Indigenous Peoples, Heritage and Landscape in the Asia Pacific:
Knowledge Co-production, Policy Change and Empowerment

Panel 2: Wisdom of the Landscapes

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TRANSCRIPTS

Dr. Stephen Acabado: Okay hello everyone! I am Stephen Acabado, Associate Professor of Anthropology at UCLA and the co-convener of this webinar series. I would like to welcome everyone to panel 2, “Wisdom of the Landscapes,” the first of two panels that will talk about environmental justice issues. This is the second of ten panels of the webinar series “Indigenous Peoples, Heritage and Landscape in the Asia-Pacific: Knowledge Co-production, Policy Change and Empowerment. Before we start, we would like to acknowledge that the Department of Anthropology, the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology and the Asia Pacific Center at UCLA acknowledges that the Gabrielino-Tongva peoples as the traditional caretakers of Tovangar (the Los Angeles basin and So. Channel Islands). As a land grant institution, we pay our respects to the Honuukvetam (Ancestors), 'Ahiihirom (Elders), and Eyoohiinkem (our relatives/relations) past, present and emerging. We are grateful for the support of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research through the webinars and the Future of Anthropology Grant, the Henry Luce Foundation, the New England University First People's Rights Center, the National ChengChi University Center for Taiwan Philippines Indigenous Knowledge Local Knowledge and Sustainable Studies or CTPILS, the UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, and the UCLA Asia Pacific Center, the UCLA Department of Anthropology, UCLA Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Ifugao State University, the Partido State University and the Save the Ifugao Terraces Movement, our co-hosts of this webinar series. Panel 2, this panel, discusses how communities are solving ecological problems using local knowledge systems and at the same time claiming their rights over their lands. This is the first of two panels that will look at how engagement and empowerment result in a more sustainable and equitable ecological conservation. Degradation from resource extraction has the strongest impact on indigenous communities and others who live right alongside the resources and thus, um, destruction. Even when communities are not fully displaced from the land, they can still lose access through restrictive enclosures and also from the physical removal of forests and the destruction of waterways. This panel will discuss community-led initiatives and collaborative research projects

that attempt to foreground the ideas and concerns of indigenous groups living within and around project areas with respect for their knowledge of the landscape. The situation as well as possible solutions drawing examples from Cambodia, Indonesia, and Guam panelists focus on both policy implications of their work and the impacts of their activities on local communities. We have a dedicated a Q&A portion at the end of our discussion. Attendees can submit questions at any time during the discussion. Zoom attendees can use the Q&A feature whereas Youtube and Facebook attendees can submit questions via the comment section.

Professor Da-Wei Kuan, Associate Professor at the Department of Ethnology at the National ChengChi University and the co-convenor of this webinar series will introduce our panelists and moderator.

Dr. Da-Wei Kuan: Yes, thank you Stephen. It's my honor to introduce you our panelists and moderator today. Our first panelist is Courtney Work. Courtney Work is Associate Professor in the Department of Ethnology at National ChengChi University in Taiwan doing active research in Cambodia since 2005. Courtney's research incorporates elements from the anthropology of religion, development and environment, also the history of Southeast Asia political formations, and contemporary political economy and climate change. Her new book "Tides of Empire: Religion, Development, and Environment in Cambodia" explores Cambodia's development frontier through the lens of migrant families, land spirits, loggers, and soldiers all creating a new village out of the forest. Our second panelist is Micah Fisher. Micah Fisher is a faculty member at University of Hawaii at Manoa in the Matsunaga Institute for Conflict Resolution and the Program for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance. He also holds adjunct position in the Forestry Department at Hasanuddin University in Indonesia. His research interests center on sustainability dimension of landscapes and watersheds and more specifically revolves around rural smallholder dilemmas and policy to empower land rights and livelihood. Micah has long-term partnership with the indigenous community of Sulawesi to help secure formal state recognition of indigenous land. Our third panelist Else Demeulenaere is the Associate Director for Natural Resources at the University of Guam's Center for Island Sustainability where she leads a team of biologists to conduct research on forest and watershed restoration, endangered species protection, and recovery and green growth. Elsa is an avid advocate of sustainable living and the protection of Guam's biocultural diversity. Her research focuses on conservation in Micronesia, traditional ecological knowledge of endemic plant species, social activism and aims to find policy benefiting the protection of Guam's ecosystem and its people.

Our moderator today is Guy Charlton. Guy has a broad range of legal experience and he is currently an Associate Professor in Law at the University of New England in Australia where he assisted in the establishment of UNE First Peoples Rights and Law Centre. He has lectured law in New Zealand, Hong Kong, and Taiwan and published law articles in five different jurisdictions. His research interests include constitutional conflicts and religious rights and the study of indigenous peoples hunting, fishing, and gathering rights in different countries. He also looked into historical and contemporary disputes concerning the nature and understanding of sovereignty that affect the legal construction of indigenous rights nowadays.

So we have very outstanding panelists and moderator today. I would like to once again welcome all our participants and have Guy take over from here. Guy.

Dr. Guy Charlton: Thank you, thank you, thank you very much Daya and Steve for that, uh, very kind introduction!

Uhm, what we are going to speak about today in terms of, I wanna, I wanna frame the discussion, we want to frame the discussion on what landscapes are and how the communities and our panelists understand and define these landscapes. So, I thought what we could do is go through the, uh, each of our panelists and ask them to, uh, speak on that issue and, uh, discuss the sort of the ecological, uh, issues that are confronting this landscape and I'll ask Courtney to go first on this.

You're you're, uh, you're muted Courtney.

Dr. Courtney Work: Good okay, I'm unmuted now thank you guys.

Sorry about that, um, I'm gonna share a screen with you. Is that coming up for everyone? There how's that can you guys see my shared screen? All right so thank you very much, everyone! I just want to give you a quick introduction to the landscapes that we're gonna to be talking about. My work here is in Cambodia and here in Southeast Asia. Within Cambodia the landscape we're looking at is the Prey Lang Forest which is here in between the Mekong River and the Tonle Sap River. The Prey Lang Forest is the largest lowland evergreen forest in Indochina and you can see here starting from 1989 the dramatic changes that we're seeing in forest cover. This last slide is from 2014. I have some more recent ones that I'll show you in a little bit. Ah, but this gives you an idea of the extent of the forest landscape. As far as the way local people view this landscape, this is a place to get resources, this is where we get everything that we need, this is rattan we are fishing, this is rattan to make the boats and the baskets, uh, waterproof and also to sell. This

particular landscape is a favorite elephant habitat this is a natural grass field forest, this is where you find the big game. You don't find big game deep in the forest, you find it here in these grassy areas.

This is another view of the forest that has come to people recently since we've been collaborating. This is the view from the drone, far and wide or rich deep canopy and people love these shots. And these areas here along the riverbank and these little islands and little clumps, this is where you find the fish. This is where all the best fish are. But now people don't understand themselves to be the owners of these resources. The people understand themselves to be a part of a larger community and the owner of the resources is quite literally *maja tuk, maja dey*, the owner of the water and the land. And this is a deep and long relationship and people understand themselves to be the children and the grandchildren of this honored ancestor. The ancestor owns the resources and the children and grandchildren live and thrive in this environment at the pleasure of the ancestor and not the other way around. So, one of the most striking things about this landscape is the dramatic transformations that have been going on since development arrived in earnest in the late 90s early 2000s. So this is the landscape people are living in, here's the community of the Prey Lang, the community network that we're working with.

In addition to illegal logging, single cut logging in the forest, we have plantations moving in all around the perimeter of the forest. Here's a sawmill in Kratie. This is a transformation into a pulp tree plantation. In 2016, the Prey Lang Forest was awarded a sanctuary, a Prey Lang Wildlife Sanctuary protected area and you see the forest here in 2016- these are slides, uh, this is forest data, forest cover data from the University of Maryland adapted by the NGO Likado in in Cambodia. You can see how difficult this is. Here's the same forest area in 2020 and this area here in 2016 that you see outside of the protected area was a REDD+ project and you can see this is almost all gone there's encroachment all down in the bottom areas and up in the top areas. So you can see the, uh, the difficulties in protecting this forest area. What we've done in 2014, uh, two university projects, uh, came into this area independently of each other- one from the University of, uh, Copenhagen and one from the Institute for Social Studies in the Hague which is where I was located and collaborating with Chiang Mai University. And the Prey Lang community network had been active in forest patrol and actively trying to, uh, to stem the tide of illegal logging in their area. And what we did in collaboration with them is to add some resources and add some tools. We added smartphones that they used to gather data to collect, uh illegal logging information to collect, uh, tree stumps as well as general forest product information. We added, uh, interview techniques and how to record what you're doing so that it becomes data. We

added GPS technologies to map areas and drone technologies to monitor, uh, deforestation areas and in collaboration with the University of Copenhagen since 2015, the Prey Lang community network has published forest monitoring reports with really hard-hitting data about what exactly is going on in the extent of the forest damage. But you can see that these issues, uh, completely disrupt people's traditional relationships with the land, with the resources and with their economies. So I'll close it here, we'll talk more later. I'll give it to others, thank you.

Dr. Charlton: Micah, do you want to speak next?

Dr. Micah Fisher: Sure I'm gonna share my screen. And again, thanks to everybody, uh, while I'm setting this up but I really, uh, I really enjoyed last week's panel. I think, uh, lots of great issues were raised and, uh, I think, uh, this is this is a really great initiative so I'm just going to very quickly…

We kind of agreed to share a couple minutes about our sites to prompt the overall conversation, um, my research took place in Sulawesi, uh, here at the top in the middle of Indonesia right at cut at the center in a province called South Sulawesi and at the south east toe here you can see, uh, an area about 22,000 hectares and this is a place that, um, came to be very widely known in the last five years as the Kajang Indigenous Region. And the reason that it gained so much attention was because it was among the first to get a formal title, land returned back to an indigenous community in Indonesia. So lots of institutional reforms about the possibility to reclaim state land and this was among the first initiatives that succeeded and became a precedent setting site. Um, so that's the overall narrative that we know about the Kajang, um, in terms of gaining recognition, uh, and I'll talk a little bit about that but first I want to really show what, uh, what this area, this 22,000 hectares that I showed earlier looks like. So the western, uh, part of it here- the areas in blue looks like this upper left image so what you think of this is rubber plantations and about a quarter of this landscape is controlled by a rubber plantation, uhm, industrial scale operations. Now in the middle of the image here is the sacred forest of the Kajang right so this is the center of their cosmology, this is the area that was, uh, on paper it was state forests, uh, but it's still day-to-day very much controlled by, uhm, local indigenous practices and this was, uh, the land that was formally given title back to the indigenous community. So, um, depending on how much you know about, uh, the constitutional court, uh, developments in Indonesia, um, this was a precedent setting case so around the state this forest, this sacred forest, um, you can see here images on the bottom right, there's these traditional areas that the Pasangri Kajang which is the local moral code and belief systems is very much closely adhered to and this is how these locations look in and around the forest. On the bottom left is kind of a more, uh, a common landscape that you

would see, uh, there's roads where houses are built along the way and then there's all these areas in between which is really going to be the focus of what I consider the issues of the landscape, uh, to be.

So I was fortunate in 2014 to be part of this task force, right. I was an independent researcher, I wanted to study, uh, participatory action research. I wanted to study, it was unique because, uh, local government and NGOs, activists that in the past had been very much at odds with each other and conflict happened- there was, you know, deaths that happen with conflicts between the rubber plantation and the religious community here. Um, but because of the regulatory developments that happened, here we have pictures of really a participatory approach so local traditional leaders were involved, the local government, central government, NGOs got together to draft a policy on how to return, uh, return land back to, uh, local ownership and on the right here, this is President Jokowi Widodo, still the current president, um, in a ceremony providing land back to, uh, the leadership, uh, the Kajang leadership.

But as I was participating in all these public consultations with the communities, um, what I really reflect on a moment that I was kind of straight away, I was sitting at a coffee shop, talking to local disaffected youth and I was really struck by the cynicism about this process, right. So I was very hopeful about, you know, this process as a process of environmental justice, of returning land rights to local communities and when I talked to people day to day, there was a really a variety of different perspectives about these issues and what I, uh, what I began to do was I really wanted to shift the research approach to reflect that. And so, there's two ways that I wanted to do that. The first is, you know, what is the basic thing that people do on a day-to-day basis and most people are involved in some form of farming so what I started to do is just participate. I started working with families and joining them and planting corn, uh, in planting rice and following every step of the way. Where do they get their seeds? Where do they plant it? How do they maintain it? How do they harvest it? How does it go to market and how do these relationships produce and reproduce the landscape?

And so corn and rice are the seasonal kind of crops and then I learned how to tap rubber and to work on black pepper to really get a sense of what are the local concerns related to these institutional, these formal ways of getting recognition of land that were so, uh, they were gaining so much attention in Indonesia at that time. The second way that I engaged and wanted to work and partner with local, uh, perspectives was on the village planning practice, at processes. So on the one hand, I would go farming every day, on the other hand, I would show up, to how local development decisions were made, so how gaining recognition was then translated into the

processes of coming up with village plans. So I was observing how village elections happen, I was going around with local village administrators- they had new requirements of doing village boundaries- so we helped them do village boundaries. Uh, we would walk these boundaries and have these incredible conversations about what is happening, how the landscape is changing.

Um, so I'm just going to stop it there. I promised to keep it very short, um, but the overall kind of approach was that, um, thinking about how, uh, formal recognition translates into the day-to-day processes that affect people's lives in terms of how the landscape then turns, recreates itself, as well as how new policies and how local leadership translates those decisions into, um, uh, how development or how things go, uh, going forward.

Dr. Charlton: Thanks Mi, uh, Micah. Um, Else?

Dr. Else Demeulenaere: Yes, thank you! I'll share my screen. You can see it? Okay have a nice day, everybody. Um, I want to show a few introductionary slides about the social movement, to protect the landscapes of Litekyan and how the social movement advocates for biocultural protection and the restoration of indigenous land sovereignty in Guahan or Guam.

The landscape of Litekyan and Tailalo is really important to this story and if you look here at this left picture on the top, uh, of the cliffs there, that is where Tailalo is and currently under jurisdiction of the Department of Defense. Litekyan lies below there, below the cliff and along the ocean and it's currently a wild refuge. I will speak more about the history of these lands as we go into the discussion later and how the original landowners are still fighting for the return of their homelands.

Um, for the Chamorro people, a living landscape embodies the close relationship between the people and their environment and is really interwoven, uh, with culture and spirituality. Litekyan is one of those places- it's actually a place where you can see, the only place on Guahan actually where you can see evidence of every period of human life on the islands. And here you see a picture in the middle of a latte house on capstone pillars dating from the latte period and if you see here on the right hand side you can see a picture of the current, um, view of these latte villages and this is a place that the Chamorro people will still try to connect with as part of their history. And it's also a way to learn more about how their ancestors lived and although schools now they offer Chamorro language and cultural instruction, the landscape of, Litekyan offers like a really place-based more, um, learning experience, um, compared to the classroom experience. And it's really important that students and people can still collect connect with that extraordinary, uh, knowledge and wisdom there that is visible in the landscape. And, um, when I was talking to, you know, from my research to younger people, they told me that the landscape of Litekyan, for

instance, uh seeing handprints in the caves really, uh, connected them with their ancestors and it helped them, uh, the abundance of the cultural, um, you know presence there and spirituality with their ancestors really helped them finding their own cultural identity and I thought that was really very powerful. And there's many stories that were shared- it's also, um, a place where Chamorro people connect spiritually with their ancestors as that is really key to their animistic world view.

Um, besides, um, you know of showing evidence, um, there's actually evidence of, uh, healing practices visible in the landscape today, for instance, um, in the limestone you can still see, uh, *lommok* which are the pestle and mortar, ah the mortar and pestle still in place, uh, engraved in the landscape. But today, the *yo'amte* which are traditional healers still go to Litekyan and, um, to collect *amot* or medicine and they also bring their apprentices to, uh, to learn about, you know, medicinal practices. And here, you, I want to show some pictures, uh, here on the left-hand side. You see, uh, Jessica, um, she's, um, collecting, she's looking at, uh, *Kamang tasi* or *Triumfetta umbens* and, um, this is a plant that not is not so commonly found anymore, uh, on Guam and, um, healers really go to, um, Litekyan to collect these plants and there's a one healer that that uses it for babies' medicine and when she needs, she, when she needs to prepare that medicine, she'll always go, um, to Litekyan and it's… a lot of the medicine, and, are combination medicine so they usually need a lot of ingredients but this is one that is really wanted. And then on the right-hand side, you can see, um, so Auntie Susan she's collecting the fruits of, um, *Nanasu* or *Scaevola taccada* and that is used for, uh, eye ailments. It's not, it's actually pretty common this plant still on the island but they feel, the healers feel that the plants are more potent there at Litekyan and the fruits are bigger and you can see she's squeezing some of the juice of the fruits in her eye. So it's actually, um, used against pink eye but also for, um, just a kind of regular visine to relieve dry eyes. So, um, and my research, uh, besides of policy research, I looked into the ethnobotany, uh, of Litekyan if anybody has any questions about that during the presentation I'm more than welcome to answer those but, um, for this book, uh, here I'm more looking into the regulations, the policies, uh, relating to fighting to, uh, keep access to these places.

This is a view, uh to the beach, to the beach side and, um, the waters are also used for fishing and before this was a wildlife refuge, it was also used, the wood would also be used for, um, building huts for fishing. Um, my research mostly focused on botany because I'm kind of also a botanist so, but uh, um I just want to highlight that this area is also very important traditionally for fishing. Then, um, the people and cultural groups, uh, gather at Litekyan, um, for ceremony and Leonard Iriarte who is a master of Chamorro chant told me that, um, they typically do ceremonies

at spiritually charged places in Litekyan which are, for instance, the shoreline or cave areas and latte villages. So it's really important to note that that this landscape is used for spiritual practices.

So the current social movement, uh, to protect Litekyan results actually from ongoing historical injustices that still, uh, shape, uh, the nature of the island's governance and, um, I can go more into detail later maybe to, um, to talk about how the political status is right now with, uh, Guahan. But for now for the introduction, I'll keep it a little more brief and say that, uh, the United States Department of Defense plans to re, um, for the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps personnel from Okinawa to Guahan, included the construction of a live fire training range complex and here you can see on the map. So the blue is Litekyan which I showed pictures of along the beach, um, and then up on the ridge is the other part which is called Tailalo in the native language and is renamed by the Department of Defense as Northwest Field. And so I didn't show any pictures of Tailalo because that is inaccessible for people to go there but, um, I want to highlight that Tailalo, so in Tailalo there will be 256 acres of limestone forest that will be bulldozed to build a firing range and that landscape is also very important to the Chamorro people. Um, it not only is a very, um, pristine forest with endangered species, it also has a lot of cultural artifacts that haven't been, uh, explored yet and are very special to the Chamorro people. Um, for my research, I'm also focusing on the last, um, the fight for the last *Hayun lagu* tree or *Serianthes nelsonii* which is located, um, in the footprint, next to the footprint of the firing range, you can see the green triangle there. And although this is a critically endangered species and there is only one adult, uh, seed producing tree left on Guahan, um, that this tree won't be cut down because of the firing range but there will be only a hundred feet buffer around the tree left which is not enough to sustain a healthy population and will also jeopardize the tree during, uh, storms. So, uh, this tree actually became kind of a symbol for, um, for resistance for the movement that, uh, resulted from this so this is important to note but it's also important to say that people cannot connect with this tree unfortunately because it's on restricted, um, place. Um and then you can see Litekyan there so on the, in the blue and the surface danger zone of this firing range will actually prevent access to Litekyan for traditional healers so, not completely, 68% of the lands will not be accessible during the use of the firing range.

Dr. Charlton: Thanks Else...

Dr. Demeulenaere: And the last...

Dr. Charlton: No, no go ahead. I thought you were fine...

Dr. Demeulenaere: I have one more slide.

Dr. Charlton: Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Demeulenaere: Okay a direct action group, um, Prutehi Litekyan started to, um, you know like to protect the natural resources and the cultural resources at Tailalo and Litekyan and brings together like, um, cultural activists, uh, environmentalists, scientists, original landowners, healers, all kinds of people and they were advocating with the policy makers but I'll go more into their actions later as we go through the discussion. Thank you!

Dr. Charlton: Thanks, sorry about that. Uh, Else, you know one of the things that interests me about these topics in this diverse range of the world where you guys are talking about is that the similarities as well as uniqueness and, uh, in the work and the challenges facing the communities. The way, clearly all these communities have issues with land recognition and the use of their customary rules and environmental degradation it sounds like. And so guess I want to ask you guys what, uh, what is the extent of the customary rules that Else used- you showed a few pictures of people and Courtney did also- what is the extent that the customary rules are being used in these areas and how are they responding to these issues of ecological challenge, degradation, uh, or recognition for that matter? Uh, I defer to whoever wants to speak to that question answer that question initially.

Dr. Work: Well I can go ahead and start, um, thanks for that good question. It's actually, um, it's really fraught of course because almost all of the state policies currently hamper local solutions to ecological problems and disrupt the cosmological relationships and the whole logic of the system of cosmology that people have used for generations to maintain their livelihoods in these landscapes. Uhm, and extractive economics simply breaks all the rules and so these initiatives come in and they do dramatically change local landscapes and local understandings of how to work with the land and how to work also with the authorities and with the government which is a very real threat and a real need. Um, in my own situation, there's in the, in the field site that I'm working in in Prey Lang, there's a couple of things that happen. Local people would one, we see that when we tell authorities that what we're, what we're looking at, what we're researching, what we're concerned about our local practices and traditional beliefs, they tend to back away and they don't get in the way of what people are trying to do. As soon as it becomes apparent that those investigations, uh, push up against economic activities then we often run into a little bit of resistance and a little bit of trouble in executing the projects that we're trying to do especially in mapping particular areas. Um, communities have tried to grab certain areas that are powerful, that have, uh, local significance and are known to be agentive places, places where the medicine is stronger, places where you might go to have a healing ceremony. And, uhm, that has been

mildly effective when they can work inside of state policies to suggest a community forest for example, around this one small mountain, uh, that has a powerful site at the top of it. Um, and so it's a, it's a push me, pull you and you can you can make inroads a little bit and then you get pushback and there's the, it's a very constrained environment where people are trying to do this work, um, and in terms of finding community, you know, finding solutions to community problems. The real difficulty that we have and that we're seeing really starkly in Prey Lang is that the community is not homogenous. I mean you can't say that the *Kuy* community and Prey Lang all has the same ideas about what it means to live in the land and what it means to be successful and what it means to be a member of the community. So that's one of the things that gets most difficult and when we talk about communities, we kind of pretend that they might be, you know, the same, they might be homogenous actors. Uhm, but they're really not and so I look very much forward to the comments of the other panelists about that particular issue but, um, but that's what we're seeing in in Prey Lang so I can just cut off with that.

Dr. Charlton: So could I just add to that then. For you guys, is the concept of landscape itself then contested? Is that are you saying in as well? What is that landscape?

Dr. Work: Oh yes, certainly! Well the map that I showed you of the protected area, the Prey Lang forest, as far as communities are concerned, the first map that I showed you…I wonder if I can share a screen quick. Um, the first map that I showed you was, um…That's the forest, let's see, can you see that screen? So let's see if I can go back to this. Okay so this here in 1989, that's the forest that people understand and so then we go here to 2016 when they made it a protected area, and that's just a trunk, right. Can you see my pointer when I do this?

Dr. Charlton: Yes.

Dr. Work: So all this area and all this area even across the river, uh, these were all considered the landscape that people lived and worked in, um, and it's just a completely different animal now. Thanks! That's a good question.

Dr. Charlton: Does any of the other panelists want to speak to that?

Dr. Fisher: So I'll jump in very quickly in terms of, so, yeah without going back to the map, um, you know I think livelihoods have a really, uh, you know have a central role here and, um, you know, the landscape is divided between a 100 year-long existence of a rubber plantation that really began to expand a lot in the 70s and 80s and that's where the resistance movements began to push back against these enclosures that were happening through, you know security forces. I

see the questions about, you know, how the arrival of security forces and things like that and casualties did happen right. Three people died in these clashes in 2003 and that's where indigeneity and the movements for Indonesian *adat* really became you know the resistance these used to be farmers, um, resisting against the plantation but now they were talking about these issues in terms of indigeneity and that gave them additional, um, opportunities to be able to contest these landscapes. But I, you know last week's panelists' themes and what Courtney was just talking about in terms of the, uh, differences between the communities- there's clearly a difference and I think what was so interesting in my research was how the agriculture, the things that people planted really connected with their values about what things should be, right? So the people who are rice farmers who depend on this rotational system of changing over ownership, there's some clear pressures that are happening specific to rice and just the role of rice in traditional cultural practices in terms of how much rice you need to give to certain family members during a wedding really puts pressures on the landscape in terms of what your responsibility in the community is. But for other people who are really, you know, very dependent on smallholder rubber, for example, so there's a plantation and one of the really interesting contestations that come out of when you see the landscape is that local people started innovating and developing their own smallholder rubber and finding their own markets to sell to and then other tree crops started to come in and then you had these shifts what, what you know these crop booms that, I like to think of them and they're these waves that ripple across the landscape when one price comes up, new tree crops start to repopulate the landscape. When I was there in 2016, everybody was kind of trying to get rid of the rubber they had, because the prices were so low, in order to plant black pepper which had become this boom price. But if you go there now, people who are dependent on cloves, they can't sell their cloves because it doesn't have any price literally whatsoever right now. So these critical decisions on the household level are really, uh, fundamental for understanding, uh, you know the legal aspects that I went in, so interested in, right? It's like how do we make sure that we help communities to secure their land and then when you talk to communities, it's much more about what's the price of rubber versus pepper right now, what's, you know, when can I get my rotation of planting rice on the landscape? So I think for anybody doing this kind of research, having those contextual factors of how people create and recreate the landscape are really, uh, fundamental for understanding what's going on.

Dr. Charlton: And that creation isn't static you're saying? It's just, it's ongoing, it's an ongoing recreation do I understand that right?

Dr. Fisher: Yeah. And not only is it ongoing it also relates to local authority right, um, and that's a really critical part because, uh, we think that getting this piece of paper of land title is an end point and you know we have the later session today is about activism, right? And my experience especially like looking, moving out of the, this community and seeing how, how activism, uh, works in terms of pushing on the legal and regulatory side of things. It's like get that piece of paper title and then let's go find the next fight to work on without, uh, fully appreciating what the implications and how the authority shifts and these dynamics recreate new systems of authority and contestations, uh, locally so I think that's, there's something to be said about continuing after the recognition or after gaining the title after the legal victories, um, because that's where people, uh, reconstitute the local authority and decision making processes.

Dr. Charlton: Else, do you wanna...

Dr. Demeulenaere: Yeah. Sure, yeah. So first I wanted to say, like, for instance, the landscape of Litekyan being a sacred place, um, that is important to say that if you cut off access for indigenous people, that is the same as land taking and that's a really important point to say and especially, um... So for the military build-up when do you do the NEPA process, um, that was not considered as land-taking, preventing the access to Litekyan which is actually problematic because this is not the case for indigenous people and their worldview that would, that is the same as land taking because they cannot continue their practices of healing, they cannot protect, you know, they cannot go and connect with the landscape and spiritually so that's a problem. But, um, for the customary practices that were, you were, your question like, uh, responding to ecological challenges so, um, the sacred connection to the land and, um, you know instill the respect, the respect that is instilled to the resources is very much still alive here with the Chamorro people as they, um, for instance enter the forest they'll ask permission, you know, to their ancestors and it's really, um, that kind of practices that is, despite the you know the long history of colonization it's still very much alive. And I think, um, grounded in this spirituality, I think customary practices are really important and you can we can also see that with the healers when they enter the forest there's this really, um, respect towards the resources and they will only take what they need and leave on a part of the plant to regrow. But let's say they need roots or, um, you know or maybe a whole tree then you would leave, you want to make sure there's seedlings or already adult trees there to take their place, right. So, um, and traditionally of course there would be permission asked to the chief because they would be, um, you know regulating marine and tenure systems but this one, this is not in place anymore due to colonization and we have other kinds of rules and regulations. And I don't know if people are, um, familiar with the NEPA process but with the NEPA

process they're so, when there's significant, um, effects due to an action- in this case, uh, for the live fire training range- they have to come up with different alternatives in that process and abide by environmental laws but also ask people for input, right, and the input of the people was really like we need to protect these sacred spaces and that was unfortunately not taken into account, the spirituality and these practices that are customary practices. Um, and that's really important, uh, to know that maybe we'll go further into that discussion later with the activism but I think, um, it's a good, uh, time to say it because it relates to the customary practices and um in Guahan, there is, um, a lot- one third of the island is military property so it's not the only sacred place that is not accessible anymore for the people, uhm. So, and this particular place that doesn't is very um, you know it's very sacred to the Chamorro people and yeah but we can get more into details later about the rules and regulations

Dr. Charlton: So I guess I would like to, uh, just follow up with everyone before we talk about some of the activism issues and I guess the issue that comes out of the discussion is to what extent do governments take or planning agencies or state institutions take into consideration in your experiences and the experiences of the communities you've been working with of those customary practices? I mean, Micah, you mentioned, uh, the discussion at the local level- are state authorities taking this material, this understanding, this cosmology on board, uh, are they or are they basically, as Else, you suggested- I've worked in the NEPA process myself- is they check a box and they move on? Um I guess what's your experience? What are people's experience as to that aspect of working with land rights in landscapes?

Dr. Fisher: So I'll just jump in very quickly, uh, first since you mentioned my name, um. I think you know the idea of government is really interesting from the local perspective, right? A lot of the engagement that I had with government before going to do research was you know very much in terms of the activism and making sure that, you know, two-thirds of Indonesia is state forest, right. How do you, how do you get opportunities for local communities to reclaim that land it's when you think about it in these terms- the scale of historical dispossession that might represent is really profound, right. We're talking about area the size of Japan that, you know, maybe there are local customary systems that may have been in place but have been, uh, kind of drawn under state boundaries so, um, that's the way that I was thinking about it. But when you scale down into, uh, the local communities it's not that there's outside people in the process and there's local people who are outside of the process, there's local representation that serve as the village heads right that are the intermediaries of these processes and these, you know. I spent, uh, about a year just following the politics of a local village election right, so basically four different families who are the

landed elite kind of going at each other saying “No, no I want to be the one that makes this decision.” So in that context of participating in a policymaking task force which was, you know, conceptually perfect, right. It was participatory action research. Drafting the legal regulation to get land rights was done with representation of the local traditional elders, with the local government agencies, with activists who wouldn't sit in the same room as government at one point, right. So having these people at the table coming up with a policy, it was like this is an ideal scenario but then you turn that into how does that change the local governance practices among the local community? It's still local families of landed elite trying to expand their own, uh, areas that they control, their own smallholder, uh rubber, and the alliances between themselves depending on how they want to reproduce the landscape. So, um, what's really critical about thinking about the government in this way is that the local village heads- if you win a village election- you also get customary leadership status, right, so the state and the local customary institutions it's, there's not a fine line between them, right. They are constantly working with, uh, one another and obviously if the option is big plantation wipes out the whole history of a place versus, um, only the local community control it- those are extremes and those, uh, obviously exist-but there's so much happening in the middle in between those extremes that then are the ones who end up being able to make the decisions about what happens next and they're the ones that start interpreting things like legal land title and recognition of indigenous rights and they, and they shift hats very quickly. I'm the village head one day to go get resources from the state and I’m the *gala* whatever who is representative of these kind of cultural decision-making practices.

Dr. Charlton: Does anybody else want to comment on that?

Dr. Demeulenaere: Yeah, I would like to, um. So first of all I wanted to mention that, uh, Guahan is actually an unincorporated territory of the United States and still is one of the 17, uh, non, non-self-governing, uh, territories that is listed with the United Nations. And, um, you know they really have the right, uh, to their natural resources and should be able to give consent and this is not what's been happening during the NEPA process. I also wanted to delve a little bit more into the NEPA process because your question was really about how state policies hamper local solutions to ecological problems. So the NEPA process has actually an environmental justice portion, um, that is really meant to include, um, indigenous people and their vision and that hasn't been used I think not even not on Guam but also elsewhere- I have read that, um, that portion of NEPA is not really used. And then there's also a few problems met with that law specifically to island communities, too, is that, um, first of all, you know, when you have all these alternatives that are being proposed, uh, NEPA doesn't say that, yeah, you have to take the least, um, effect, you

know, the alternative with the least effects. You can actually choose what, they can actually choose whatever, uh, alternative they want. Secondly, uh, public input only needs to be considered so they really, they can, they can take the public input and give comments back but it doesn't need to be taken into account really. So and that's actually a little bit what happened on Guahan and there's two, um, phases of public input- there is one when the environmental impact statement starts. Before that, there is like the public scoping but unfortunately, um, there was not much transparency, uh, and there's also, um the people people's input wasn't taken into account and once the environmental impact statement draft was there, uh, there was a lot of public comments that, um, were about spirituality and also about indigenous practices and these kinds of, um, “not real data” according to you know like more US law, wasn't taken into account and that's very unfortunate. I really think that's lacking in NEPA that spirituality and, um, and practices is not, um, being taken for into consideration when you do an evaluation for NEPA. And then secondly, there's also a few other laws that go along with NEPA process and that's Endangered Species Act and I talked about the Hayun lagu tree- the last tree- there is actually no input that is necessary from the public with US law which is very unfortunate because, um, endangered species is not just scientists that know things about it or feel things about it. I really think that the people of Guahan really wanted to protect that tree- it’s actually the largest tree in the Marianas which is and it also occurs on *Rota* and it's also only, they only have 35 trees and it kind of also has this relationship with the islands, um, in within the archipelago and I, the Prutehi Litekyan actually submitted, um, documents to really, um, advocate not to build a firing range so close to the tree but that was not taken into account because there is no legally, no public input allowed. and there already the conversation stopped, uh, for the Endangered Species Act. And then with the National Historical Preservation Act, the problem with Tailalo which is the area that is not accessible for people, uh, people don't know what cultural artifacts are there because they can't go there- that's already a problem. And then, um, once there were more artifacts found it was hard to go back and re-evaluate and then mitigation also is something that is an indigenous perspective not really possible because they really want to keep, um, those artifacts in place, right, compared to like having them stored in a museum. But of course, the Litekyan access again that's a very, um, important point why NEPA was really, where NEPA really was failing and not taking that into consideration how people related to the landscape really there. I think that's a major, you know, that's the answer on the politics.

Dr. Charlton: I've gotta unmute myself here. Um Courtney, do you want to add to that or at all or...

Dr. Work: Yeah, yeah, thanks I can add to that. It's actually, the situation in Cambodia is a little bit interesting because in some ways the cosmological understandings of the world are between the local indigenous communities that have been living in the forests and the *Khmer* authorities are not completely different. There's a lot of overlap in in the cosmological understandings and the Cambodian authorities are pretty aware of *maja tuk* and *lokta* is an element in most of their lives. So, um, so it's really interesting to watch this interplay between them and Micah made such a really good observation that, uh, earlier about the way that people are thinking about land. It's it isn't so much about having land, it's really about using land, and that ties directly into the whole deep history of traditional relationships with the land. You know we don't own it but we definitely need to use it and this is how we get our livelihoods. And so, what we're seeing, what I'm seeing is people shifting their understanding about where the power is coming from. And I've even heard local authorities say "yeah that might be lokta's forest but the government owns it." And so, everyone's aware of this system but they're also aware of the changes in the system and there's and Cambodia is such an interesting place. The international community- it's been, it's been one of the last kind of frontiers of available land to develop industrially so there's been a huge land rush in Cambodia from external actors that's been promoted by the Cambodian government because, of course, it makes them look good, right? They are the shining Asian star and they're, you know, coming into this global economy. And everybody has plans for Cambodia and in fact if you look at the ADB's, the Asian Development Bank's, um, economic corridors this southern one encounters, it just runs right across Prey Long and you can see how people are being pulled into this. So the local authorities will come in and they'll be like "Oh no, no, swidden is the way of the past. You can't do your shifting agriculture because it doesn't fit with conservation, because it takes too much forest, and really you can make a lot of money on those cashews, you know, and you can plant the cashews right in your swidden forests and then you don't take up so much forest and you don't need new land." And so, there's a real kind of, um, this soft pulling of people into the larger global economic system that is very, that is not only hard for people to resist, uhm, but there's also even in the logic of traditional cosmologies there's a certain logic to it that this is a subsistence strategy, right? Um, so, uh so it is really, um, fascinating to watch the way that these relationships evolve and then in Cambodia- I don't know about your other sites especially Indonesia- but, wow, then people get in debt. So, once you have cashews on your swidden fields, then you can get a little piece of paper- it's not really a land title but it's a piece of paper- and then you can borrow money from the microfinance organizations and then people get locked in. So it's a, uh, it's an ongoing evolution people are both, there's a number of people that are trying to protect things as they've been and trying to maintain the old relationships and they're definitely

still there, as Else, says they're still there. You don't walk into the deep forest without some acknowledgment of the fact that it's not your forest and you're visiting and you say, “hey,” and people do they're like “Oh lokta, your children and your grandchildren are here and we're just coming in and we're gonna get some of this and some of that”. But at the same and then there's a lot of people that are just going in there like this is money, this is good we're this is the way of the future. I don't know if this road is good or bad but I like it, right, we're in. And then there's people on the other end and we're seeing this all over, we're seeing it in Guam, for sure, we're seeing it in Taiwan, for sure, that are saying “Whoa whoa whoa whoa, I was in and now I think I want to be out this, this is not working out so well. I don't know about this.” Uh, so the situation in Cambodia is quite dynamic but we're seeing all ends of this of this spectrum.

Dr. Demeulenaere: Um, can I add a few things to this? So yeah, so first of all, I just want to say that like for instance Guam is, you know, it's a lot of different cultures here, right, but I think you know the customary practice of asking permission for instance to the forest is something that I see here with my neighbors everywhere you go. It's still very embedded in practices and despite colonization and even religious aspects even with the Catholic Church there's practices that are, you know, traditional practices that are still alive here in Guam and... So it's important to recognize that spirituality is really recognized by the whole community. We have also sacred trees which is also a way of protecting, you know, resources, we have the *nunu* tree here in Guahan and we have, we have a tree in our little street here and when it's overhanging too much nobody wants to cut it you know like it's so sacred, right, so I think it's important to highlight that. But the other aspect I wanted to say is that, um, you know the fight kind of, for Litekyan, right, or trying to preserve that for the people is really, um, not just, you know, the cultural practitioners, there's also scientists that really were trying to advocate to protect the forest that's Tailalo and the Prutehi and Litekyan you know because of ecological reasons too and because the landscape itself for instance at Tailalo has very deep karst-like limestone, karst then once that would be removed it's gone forever. You can never restore that landscape and mitigation that is proposed is really it's like a forest enhancement site and its degraded forest that they're gonna try to, you know, like um, come back to a more natural forest but that will never be replaced. So it was like, um, a co-production of knowledge of people, scientists and non-indigenous people but everything was grounded in indigenous spirituality, I have to say and, uh, practices because, um, the, yeah, the *yo’amte* and their healing practices was for sure one of the most important aspects and of course also the return of the lands because, um, in, uh, 1957 and until then Litekyan was owned by Chamorro people and it was condemned by the Department of Defense for their use and later when they didn't need it anymore instead of returning it to the original land owners it actually went

to US Fish and Wildlife and became a wildlife refuge. And now then this happened so it's been a and there's a lot of original landowners and descendants from them, there's young women that are really trying to fight to get you know to protect Litekyan and this is a social movement that really has a lot of effect in the policy, public policy makers too and, um, you can see also that the policy makers really were trying to protect it as well because we had two resolutions to help the halt of the construction of the firing range and we've never seen the legislature so full and it was not just activists there were scientists and other people asking to please not take Litekyan. And, um, yeah, I think it was a very powerful movement that really, um, was carried by the whole community and two of the main activists actually were elected and are now part of our legislature so that also shows you know, um, yeah the weight of the movement and how it really, how people really related to it.

Dr. Charlton: Well on that issue of activism and maybe, um, you know what maybe we could talk about, yeah, you spoke about specific issues with activism, specific topics. Maybe we could talk, uh, more specifically about experiences you've all, that you guys have had in terms of the work that you're doing and also maybe as we talk about it, um, I'm sort of interested as to what, as a researcher, what's coming in as an outside position, how you negotiate that activist area in terms of your own work and maybe Micah, yeah, we could ask you to start on that.

Dr. Fisher: Yeah, I mean, I shared about how, you know, my own not misperceptions but maybe, you know, just the idea that that you have a concept for what you're going to study and then things just completely fall apart when you get there because nobody's interested in talking about that right. So I think there's something really to be said about how you position yourself too and I think this is what, uh, Stephen and I are trying to do with this book, right, to try to, uh, how do you do engaged scholarship, how do we update our approaches and methodologies for doing research and I think there's a lot already that's been written about participation, right. How we engage with local communities and who we decide to work with, um, but I think it really requires this openness and an ability to a willingness to listen to really spend the time to hear what's important from local perspectives, um, rather than translating them for the things that we want to see and obviously those things are inevitable, right. We're drawn to these issues, we research these topics for a reason, um, but I think there's something to be said about how you position yourself to best listen like, uh, in the chapter that I'm trying to write right now I mean everybody that I worked with at the beginning they say farming is really easy, right. But I did not find it easy especially at the beginning and I think there was the, this there was a really important moment for me where I had been like, uh hoeing, in the rice field for close to like a week and I had like 21 blisters on my hands and this

was like, any time I walked down the street, everybody wanted to, just dying to see my hands right. It was just, “Oh could you, did you hear like,” kind of thing and just after that moment, it was kind of like everybody wanted to talk, everybody wanted to share because, you know, a lot of rural smallholders think that farming is backwards, dirty, you know. There's this perception that, like, why would somebody from who knows where he or she is from, come out here to learn about our, there must be a scam here. I must, I must really like be, have to tell them what they're supposed what they might want to know right, but when you have those moments that reposition, that you're just trying to see things from the perspective of the community on the issues that matter from the, from the perspective of the way that they make decisions and during the election especially where the community itself is just it the tension is palpable, people are really going at each other to try to win this seat of power. There's almost nothing you can do right the families that you stay with the people you interact with lock you into to “Oh I saw you with so and so, that means you're partial to them.” And that's always going to happen. So these, uh elements, these, these dynamics are really important and interesting and I think, um, you know just one additional story when I was there, like, uh, there's also, like, uh, Islamic missionary. I don't, I don't know what you would call them but they come and they're trying to re-educate indigenous populations about what modern Islam is and the *Kajang* is unique because they're, yes they're a customary community which have these beliefs like Else was talking about, right, those even though there's an outside religion influence, the local practices are still fused together as part of daily practices. And you know a couple times I was staying in homes with these, the people trying to re-educate what the right type of Islam is so there's these identity battles that are going on and you know it was such a contrast with me trying to like oh how do you do things like trying to learn as much as I could about the way people think about issues locally with this presence of saying no you're not allowed to do that this is what the book says this is what you're supposed to be doing and it just allowed for really interesting discussions being at like eating together with these perspectives about what's right I mean, um, the richness of what comes out of engaging in those discussions are really, really fascinating and I think the idea of engaged scholarship, uh, you know we should be thinking uh at the forefront about these issues all the time.

Dr. Charlton: And actually, I just have a follow-up question that I want to add when to that when the other panelists speak. Is there in your experiences, there's already a recognition of what the issues are out there in terms of the landscape and land? Or and we as scholars maybe come in and say well, we know the issues but the issues are already known to these people and these communities is that in terms of, in terms of the engagement that you're working in? Is that, would that be a fair statement or, or in terms of the interaction that you're having? I mean you, we, we

talk about land privatization or deforestation- these issues are known to the communities and we have a tendency to just say, “Oh that's they need to do this get this slip of paper,” as Courtney says so.

Dr. Work: So..

Dr. Fisher: I don't know if that was.. yeah go ahead...

Dr. Charlton: Yeah, that’s directed to everyone, yeah.

Dr. Fisher: Okay, okay.

Dr. Work: So actually, I can speak directly to that and it's interesting because what you say, Guy, in one sense is right, um, because the people are living on the land they know, they know what the issues are, they know what the impacts are. In the case of the project that I’ve been working on, um, one of the focuses of our research was climate change mitigation policies and the enactment of climate change mitigation policies and so in that arena it was really interesting because the people did not know what was going on. And then the outside knowledge that we had as researchers was really important for them and so we were able to come in and really talk to them about REDD+ about what REDD+ is- Reducing Emissions Deforestation and Degradation. We were able to give them case study information about what has happened to different communities in different places with these projects and we were able to arm them with some appropriate questions and some and some ways to negotiate their positions and to understand what, promises may or may not, uh, come out of this of this initiative. And we were able to go in and say, “Oh no, this place that looks like it's just a regular economic land concession and they're just clearing the forest no, no this is actually a forest restoration project and it's connected to climate change mitigation, uh, initiatives through Korea and the Cambodian government and they're trying to tell the rest of the world that they're conserving carbon by taking down the forest and planting, uh, planting pulp acacia trees.” Uhm, so in that sense they didn't know they had no idea that any of this was going on. Um, and so that was really empowering. Uh, the, all the other stuff they were well aware- in fact all a lot of the other stuff they had to tell us what was going on. We came in, we had no idea they're like, no, no, no this is happening here, that's happening over there. So it really was a nice, uh, partnership on that on that front…I'll let other people...

Dr. Demeulenaere: Yeah, so, um, what you talked about like is it well known. I really think that, uh, Litekyan was really, um, in the frontline there to tell the community how important Prutehi

Litekyan is and was really, um, like empowering the community and educating the community about these different aspects of why it is important to preserve the landscape. I even went into like making memes of like, uh, endangered species and talking, uh, on social media about all these different aspects so I really think the movement was so important not just to educate the people in the community but also the policy makers they kept on doing this over and over again and got really attention, um, from them which was really important. And I think, um, your question relating to as a scientist or scholar, I think what I was trying to do with being part of this movement and research is trying to see how I can have these voices better heard maybe through like this book or other means right and how can we find solutions um for the community. My research is not just this NEPA process it also includes other things but I do think that, um, the how, how the knowledge about the landscape and how important it is was really driven by, uh, Prutehi Litekyan, um, and I did participatory action research too, I included some, you know, like natural resources policy makers all okay everybody kind of that was in that same kind of policy space. I asked what they thought about the NEPA process but I also asked how what solutions they could think about think of within our current political system, how can we, uh, legitimize these voices for the people right and that's, that's another important aspect of my research where I was hoping to give back a little bit to the community and, and um.. So there are some solutions that we were thinking about and maybe I don't know if we're probably gonna get into that maybe later. But I really wanted to emphasize that like, um, you know by Prutehi Litekyan really bringing all these issues up I really think the voices of the people really need to be legitimized more.

Dr. Charlton: Yeah, maybe following up on what you say maybe we could, the, we, the panelists could share a story or a success of their work or the community work in those communities in terms of these land use issues and then we'll open it up for questions, uh, for the final half hour. Uh, uh maybe Micah, you wanted to start some story or yarn as they say down here in Australia so...

Dr. Fisher: So I was starting in a little bit earlier so I'll, I just wanted to talk about the last point, um, but I'll transition it into that question as well. So I think for, um, some of the themes that I think we've all been raising, uh, for, in Kajang specifically a lot of it has to do with accountability. Um, and, uh, people are looking for, you know, accountability of decision making and so whether it's the state and you know democratic decentralization that has happened in Indonesia and you know elections and there's, uh, people are starting to have a lot of distrust over the system. They call it locally money politics, right, and so they see that elections are really a process of, you know, people trying to gain access to power and the processes that are being done, it undermines the

overall system of accountability and I think that's where the issues of Islam come in. People are looking for accountability, uh, in other forms and then there's Kajang right, the idea that this is a long-standing, uh, traditional practices and you know ancestors passed down to the generations they have their oral code, uh, called the *pasang* and that's really important and it connects to the question that's being, uh, that I see here directed to me on the on the Q&A which about the lettered word right, um. And the kajang, you know, it's like a protection mechanism so it's very distrustful of outsiders so if anybody starts to write things down especially on legal, uh, documentation they have a saying, they have a pasang that says specifically that as soon as you write something down it loses its meaning right so... The idea of documentation, of trying to redefine- I mean the Dutch were doing this a hundred year ago, right- so they're, they have their own accountability mechanisms so outsiders don't redefine who they are. Um, so in in terms of the law and accountability, there's this chance that's happening that's I think really fascinating that it's so easy to kind of fly over the radar, uh, on in terms of redefining the landscape and as a follow-up to what I was just introducing in terms of accountability is that you know, I was going around with a forest ranger one day and you know we were looking at a tree he was like that tree is just amazing right and everybody knew whose tree that was it's not it's not land rights it's not it's not written down as somebody owns it but if somebody tried to cut that down, there would be a system that would stop that from happening even though it's not, you know, registered uh to some to somebody right. And there's all sorts of ways of seeing that tree right for the lumber that it creates for the shade, that it provides people are thinking about these definitions in different, in different ways, uh, in terms of what gets defined as what's allowable and what's possible in in these locations.

Um I'll turn it over to others, um, but I, lots of stories about how the landscape is being redefined

Dr. Charlton: Else, you want to speak to that? Oh, you're, you're muted.

Dr. Demeulenaere: Yes, sorry. I wanted to quickly pull up like a quote let me, um, find it, um. Okay, yeah, I just want to emphasize, um, the involvement of the youth to here, um, really quick and I think that's kind of a good story, uh, kind of, um, you know here. So the youth also like the high school students really stepped up in this movement and really were like, um, producing videos and were also like organizing protests at the schools and in the villages and they also testified at the legislature and that was really powerful to see that happen and just want to read one quote um here from Scarlett Cruz who testified and said, “This is part of our testimony . We are not ready to hear that our native species unique and important to our island which I and most of our youth did not get the chance to see have become no more and gone forever.” So I really think it's important that we kind of, um, recognize also this is not just for the current generations

for the future generation to protect these lands and to protect their culture and the cultural identity, uh, is really important in this aspect, I think to recognize and I think that was a good, um, outcome of this kind of movement too that it's not just, you know, the policy makers are all on board and everything but the youth and other people were connecting to their culture identity and so Litekyan and it's the landscape of Litekyan and really important to that and I think that was really to me one of the most powerful, uh, things that happened within this movement- that the youth was standing up and really wanting to preserve that access to that space and wanted to know how these, how the healers use the plants and want to go and visit them when they're sick. So I really think the movement did a lot of positive things for Guam and I really still hope that you know, we can, um, prevent this from happening. Um, yeah and it was, I'm actually seeing my notes really quick, um, was there another question, Guy that you had?

Dr. Charlton: No, that, that's now that we, what I thought we could do is maybe have Courtney speak and then we'll take questions from the people, uh, the people watching. So Courtney, do you want to, uh, you want to speak on that issue?

Dr. Work: Yeah, yeah, I can and I... we should have planned this better Else. You should have gone last because yours is such a lovely, uplifting kind of story and, unfortunately, the story that I have is not nearly so lovely and uplifting because we're watching as Cambodia slides into really much stronger authoritarianism and is, uh, taking heed less and less of, uh, local people's protests and of the, um, the international community and the eyes of the world. Uh, and so with all of the support that we've given, um, and with all of the incredible work that the prolonged community network has done over the last few years, in just these last few months, and even starting in February of this year and especially, especially during the years of Covid, the national government in the Ministry of the Environment has blocked their access to the forest and partly because of how powerful they became, partly, because of what a strong voice they had and the reports that they were publishing and the work that they were doing, they were becoming just too uncomfortable for the local authorities and they have been banned. And we did some community mapping of recent forests, uh, when they, when the reforestation project came in and started clearing the forest area and we supplied maps that were made by the community to both the company and to the ministry and when the company changed hands last year to a Cambodian-run organization, Cambodian and Taiwan-run organization, the first thing that they did is they came in undercover and they targeted the local resin tappers personally, intimately, face to face and they said, "We're going to take your trees- you can either sell them or you can lose them- the choice is yours." They knew exactly where the trees were, they knew exactly who to go to, and

they knew exactly where to target their energies. So this is, if this is a fraud space, we don't know when we did it. It looked like it was good and it looked like it was empowering and then when the government decided to just change and decided that they were not going to play by any of these internationally accepted rules, it turned out to be exactly the wrong thing to have done and it turned out to be sort of disempowering, um, which doesn't mean we stop doing it. It just means that we, that we know what the implications can be and that we, uh, maybe think differently about some of our strategies. So sorry about that really we should have switched it around now remember Else's really awesome story about the young people talking, about the fact that they're ready, they're ready to get in this fight. Thanks!

Dr. Charlton: Well I'll follow up with them with a question, uh, to Else then to start off the Q&A section. It, the question is related to, in what ways have social scientists been helpful to your work to protect this ancestral area that you referred to in Guam and what kinds of assistance could a researcher whose work in these areas but is not part of the communities the descendant communities provide, uh, in your work?

Dr. Demeulenaere: Okay, yeah so there's actually a lot of scientists, social scientists and others that are part of, um, doing research at latest. There's archaeologists looking at the, you know, the landscape in the latte villages there. So I think they have been really important, um, to, you know, to add to the story. Um, social scientists, I think you know looking at the cultural identity part is really important I think and I think social scientists can really maybe emphasize the importance of that especially, um, because you know this research is also, um, founded in, you know, decolonization efforts, right, so I think it's important because we're, they're colonized people, right, to provide that right that they can connect again with their culture identity. Um, I think that's a really important aspect of this whole story and then, of course, the disempowerment that's been felt is really hard for some people to deal with I think knowing that you might lose this land or these special resources forever is I think a really, um, really hard to deal with for a lot of people and especially also for the original land owners too, um, to see this not being resolved, you know, for generations already and I think they're um…. it's important that we bring those issues forward and I actually, for my research, so as I was mentioning, I interviewed, of course, all the activists and they were, I was very engaged in bringing those stories, uh, forward but for I also interviewed social scientists actually and, um, and you know just biologists anybody that was relating to this issue and they all came back with kind of similar answers to, you know, like that there's really a disempower disempowerment right now and that we really need to change, um, these rules and regulations. And, um, the NEPA and I'm sorry I was, I should have, you know, like clarified that a

little better but, uh, national environmental protection, you know, rules and regulations are really, um, at the moment really not sufficient in protecting, um, people and there's also currently, um Julian Aguon who is a lawyer, um. He actually did a submission with, in partnership with, uh, the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. He did a final submission on behalf of Prutehi Litekyan with the United Nations Special Rapporteur of Indigenous Rights and it's really important to say that the people really decided that the NEPA is not sufficient to really look at these environmental problems and especially environmental justice issues that we're dealing with right now and there is no consent ever given to the community. And I think that's important to highlight that we taken that into account and social scientists also looked in, you know, are very big advocates of having the people's voice heard.

Dr. Charlton: Uh, thank you. Uh, I have a, there's a question here for all the panelists, um, and I'm thinking about the, uh, the blisters on your hand Micah, uh. "Have you found yourself going outside your comfort zone or at great lengths in activist efforts related to environmental conservation or to and or indigenous cultural promotion while conducting your research and how was this experience and how do you think non-indigenous uh scholars would have fared, I'm sorry, how do you think non-white scholars would have fared in similar situations? So, uh, where have you gone out of the, where, people gone out of their comfort zone and what's their experience, uh, in that process?

Dr. Fisher: Uh, it's a, it's a big question and, uh, I think there, there's a, there's a lot, here. Um, you know one of the one of the first things that, you know, working in Kajang was difficult, uh, at the beginning because of the, they really don't like, uh, they're really distrustful, right, and that's because of a history of distrust, right. So building trust is really difficult and there's reasons in that in place, right, so just being able to sit in the conversations of the elders and to be able to understand what's going on in the processes, it took a lot of, it takes a lot of work and it and it's all about building trust and relationships and mutual, uh, understanding. Um, and I think everybody, you know, one thing that's very absent from my research is women's voices in particular, right. And, uh, it's not that I'm unaware of that, it's just, you know, the connections that you make locally, um, you know, at first building relationships with local youth was playing soccer with them like in the afternoons every day, right, so these become your connections and, uh, you know there's land use systems about, uh, that women there's indigo which are land rights specific for women that I would love to be able to explore and working with a grad student now who is from the region speaks the language much better than I do who can explore these issues and better understand these things so. Um, I think there's benefits and drawbacks, uh, in various ways

like one of the things because of networks I had initially going into this research project because it wasn't a relationship with Kajang- it was a relationship with land rights recognition- was that I was invited to present the Kajang case at the president's office right at a panel trying to interpret what to do about indigenous rights recognition. So on the one hand, it gives you access to be able to raise these voices and I think it's really important to be cognizant whose voices you're raising so that they don't get misinterpreted, right. So, um, I'm totally aware of the issue of, you know, who I am and what I was doing there right when I walk down the street people shout *balanda*, balanda and balanda in, is a reference to Dutch, yeah, it means Dutch person, right, so which is a reference to the long history of colonialism that, uh, took place in Kajang, you know. I've maybe been to the Netherlands, uh, once but and so these always prompted interesting conversations about, you know, where you're from and all these issues so. Um, yeah, I think on the one hand, it doesn't allow you to have access to certain things and I think it raises the importance of building networks and relationships with other people that can help with those issues. On the other hand, you can use those to help draw attention to key issues so I think there's, uh, there's many different ways that, uh, things unfold, uh, with this question that we need a lot of time to continue to engage on.

Dr. Charlton: On mute. Courtney do you want to speak to that issue, or Else?

Dr. Work: Yeah, yeah, I can, uh, I can speak to that issue um. I'm just kind of picking up where Micah left off- one of the things that's become very visible to me is the way that, um, especially with gender for example, uh, it really gets approached, um, bureaucratically as a box to tick, right. Yes and people that I work with they do say, "Yes, yes we had a meeting and there were five women," so it's a, it's a counting mechanism but in terms of engaged research and engaged scholarship, um, really I think that one of the things this era is showing us so clearly is that we can't work as individuals. In fact, we're sort of ineffective as individuals because we can only get at one part of it. So as Micah was saying, he, you can you can talk to the president, maybe right, you can get access to authorities but you can't talk to the women right. For me, I can't talk to the young men. I have no idea what the young men are doing and they're and these guys are the loggers, they're the ones that are going out and driving the informal logging market or actually being sort of roped into the informal logging market and I can't hang around and talk to them and see what's making them take and what's working for them and what kinds of things would make changes for them. Um, so we're all as individual researchers in these landscapes, we're all limited and we're all kind of boxed in to particular avenues and with particular strengths and, um, and one of my great, you know, going outside of the comfort zone, um, didn't have anything to do with

the field research. It had to do with the work I was doing with other engaged white people and to push at them to stop yelling at each other. There was a lot of, um, kind of conflict between “Oh yeah that that person doesn't know what they're doing” and, and “Look at that, look at that ridiculous, uh, plan that they made when they were, when they were trying to, uh, to do this campaign.” And these people didn't engage properly when they tried to engage with the World Bank, they, uh, they misled local communities. So there was all of this bickering among different collectives that were trying to do some good work in and alongside of local communities and intervening in that is, um, is very uncomfortable and is very difficult, um, when there's a lot of really good projects going on but everyone has their own skill set and everyone has access to particular kinds of processes and one of the things that will strengthen what we're doing is to be more inclusive and to be willing to look at all of each other's failures and all of each other's strengths and use those accordingly in different spaces.

Dr. Charlton: Else, do you want to add to that?

Dr. Demeulenaere: Yeah, I just wanted to say I started when the movement started for Litekyan and I was already part of it but I was part of it more as a biologist to start with, right. And then, um, as this has been going on, I think for five years almost. Um, I kind of got to understand by talking and being part of this movement more intensively, um, and understand really the cosmology of the indigenous people better by talking to them. But I always try when I go to events to really not position myself as a researcher but being really for a respectful participant, right, when I went to, like, there were candlelight visuals, there was, um, walks at Litekyan and so I really tried to listen to the people and I also, uh, became friends with a lot of the activists very closely and I also, um, went with the healers on different trips with them, to the forest and they showed me things and that was really, I think, important for the research to be able to kind of, um, speak about these issues. Of course, it's their voice, right, and I want to emphasize that too. It’s really, um, I use a lot of quotes in my research to just make sure that these voices are all heard and, um. And I also realized during the research, too, like that my neighbor who is, um, an 80 year old Chamorra woman, what she has been telling me all the times- I live here for 15 years- is really what you know transpiring to the movement too and it's really the elders where we pull ourselves off and there's a few elders in this movement I can listen to them forever and they have such deep knowledge about, um, the landscape and why it is important to pass on the land to your, to your children and it's just, um, all connected and it's used. I kind of find, um, it took me indeed a few years to kind of fully understand, kind of I’m still probably not 100% there but I mean like, uh, to understand really, uh, what matters, um, from an indigenous perspective and I really

hope, uh, I, you know, with this story, we can we can emphasize that. Uh, another thing I want to mention is that you know, like what you were saying “for your comfort zone”, um, being a biologist I do know some of these areas and I do know the importance ecologically and I really tried to also testify in the in the legislature and have my voice as a biologist heard and that was appreciated from the community that I showed that I emphasized the problems specifically to *Serianthes* so and a lot of my research actually all my research centers around that one tree. But, uh, I think it's important that with, that scientists feel comfortable and empowered to really also, um, like have their voice heard for the community and I think the community really appreciates, um, all different voices and this movement was really, um, all kinds of people coming together and trying to fight for Litekyan and that was the beauty of it like, um, there's a lot of archaeological work being done and there's books being, there's books been written, um, there's a children's book from Olympia Terrell that was recently published and really brought attention to this issue for the children and then there is a beautiful, uh, book, um, about Litekyan, uh, that came about and it was not just about the (unintelligible), it was the archaeology, was everything combined like really all the aspects social sciences, uh, biology, um, the cosmology, the importance, uh, for the original land owners- everything was connected- and I think, um, that's really important as scholars that we kind of try have all these voices heard.

Dr. Charlton: Thank you. I think we have time for one more question before we wrap it up and, um, the question I’d like to ask relates to these conflicting perspectives that we've mentioned in our conversation today. And the issue is, as an outsider how do you deal with these conflicting perspectives and, um, in some cases as in any community there's more vocal parts of that community and Courtney mentioned, uh, issues of women as well as Micah? How do, how do you deal with that in your work and how do you sort of take a position on that more generally?

Do you want to start Micah, on that?

Dr. Fisher: Sure, um, so I just wanted to share two different things. I also want to say thank you if this is the last chance I speak. It's been a really, really deep, uh, and engaging conversation, um. So the first point that I want to say is that I’m driven by, a, you know just the research tradition of focusing on vulnerability, right. I think that a lot of the way that I approached the research was trying to understand who is most vulnerable in these communities. And you know the common thing that people talk about the Kajang is this essentially, they have this egalitarian society where everybody, uh, treats each other the same. And yes, in a philosophical, moral sense that's true but there's also a very deeply ingrained caste system- it's not called caste but you know there's this, this history of the slave cast, the people that weren't land owners that were built into the local

um, uh, hierarchical systems in society. So, um, in the way that I did my research related to following kind of how landscapes are recreated was trying to continue to keep the focus on the people that were left out, right. So as land use systems were changing, you could, you can really see who's not getting access and, um, there are specific reasons that drive those changes of people who can't get access to rice fields anymore so that they can't, uh, produce their function in the social systems to be a good member of society who are pushed to the margins that have to migrate to find work in other places or in more vulnerable conditions and more challenging situations. And I think there's lots of great research that guides us on this and throughout the research learning about other cases from elsewhere about how to continue to train our focus on vulnerability is really important. And the second part of that is kind of corollary, right, so taking this focus on vulnerability and using it through our positionality perhaps to engage on those that hold power on these conversations. So you know with the village, you know it was easy for me to have a conversation with a local village head they'd always invite me over, right. So you find opportunities to slip these conversations in what about these situations where people are really, you know, coming up with very, very are dealing with situations that are very difficult, right, and they're members of your society so how do you care for those type of people? what kind of welfare systems are in place locally to support issues like that? Um, you know and these are uncomfortable conversations but I think it's our responsibility as researchers in terms of how we think about our values in these processes as well. One situation was I would always ask, um, elected village heads what their solutions were for agriculture and their solutions were always "We need to test the soil find out what the best agriculture is so that we're not poor anymore and that'll overcome poverty." So it's a very technical solution- everything- and it relates to exactly how they became successful, right. And people don't have access to those means or can, you know, deal with the risk that's associated that with, that in agriculture. So I think, um, trying to help them think through those processes of why that's the solution for them and maybe not for others are really poignant conversations that we as researchers in our engaged research can help to raise not necessarily provide the solutions but at least deepen our understanding of the problem.

Dr. Charlton: Thanks. Elsa, do you want to speak to that?

Dr. Demeulenaere: Yeah, I can still relate to ah, Micah says here for sure. Um, and you know you oftentimes get that comment it's not just, it's just the activists right that think that way and maybe not the whole community, right. You get that often but I think as Micah was saying, you know, like you do participatory action research and that is for, um, more unserved communities, right. But I think it's, it's not in in the case of Guam, it's not necessarily because you're not there- the protests-

that you don't think that way especially because like you're dealing like with the Department of Defense which a lot of people have families here right that are with the military. So it's not always a(n) easy issue to talk in public, to be there in public or you work, um, you have working relationships so it's sometimes not an easy, um, thing to speak up. But I do think by the fact that two of the main drivers of the social movement actually co-founders were elected into office really shows that people care because otherwise they would not be you know like elected by the majority of the people. So I think that was a very good statement from the community itself there and but I do think it's important to, um, to raise these issues as a scholar for like it doesn't need to be the whole community that is necessarily standing behind this issue too if that wouldn't be the case I think, um, and especially this is dealing with, um, you know indigenous rights. I think it's really important, um, to have these voices heard, um, through the research we're doing, um, yeah.

Dr. Charlton: Well Courtney, you have, yeah, you'll have the last word

Dr. Work: (Laughs) You keep giving me the last word, Guy. I don't know but I do, I do have to, um, I'm gonna just sit on this point that Micah made at the very end, um, that I, that is really important. One of the things that engaged research does and that engaged researchers do is that we go into places and we ask questions and we have conversations, and we have conversations with lots of different people and because we are structurally outside of the system, we can sometimes push uncomfortable conversations a little further than a local person would push them. And I, "You know, well, she's just a white person, she doesn't understand good manners, she has good manners she's just, she has bad manners," and you can you can push things a little farther and you can cut people off when they're talking too much. If you're having a conversation in the group and the one powerful voice is going on and on about how great everything is, I can stop them from talking and I can ask other people to talk and we can begin to start having a different kind of conversation and even sometimes we do live in our own thought bubbles often and it's very easy to become completely unaware of someone else's circumstances and of what it means to be in those kind of circumstances and through the process of doing research and being engaged, we can break some of those bubbles and we can kind of make a space where people can see things differently. It doesn't necessarily mean that things change but it can sometimes change the conversation which is part of the beginning.

Dr. Charlton: Well I think we'll leave it there thank you very much to all our panelists! Uh, we could fill the internet with a conversation for days, I think, if we wanted to. Uh, uh, I obviously, the issues involved here are complex and one of the things that I find personally, that I'm interested in is this contestation of landscapes and how they change and impact the communities and the interaction

with the, uh, government and with activism. So I'll leave it there. Stephen's going to, uh, talk about next week's uh, session. Uh I'll, I know I'll be there looking forward to it, Stephen.

Dr. Acabado: Well thank you everyone, thank you Guy, uh, Else, uh, Courtney and Micah! Um, this is really a very informative discussion and we have eight more, um, that will have a very similar discussion and in-depth discussions about engagement. But before I talk about, um, the next panel, um, some of you, some of the attendees are requesting for certificates of attendance. So if you are, uh, please complete a short survey. The link is just, is posted here on the chat box, um, by Maddie. Um, please complete the survey, um, this survey will have the information, you'll put in this information where we will send your certificates. Uhm, please complete the survey even if you are not requesting a certificate. This will help us improve our future panels, uhm, and speaking of panels- so panel three we'll continue the discussion we'll actually have an example where the state, the Taiwanese government incorporated customary indigenous land use system, um, in their forest management policies. Um, and so our discussions next week, um, we'll have examples from Bali, Bali, Indonesia, Bicol, Philippines and Taiwan and registration for Panel 3 is also available on the webinar webpage and Maddie just posted it on the chat box. So thank you everyone for, to those who, for the questions that we weren't able to answer, we will share them with the panelists and we hope that we can post them on, either on Facebook or on the webinar webpage. Thank you!

Dr. Charlton: Thank you!

Dr. Fisher: Thanks everyone!

Dr. Charlton: Thank you.

Dr. Demeulenaere: Thank you.

Dr. Kuan: Thank you. Bye.

Dr. Charlton: Bye bye.