and cultural rights	
11-I	M	International	Program director	Healthy rangeland management, wildlife corridor conservation, communal land rights	Monduli Simanjiro Longido Kiteto
12-I	F	International	Gender expert	Wildlife conservation, natural resource stewardship, sustainable livelihoods	Simanjiro Babati Monduli Longido Ngorongoro
13-I	F	International	Project coordinator	Water security, climate change adaptation, nature-based solutions for sustainable livelihoods	Simanjiro Kiteto Monduli Longido Arusha DC Meru DC
14-I	F	International	Technical advisor	Water security, climate change adaptation, nature-based solutions for sustainable livelihoods	Simanjiro Kiteto Monduli Longido Arusha DC Meru DC

I set out to conduct approximately 15 to 20 interviews. The logistics of this project’s timeline and difficulties in securing remote interviews originally constrained my sample to a total of 12 people. Due to COVID-19, I was unable to travel to Tanzania in early 2022 to conduct interviews in person, meaning I was also unable to create familiarity or deeper relationships with my interviewees. The busy travel schedules of my interviewees during which they were strapped for time and often lacked Internet connection contributed to this constraint. In August 2022, I was ultimately able to travel to Arusha, Tanzania as a U.S. Boren Fellow to intensively study Kiswahili. Upon completion of my language program, I spent three months interning for Tanzanian conservation NGO Oikos East Africa and

building deeper connections with the conservation community in northern Tanzania. During this time, I conducted an additional two interviews in Arusha, bringing the total number of interviews to 14. All interviews were conducted in English. Although I have intensively studied Swahili as part of my Boren Fellowship, I am not proficient to the level of being able to conduct high-level professional interviews in the language in order to capture minute details. My interviewees were proficient in English, which is taught and spoken widely in Tanzania, and expressed that communicating in English was a comfortable way for each of them to participate.

Data analysis

After completing interviews, I transcribed them using Temi, a secure audio-to-text transcription service that uses advanced speech recognition software. I then listened to each audio recording while reading the transcription, ensuring that the transcription was correct, and adding any details that were lost. This was a useful exercise considering that the transcriber can capture multiple levels of meaning within the transcription process, such as pauses, and nonverbal cues used by a respondent (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). This process provided me with a valuable opportunity to actively engage with my own research material.

Next, I coded the qualitative interviews using NVivo, which is a software designed to help organize and analyze qualitative data. I used NVivo to identify codes, or thematic categories, of every interview. I looked to grounded theory and open and axial coding to categorize themes and construct linkages from the interviews (Böhm, 2004). I did not code portions of interviews that were off-topic, redundant within the interview, or for which clarity of the response was an issue, due to ambient noise or poor connection. The first round of coding involved the comprehensive collection of themes with broad codes. For the second round of coding, I organized already identified codes into sub-codes that offer more specificity. I then performed a final round of coding to organize overlaps in coding and

finalize the structure of all codes and sub-codes. Throughout the process, I wrote down thoughts and coding ideas to consistently reflect on data and potential emerging themes and codes (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). In the process of drafting my analysis, I removed respondent ‘fillers’ in the quotes such as, ‘you know,’ ‘um’, ‘like’ and so forth for ease of reading.

Results

In the following section, I present the major findings from the interviews. Results are organized into five themes: 1). Understanding women and participation, 2). Perceived benefits to pastoral women’s participation, 3). Perceived barriers to pastoral women’s participation, 4). Measuring women’s participation, and 5). Issues of power. Within these themes, I present various related subthemes complete with illustrative quotes from participants.

1. Understanding women and participation

1.1. Defining women

Before an organization can include women in an environment and development agenda, it must decide how it will frame and refer to women. Responses varied when respondents were asked whether there is specific terminology their organization uses to describe the pastoral women they work with (e.g. ‘champion,’ ‘partner,’ ‘beneficiary,’ or others). Several interviewees recognized the number of different names that exist to describe and define pastoral women, with interviewee 10 noting, “We have so many names: the grassroots women, the pastoral women, Indigenous women, but we consider them as partners” (10-L). For some respondents, the context of the project determined what name a woman or women might be assigned. For instance, a health project might name women as ‘beneficiaries,’ while an economic empowerment project might use the term ‘community partners.’ For others—and particularly for several interviewees from local NGOs—there was

only one right answer as to how women should be defined. One respondent from a local NGO indicated that women are called many things within the context of the environment and development landscape, but that it is best to simply treat them as part of the community, as stated in the below excerpt:

I know others call them champions, or other words. But me, it's better we call them ...we're not treating them as separate. So we normally treat them as part of the community so we just say 'women' and 'women's rights and leadership forums,' for example, without giving them a specific name. (1-L)

Another respondent from a local NGO emphasized a similar position, stating that within her organization, "we're always talking about grassroots women (7-L)." The same respondent added that using the term 'grassroots women' can hold certain stereotypes or negative connotations, and that by using 'grassroots women' along with an emphasis on grassroots women's ability and knowledge, the organization hopes to help associate the term with positivity and bring greater opportunities for women's growth:

We also understand that even though they are rural and grassroots kind of women, yes poverty is there, but we always try to bring up their ability, that they are capable of doing so much. And therefore they are so rich in their traditional knowledge, in their Indigenous knowledge. (7-L).

Using certain terms can encourage women to feel they have a role to play in conserving the environment, according to one respondent. Her organization uses the term *wanawake wahifadhi* in Kiswahili, which translates to 'women who conserve the environment.' This, she said, helps women feel that they are competent managers of the natural resources. (12-I)

Importantly, differences emerged in how respondents perceived the importance of how women are defined. As demonstrated in the above two excerpts, several NGO interviewees stressed that pastoral women are women deserving of respect and opportunity and that this should be reflected in the way(s) they might be defined. Multiple INGO staff interviewed, on the other hand, did not assign the same weight or importance to how women

are defined, adopting what could be understood as a more pragmatic approach. For instance, one interviewee (8-I) employed by an INGO noted that the donor funding the project might determine the way women are referenced, particularly in documentation. The interviewee articulated it this way:

It very much depends on the donor that you're writing for, or the audience. So on our social media, we refer to them as the people that they are—pastoral women or women in the communities. For certain donors, they prefer the term beneficiaries when you're writing a proposal or a report. (8-I).

When asked how the respondent felt about changing how pastoral women are referenced in order to suit particular donor preferences, the same interviewee responded, “It's just how the world works at this stage. You adjust your language dependent on the donor and changing priorities, changing discourse” (8-I). Another INGO respondent noted the limitations of a “communication system” (14-I) and “development world jargon” (14-I) that is slow to change.

One INGO respondent posed a different take, likening the labeling of pastoral women with specific terms to the way certain businesses are referred to as ‘SMEs’ or ‘small or medium-sized enterprises.’ “In the meetings, in the trainings, in the workshops — everywhere they're being called SMEs. So the term ‘small’ stays and may somehow contribute to people remaining in that position just because they're called that way.” (11-I). The same respondent elaborated that his organization uses both ‘beneficiaries’ and ‘partners’ to describe women they work with, but that using certain terms can “enhance that feeling of being marginalized and probably suppress some of the aspirations” (11-I) of women and youth. He recommended that organizations spend more time thinking about how women and youth can understand their context “without necessarily baptizing them a name” in a way that keeps them stuck (11-I).

For interviewee 14, an INGO respondent, the nature of trying to describe pastoral women in one or two words is challenging no matter the circumstance. “We address them as

key drivers of change in our proposals because that's what they are. We also address them as vulnerable community members" (14-I). Yet these descriptions, although both accurate, remain "very simple compared to the complexity of the role they play" (14-I).

1.2 Defining participation

Women's participation is about much more than women simply being physically present in decision making spaces, according to nearly all respondents. Interviewee 7 stated that it is not enough "to engage without really bringing up your issues, your rights and what you believe will work for you and your household and your community" (7-L). Interviewee 1 distinguished specifically between participation and "active participation," and offered this description:

Participation to me has a different interpretation, different than in the dictionary because participating is just sitting. You are just observing. But effective participation, you were there and actively participating, that entails giving your opinion on the issues. So active participation is what we most of the time advocate, and not just participating by filling the number of participants in a list. (1-L).

Several respondents noted the mediums in which women can and should participate, such as in the savings and loan institutions ubiquitous across Tanzania known as VICOBA's, short for 'village community banks,' and in land use planning committees. Interviewee 9 stated, "For women, being a member of a microcredit organization, for us that is participation (9-I), while interviewee 4 noted, "Participation means being at the process of land conservation or land management issues, for example, land use plans, [and] giving their views in the village meetings on district land issues. So participation means the process" (4-L). Interviewee 2, meanwhile, stated that the issue or medium is inconsequential because "Participation means when women are being involved in any issue. It doesn't matter if it is land issues, any topic related to women, even issues related to governance" (2-L).

Importantly, multiple interviewees linked participation with power, voicing that participation without power at various scales from household to national levels cannot be considered participation at all. Interviewee 7 expounds on this thought in the excerpt below:

Full participation would be that women are given power to some extent, it doesn't need to be high level power, it can be from the community household levels, and of course at the village government and also at the level of the district. If given the position to engage or become leaders in those areas, these women can have a huge impact in the changes within their own districts, that's good participation. Because if they are not engaged in decision making then they'll just be followers at the end of the day, and a lot of decisions will be made for them. (7-L).

For both NGO and INGO respondents, participation is considered at different levels—from the individual, to the household, to community, regional, and national scales. For instance, interviewee 10 noted that women's participation “on their own, as a human, to decide what she wants to do and what she doesn't want to do—that is household level” (10-L). Interviewee 10 explained that her organization is mostly concerned with “whether women are being considered as one of the people who can participate in leadership or ownership in the community” (10-L). Demonstrating a distinction between levels of participation, interviewee 8 voiced a desire for pastoral women's authority that begins in the community and extends nationally. Interviewee 8 pointed out that Tanzania's President Samia Suluhu Hassan has done an excellent job in ensuring that women are included in parliament and in village and district level governments, but that there is still much to be done to strengthen participation at the community level. The same interviewee referenced informal financial institutions, or VICOBAAs, as a place where equitable power must be conferred. When describing “ideal women's participation,” interviewee 8 suggested that “organizations that are run by women and managed by women have to be given the same level of community, district, and national level authority to affect economic and social change” (8-I). The respondent elaborates on why this isn't happening yet in the excerpt below:

Right now, many of these informal VICOBAAs are considered something just for the women. It might be run by women, but it's a community organization. So I think in

the ideal situation far in the future, I'm sure organizations and financial institutions and NGOs and projects would not necessarily have to be focused on women to impact women. And right now, every organization has kind of a token women's program as opposed to incorporating this gender mainstreaming throughout all of their programs.

Interviewee 8 continued by stating that ideally, at the community level, organizations and VICOBAAs run by women would not only be supporting women, “they could also support men because people would be thinking of them as an equal partner in community development, which is not currently the case” (8-I). Interviewee 9 also linked women’s participation to the behavior of others in the community, for example “if people in the household are open to see women leading, maybe in political or in other civic positions or other social positions.” (9-I).

1.3 Engaging other stakeholders

Respondents repeatedly emphasized that women’s participation cannot be addressed in isolation and must be linked strongly with support from men in the community, as well as from local leaders, local government officials, and when possible, from national government representatives. Many interviewees mentioned how crucial it is to engage with traditional leaders within communities. Interviewee 10 explained, “We engage other stakeholders like the traditional leaders who hold the big role in the community, for them to be educated and for them to support the movement in the community. So we bring them and try to educate, and change perspectives when it comes to women’s rights, women’s issues” (10-L). In another emphasis on the importance of local context, interviewee 7 shared that to accelerate women’s participation, “We use local strategies, the ones that have been used by these women before” (7-L). The same interviewee expands upon this thought in the excerpt below:

In Maasai communities, it is well known that men should always respect a women’s meeting, so when women meet or they have particular demands, then the men need to respect that. We use the women’s forums that are traditionally done, but we also use men or traditional leaders as champions of the women. We work with traditional leaders but at the same time we make sure women are leading the forums so that their voices can actually be heard. (7-L).

Others noted the importance of knowledge exchange among women from different communities, such as during the United Nations' International Women's Day celebrations:

We take our local women from several districts to where the event is taking place as a place where they can learn. During International Women's Day, it's where through bringing the local women from the village to the town center they can learn more about the day... different people are presenting their issues, it's a way to exchange ideas and understand issues to empower themselves. (2-L).

When it comes to engaging local government, interviewee 7 commented that "local to local dialogue" (7-L) is essential. This involves "bringing together all the stakeholders, it could even involve donors and international donors, to iron out all the things happening at local level that need to be solved and looking to who should be solving it" (7-L). According to interviewee 5, there is much yet to be done on the part of local government officials to support women's participation and women's rights:

I also wish the stakeholders such as the police, the government officials, are all held responsible. Because when they are not responsible, women will not really get their rights. Women can report a case, but if someone reports their case and nothing was done to her husband and he is back in the community the next day, why should anyone else report? Its demoralizing to the community. So I think all people should be accountable (5-I)

Based on responses, interviewees from local NGOs consider national and international engagement—particularly related to pastoral women's participation in issues of land rights—as part of their mandate. For instance, one informant employed by an INGO noted that there are "other organizations" (9-I), aside from his own, aiming to empower women to form networks and participate in dialogues at the village, district, and national level. Interviewee 10, employed by one such 'other organization,' mentioned the importance of international advocacy, citing an effort several years ago in which rural women from across Africa gathered at Mt. Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa, to recognize International Rural Women's Day and to "voice out their issues and interests in regard to women, properties, rights, inheritance issues, and participation in leadership positions at different levels" (10-L). Interviewee 4, meanwhile, raised the fact that a large group of

pastoral women recently visited Tanzania's President Samia Suluhu Hassan to share how pastoral women and children are impacted by eviction from their traditional lands. For interviewee 4, this visit represents progress in overcoming a longstanding barrier:

“I remember in past years and hearing from my elders, women are not even allowed to come to meetings. But now women are in the front. And now women are the ones who are given space to go and see national leaders” (4-L).

One INGO informant also noted that her organization is committed to ensuring women reach leadership positions and is working with the government of Tanzania to identify barriers to women's participation in national wildlife management. (8-I).

2. Barriers to pastoral women's participation

2.1 Lack of land rights

The common barriers to women's participation in environment and development work described by study participants include economic barriers, cultural barriers, and issues of land and human rights abuses. When speaking of economic barriers, many respondents spoke specifically of land and land rights. One interviewee (1-L) succinctly explained why lack of land rights is a key barrier, stating that women's lack of land ownership alone impedes women's participation in decision-making within their communities and within broader environment and development work:

We came to realize that women are not owning land. If you don't have that in place, you won't be able to make that person strong in decision making. Because economy plays a role in giving decision in these communities. If you are poor, your decision also will not be honored. (1-L)

Another respondent stated, “land is critical” (4-L) to discussion of women's empowerment, especially as the movement of Maasai becomes increasingly limited due to land access restrictions and shrinking areas to search for pasture. The same interviewee named “the importance of land rights” as a priority topic to teach Maasai women today, as demonstrated in the below excerpt:

Maasai women have been left behind in various issues because of the norms and customs of Maasai tradition. So the entirety of their lives, they are just people waiting for men to say something. So previously, they don't know their rights. They don't have a sense of ownership of anything. But when we started to engage on women's property rights, we started telling them importance of land ownership. Because it seems now that pastoralist communities are ... previously they were just moving around, but their land now, they are land planning. Their movement is now limited. So we engage them by sensitizing them on the importance of property rights, including land. (4-L)

Amid ongoing land rights and human rights issues in the country, it is perhaps unsurprising that several interviewees commented on these broader issues as barriers to women's desire to participate in local environment and development projects at all. One participant (5-L) described the worry in the community in which she works, which is one of several communities in northern Tanzania facing threats of eviction for the purposes of game hunting and fortress conservation:

It is true women are afraid, they are not sure they will be there tomorrow. Even if we have other health programs, or education programs, when you are speaking with the communities, at the end, the question will always come: 'You are really teaching us a lot of things, but we are not even sure whether we will be here tomorrow.' They are scared. 5-L.

Another interviewee elaborated on the damaging impact that fear and anger over threats of eviction and human rights abuses has had on Maasai people's relationship to their environment, explaining that "They are now regretting of being the best conservationists of the nature" (4-L). The interviewee expounds on this thought below:

The Maasai or pastoralist communities don't consume the wildlife, they don't cut trees for big timber. Now with these evictions, almost every pastoralist land, we can see that we are now harvesting what we planted. We have been good protectors of this but now...we can see there is a certain regression. We have been protecting this wildlife, we know how to escape them without killing them...I've been protecting this land for a long time but now I'm being evicted from this land, so now why did I do this for a long time? (4-L).

2.2 Social and cultural norms

Although my interview guide did not include a direct question about cultural or social norms, staff of both international and local NGOs repeatedly cited cultural conflict within

Maasai communities as a barrier to reaching and empowering women. One interviewee stated: “When you have successes, you can’t miss the challenges. The challenges are there also” (5-L). One grand challenge to increasing participation of Maasai women in various levels of decision making is patriarchal cultural norms. Interviewee 5 described a phenomenon in which women, equipped with more knowledge, often enter into conflict with their families:

Men can feel like women are now superior. So sometimes men can say no to women attending the meeting, no to participate in the development activity and just stay in the house because men believe that the information women are getting is what is making them superior to the men. (5-L).

The same interviewee described the process of trying to help a Maasai woman who had suffered domestic violence to gain justice in the courts. Patriarchal culture and fear were the factors that held the woman back from following through with pressing charges, as described below:

You are trying to help, you go stage by stage, but when you are now at the court session, the men or the relatives have spoken with the woman in secret to try to make her insecure and make her stop the case. So you find that you are now in the court yourself, the woman is not with you... There is still a lot of things to be done in women being confident in themselves and knowing their rights. (5-L).

One interviewee elaborated on the conflict that can arise when women participate in economic empowerment projects that help them start their own businesses, such as selling honey or renting out chairs and tables for events. A woman taking time away from her family or staying out later than anticipated for business reasons can be interpreted as disrespectful by her husband. “A man will say, ‘No, you are supposed to be back at home at five o'clock.’ So if you come back, or if you come back by six, then they say, ‘This woman is not respecting me.’ So there are still some who cling to that” (9-1). Similarly, another respondent described that many of the initiatives undertaken by her organization, such as securing legal land rights for women and encouraging women to start their own businesses, can feel like an attack on culture from the perspective of men:

It's a cultural thing that you cannot allow the women to go ahead and just become a leader while your man is just staying there at home. You cannot allow her to have a paper written under her name, like she owns a plot of land, it's not our culture that a woman can go around and go to the markets and do the businesses, with their own money from their own pocket. It's like you are undermining men. (10-L)

Cultural and social norms can also serve to stunt pastoral women's participation, even when it is protected or encouraged under national law, according to both NGO and INGO informants. Interviewee 8 referenced the difficulty of involving women in her organization's rangeland management program, which focuses on preserving and restoring communal pastures and protecting them from conversion to agriculture:

We include women in this program as much as we can, though it is very, very tricky here in Tanzania, since our rangeland monitors are selected by the village governments and the village governments are very tricky to work with when it comes to incorporating women at the decision-making table. (8-I).

Interviewee 10 referenced the 1999 Land Act, which establishes several principles that help to protect women from discrimination and stipulate their participation in leadership positions regarding land. "But it's not actually happening," according to interviewee 10, who suggested that the government revise the act and consider how it can enforce implementation "because in the rural areas, especially in the Maasai communities, the traditional norms are still very, very, very active and strong. So you see the laws are sometimes being overpowered by the traditional norms" (10-L). The same respondent articulated that despite advancement in the number of women parliamentarians in Tanzania, this progress can be traced to an established quota. It can be considered true progress, interviewee 10 stated, when the culture in the country does not merely support the appointment of women to parliament, but also their popular election. "That would be a sign. That you run and of course you win" (10-L).

Interviewee 10 described what she would like to see in the future this way:

We think it's about time that women are participating in decision making just automatically by default. It's not up until one has to struggle as if you are doing something illegal, because this is what is happening. If you find a woman up there, she struggled a lot. We wish that a community would always consider a woman. (10-L).

Certain social stigmas also make inclusion in projects more difficult, noted interviewee 14. One “major complicated issue” in pastoralist communities is the inclusion of persons with disabilities because “there's very few disabled that survive and it's always very challenging to involve them and understand who they are and where they are” (14-).

3. Perceived benefits to pastoral women's participation

3.1 Behavior change

Traditionally, “Maasai women have never been allowed to participate in any activities or social events” (10-L). Behavior change in patriarchal Maasai communities was named by almost every respondent as a goal or benefit of women's participation in environment and development work. During interviews, it was very common for respondents to begin by describing a certain initiative of their organization, which was perhaps meant to economically empower women, and to end by emphasizing that the true purpose of the initiative is much bigger than one woman—or multiple women—achieving greater financial security. For instance, one respondent, after describing a project that encourages widowed women to own and manage cattle, concluded with this statement: “But the idea is to try to change the mindset of the pastoralist men that women can own, but also manage livestock” (3-L).

The desire to create behavior change that supports a more equitable Maasai society was particularly well captured when informants spoke of education initiatives. One informant described a project in which young women who have dropped out of primary or secondary schools are taken to a training center where they are taught computer and entrepreneurship skills and connected with a solar installation company, explaining it this way:

They become local solar engineer in their villages. We have one who installed solar to seven rooms and also to the hospital. And men keep asking, ‘Can a lady go up to the iron sheet and install solar like a man? How can this lady go on top of the house without the support of men? We always feel like this is the men's and not the girl's work.’ (3-L)

Women installing solar panels are now making their own independent income, while other women in the program have gone on to pursue higher education in the country. But perhaps most importantly, according to interviewee 3, “they're changing people's minds as they do it” (3-L).

Additionally, leaving the community to pursue an education and then returning to one’s community was mentioned by several local NGO informants as an effective way to prove that change can be a positive thing. Interviewee 10, who did just that herself, commented about her own experience after returning to work for a local NGO to serve Maasai communities:

Men have always had these stereotypes. Like whenever you take a girl to school, you never see her back, she will go and get lost over there in town. So we go, we testify that as you take a girl to school, this is how she can come and give back to the community. Most of us have been doing that...having these mentorship sessions with the girls at the school. So we go and try to tell them and inspire them that as much as you go higher, you are also required to go back to the community so that the men will also be encouraged to take their kids to school, to support the women, that it's not a bad thing to change for the better. (10-L).

Similarly, interviewee 5 expressed that Maasai women who graduate from university and work independently “have a very good standard of life” (5-L) and can assist others in their family as well as show fellow community members what is possible. She explains more in the excerpt below:

I am one of them. I have a job, I can take care of my parents, I can take care of my own children, but I can also support my young sisters and my young brothers who are also still in the process of education. So I wish I could see other women who are reaching their own personal goals but also community goals.

This interviewee expressed a similar sentiment to interviewee 10, noting that “I wish [educated] women could come back to the community they come from, like what I am doing. And feel like they are still the same to the communities, trying to help them cope” (5-L).

3.2 Environmental well-being

Informants from local and international organizations framed advantages to women's participation in environmental initiatives similarly. The similarities were particularly evident when respondents referred to women as rule followers and as members of a community most likely to be compliant with land laws and regulations, as in the below excerpts:

When women are involved in the conservation issues, they are people who don't want to be in trouble or disobey the policies or bylaws that are kept in that area. If they are involved then there is a big impact ahead. (4-L).

You get better compliance when you have women in the design with whatever is agreed for the natural resource management rules. So this is usually about how long you can graze an area before you have to move your livestock. And when women are part of that decision making, then they're going to be much more likely to honor it and respect it. (6-I).

This is one of the main points that we bring up in our capacity building, in training of village governments—to say, the village governments make these laws and they make these rules. But then if the women are not aware of them, if they're not involved in the decision making and can't provide perspectives, then they're the ones who are going to be committing infractions completely unawares. (8-I).

The above excerpts demonstrate a certain continuity of thought regarding women's behavior, regardless of the informant's organizational affiliation. Interviewee 6 also emphasized that women are integral to natural resource decision-making due to the likelihood that they will manage resources more sustainably than men, noting, "That same grass bank that they save for the sheep and goats can also have benefits for wildlife" (6-I).

Informants employed by INGOs and local NGOs also pointed out women's strength, traditional beliefs, and unique role as caretakers as key advantages to their involvement in environmental decision making. Multiple local NGO informants referenced woman as those who are strongest in the community, as well as those who become connected to the land and are therefore less tempted by lucrative deals that could serve to degrade or damage the environment. For instance, interviewee 1 commented, "We have so many men on the ground, we have traditional leaders. We have all that, but when it comes to the issues of defending

the rights of the entire community, women become more strong” (1-L). Interviewee 10 expounded on this thought, providing the example of when Longido district became independent of Monduli district in 2007, a time during which many Maasai men were tempted to or decided to sell their land. “It’s the men who always go and sell and sell and sell. So women gathered to say no to that...So women took part in stopping that. So you see, women are more attached to the future, to their communities” (10-L). Women are also accustomed to standing up to outsiders, interviewee 10 noted, considering that men sometimes leave for up to eight months at a time in search of pastures and water for their cattle, while women remain.

Several respondents communicated the idea that within pastoral society, it is women who “are the first managers of the natural resources around” (2-L). It is therefore women who practice sustainable resource management because they “collect firewood but they don’t cut the tree, they cut the branches as one way of conserving the environment and ensuring the sustainability of the ecosystem” (2-L). Interviewee 2 also noted that certain trees, such as the baobab tree, are used by pastoral women as a spiritual place, which serves to protect the tree. “Having the traditional belief enhances women in trying to conserve the environment that is around them” (2-L).

Additionally, women were positioned by nearly every informant as vital teachers and conveyors of positive environmental messages for children. According to several interviewees, educating women in sustainable resource management also means educating the next generation. Interviewee 9 explained it this way:

I think women are the teachers, you know, at the household level. There is a saying in Swahili which says, ‘when you teach a woman, you have taught the society.’ It is women who are taking part into raising and nurturing children. So after coming from school, they meet their female parents back at home. So for us, we think if women are getting this opportunity of being educated, then it is very easy for them to transmit or to transfer the education they’ve achieved to their younger children. So it is very easy to make the entire society, the younger children, understand and take part on what has been taught. (9-I)

Interviewee 9 noted that women who meet for bee keeping groups, for instance, take part in much more during that time than simply collecting honey. “They meet for issues of bees for their finances. But again, they also take time to speak about other development issues, regarding their kids and their families. So women are one of the big platforms in a way to reach more people in terms of education” (9-I).

4. Measuring women’s participation

4.1 Hearing pastoral women’s voices

At the heart of participation is the elevation of women’s voices, several respondents stressed. Many of the interventions that respondents provided as examples of their work aim to elevate the economic and social status of women in the community. But in order to create continuity in these projects and to build upon them, respondents identified that women’s voices and choices must be heard and respected—both within the community and by the organizations undertaking environment and development work in the area. One participant described it this way:

These women, if given the voice, they are able to engage in other forums and participate in decision making, these women can do much more and be huge contributions in their own communities. We have seen a lot of that. It’s usually the opportunities that are missing. (7-L)

There are commonalities as well as several important differences in how women’s voices are heard and responded to by NGOs and INGOs operating at the nexus of environment and development in northern Tanzania. For example, several respondents from both NGOs and INGOs described strategies that involve helping pastoral women organize their own meetings, such as Women’s Rights and Leadership Forums, to enable women to discuss issues separate from men ahead of a village-wide meeting. Interviewee 9 described this practice in the context of land use planning:

How will this land use plan affect them, will it affect or improve their work? And they give their opinion. After that we go back to the village general assembly, because they

already had a discussion on the same issue, and now women are having a core understanding of the matter (9-I).

According to another interviewee from an INGO, a similar strategy is used internally by her organization to ensure that women's voices are heard with the implementation of female-only focus groups "to make sure that you do have some situations where female staff are interviewing or facilitating focus groups with only women from the community, preferably without men present...to make sure we get a women's the women's point of view" (8-I). Another respondent employed by an INGO articulated that his organization conducts key informant interviews with Maasai women by recruiting women who are going to college from Maasai communities to conduct focus group discussions. In these cases, ideal participation looks like "a largely woman-owned space, so there's nobody in the room that looks like me. There's no *mzungus* [*white people*], and there's almost no men, because the women are going to be much more forthright when it's just them. It's pretty much a women-only space, and then you can get phenomenal information."

One contrast between respondents from NGOs and INGOs is illustrated when asked how they ensure that women feel comfortable participating in their projects and communicating with their organizations. One INGO respondent described this as particularly "tricky" (6-I) in the context of a patriarchal culture and noted how necessary it is to be comfortable with the inherent value judgements buried within gender equality efforts. The interviewee elaborates below:

We have to recognize that [value judgement], and because people disagree about those values, and it's really not for us to try to push them or force them, certainly not force them, but we just give those opportunities for women, whether they can take them because the men let them take them or not, or they don't want to take them, it's up to them. It's really important that it be 100% voluntary and with no even implicit, sort of coercion or incentives or disincentives, that it's completely up to them to choose what they want to do. We can't decide what's right for them, but we can give them opportunities and see what they may choose or they may not. And regardless we respect that decision. (6-I).

INGO respondent 14 also drew this distinction, noting that “we don’t provide monetary...we don’t provide any immediate advantage to engage with the programs that we build together with communities” (14-I). The same respondent described the lack of monetary incentive as an obstacle to begin with, but in the case of a recent marketplace literacy training, “they’re all free to leave, and if they stay on, it means it is meaningful participation” (14-I).

Given the critique of international organizations engaged in environment and development work, it is perhaps unsurprising that respondents employed by INGOs referenced the need that participation in environment and development projects be voluntary and that women choose whether to participate. While I elaborate on how local organizations measure women’s participation later in this section, it is worthwhile to note here that staff of local NGOs do not worry about voluntary participation in the same way. Instead, several interviewees employed by local organizations emphasized that their organizations are membership based. In this sense, “women *are* the organization,” (7-L) said one interviewee. Another NGO respondent described the built-in support for their initiatives as a result of a similar membership structure: “You can voluntarily come [to a session] and ask for membership, and then you’ll be invited to the annual general meetings. So in a way we work with the women who already think that what we are doing is actually helping improve their lives” (10-L).

Additionally, respondents employed by local NGOs often described how they listen to and hear pastoral women, which is often in the form of individualized attention. Many NGO interviewees noted the amount of time they spend in the communities in which they work, with one respondent noting that she spends up to 80% of her time in the community (10-L). Multiple respondents described the use of small groups to get to know individual women and judge who is grasping certain concepts and who is not. One respondent explained these

meetings as an opportunity for organizational staff to gain a better grasp of what concepts are important to women, what concepts might be foreign to them, and what concepts excite them. It was also common for NGO informants to explain that they share their cell phone numbers so that any woman can call at any time, as demonstrated in the excerpt below:

Mostly they can face us face to face when we are in the field, saying their issues or their problems. Or they can call us if there is a burning issue and ask 'How would you advise us?' We usually give them some advice or if it is an issue related to laws, we link them to other organizations. (2-L)

Interviewee 2 also described a situation in which one woman in the community had lost her husband. Following his death, her land was grabbed by her husband's relatives. The interviewee continues below:

She wanted support from us. We called her so she could tell us what happened, after that she took initiative to take the problem to the village leaders. But she didn't get help. After that she called us, to take her problem to court. Then we support through providing maybe transport, and the lawyer who can support her. And she finally got support and got her land back. (2-L)

Hearing women's voices and incorporating their thoughts into project design are two separate endeavors. When it comes to program design, a majority of informants commented that it is difficult to involve Maasai women in all aspects of project design, although the reasons cited for difficulty differed. One INGO respondent noted of a beekeeping program that "in terms of design of the initial programs, it is unfortunately very patriarchal, including the women's beekeeping initiative, which was designed more by men. Although, the women have taken ownership of it, which is great" (8-I). Interviewee 6 also noted that project design timelines are a limiting factor, considering project design might be undertaken once in a two-decade period. Instead, the focus is on adapting the projects along the way:

What we do is every few years we do a pause, reflect, and adjust. We look at what's working and what's not and use some adaptive management to change the activities. So the design is important, but you are never going to get the design quite right. An iterative approach works a lot better and you need women involved in that whole process when you're doing your pause, reflect, and adjust and hearing their voices. So we do a lot of focus group discussions. (6-I).

Similarly, interviewee 3 noted that her organization has “a culture of just asking [women] questions like, ‘apart from what we are doing, what are the gaps?’ Because we are very sure that we cannot be able to solve all the problems that face the women in this village. But what are the gaps? What do you need more from us, apart from this project?” (3-L). Interviewee 10 also described a process of hearing feedback from pastoral women after the creation of a girls’ education program, which funded girls to pursue secondary and university education:

Later, the women came back through our annual general meeting, when we come together and discuss and analyze things. And they suggested that what if we built a school that will bring all the Maasai girls that are scattered from one area to another, so that we can have them all together in one school, that way you can monitor their progresses, you can also mentor easily. (10-L).

Based on this feedback, interviewee 10 explained, her organization did create a secondary school in Arusha where many Maasai girls now study. One INGO respondent described the development of a marketplace literacy program for Maasai women as an example of when women’s voices were heard within her organization —and when women moved from beneficiaries to change agents. “They were always somehow beneficiaries, but never frontline” (14-I) until the kickoff of this program. She continues below.

When we piloted these literacy programs, they really shaped them completely. And it became, you know, relevant, pertinent, culturally acceptable. I mean, [women] were so important, so relevant to design this program, which has now reached 15,000 women. The marketplace literacy program was tailored by Maasai women. (14-I).

It would be a loss not to utilize pastoral women’s vast knowledge of the environment when it comes to conservation projects, according to several INGO interviewees. Interviewee 13 described the practice of layering technical expertise with women’s Indigenous knowledge of local plants and environmental practices. When asked how pastoral women’s voices show up in her organization’s work, she posed the example of visiting a rural community with the idea of identifying small rangeland plots for restoration. When the respondent asked a woman community member if she had any ideas about restoration, the woman responded ‘yes, I

already do it. I have my own piece of land at home in my backyard which I've restored.

Whenever you are ready, I'll show you the place.' The interviewee continues below:

Imagine, I'm going there to the village plot which we're going to restore, and she's telling me 'I've already done it.' A woman like that is going to be in the forefront of whatever we are doing there. So that's how it's like ...we have those ideas or ways of doing things, but when we go there and we find something like that, we obviously build on it. (13-I).

Elevating women's voices, for one respondent, was also likened to bringing to the fore, or into the light, the role women already play behind the scenes in the community. One respondent shared that "the decisions of most men—they are from women" (1-L). The same interviewee elaborated on a common occurrence that he witnesses in the villages after men have a meeting where they fail to reach consensus on a specific issue:

After failing, they're saying, let's adjourn the meeting and resume tomorrow. And they go back with the women and say, 'We had a very strong meeting and we failed to reach a conclusion.' And the woman says, 'How was it? What was the matter? And the man starts to explain. And the woman says, 'Why can't you think of taking this way? If you take this way, then the result is this.' Men normally say 'No, that is impossible. We can't do that way.' But then in the meeting, they're going to use that idea to resolve the conflict. The decision is from a woman, but they don't acknowledge that it is from a woman (1-L).

4.2 Measuring change

When asked about measuring women's participation, 12 of 14 respondents spoke about how they solicit feedback from women participants and adapt programs to suit them. One respondent commented, "We are always on the ground staying with them, collecting the different kind of stories from these ladies" (3-L). Interviewee 5 commented, "Maybe when you are doing [monitoring & evaluation] in a certain project, you can use that time to monitor even how women are perceiving [the project], is there any violence, any challenges the women are facing? We always have close communication" (5-L). Interviewee 1 explained the action taken when analysis shows that Women's Rights & Leadership Forums are not as age inclusive as desired, for instance:

When you find that the age is a problem in some of the Women's Rights and Leadership Forums — for example you may find in analysis, most of the leaders elected are older. How can youth also be part of these forums is one of the things we think is very important. After realizing that there is a gap, we compare with the leadership in the forums, we find a way to balance in our interventions. In our next intervention we will focus on this kind of training to help younger women to participate. (1-L)

Again, several NGO informants explained how they maintain close communication with the pastoral women in the communities they serve, with interviewee 5 explaining, “We provide our numbers in every session so that communities can reach us closely” (5-L).

Interviewee 5 expounded in this way:

Some of them you find at night they are calling you, saying ‘there is a girl who is being married, please can you do something.’ That is how we then communicate with social affairs officers and try to take initiative. That’s what makes me feel like we are sustaining because of communication, close monitoring, and we have champions on the ground, and trust. (5-L)

Interviewee 5 also noted that when she conducts a training, she takes the phone number of the chairperson, “but also you can just see a leader. When you meet a woman, you just know who is a leader, so I always take the number of a woman who I think ‘oh she is confident and she can represent this community.’” (5-L).

Several interviewees described official indicators and theories of change as ways of measuring women's participation. Interviewee 6, for instance, noted that “we track the number of clients reached with family planning services” and “We count the number of women that we're supporting with livelihoods” (6-I). Interviewee 8 explained that her organization is trying to create an evidence base to “demonstrate that women's participation and inclusion and genuine leadership in conservation initiatives is benefiting the broader communities” (8-I). Importantly, interviewee 8 noted the blind spots and limitations of relying on quantitative data to understand women's participation, yet “so many evaluations also don't have the time or the resources to look into the qualitative impacts of women and leadership” (8-I). Interviewee 8 explained that donor funding often requires the counting of

the number of women and the percentage of women in a meeting. But she expounds on what she would like to see happen in the future, below:

Through our hopefully improved evaluation metrics, we are looking more into the effect of, for instance, the women's empowerment program or the women's beekeeping program on empowerment outcomes, such as levels of confidence and women's feelings of financial security and financial independence, and women's desire to feel like they have bodily autonomy. Again, those are much higher-level impact indicators that we can only touch on at this stage in our programming.

Interviewee 1 took a similar stance, commenting that new questions arise to be analyzed and measured when early quantitative analysis shows that a larger number of women are participating within the Women's Rights & Leadership Forums, many of which cannot be analyzed quantitatively:

How many resolutions favor women? Or because women are participating, are there now changes in the form of seeing how many women are now having rights? We still see there are a lot of violations, like violence against women. We see also women are not going to school. But if women are participating in decision-making bodies, do we see young girls going to school, do we really see that? Do we see women's issues being handled in a different way? (1-L).

Interviewee 8, meanwhile, expressed discontent that the current metric of success in women's empowerment is that 50% of women participate physically, explaining the problem this way:

Participation doesn't mean genuine inclusion. It doesn't mean that the women's voices are being heard or listened to. It doesn't mean that they're being respected as equal contributors to the conversation, and it doesn't suggest that there is equity in their perceptions. (8-I).

Particularly in Maasai communities, in which women have long been oppressed and silenced, striving for gender equality means that "women should have more of a voice" (8-I). Rather than striving for equality at 50%, "we should be thinking of the historical exclusion of women in these decision-making circles, where if women have been excluded for hundreds of years, 50% just now in 2022 is not actual equality" (8-I). Interviewee 8 expounds on this idea below:

My thought is that just having 50% participation by women is not having any impact on the ground in terms of women's empowerment and women's voices being heard. Both within the conservation world here in Tanzania, and more broadly, so that women and other female identifying people are genuinely contributing to the discourse around conservation, they should be trying to also accommodate or account for the fact that for the last 300 years, women have been excluded entirely. And therefore at this point in time, we should seesaw in the other direction where women should be given more of a voice to try to account for that.

Overall, changes in women's participation seemed to be perceived differently by informants from local and international NGOs, as evidenced in the way informants perceive the necessary scale of change. One respondent employed by an INGO noted that, "We've got more people in the Women's Rights & Leadership Forums than five years ago. But I'm not seeing or sensing or hearing about any big... no sea change" (6-I). When asked the same question about whether there have been changes in pastoral women's participation in their communities in the past five years, several local informants immediately responded yes, and described small changes they believe will have big impact over time, such as women contributing to meetings and demonstrating interest in defining their property boundaries, known as land demarcation. The below excerpts offer a few examples:

They thought that everything has to be managed by a man, like the land, the livestock, everything, according to their cultural traditional way of life... after several trainings, there are some changes even today. Today pastoral women are now engaging in land use issues, they are engaging in several committees within the village. Before they don't even engage in leadership issues but now we have some women representing as subvillage leaders. (2-L).

Women were never allowed to go to the meetings, or to make contributions. Women were only allowed—if you are to go in where men are, then you go and sit down and never ask or answer anything... but nowadays we see women going there, they are making their contribution, they do their claims and make several follow-ups. (10-L).

So we can see that women have now understood the necessities of land issues but also another thing that we measure is when women come to demand for the demarcation of their land. Previously they do not think this is something I should own...you found land, you keep your boma, and then the day that you wish to go, you go, you find another space. Now women are demanding that their settled land is being demarcated. ...we can see there is a big change in the sense of ownership, especially in the land. (4-L).

Interestingly, the same event described as a positive change by a local informant is not necessarily interpreted the same way by an INGO informant, which demonstrates a dominant tension addressed in the literature whether humans or nature take priority in integrated environment and development projects. One example of this is the increase in pastoral women's ownership of goats or shoats, which are a sheep-goat hybrid. Interviewee 5 described that a local micro-savings group is allowing women to "get loans and pay school fees for their children, but they can also buy some other items such as goats, so you can see that the level of dependence on their family has been reduced through the training and initiatives" (5-L). By contrast, interviewee 6 describes the same phenomenon this way:

What we also know is that shoats have gone up in number exponentially in the last five years. So we've got some good data from a couple of different projects, and we know that the number of the smaller ungulates really, really increased dramatically. So in some ways this is really good for women. It gives them more income sources. But it's not so good for the rangeland. (6-I).

5. Issues of power

5.1. Colonial power and Western culture

Layers of power dynamics govern conservation and development work in northern Tanzania, according to nearly every respondent. Interviewees described challenges within the complex relationship between 'Western' culture and Maasai culture, local and international organizations that operate in the region, and uneven power dynamics between local government and pastoral populations. Interviewee 6, a respondent from an INGO, avoided using the term decolonization, yet noted that "a lot of us are still on the steep part of our learning curve on...we're just, nobody's really figured it out yet" (6-I). Interviewee 6 added that "a lot of us recognize that we do bring a lot of baggage with us as a Northern colonial power in many cases working in Africa" (6-I).

When asked directly about decolonization, several respondents from INGOs noted that addressing organizational staff diversity and hiring practices is one way to confront

power dynamics and meet greater goals of decolonization and de-centering of Western views and voices. Interviewee 6 stated that conservation in Africa “is really white. Almost all the leaders of conservation organizations in Africa are white and it's just...the thing that nobody wants to talk about or face” (6-I). Again, the respondent stressed that his organization wants “to center and forward African voices, so the first place that starts with is your staff” (6-I). Similarly, interviewee 13 noted that a transition has taken place within her organization, with project handovers from Western project managers to Tanzanians. Interviewee 8, another INGO respondent, pointed out that nearly 100% of her organizational staff is Tanzanian, but that the concept of decolonization goes beyond staffing and toward behavior of international staff as well, as stated below:

We, as the international community and expatriate staff, should not be imposing our conservation values on the communities, but rather facilitating and advocating for them on the international sphere to gain financial resources, to be agents of their own change (8-I).

Interestingly, no respondents employed by a local NGO brought up the employment of African or Tanzanian staff as a key action on the road toward decolonization. Many interviewees employed by local organizations first acknowledged how uncomfortable it is to speak about decolonization and power dynamics at all. Interviewee 1 commented, “I don't know how to start about this because that thing is existing” (1-L). He expresses hesitation in continuing this topic of conversation:

We can't avoid that. That thing is there.... Frankly speaking, there are really also international organizations also having push ... big, big organizations, maybe even individuals, who also try to push some of the issues just for their interests. And because also we have some agreement with them. But I don't want to speak more about this (1-L).

Interviewee 1 suggested reframing the conversation by focusing on ‘inclusive conservation,’ defining this as conservation that emphasizes community ownership and recognizes community members as those who are the decision makers over their natural

resources rather than “just having one big private or any other organization having rights to that” (1-L).

Interviewee 5 was explicit in describing that Western culture has been imposed in northern Tanzania. Particularly in Maasai communities, Western culture is one of the driving reasons behind negative change, according to interviewee 5, who stated, “What I feel like now from our communities is like the Western culture has been brought to us, and communities are forgetting their own culture.” Activities like late night discos or even church seminars—happenings that were not previously common in Maasai culture—are now causing an uptick in teen pregnancies, for example, she noted. She continues below:

Having put away our own religions, our own ways maybe of behaving or our own music and trying now to reach for the Western culture...it has brought some of the influence to the communities (5-L).

Her organization wishes to maintain the traditional Maasai “cultural setting” (5-L) while simultaneously trying to change social norms that negatively affect women in the community. Culture to be maintained include life skills taught by the family, such as how to care for livestock. Interviewee 5 provided the example of a Maasai father whose son returned home after failing the national exam that would have allowed him to proceed with studies: “The child had spent his life and learned his skills at school, forgetting the skills the child was being taught at home, such as how to medicate the cow, how to go and buy medicine for the cow” (5-L). Interviewee 5 continues below:

So the man was telling me, ‘I’m mixed up with my child because he has failed in his exams, but when the child comes back home he can’t even medicate the cow.’ I think sometimes it’s just good to maintain the good culture and the good life skills that were being taught at our home. The way of behaving, the way of respecting the elders. We also have our own traditional leaders and a way of solving issues and disputes among the communities. (5-L).

The same respondent emphasized the need to strengthen relationships with local community leaders so that they can increase their roles and responsibilities and ensure that women receive and maintain their rights in the community.

Interviewee 8, an INGO respondent, also commented on imposing Western values. In this case, she spoke of fear of imposing Western values in the context of women's rights. Because the focus of this investigation is the way in which conservation organizations engage pastoral women in their work, it is perhaps not surprising that several INGO respondents raised the conundrum of engaging in gender mainstreaming or gender equality work while respecting local culture. Interviewee 8 put it this way:

As a Western organization, and in terms of the decolonization of conservation and development, there is a fine balance between wanting to ensure that women's voices are heard and listened to...and also not wanting to impose our Western values on these communities (8-I).

One way to combat this is by not thinking about community engagement as something an outside NGO needs to bring, but “rather we should be waiting and empowering those communities, catalyzing the work that they're already doing and waiting for them to invite us to their table,” (8-I).

5.2 Local power imbalances

Local NGO staff working on issues at the intersection of gender and environment often do not feel invited to the table when it comes to government intervention, according to four interviewees employed by local organizations. “Local people need to be involved with whatever is done on issues of conservation rather than other people coming from another place and just monopolize,” said interviewee 4, noting that the Tanzanian government wants to “make their own decision immediately without giving concern to people around” (4-L).

Interviewee 4 outlines what she would like to see, below:

We wish they could come, and we make the decision together. The government can say ‘this is what we want’ and the community can say ‘this is what we want,’ and then we create something we have all agreed and then we will be in harmony. But for now, the government wants to implement everything on its own. (4-L).

It is all too easy to skirt participation of local people, particularly pastoral women, according to interviewee 7. Her perception of many projects in northern Tanzania in sectors

such as mining or wildlife tourism are that they are “not just about benefitting the community, it’s normally about getting more for the country, or getting more for building the wealth in the country even if it means hindering the development of some people,” (7-L). As a result of projects undertaken for gains “beyond the local community,” (7-L), the government will organize high-level meetings “which prevent rural Indigenous women from participating since they are not knowledgeable and some of them are illiterate, so how do you get them to read about the information when they cannot read or write?” (7-L). In many cases, the government attempts to purposely block women from participating or “bypass them knowingly,” (7-L), which is why it is so vital to educate women on their rights. According to interviewee 7, the role of organizations that work with pastoral women is not just to see and hear pastoral women, but to ensure that pastoral women see and hear what is going on in their community and in the country:

Women are always thinking about the community, thinking about their children, thinking about their future. When a project that deals with conservation comes about and they are not involved, it’s almost like something that might create wealth but women are put in the shadow, so they don’t engage well. We build their capacity so these women can see everything happening around them and can advocate for things that they want. (7-L).

Interviewee 10 believes the discussion of decolonization is currently too broad. There is first a need for the Tanzanian government to recognize Indigenous peoples in the country before moving on to consider efforts to decolonize international efforts. As a result, “We have a double stress” (10-L) when it comes to decolonization because Maasai and other ethnic groups who wish to be recognized as Indigenous within Tanzania remain ignored. This lack of acknowledgement means that “when it comes to issues of investments, you see the country would always allocate the land that belongs to Indigenous communities, yet we are the only communities that has preserved the areas for such a long time” (10-L). Overall, interviewee 10 advocates that it is too soon to consider decolonization until Indigenous people and their sovereign rights are recognized nationally and internationally:

So which part of the decolonization are we talking about? Is it for the agricultural issues? Is it for tourism or pastoralism issues? Until it's identified that we have Indigenous communities, that they own their own lands... then the question of decolonization will come in the final stage. (10-L).

There is a movement within Tanzania for recognition of Indigenous peoples and the links between land, identity, and traditional culture, according to interviewee 10, led by PINGO's Forum, or Pastoralists Indigenous Non-Governmental Organizations' Forum.

5.3 Decolonization and role of international organizations

INGOs were described as useful allies and actors who can “play their part” (12-I) to help meet goals of decolonization by two respondents employed by local organizations. One interviewee credits an international outlook for expanding the way she thinks about East Africa's natural resources and landscapes. Collaboration together with international organizations has taught her that “conservation is not only for the Maasai community, it's for the whole of Tanzania, for the whole of Africa, for the whole of the world,” due to global impact of deforestation and land degradation. Still, she would not go so far as to describe the work international groups do as ‘decolonizing,’ as she describes below:

I cannot say really like they decolonize development or something like that. They play their role though. Maybe there might be some of the institutions and organizations that they might be doing something which is not...something fishy sometimes. But overall, I see like they will play their role and it is helpful. (12-I).

Two respondents brought up exit strategies, with interviewee 11 noting that the existence of exit strategies, or plans to hand over projects to local leaders, on the part of INGOs is an important indicator of decolonization. His team has led dialogues to discern how community members would feel if the organization was to “exit the landscape” (11-I). This is an exercise to prepare those involved in the projects with “that mentality that they should not rely on us forever. They should learn and say, ‘If we are to be sustainable, how should we do that?’” (11-I). Interviewee 13 echoed the need for an exit strategy but emphasized that it is too soon to transition completely away from the international presence of many of the

organizations conducting conservation work in the region that offer important technical capacity. The conservation sector, in particular, is currently in transition toward greater local leadership but emphasized the need for caution when it comes to demanding that international experts exit the country with haste (13-I).

“We need to have a smooth transition. We cannot just say ‘stop.’ No, it has to be something which is evolving over time. You cannot do it overnight, say from tomorrow, ‘We don't want to give anyone a permit to come and help us in agriculture,’ let’s say. It's knowledge sharing. There are ways which I've been doing things... and all those ways I was doing were correct and OK. But you could bring something more advanced or can help me to get more yield than how I've been doing it. (13-I).

The way international organizations engage women in conservation and development can move the region toward greater decolonization goals, according to interviewee 13. In fact, “it already is” (13-I). Interviewee 13 described how her organization sets women up for success for local-led transition from the start. “We will hear what they're telling us, and then we'll offer some expertise in order for them to do it. But next time we are not going to be there. They're going to be themselves doing it. So to me, that's the way we do decolonization or participation of women. And that is a sustainable way” (13-I). Women can always feel free to reach out to staff if there are problems in the future, she stated, but if the project is not built by women to begin with, “It means once we...once the project is closed, nothing will happen. It's done” (13-I).

One interesting research outcome was the way interviewees spoke about who gets to decide what happens where. It still matters whose ideas are whose — and who asks whom for input before engaging in a landscape — according to interviewee 7. “If an organization is being funded to do conservation or to do education, they must first seek knowledge or understanding of communities they are going to work in” (7-L). This will naturally lead to projects that are more culturally sensitive to communities, whether decolonization is an

outright agenda item or not, interviewee 7 said. “I’m not sure if it has to do with colonization, decolonization, it is just the way to go” (7-L). Interviewee 7 continues below:

You cannot just come into my house and make a decision about what you are going to cook or how you’re going to sweep, you have to ask me first before you start doing it in my house. It should be a requirement that this has to happen or you cannot engage in the community. I’m sure someone from the south cannot just go in the U.S. and start a project in the middle of Manhattan without consent of people who live there. (7-L).

Good practice should extend beyond consent and include a mixture of local and international ideas, according to interviewee 9. One example is the ‘living walls’ innovation, which builds upon a traditional Maasai practice of using acacia thorns to create a fence to protect livestock corrals. Creating a living wall involves planting native trees that act as fence posts, which are then covered with chain-link fencing to create an enforced, more predator-resistant, corral. Interviewee 9 described it as nearly impossible and perhaps counterproductive to consider which piece of this advancement to credit where: “These were local efforts, but in a way we are advancing this, but the advancement can be maybe not from outside or not from inside” (9-I). Interviewee 9 noted that “There are a number of staff which provide a local perspective and are being heard to strengthen our own conservation attitude, for instance.”

It is a mixture. of outside knowledge with local knowledge. And that — that’s a good thing. Now to know maybe how many aspects are local, how many aspects are foreign — who knows which ones are outweighing the other. (9-I).

According to respondent 14, working closely with pastoral communities has become a necessity as populations have grown and pastoral people have been squeezed into certain areas by land use change and government policies. Most of the conservation efforts until 15 years ago were in national parks, noted respondent 14, adding “It was really difficult to... there was never like, ‘oh, I’m having a three-year engagement with this Maasai village’ because there was no Maasai village or there was a temporary settlement that was seasonal and that was really in harmony with the natural resources.” A greater pressure on resources,

compounded by climate change and introduction of invasive species, has led to “superfast changes” (14-I) in the past 10 years, including a shift in conservation focus from national parks to the border land and people who live there. Respondent 14 explains:

Maybe I'm too naive, but I see this as a major need for success. There's no other way around. Communities outside protected areas are drivers for degradation, victims of degradation, victims of forces like climate change that is caused 8,000 kilometers away from them. So they have to be the main actors and that's how it is. (14-I).

Discussion

Environment and development practitioners identify gender-inclusive participation as a vital element of the integrated social-ecological agenda (Lawless et al., 2021; Leisher et al., 2016), yet it is less clear what meaningful gender-inclusive participation entails. This study was designed to address gaps in knowledge surrounding how the environment & development agenda in Northern Tanzania frames and influences the participation of pastoral women—a population that has not traditionally enjoyed the elevation of—or respect for—their voices (Köhler-Rollefson, 2012; Homewood et al., 2009), and one particularly hard hit by climate change and land use competition in the region (Galvin, 2009, Reid et al., 2014). These same pastoral women find themselves at the center of an ongoing discourse within academia and development practice emphasizing the need to elevate their voices and place them at the center of integrated conservation and development work—just one piece of a larger decolonization picture (Matulis & Moyer, 2017).

Specifically, with this study I sought to investigate how pastoral women’s involvement is perceived and measured by INGOs and local NGOs and how decolonization is understood and practiced, if at all, by INGOs and NGOs. The findings highlight trends in perceptions of women’s participation that can strengthen our conceptual understanding of what meaningful participation is and what efforts toward decolonization in conservation might look like. The following sections discuss key themes that emerged from this research. This study explored current perspectives of pastoral women and participation, barriers to

women's participation, measurement of women's participation, and issues of power, among other topics. Findings reveal areas for improvement—particularly around defining pastoral women, overcoming cultural barriers to women's participation, and measuring pastoral women's participation—that can help improve the design and measurement of projects intended to engage pastoral women in the integrated conservation and development landscape.

Women and the space between tradition and transformation

The data presented in this study provides an updated understanding of how pastoral women are perceived and what their 'meaningful' participation does or could look like in the context of integrated social-ecological work in northern Tanzania. The interview data reveals that there is not necessarily one shared understanding of who pastoral women are within today's conservation and development landscape, yet there exists a shared respect for the layered, complex lives they lead. Descriptions of pastoral women ranged from 'change agents' to 'partners' to 'beneficiaries' to "grassroots women...rich in their traditional knowledge, in their Indigenous knowledge." (7-I). In fact, one interviewee explicitly pointed out that any single description fails to capture the complexity of pastoral women's roles in rangeland landscapes.

At play throughout the interview data is a particular push and pull between women's roles as keepers of important traditional knowledge and as transformative changemakers. This theme was illustrated in part by multiple respondents who emphasized the importance of Maasai women leaving their villages to pursue formal education, yet also returning to their communities to translate the knowledge they've gained for the benefit and continuation of their culture. The tug-of-war between tradition and transformation in the data supports Fernández-Giménez and colleagues' (2022) findings, which posit that women pastoralists are the "invisible thread that stitches new knowledge to old" (p 10.) yet also serve to "unravel

and reweave the fabric of rural society into something new, as agents of transformative change” (p. 10). Similarly, the data supports Baxter’s (2008, p.3) postulation that pastoral women’s identities are “complex, shifting and multiply located.” In many ways, the interview data presented here also aligns with feminist political ecological scholars who have worked for decades to encourage the complication of women's participation in environment work to consider political, social, and economic factors (Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2008; Rocheleau et al., 1996). Undeniably, this scholarly work has led to a more politically and socially located pastoral woman, who exists not just in the space of an integrated conservation and development project, but within the spaces of her household, within the relationships with her spouse and community members, and within a larger political landscape—all of which influences her relationship to rangelands and natural resources. In this way, I find the lack of a single definition of pastoral woman to be unsurprising, and perhaps a sign of how deeply feminist political ecology has permeated integrated conservation and development thinking in northern Tanzania.

One standout difference in the framing of pastoral women between local and international organizations is the reasoning behind the terminology used. The majority of respondents employed by local NGOs attached elements of power and respect to the terms used to describe pastoral women, while those employed by INGOs tended to defer to ‘development jargon’ and the ever-changing discourse of donor priorities to determine how women are defined. The emphasis—particularly from respondents employed by INGOs—on the need to please donor governments or to use suitable language to match donor priorities contrasts with two respondents who described the way women are named as powerful enough to keep them stuck—with one respondent noting that certain descriptors could “enhance that feeling of being marginalized and probably suppress some of the aspirations” (11-I) of pastoral women. Overall, these findings suggest there is innate power in the way

organizations choose to describe pastoral women and the way those perceptions are shared with the world. Among barriers to women's participation in integrated social-ecological projects, respondents named lack of land rights and social and cultural norms yet did not name development discourse or assigned labels. Based on existing observations about actions to decolonize conservation and development (Gokkon, 2018; Mabele, 2021), it seems that deferring to a jargon divorced from local meaning takes us farther from stated goals to elevate African voices, rather than closer. Perhaps this is an area ripe for reclaiming of power that can be further explored. In fact, one interview participant described that INGOs operating in the region can “play their part” (12-I) on the international stage, using political ties and influence to wield power in a way that supports broader goals of elevating pastoral women's voices. This action might start with something as simple as the words used to describe a population that so many organizations have deemed essential to the conservation and development landscape of northern Tanzania. In the same way one respondent described asking pastoral women what they want in a project, organizations could ask pastoral women how they want to be defined or what they want to be called, then relay this information to donors. This is just one example. The bigger question is what meaning might be created if actors operating in the integrated social-ecological arena in northern Tanzania weave pastoral women's stories on top of development jargon, effectively rewriting it. As interviewee 7 suggested, perhaps more thoughtful reflection on the part of INGOs is required to understand whether staff are weaving a story that serves to further empower—rather than marginalize—pastoral women.

Participation and power

Among staff of local and INGOs in northern Tanzania, there exists a strong shared understanding of what constitutes meaningful participation of pastoral women. My research shows that recognizing women's power as it exists within cultural bounds—and encouraging

respect for their voices both within and beyond those bounds—is foundational for participation in integrated conservation and development projects. The majority of interview respondents expressed frustration with a definition of participation that stops at the physical presence of women in meetings about conservation and development, as a focus on attendance is not a reflection of whether or not women feel comfortable speaking or are heard (Lawless, 2022). By collating thoughts from respondents, a loose definition of meaningful participation in this context would be when pastoral women’s voices are equally heard, and respected at household, community, national, and global scales. Thus, the definition provided of ‘ideal’ or ‘meaningful’ participation that has emerged from this study supports Goldman’s (2011, para. 12) definition of ‘active participation,’ which argues that participation of communities can and must be about building a system of active participation rather than pacifying pastoral people into accepting conservation projects, for example. Perhaps most paramount within the interview findings is the inextricability of participation from power across varying scales, from household to community to national levels. One respondent noted that women’s participation will be successful when organizations run and managed by women see the same level of community, district, and national level authority to affect economic and social change as organizations run by men. This opinion supports established research that has shown that women’s inclusion within male dominated spaces—where women’s agency is often curtailed by gender differentiated decision-making power—does not automatically equate to gender equitable outcomes (Cornwall, 2003).

Interview data reveals that finding additional ways to elevate women’s voices and views will be paramount to achieving greater participation and goals of gender equality. Elevating women’s voices, for one respondent, was likened to bringing to the fore, or into the light, the role women already play behind the scenes in the community. This thought was echoed by another respondent, who shared that “the decisions of most men—they are from

women” (1-L). As Fernández-Giménez and colleagues (2022) found, synergies exist between women's roles as holders of tradition and change agents that “could serve as a leverage point for adaptive transformation.” According to my study, this leverage point can be accessed by NGOs and INGOs through relationship building and respect for local knowledge of pastoral women. By and large, methods described to hear pastoral women’s voices were informal, such as providing a cell number so that women could contact a staff member or spending time in a village to chat with women about family life. Consistent among respondents from INGOs and NGOs was that creating space for women to share their perspectives is most often carried out in private women’s meetings before community-wide village council meetings, which serves as an effective way for women to feel safe and comfortable sharing their ideas (Lawless, 2022). But as described by interview 13, providing women private space during a one-on-one interview allowed insight into one woman’s rangeland restoration knowledge that otherwise might have gone unknown. These findings suggest that a combination of private and group pathways could be beneficial in capturing women’s voices—particularly considering Goldman and colleagues’ (2021) argument that conservation practice must account for different ways of knowing and relating to the environment and different ways of communicating knowledge, such as storytelling.

Respondents’ framing of women’s participation did not strongly demonstrate the common ecological narrative in which women are depicted as innately connected to the environment, an assumption that has positioned women as responsible for, and natural saviors of, the environment (Lau et al., 2021, Leach, 2007). Several respondents situated women’s connectedness to their environment by describing women’s role as caretakers while men make lengthy migrations with livestock to locate pastures and water. Other respondents did emphasize that women are integral to natural resource decision-making due to the likelihood that they are more apt to follow bylaws and manage resources more sustainably,

which demonstrates a pragmatic approach to gender equality in which women are involved in projects on the basis of potential conservation outcomes. Yet overall, my findings highlight the potential of an orientation that moves away from pragmatism toward valuing gender equality more intrinsically (Lawless, 2022). This was demonstrated in responses with a focus on building women's movements, rather than inviting individual women to participate in existing projects, and an emphasis on a bigger purpose of conservation and development initiatives to change behavior and help achieve equality for Maasai women, rather than solely to protect the environment they depend on.

Still, there was little talk of intersectionality, which leads one to wonder how far integrated conservation and development practice on the ground is behind intersectional feminist thinking. Several respondents mentioned age disparity of women participants, while one respondent mentioned the difficulties of engaging with women with disability. My findings signal that intersectionality, while widely lauded in the literature as a key piece in the move toward an intrinsic approach to gender equality within integrated conservation and development (Apostolopoulou et al., 2021), has not yet been translated to project work on the ground. If organizations are just now placing women at the center of their work—and still too often relying on tokenistic, women-focused approaches, as one respondent pointed out—then they are likely not using sophisticated ways of considering age, class and other intersectionality that determine a woman's ability to participate. Increased engagement with race, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, and social class would invite future emphasis on intersectional characteristics that could help unleash an even deeper, more meaningful engagement with pastoral women. Here, a greater engagement with feminist political ecology and decolonial intersectional thinking could allow for the centering of those marginalized by gender, poverty and other axes of social and ecological difference (Galvin et al, 2018). Importantly, this intersectional engagement would (1) allay well-founded fears that continue

to plague integrated environment and development work about the ‘why’ of engaging pastoral women, and (2) allow integrated conservation and development practitioners in Northern Tanzania to act on their wishes to complicate the definition of women’s participation.

Culture clash

Results from this study support findings from James and colleagues (2021), which through a comprehensive literature review found that patriarchal, societal, and cultural norms affect and generally limit how women can engage in conservation and natural resource management. Indeed, Maasai women’s access to information and ability to respond to economic or land planning opportunities remains inhibited by a patriarchal family structure that requires representation by a father or husband and a society that does not value education for women (Kandusi & Waiganjo, 2015). One emergent piece of data from this study was the discomfort several INGO respondents felt about addressing gender equality in Maasai communities, as they did not wish to impose Western values where they are unwanted. This is well-founded concern, considering the flawed history of integrated conservation and development work (Goldman & Milliar, 2014; Noe & Kangalawe, 2015) and emphasis from feminist scholars that empowerment and equality cannot be done to or for women and is rather an internal process that must start within and be led by women (Listo, 2018). Furthermore, there exist varying philosophical, spiritual, and moral views about gender equality and women’s rights depending on context and culture. Yet practitioners of an integrated approach in northern Tanzania must be careful not to lean on feminist scholarship to the detriment of progress. Maasai women activists continue to express desire for greater control over their lives (Pastoral Women’s Council, 2020). Because Maasai women actively advocate for greater rights, it seems that concern of imposing Western culture in the context of gender equality is largely unwarranted. Instead, concern might be better placed when there

is lack of listening and co-designing of projects, as described by respondent 7, who described that organizations funded to carry out conservation or education work in northern Tanzania, “must first seek knowledge or understanding of communities they are going to work in” (7-L).

Throughout the data, patriarchal gender ideology and power relations that keep women stuck are routinely recognized, a nod to the importance of a feminist worldview in which women are not individual objects whose agency operates autonomously to their social environments, but embedded within dynamic social systems (Rao, 2017). Within the data, the challenge of cultural norms was most vivid when respondents discussed making leap from listening to women to implementing their knowledge, or the ways in which their voices show up in projects or in organizational values. In other words, listening to women is easier than implementing their knowledge in projects due to coming up against the wall of limiting social norms. In response to this challenge, two suggestions were put forward by respondents: (1) Relationship building with traditional leaders and other men in the community to avoid a feeling of ‘attack on culture’, and (2) Taking the lead of local people, particularly local women, when it comes to designing projects. For two respondents, this approach means avoiding offering incentives for participation in conservation projects, as the exclusion of monetary or material incentives from the picture leads to greater local ownership and greater sustainability. Furthermore, relationship building with women—hearing them and their ideas and incorporating those into project design—highlight the importance of conducting in-depth qualitative interviews with women and thus not underestimating women’s existing knowledge. One respondent suggested moving forward by not thinking about community engagement as something an outside NGO needs to bring, but “rather we should be waiting and empowering those communities, catalyzing the work that they’re already doing and waiting for them to invite us to their table,” (8-I). In the same breath, the respondent noted

that the donor environment is not set up for this type of engagement, leading to important questions of how often pastoral women's voices are driving projects now, and the ability of women's voices to drive environment and development projects moving forward.

The interview data also revealed continued shortcomings when it comes to the overall approach to women's involvement in the integrated environment and development agenda. Several respondents noted that organizations active in northern Tanzania continue to design tokenistic, one-off, women-focused initiatives as opposed to incorporating gender mainstreaming throughout their programming. This observation holds echoes of a 'women environment and development,' or WED, approach, which came under fire in the '90s for a focus almost exclusively on women's activities and a tendency to portray women as one homogeneous group (Leach, 2007). Thus, my findings reveal there is more work to be done to move integrated environment and development work in northern Tanzania away from outdated interpretations of gender inclusivity—and the shallow performance targets that accompany them—and toward a more radical, transformative gender equality agenda.

Potential for improved measurement of women's participation

My results suggest a problematic disconnect between meaningful women's participation and its measurement. Techniques to measure women's participation in integrated environment and development work has not kept up with gender equality discourse, or with the broader pace of change of the integrated conservation and environment agenda. Now, measurement is struggling to catch up with a discourse that has sped ahead, powered by both a local and global women's rights advocacy and gender mainstreaming movement within environment and development work. In short, discourse has evolved while technical capacity to deliver on lofty gender equality ideals and promises lags behind—mired, based on the interview data in this study, in outdated donor limitations and lack of resources.

Findings regarding the measurement of women’s participation in this study are in keeping with past studies, which have noted that social and cultural barriers to women’s full participation are complex and embedded, requiring more attention than quotas of an NGO as well as a longer-term perspective that is hard to grasp within time-limited donor funded projects (Flintan, 2011). Despite established literature that supports the idea that qualitative measures can better capture quality of participation (Karl, 1995), most organizations in northern Tanzania continue to rely on quantitative measures of participation—such as how many women were present at a meeting. Yet quantitative measurement does not inform an organization of whether participants benefit from their participation, or how meaningful the participation was. Drawing on Lawless and colleagues’ (2022) framework to understand how different social-ecological narratives implicate gender equality, my analysis reveals that external donor or project requirements to work on gender in northern Tanzania lead to approaches that more often ‘tinker’ with gender equality rather than ‘transform’ it (Lawless et al., 2022). In these cases, gender approaches tend to quantify women’s involvement by simply monitoring their physical inclusion in projects and meetings. “These approaches may be appealing as they are the easiest to achieve because they do not require significant alteration to plans for project implementation, or heavy adjusting of project goals” (Lawless et al., 2022, p. 12).

Perceptions versus reality of addressing gender issues has served to trip up implementing organizations working in the integrated environment and conservation arena. For example, one study focused on marine conservation found a mismatch between perceived versus actual capacity to work on gender, where practitioners ranked their organizations’ gender capacity as high despite evidence suggesting capacity was low (Mangubhai & Lawless, 2021). In contrast, several respondents in this study were explicit in expressing that the way they measure pastoral women’s involvement is lacking. In fact, nearly every

respondent noted that the current measurement of women's participation is not in line with their stated priorities. Organizations frequently measure how many women are included or represented (Johnson et al., 2018) in meetings, and while they do not assume that this measure is equal to gender equality or women's empowerment (Cornwall, 2003; Johnson et al., 2018), they stop here due to lack of resources and funding to carry out more in-depth monitoring and evaluation.

There is an urgent need to determine how to measure beyond the number of women at a meeting, a practice that nearly every respondent noted does not match their given definition of meaningful participation. Interviewee 8 commented on the blind spots and limitations of relying on quantitative data to understand women's participation, yet "so many evaluations also don't have the time or the resources to look into the qualitative impacts of women and leadership" (8-I). Several calls to action were shared, including the measurement of high-level impact indicators, such as levels of confidence and women's feelings of financial security and financial independence, and women's desire to feel like they have bodily autonomy.

Overall, more work must be done to reconcile women's participation with broader conservation goals and outcomes. There is also more to be understood about how the ethos and background of an organization impacts the way change is understood and measured—and at what scale. This need came across clearly when one interviewee hinted at being concerned that too much of a tip toward gender equality might result in women being able to buy or raise more goats, which would in turn damage the rangeland environment. This observation raises the question of whether pastoral women's participation can be constructed and measured by conservation organizations alone; it invites the need for even greater collaboration among organizations operating in northern Tanzania across various fields in order to express gender equality goals and design fresh indicators of success. While this study

did little to compare the social-ecological narratives that drive organizations' approach to gender equality, one idea moving forward would be to fully apply Lawless and colleagues' (2022) 'Tinker, Tailor, Transform' gender assessment typology in the region to better understand why gender equality actions are undertaken and help organizations orient to a more intrinsic approach to these goals.

Variations in understanding of decolonization

Within my findings, several veiled comments about certain organizations with 'big' power or personal agendas allude to a sense of tiptoeing around the concept of decolonization. Yet so much of the discussion of women's participation revolves round power—and not just the power of pastoral women, but also the power of the organizations tasked with protecting Tanzania's natural resources and contributing to its development. The results of this study show that decolonization is understood differently by staff of local and international organizations, as well as among individuals. One common thread was the number of interviewees, employed by both local and international organizations, who were uncomfortable saying the word decolonization, let alone discussing it. This leads to questions such as: How free do staff feel to talk about these topics? How many safe spaces exist to have conversations about decolonization in regular voices rather than whispers?

Although shared ideas have emerged, there exists no solid, shared decolonization framework among organizations carrying out integrated conservation and environment work in northern Tanzania. One activist suggests that a key act of decolonization is to go beyond respecting the observations of people living in the area and to design a system to incorporate those observations into models (Gies, 2022). As demonstrated when discussing the difficulty of moving from hearing women's voices to implementing their ideas, this still seems to be where things get stuck in Tanzania's rangelands. Goldman (2011, para. 12) similarly argues that participation of communities can and must be about building a system of active

participation—the same type of participation described by study participants as ideal. Still, when speaking of decolonization, few INGO respondents in this study went beyond naming the importance of elevating the voices of local peoples, and most stopped at describing tangible actions such as designing an exit strategy, or the handover of projects from international to local staff. Yet both feminist and decolonial research calls for reflection on who produces knowledge and how such knowledge is used and shared (Lugones, 2010; Ravera et al., 2016). In fact, Mabele and colleagues (2021, para. 21) describe that engaging in decolonial conservation requires a “radical shift in focus of conservation efforts towards the myriad of vibrant forms of engaging with and knowing the world around us.” Considering that the use of Indigenous and local Knowledge and practices on rangeland biodiversity conservation in Tanzania has been constrained by scientific bias, loss of local expertise, poverty, and conflicts (Selemani, 2020), my study suggests the need for a greater stocktaking of how pastoral women’s voices show up in environment and development work, what social and political dynamics continue to limit their participation, and exactly who holds the power in the implementation of the integrated work being carried out. Only with this understanding can organizations move forward to define decolonization and establish a framework for the shape it can and should take in northern Tanzania.

One important finding to emerge from this study are the parallels between meaningful participation of pastoral women and actions to decolonize environment and development work. The way international organizations engage pastoral women in environment and development work can move the region toward greater decolonization goals by way of elevating women’s voices and implementing projects with goals to support transformative societal change—where organizations are ‘invited to the table’ by local voices rather than driving the agenda. Decolonizing conservation requires deep interrogation of the underlying philosophies that drive and shape conservation and addressing the practical difficulties of

including local perspectives due to power relations. Thus, decolonizing conservation would entail a larger shift in world view by recognizing underlying perspectives that advocate for Western science and knowledge as more well-suited or legitimate to decision-making. Furthermore, the interview data in this study signals that there might be need for a shift in the way organizations consider staff and expertise required to carry out integrated social-ecological work. It seems there may be a preoccupation with hiring ‘local’ staff, an undeniable necessity for local voices to lead organizational practices. But the makeup of the organization may also need to consist of environmental social science consultants, for example, in order to firmly embed decolonial feminist theory into all organizational practices, including monitoring and evaluation. As discussed above, organizations in northern Tanzania have done much to define the future of pastoral women’s meaningful participation but could benefit from greater conversation and coordination to roll out new ways of designing and measuring women’s participation and better understanding how this practice dovetails with decolonization. Decolonial feminist theory values all knowledge and lived experiences as equal and could bring what Manning (2021, para. 1) describes as “a new geopolitics of knowledge” to northern Tanzania’s integrated environment and development landscape. There remains a need to embrace the messiness that this transition would entail, rather than sticking to existing paper sheets where numbers of participants can be recorded and scanned over to donors, in which homogenous groups of women remain stuck as ‘beneficiaries.’

Additionally, and somewhat unexpectedly, this study sheds light on the importance of drawing distinctions between international and local NGOs. While it is difficult to place organizations—comprised of diverse staff members—into a specific box, the findings of this study lend to the argument that it is still helpful to distinguish between the two to better understand the differences between a local and internationally driven integrated environment and development agenda. As respondent 9 articulated: “Now to know maybe how many

aspects are local, how many aspects are foreign, who knows which ones are outweighing the other?” (9-1). But there is an argument to be made for continuing to ask whose influence outweighs the other, particularly considering major donor the U.S. Agency for International Development’s recent ‘localization’ push, an attempt to increase funding for ‘local’ organizations—though the definition of local continues to be hashed out (Ainsworth, 2021). In this sense, one could argue it is more important than ever to attempt to define who or what is local and who or what is not.

Conclusion

The results of this research validate the importance of improving our understanding of how pastoral women’s participation is understood and practiced in northern Tanzania’s rangelands. Such an understanding not only contributes to more successful gender equality and gender mainstreaming efforts, but also to furthering a decolonization agenda in the region. My analysis revealed key contradictions in definitions of pastoral women that reflects (1) Pastoral women’s complex and multi-layered lives and (2) the power international donors maintain over pastoral women’s discursive and material identities. Strong recognition of patriarchal gender ideology and power relations that keep women stuck, meanwhile, signals that feminist theory has found its way into integrated environment and development work in the region. A shared definition of ‘meaningful’ participation also contributes toward intrinsic gender equality goals, rather than gender equality as a means to an end. Yet the data simultaneously revealed a reliance on shallow performance targets to measure women’s participation and an aversion to the deep interrogation of underlying philosophies that decolonization would require. This research advances integrated social-ecological research in a pastoral landscape by questioning organizational patterns that do or do not support the centering of women pastoralists’ voices and knowledge as they pertain to conservation and development goals.

In describing how pastoral women are named and involved in integrated conservation and development projects in northern Tanzania, study respondents have aided in pointing out their own shortcomings and wishes for the future of meaningful women's participation, envisioning a way forward for the role of pastoral women in natural resource conservation and development initiatives. Though a single definition of pastoral women did not emerge, a shared understanding of their meaningful participation—when pastoral women's voices are equally heard and respected at household, community, national, and global scales—did materialize. Through their responses, subjects of this study have demonstrated the vast interconnectedness of engaging in integrated social-ecological work in Tanzania's northern rangelands. The complex web that constitutes integrated work is communicated in this study as respondents detail harmful social norms that limit women's involvement in the same breath as they describe women's knowledge of rangeland restoration. It becomes clear that if engaging with pastoral women is a priority, social and political issues must be as integral within project work as rangeland monitoring, restoration, and livelihood activities. Actions on the road toward this version of integrated work might entail confronting the limiting way that pastoral women are referred to on an international stage and collaborating to design systems of measurement that suit today's feminist political ecological-backed approach to meaningful participation. Additionally, the way international organizations engage pastoral women in environment and development work can move the region toward greater decolonization goals by way of elevating women's voices and implementing projects with goals to support transformative societal change, where organizations are 'invited to the table' by local voices rather than driving the agenda.

Above all, actors in northern Tanzania should not shy away from the messiness and complexity that will inevitably follow the above recommendations. Additional voices will always complicate work and decision making, yet this complication is the mark of progress.

My findings do not support getting stuck in actions of finger pointing or comparing, but rather to continue to look to multiple ways of knowing and being. Relatedly, this study supports the idea that it remains important to distinguish local from international knowledge because scientific modernity, if we are not careful, can so often trump women's voices as storytellers and knowers of traditional knowledge. Several respondents in this study noted the importance of international organizations to 'play their part' on an international stage when it comes to respecting and advocating for pastoral women's health and rights. It seems that pastoral women already play their part—as tradition keepers, as educators, as both leaders and rule followers, and as agents of transformation pushing social norm boundaries—in an integrated environment and development landscape in northern Tanzania. Organizations operating in Northern Tanzania have embraced the complexity of the role of the pastoral woman but have not yet reconciled this complexity with the ways they engage women across social categories or measure change created by women's participation in integrated social-ecological projects. Thus, important questions remain, including: What is the balance between pastoral women as change agents and tradition keepers? And how can international organizations find the balance and operate within it in a way that honors all the ways pastoral women show up in their societies?

CHAPTER V:

SYNTHESIS & CONCLUSION

Summary of findings

To prioritize gender mainstreaming and gender equality, conservation and development organizations have been tasked with placing historically marginalized women at the center of their work. Yet, as James and colleagues (2021, para. 1) recently posited, there remains “a need to examine how women can be meaningfully engaged in conservation.” This study offers a closer look at both the identities and participation of northern Tanzania’s pastoral women—as framed by both local and international implementing organizations—in order to how women pastoralists are engaged as actors within northern Tanzania’s integrated environment and development landscape.

This study set out to examine 1). How the environment and development agenda in northern Tanzania frames and influences the identities of pastoral women and 2). How the environment and development agenda frames and influences the involvement of pastoral women. In Chapter III, I interrupted dominant global narratives to explore local discourse that tells a multifaceted story about pastoral women and their environment. In Chapter IV, I turned to semi-structured, in-depth interviews to gain a greater understanding of the ways in which organizations invite pastoral women’s voices and knowledge to influence their environment and development work in northern Tanzania’s rangelands. Jointly, data from this study demonstrates a consistent push and pull between tradition and transformation, ultimately inviting actors to break away from limiting world views to design integrated social-ecological projects that honor today’s complex pastoral women. Below, I synthesize results in order to offer several recommendations on the way forward for a more gender-responsive, inclusive conservation and development agenda in northern Tanzania. Specifically, I offer three new frames of work upon which future interventions can be built:

1. Challenging perceptions of today's 'traditional' or 'modern' pastoral woman

Results from this study reveal pastoral women as holders of knowledge, whose leadership potential remains stunted by limiting societal norms and an enduring global discourse. Chapter III showed that international discourse has long constructed the identity of pastoral women as an underutilized population with the potential to deliver on environmental goals—or as a smart economic investment (Bloom et al., 2017). Interview data, meanwhile, revealed that pastoral women's discursive identities are often still determined by 'development jargon' and the whims of international donors. But results also revealed a path to interrupt simplified mainstream narratives to bring a new geopolitics of knowledge and knowing from the perspective of local organizations. Critical discourse analysis of local NGO website material revealed three frames that resist global constructions of the oppressed pastoral woman, African savanna as the playground of elites, and the objectification or dismissal of traditional culture and knowledge. Altogether, these resistance strategies are aimed at effecting social emancipation and transformation, contributing to an overall frame in which pastoral women's identities or pathways to land rights and sustainable land use cannot be led or defined by anyone but themselves. The complex social and political positions of pastoral women also come into view in chapter IV when interview respondents put forward more than six terms used to describe pastoral women in the context of integrated environment and development work.

An important thread throughout both chapters is the tug-of-war between tradition and transformation, which has limited the role of pastoral women in the same way that integrated social-ecological work has been limited by a 'people versus nature' dichotomy. Results of this study encourage additional space for the 'in between,' or for women pastoralists as the "invisible thread that stitches new knowledge to old" (Fernández-Giménez, 2022, p 10). Pastoral women are not at odds with modernity and should not be pitted against 'modern'

scientific practices. In fact, several examples throughout the study point to women's 'traditional' knowledge upon which 'modern' practices are built. And indeed, Maasai women activists are finding ways to transform their culture both within and outside of existing cultural bounds. It is this 'in between' space, this space of complexity, in which pastoral women must be engaged within the environment and development landscape. My study results suggest that empirical research on the integrated environment and development approach must be further complemented by critical feminist theorizing of the discursive constructions and categories that shape our knowledge of pastoral women and culture today. This study has shown the limits of viewing pastoral women through internationally driven narratives alone, as well as the shortcomings of trying to squeeze pastoral identities into externally defined, outdated boxes. Specifically for organizations to work toward greater justice for and with pastoral women, they must be at the ready not solely with 'new' conservation interventions, but with a willingness to look through new frames replete with locally defined, sometimes messy, pathways toward sustainability and equity.

2. Considering both 'why' & 'how' of pastoral women's participation

A clear and shared definition of 'meaningful' women's participation emerged from this study, as did the idea that women's participation is vital to the success of integrated projects. Yet the 'why' and 'how' of implementing and measuring women's participation remained murkier. In Chapter IV, several respondents noted that organizations active in northern Tanzania continue to design tokenistic, women-focused initiatives as opposed to incorporating gender mainstreaming throughout their programming; others noted that measurement of women's participation and the change it brings has failed to keep up with evolving gender equality ideals and promises. These findings suggest that an intrinsic approach to gender equality—in which gender equality is oriented toward justice and fairness as worthy outcomes (Lawless et al., 2022), continues to evade practitioners of integrated

environment and development in the region. This is a prognosis that has haunted integrated social-ecological work since its inception (Igoe, 2007; Lewis & Carter, 1993). Yet my research provides glimpses of what a more intrinsic approach to gender equality could look like in northern Tanzania's rangelands. For example, implementing organizations can look to local discourse, divorced from a neoliberal logic of women as instruments for external political or economic agendas (Dogra, 2011), to allow the possibility for women to be valued for their agency or for making meaningful contributions to rural households and village or district policy through their leadership and work. Other glimmers of a deeper, justice-oriented approach emerge when we look at interview data that details building women's movements rather than overemphasizing individual women, in which respondents explain the importance of developing personal relationships with village elders, individual women, and women's groups. In fact, behavior change in patriarchal Maasai communities was named by almost every respondent as a goal or benefit of women's participation in environment and development work, suggesting that an intrinsic approach to gender equality is in the works, if not yet fully operationalized in the region.

Results from this study reveal that organizations operating in Northern Tanzania have embraced the complexity of the role of the pastoral woman but have yet to reconcile this truth with their strategies to engage women across social categories or measure change created by women's participation in integrated social-ecological projects. There is an urgent need to determine how to measure beyond the number of women at a meeting, a practice that nearly every respondent noted does not match their given definition of meaningful participation. Several calls to action were shared, including the measurement of high-level impact indicators, such as levels of confidence and women's feelings of financial security and financial independence, and women's desire to feel like they have bodily autonomy. Achieving this level of robust monitoring and evaluation will require that gender expertise is

not merely an organizational add-on; environmental social scientists will need to be core staff members in the future of integrated environment and development work in order to deeply consider intersectionality including race, ethnicity, age, religion, poverty and disability. In heeding feminist and decolonial researchers' calls for reflection on who produces knowledge and how such knowledge is used and shared, (Lugones, 2008; Ravera, 2021), we find that pastoral women too often show up discursively, while their voices do not find a clear path to integrated project implementation. As Fernández-Giménez and colleagues (2022) found, synergies exist between women's roles as holders of tradition and change agents that "could serve as a leverage point for adaptive transformation." According to my study, this leverage point can be accessed by NGOs and INGOs through relationship building and creating thoughtful pipelines for local knowledge of pastoral women to make it from conversation to implementation.

It is vital that we understand how INGOs can move from prioritizing pastoral women's physical participation, to centering local women's voices and knowledge by encouraging dialogue across knowledge expressions and power relations. To do this, implementing organizations will need to engage in self-reflexive processes to ask themselves how and why they are engaging pastoral women, which can perhaps lead to a reorienting toward more intrinsic visions of gender equality. This reflection could also lead to the measurement and assessment of progress against newly created indicators of impact that are more fit for the purpose of achieving greater gender equality.

3. Reimagining what it looks like for local and international actors to 'play their part' in northern Tanzania

Results from this study show that there exists no solid, shared decolonization framework among organizations carrying out integrated conservation and environment work in northern Tanzania. Instead, what has emerged is a sense that both local and international organizations can play their part to empower local communities. In chapter III, analyzed local

discourse challenged the superiority of Western intervention over local-led programs, constructing a reality in which local and international organizations can and must work together under terms guided by local actors. Relatedly, this study supports the idea that it remains important to distinguish local from international knowledge because scientific modernity, if we are not careful, can so often trump women's voices as storytellers and knowers of traditional knowledge. Several respondents in this study noted the importance of international organizations 'playing their part' on an international stage when it comes to respecting and advocating for pastoral women's health and rights, as well as on a local level by providing necessary technical expertise. Researchers and practitioners argue that community conservation needs to include a deeper appreciation of different ways of knowing and relating to natural resources and wildlife within and across communities, particularly along gendered lines. One step in this direction is for international organizations to embrace the messiness of making space to have conversations about decolonization that go beyond surface level exit or hiring strategies. As became clear from this study, individuals in northern Tanzania have varying perceptions of power and power struggles—colonial and otherwise—in the region. Conversations to clarify these opinions could lead more robust, meaningful relationships among organizations operating in the area.

Mabele and colleagues (2021, para. 21) describe that engaging in decolonial conservation requires a “radical shift in focus of conservation efforts towards the myriad of vibrant forms of engaging with and knowing the world around us.” Therefore, a key act of decolonization is to go beyond respecting the observations of people living in a certain area and to design a system to incorporate those observations into models (Gies, 2022).

Considering that the use of Indigenous and Local Knowledge and practices on rangeland biodiversity conservation in Tanzania has been constrained by scientific bias, loss of local expertise, poverty, and conflicts (Selemani, 2020), my study suggests the need for a greater

stocktaking of how pastoral women's voices show up in environment and development work, what social and political dynamics continue to limit their participation, and exactly who holds the power in the implementation of the integrated work being carried out. The way international organizations engage pastoral women in environment and development work can move the region toward greater decolonization goals by way of elevating women's voices and implementing projects with goals to support transformative societal change. Both greater understanding of pastoral women and decolonization requires deep interrogation of the underlying philosophies that drive and shape conservation and addressing the practical difficulties of including local perspectives due to power relations. Thus, decolonizing conservation would entail a larger shift in world view by recognizing underlying perspectives that advocate for Western science and knowledge as more well-suited or legitimate to decision-making. Only with this understanding can organizations move forward to define decolonization and establish new models for the shape decolonization can and should take in northern Tanzania.

In the same way that pastoral women have been embraced for the complexity of their social and political locations, it seems an integrated conservation and development agenda that embraces multiple world views, or frames, will be more fit to meet the needs of today's social-ecological systems. Results from both chapters of the study suggest the need for greater complication of seemingly obvious dichotomies such as tradition or transformation, or local or international. For example, by recognizing land as both a place of conflict *and* the place of women's empowerment, local NGO discourse seats ownership and care of ecological systems at the center of societal change, breaking down silos between conservation, health, and education and emphasizing a holistic environment and development approach that has proved so elusive in practice for international organizations (McShane & Wells, 2004). Embracing such messiness may allow organizations to find the sweet spot between tradition

and transformation in which conversations about identity, gender equality, and decolonization may take place.

Jointly, both discourse analysis and interview data in this study have raised the question of whether it is possible to bring forward only the positive aspects of Maasai culture while leaving other, problematic patriarchal aspects behind. The same query could be applied to integrated social-ecological interventions: Is it possible to bring forward only the positive aspects of integrated conservation and development, while leaving Western-dominant ideals and oversimplified gender assumptions or measurements behind? It is in these moments of tension and reconciling between old ways and new that we can recognize what is needed now. Integrated environment and development actors need conversation, mindfulness, connection, and a commitment to confront social and political messiness—both historical and contemporary. This engagement could help unstick integrated environment and from its reputation of uneven treatment of environmental and social issues and place it on a path toward an agenda that can achieve environmental impact as well as deep social change.

Theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions

This study offers theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions. In theoretical terms, this research has created a decolonial feminist-powered critical discourse framing method designed to detect evidence relevant to how pastoral women are represented, how their identities are shaped, and how their involvement in environmental issues is articulated. A focus on local organizations within my critical discourse analysis has met the call from practitioners of the method, who note that discourse analysis “often chooses the perspective of those who suffer, and critically analyzes the language use of those in power” (Wodak, 2001, p. 10). This is not surprising considering the emancipatory agenda of critical discourse analysis, but this practice can serve to polarize subjects of study into simplified categories—namely, those people or systems who wield power over others and those who

experience the consequences of that power. To create this dichotomy within my study would have served to assume that discourse constituted by INGOs is automatically dominant or more powerful, when in fact local NGOs such as PWC, MWEDO, and UCRT are powerful forces in northern Tanzania in shaping the identities of pastoral women, their relationship to the environment, and their position in the larger world of global development and environment work. northern Tanzania. In my analysis, I show how discourse found across organizational texts and images offer at least three frames with which to understand women, conservation, and gender-environment linkages in northern Tanzania. This framing approach is a novel method within critical discourse analysis, inspired by Kimberley Crenshaw's (2016) emphasis that additional frames are required that allow us to see how social issues impact all members of a targeted group.

Methodologically, I combined critical discourse analysis with interviews with leaders and visionaries in the environment and development arena. By undertaking this unusual and creative approach, I was able to examine and analyze both discursive and material participation of women pastoralists within the broader environment and development agenda. Additionally, I developed connections to northern Tanzania's rangelands by living in Arusha, Tanzania for 6 months, learning the Kiswahili language, and interning with a conservation organization, all of which allowed me to more successfully contextualize and situate the data and analysis in this study.

Empirically, there has been little research on pastoral women as they relate to the integrated environment and development agenda (Fernández-Giménez et al., 2022; Kipuri & Ridgewell, 2008); this study advances this body of work as well as amplifies the voices of pastoral women and those who work closely with them. My study has delved deep into one geographical area to understand how pastoral women are understood and how meaningful participation is framed within both local and international implementing organizations. I

recognize that this study considers only northern Tanzania's rangelands, but the learnings from this research can be applied elsewhere, particularly in other regions where integrated social-ecological projects depend upon or desire the participation of populations of pastoral women. Additionally, this research has revealed the urgent need for updated indicators and measurement tools to measure the meaningful participation of pastoral women within integrated social-ecological projects.

Research limitations and reflections

As with all research, there are limitations to this research project. First, it is important to consider my positionality as a researcher, and how my inherent biases have unintentionally influenced my thesis project and findings. Unique positionalities affect all researchers and are at the core of how they experience the world, approach their research, and interpret results. Because this was a cross-cultural study, it is even more crucial to be cognizant of my biases and limitations in understanding the complexities of the history, politics, cultures, and communities in northern Tanzania. I know there are deep and longstanding knowledge bases to which I am not privy, and although I have done immense work to educate myself, I acknowledge inevitable blind spots. My status as an outsider must be considered with particular importance in Chapter III, in which I employ critical discourse analysis. By examining discourses constituted by local organizations as they relate to pastoral women and gender-nature linkages, I selected the elements I found relevant to interpreting the data. Later, another researcher could choose other factors as the most relevant and thus construct a distinct analysis.

The remote nature in which I began this study also poses a limitation. I conducted my first 12 interviews remotely due to COVID-19 restrictions. This meant that I was not able to meet face to face or establish relationships with my interviewees, nor was I able to read body language during remote interviews. In the end, I'm sure this impacted the quality of my

interviews, as anyone who is face to face and comfortable with their interviewer is more likely to feel relaxed enough to delve deeper in their responses. I would also like to acknowledge the methodological limitations to conducting qualitative semi-structured interview research. Semi-structured interviews allowed for in-depth exploration of my research topics, but also limited the sample size of participants. This study sampled a set of conservation and development staff and leaders who are employed by organizations operating in northern Tanzania. But chain-referral sampling is a form of nonprobability sampling, which can result in lower representativeness of the sample. Thus, it may not be possible to extrapolate interview results and implications to all those involved with, and affected by, integrated environment and development in northern Tanzania.

Additionally, I made the decision to identify organizations within my interview data based on the dichotomy of ‘international’ or ‘local’ —a distinction I found difficult in practice, considering that many ‘international’ organizations rely on ‘local staff.’ At the same time, it seems irresponsible not to pay attention to whether an organization was founded locally or is an affiliate of an international organization with a presence in other countries, particularly considering current debates about localization within global development (Ainsworth, 2021). I fear I may never have the answer as to whether this distinction was a valuable piece of my research or whether it is an example of me trying to fit organizations into outdated boxes. My reasoning to distinguish organizations, rather than people, as international versus local was due to my opinion that determining whether each individual person was local or international seemed counterproductive (ie I could end up labeling someone born in Tanzania who has spent most of their career abroad as a ‘local’ and someone from a different country who has called Tanzania home for 20 years ‘international’). I wonder if perhaps I fell into the same trap trying to distinguish organizations in this way regardless of my best efforts. Still, my study aimed to work from

the view that differences in narratives of implementing organizations will affect how they address gender equality and measure and perceive successes. Using this basis was helpful when analyzing my interview data, and I felt as if there were some distinguishing points that came out of doing so. In the future, I think perhaps placing implementing organization on a ‘social-ecological spectrum,’ as was done in Lawless and colleagues’ (2022) research, would be a deeper and more reflective way to go about it.

Recommendations and future research

Within the scope of this study, multiple recommendations have emerged for designing integrated environment and development projects that more successfully recognize identities of pastoral women and engage their knowledge. Below, I collate several recommendations that would help organizations actualize new frames of work that are more responsive to local perspectives on pathways toward greater sustainability and equity:

1. **Engage in deeper organizational self-reflection.** Organizations must decide the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of gender equality efforts and define what meaningful participation looks like for their organization in order to design models to achieve these goals. A good starting place could be the definition that has already emerged from this study: Pastoral women’s meaningful participation is when women’s voices are equally heard and respected at household, community, national, and global scales. Staff might consider employing Lawless and colleagues’ (2022) ‘Tinker, Tailor, or Transform’ typology to better understand what drives their gender equality efforts and what level of societal change they are currently working toward. This reflection may also extend to donor limitations and lead to dialogue between implementing organizations and donors about needs and about the ways in which pastoral women are defined.
2. **Measure what matters.** Representatives from both local and international organizations in Northern Tanzania could gather to discuss and design new theories of change and key indicators that would accurately measure the social and environmental change they are trying to achieve. This could lead to conversations with donors over the mismatch of current goals and the shallow physical participation measurements currently used to gauge them. Employing gender specialists and environmental social scientists—and considering them a core part of the team—could also serve to strengthen gender equality efforts, including to deepen intersectional thinking about interplay among various dimensions of social relationship and discursive identity formation.
3. **Open lines of communication about power and decolonization.** Decolonization should be discussed in full voices rather than whispers. To identify the part every

environment and development organization can and should be playing—including at the local level and on an international stage—will require a larger shift in world view by recognizing underlying perspectives that advocate for Western science and knowledge as more well-suited or legitimate to decision-making. Practicing other ways of knowing emerged from this study as a key component of both decolonization and of integrating women’s voices into project implementation. Rather than inviting women to project meetings, organizational staff might consider whether they can be invited to a locally organized women’s meeting. A combination of private and group pathways could be beneficial in capturing women’s voices, particularly storytelling.

The importance of integrating gender considerations into conservation work is widely acknowledged. This study sought greater insight into both discursive and participatory practices in northern Tanzania to help conservation and development organizations embrace a diversity of gender knowledges and feminist traditions. This research is limited in scope and the results drawn from the data would benefit from more place-based assessments of gender equality efforts across varying landscapes where an integrated social-ecological agenda is on the docket. The following are several other avenues future research could take to continue building on knowledge of integrated social-ecological work and pastoral women’s identities and participation.

- Broad qualitative or quantitative (survey) study on what constitutes ‘meaningful’ participation for women in integrated environment & development work, to be compared across regions. This study would benefit from varied perspectives, including from pastoral women and men as well as staff, leaders, and visionaries active in the integrated environment and development space. This line of research would also benefit from place-based case studies of integrated projects driven by pastoral women or pastoral women’s groups and supported by local or international organizations, or both.
- Critical discourse analysis of international conservation and development organizational material in several key regions where this work is undertaken (such as sub-Saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asia) in order to gain fuller understanding of how international organizations portray pastoral women’s identities today.
- Robust study of current indicators and measurement tools used to measure success of gender equality efforts within integrated social-ecological projects. Where are the gaps, and pieces from which existing frameworks can be applied to this measurement?

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APPENDIX A: Discourse analysis sample

Discourse sample arranged alphabetically by organization. Among the works by the same organization, the sample is arranged by date. If no date, the order is alphabetical by first letter of webpage title. One work with a named author can be found alphabetically under UCRT.

Maasai Women Development Organization

- A. MWEDO. *About Mwedo*. (n.d.). <https://maasaiwomentanzania.com/about-mwedo/>
- B. MWEDO. *Community health care*. (n.d.). <https://maasaiwomentanzania.com/mwedo-health-centre/>
- C. MWEDO. *Education access program for pastoralist girls and women*. (n.d.). <https://reveccs.com/mwedo/education-access-program/>
- D. MWEDO. *Livelihoods and economic empowerment program*. (n.d.). <https://reveccs.com/mwedo/livelihoods-and-economic-empowerment-program/>
- E. MWEDO. *Our story*. (n.d.). <https://maasaiwomentanzania.com/>

Pastoral Women's Council

- F. Pastoral Women's Council. (4 June, 2017). *Meet Naomi Olodo – mother; VICOBA member; entrepreneur*. <http://www.pastoralwomenscouncil.org/stories/meet-naomi-olodo-mother-vicoba-member-entrepreneur>
- G. Pastoral Women's Council. (2018). *Annual Report 2018*. http://www.pastoralwomenscouncil.org/uploads/1/0/7/1/10710001/pwc_annualreport_2018_3.01.pdf
- H. Pastoral Women's Council. (2020). *Annual Report 2020*. http://www.pastoralwomenscouncil.org/uploads/1/0/7/1/10710001/final_annual_report_2020_pages_2_.pdf
- I. Pastoral Women's Council. *About PWC*. (n.d.) <http://www.pastoralwomenscouncil.org/about.html>
- J. Pastoral Women's Council. (n.d.). *PWC's Economic Empowerment Programme*. <http://www.pastoralwomenscouncil.org/economic.html>
- K. Pastoral Women's Council. (n.d.). *Empowerment for Tanzania's Maasai*. <http://www.pastoralwomenscouncil.org/>
- L. Pastoral Women's Council. *Our stories*. (n.d.). <http://www.pastoralwomenscouncil.org/stories>
- M. Pastoral Women's Council. (nd.). *PWC's Rights & Leadership Programme*. <http://www.pastoralwomenscouncil.org/rights.html>

Ujamaa Community Resource Team

- N. Nelson, F. & Sinandei, M. (30 March, 2018). Building stronger grassroots organizations that can take community land rights to scale. *Land Portal*. <https://landportal.org/blog-post/2018/03/building-stronger-grassroots-organizations-can-take-community-land-rights-scale>
- O. Ujamaa Community Resource Team. (2018). *UCRT 2018 annual report*. https://www.ujamaa-crt.or.tz/uploads/1/2/5/7/12575135/ucrt_annual_report_2018.pdf
- P. Ujamaa Community Resource Team. (2019). *UCRT 2019 annual report*. http://www.ujamaa-crt.or.tz/uploads/1/2/5/7/12575135/ucrt_2019_annual_report_fv_1_.pdf
- Q. Ujamaa Community Resource Team. (2020). *UCRT 2020 annual report*. https://www.ujamaa-crt.or.tz/uploads/1/2/5/7/12575135/2020_annual_report_2_compressed.pdf
- R. Ujamaa Community Resource Team. (n.d.). *Bringing indigenous rights to the high court of Tanzania*. <https://www.ujamaa-crt.or.tz/bringing-indigenous-rights-to-the-high-court-of-tanzania.html>
- S. Ujamaa Community Resource Team. (n.d.). *Meet 'Mama Nyuki' – The new women's honey collective in Hanang*. <https://www.ujamaa-crt.or.tz/meet-mama-nyuki.html>
- T. Ujamaa Community Resource Team. (n.d.). *News*. <https://www.ujamaa-crt.or.tz/news.html>
- U. Ujamaa Community Resource Team. (n.d.). *Our thematic programmes*. <https://www.ujamaa-crt.or.tz/overview.html>
- V. Ujamaa Community Resource Team. (n.d.). *Starting from scratch: Oldonyo Village – Monduli*. <https://www.ujamaa-crt.or.tz/starting-from-scratch-oldonyo-village-monduli.html>
- W. Ujamaa Community Resource Team. (n.d.) *Who we are*. <https://www.ujamaa-crt.or.tz/>

APPENDIX B: Semi-structured interview guide

VERBAL CONSENT SCRIPT (via Zoom or other agreed upon virtual platform)

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me and participate in this interview. I am trying to learn more about how both local and international organizations invite pastoral women's voices and values to shape conservation and development projects in Tanzania.

You have been invited to participate due to your experience working on conservation and gender projects in Tanzania/in the East African region. I look forward to hearing your perspectives based on your own work and experiences. Our interview will be guided by several open-ended questions to prompt topics, but we don't have to strictly stick with those questions if you'd like to mention something else.

Your name will not appear in any final results or publications and your information collected as part of the research, even if identifiers have been removed, will not be used or distributed for future studies. Does that sound OK to you, and do you have any other questions before we begin the interview?

I would like to record this interview so that I may transcribe it later on, if that is OK with you? This ensures that your views are accurately recorded and I can focus on our conversation right now. The audio recordings will be destroyed following transcription.

Is that OK? IF YES, START RECORDING.

IF NO, SAY: That is fine, I will just have to take notes as we go along.

INTERVIEW GUIDE:

Interview questions: Project staff

Background: Interviewee role and organization

1. Can you tell me about yourself and what you do?
 - How many years have you worked for X organization?
 - What is your role there?
 - In which city and country are you based?
2. Can you briefly describe the main mission or focus of your organization?
3. What are the main ways your organization engages with pastoral women and environmental issues?
4. Who are the pastoral populations you work with?

Women's current participation

5. Is there specific terminology you use to describe pastoral women you work with?
 - (ie beneficiary, change agent, partner, etc)
 - What do you think about that terminology?

6. What do you think of when you hear “women’s participation?” /What does participation mean to you?
7. How would you describe your organization’s goals when it comes to pastoral women’s participation?
 - i. Do you have a strategy to meet these goals? ie, gender balance or empowerment?
8. Can you provide any examples of how pastoral women have helped shape project design or the design of your work?
 - a. ie can their voice be seen in your strategic plan?
9. What do you think about the way your organization measures women’s (and men’s) participation?
 - i. ie counting number of women present at meetings, qualitative interviews, outcomes?
10. What do you think might be reasons behind women’s lack of participation in your organization’s projects or work?
 - What do you do if you see that women are not participating?
11. How do you ensure pastoral women feel comfortable participating in your projects and communicating with your organization?
12. What are your thoughts on how pastoral women’s participation (or lack thereof) impacts project success?

Women’s future participation

13. How do you feel overall about the way your organization engages pastoral women?
 - Areas for improvement?
14. Has pastoral women’s involvement with your organization’s work changed in the past five years?
 - If yes, in what ways? Is there a particular movement, policy, or something else you attribute this change to?
 - If no, does it need to? How?
15. To what extent does your organization help facilitate women’s participation in national, regional, or global dialogue on pastoralism or conservation?

Decolonization

(Background if needed: There is a lot of talk and work being done right now to decolonize development, which demands re-framing of development and conservation efforts away from Western-only perspectives)

16. Do you think the way development and conservation organizations involve pastoral women in their work in Tanzania can help meet greater goals of decolonization?
 - a. If so, how?

17. What would a movement to decolonize integrated conservation and development look like?

Wrap-up questions

18. Is there anything else you want to share related to pastoral women's participation in your organization or projects?
19. Are there any other people or organizations you think I should speak with on this topic?

Wrap up

20. Do you have any questions for me?
 21. Thank you for your time. I really value your participation and your input is very important to this project. If I need any clarification or if I have an extra question, may I follow up with you?
 22. Have a great rest of your day.
-

Interview questions: Regional/international experts not focused on specific project

Background: Interviewee role and organization

1. Can you tell me about yourself and what you do?
 - How many years have you worked for X organization?
 - What is your role there?
 - In which city and country are you based?
 - Where have you worked/what pastoral populations in Tanzania have you worked with?

Women's participation

2. When it comes to integrated projects, what would you say are the advantages to involving pastoral women in project design and implementation?
 - What about disadvantages?
3. How would you define ideal participation of pastoral women in integrated conservation and development projects?
 - What does that look like?
 - How often does what you describe actually happen?
4. What are your thoughts on how pastoral women's participation (or lack thereof) impacts project success?
5. What do you think are the main challenges of engaging with pastoral women's knowledge?

6. How do you ensure there is alignment between 1) the way pastoral women feel comfortable participating or communicating and 2) the methods you use to engage them?
 - What are your thoughts on how to improve this?
7. Is there an example of a participatory method you've seen work well? Can you describe it and why you would say it worked well?
8. Within integrated conservation and development work, is there a standard way to measure women's participation?
 - a. If yes, how so?
 - b. If not, should there be?
9. Have you seen pastoral women's participation in integrated conservation and development projects change in the past five years?
 - a. If yes, in what ways?
 - b. If yes, is there a particular movement, policy, or something else you attribute this change to?

Decolonization

(Background if needed: There is a lot of talk and work being done right now to decolonize development, which demands re-framing of development and conservation efforts away from Western-only perspectives)

10. Do you think the way development and conservation organizations involve pastoral women in their work in Tanzania can help meet greater goals of decolonization?
 - a. If yes, how?
11. What would a movement to decolonize integrated conservation and development look like?

Wrap-up Questions

12. Is there anything else you want to share related to pastoral women's participation in integrated conservation and development projects?
13. Is there anyone else you think I should speak with?

Wrap up

Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for your time. I really value your participation and your input is very important to this project. If I need any clarification or if I have an extra question, may I follow up with you?

Have a great rest of your day.