

## INTRODUCTION

---

### Conservation and Development in the Age of the “Global”

OFF THE EASTERN coast of Africa, a series of islands form a chain, beginning just below the continent's protruding horn and ending in the region now known as Mozambique. These islands, from Pate and Lamu in the north to Kilwa in the south, together with adjacent coastal settlements, have historically formed the “Swahili” coast.<sup>1</sup> At a time when Europe was experiencing what is sometimes known as the Dark Ages, this region formed part of a dynamic Indian Ocean trading world, serving as a gateway between the peoples of Africa and the regions to the east.<sup>2</sup> Following the seasonal monsoon winds, dhow traders plied their wares between East Africa, the Arabian peninsula, Persia, India, Indonesia and beyond, creating far-flung social and economic networks (Chaudauri 1985; J. Abu Lughod 1989; Frank 1998; Ghosh 1992). As part of this cosmopolitan milieu, African coastal residents regularly interacted with visiting traders and immigrants from Arabia, India, and other regions, as well as with African peoples living farther inland, who supplied such goods as ivory, animal hides, amber, and human slaves. The fluid interactions of this ocean-centered world defined the East African coast for centuries before it was interrupted by the land-based logic of European colonization and, eventually, the formation of independent nation-states.

Of all these islands and coastal settlements, Mafia Island is perhaps the least well known today. Long dominated by neighboring Kilwa Island that had controlled the medieval Sofala gold trade, Mafia came under the suzerainty of Zanzibar Island to the north in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During this period, Zanzibar emerged as coastal entrepot for Indian Ocean trade as well as terminus of the mainland caravan routes, and later served as a site of clove plantations that fed a growing international economy hungry for spices. Eventually, however, the economic and political heart of the region shifted to the city of Dar es Salaam, located on the mainland to the south of Zanzibar. Founded in 1862 by Zanzibar's Sultan Majid, Dar es Salaam later became the colonial administrative center for mainland Tanganyika under the Germans and, after World War I, the British. In 1890, Mafia Island, which had been a dominion of Zanzibar, was “traded” to the Germans and became a mainland territory, economically and politically oriented toward Dar es Salaam.<sup>3</sup> As part of the “mainland,” Mafia gained its independence along with the rest of Tanganyika in 1961. How-

2 • Introduction

ever, it was only after the 1964 political merger between Tanganyika and the newly independent revolutionary government of Zanzibar that the contemporary nation-state of Tanzania was formed.

Located a mere 20 km from the mainland, the Mafia group of islands appears at the point where the massive delta formed by the Rufiji River meets the Indian Ocean. Some have argued that the name “Mafia” derives from the KiSwahili “Ma-afya” referring to a healthy place, an intimation of the alleged healing properties of waters on the islands (Saadi 1941). Others link the name to the medieval town of Kisimani Mafia and note that it was historically popularized as “Monfia” by visiting Arabs (Baumann 1957 [1896]). In the nineteenth century, however, residents themselves referred collectively to these islands as “Chole,” after the smallest inhabited islet that at the time served as the urban center for the entire chain.

Although Mafia’s residents participated in global trading networks centuries before the arrival of Europeans, Mafia, ironically, became increasingly “remote” over the course of the twentieth century. Indeed, Mafia residents today agree with those in other parts of the country that their island is lamentably isolated from the rest of Tanzania as well as regions beyond. During the mid-1990s, Kilindoni, Mafia’s government seat, constituted an unremarkable settlement of concrete block offices and houses that were tenuously linked to each other by a few telephone and electricity lines. Although there had been a prodigious traffic of wooden sailing vessels in the past, the number of dhows in the region had since been reduced to an anemic trickle, and larger “modern” ships docked infrequently at Mafia in part due to the dangers of Kilindoni’s shallow port. On the main island, a mere handful of motorized vehicles traveled the sandy roads that became impassable with the onset of the rainy season, and tiny single-engine airplanes made only rare, erratically scheduled landings on an airstrip barely distinguishable from the surrounding sand.

Ironically, however, Mafia’s current “remoteness” has attracted a new kind of attention, one that serves as the impetus for the dynamics to be explored in this book. According to a certain symbolic logic, isolation signals not hardship but the “pristine” nature of the islands and their environment—a situation attractive to both conservationists and the international tourism trade. Such dynamics are not entirely new on Mafia. During the British colonial period, a European-owned fishing lodge operated in Utende, a village on the southeastern coast of Mafia’s main island. During the post-independence period, this lodge was supplanted by a government-owned and managed hotel on a nearby site. During the late 1980s and 1990s, however, tourism increased dramatically along the Tanzanian coast due in large part to the encouragement of international donors as well as policy reforms that were designed to pull poorer regions more tightly into an international economy.

By the mid-1990s, signs of expanding tourism activity were widely appar-

ent in the otherwise quiet village of Utende. Gangs of workers laid cement foundations, pounded coral rock and set mangrove beams, while hotel staff traveled the unpaved roads in four-wheel drive vehicles in order to meet supply-laden planes at Kilindoni's landing strip. During this period, four new tourist establishments came under construction in Utende. The first completed lodge exhibited striking differences from the existing government hotel, despite a common wish to attract a prosperous international clientele. The older establishment, built in the "high modernist" architectural style that was favored by so many newly independent African states in the 1960s and 1970s, emphasized such (often nonfunctioning) luxury items as flush toilets and air-conditioning. In contrast, the new private lodge sought to attract a clientele interested in understated, although also luxurious, ecotourism. Comprised of a series of thatched bungalows surrounding a central terrace and overlooking Chole Bay, the new lodge exuded an air of peacefulness and discrete isolation. Soothing and artful shades of ocher and blue dominated the decor. Impressionistic paintings of underwater marine life graced the wall behind the circular bar; hand-blown glassware rested delicately on the heavy wooden tables and bamboo chairs festooned with floral-patterned pillows invited sun-weary tourists to rest on the shaded terrace. Although guests stubbornly continued to arrive on Mafia only in trickles, Utende's new tour operators, largely Euro-American expatriates and white Africans, had hope. Their gamble in building on Mafia was a calculated one, premised on the rise of a new tourist attraction—the Mafia Island Marine Park.

#### THE ECOTOURISM SEMINAR

Gazetted in 1995 and covering approximately one-quarter of Mafia's main island and most of the surrounding smaller islands and ocean, the Mafia Island Marine Park is the first national park within Tanzania to focus on the marine environment. In a country where nearly 25 percent of the land mass has been dedicated to some form of nature protection, it is also the first park to legally incorporate the people who live there,<sup>4</sup> a pointed departure from the European colonial belief in the inherent incompatibility of people and wildlife. Mafia's internationally funded park was designed to be a premier example of a new kind of natural area—one that would encourage conservation *and* development through "sustainable development" based on ecotourism. Planned by international donors and environmental organizations in cooperation with national government officials, the park called for the participatory involvement of area residents, a position that echoed the calls for greater democracy being made throughout Africa at the time.

During the first week of October in 1995, the new tourist lodge was unusually full. The source of the bustle was not tourists, however, but dozens

4 • Introduction

of Tanzanians and Europeans, arranged purposefully around the tables of the terraced dining room. The meeting, called by park staff, included representatives of environmental organizations, Tanzanian government officials, tour operators, a handful of European development workers and academics, and, finally, representatives of Mafia's villages. The latter, a quiet group of men, some dressed in frayed, white Islamic robes and skull caps, others in worn but neat Western shirts and trousers, had been popularly elected by their home villages. If they felt uncomfortable in these surroundings—the hotel grounds being a place well known for prohibiting island residents from “trespassing”—their composure offered no trace of it.

The gathering was a seminar on “ecotourism,” which was hosted by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), an international environmental organization. The meeting was intended to call together the “stakeholders” in the newly formed marine park, but it soon became clear that these stakeholders possessed widely differing agendas. Scientists had described the region as “pristine,” a site of ecological biodiversity of importance not only for Mafia but also for regions beyond. Like the coast's own complex history, marine life in the Indian Ocean clearly ignored the penciled-in national boundaries of contemporary maps and, as environmentalists pointed out, Mafia appeared to serve as a crucial seed bank for other parts of the world. Spurred by a spate of research on Mafia's marine environment that was conducted during the late 1980s, representatives of national and international bodies had lobbied hard for a marine park. Responding to criticisms of preservationism as practiced within Tanzania's older wildlife parks, conservationists involved in park planning for Mafia, like many of their counterparts in the world of development, stressed the need for community participation rather than the exclusion of area residents as had been standard in the past. Participation, it was argued, was not only crucial for ethical reasons, it was also more efficient, and ultimately cheaper than the elaborate enforcement required to police the use of island resources.

For their part, Tanzania's national officials had long recognized the ability of protected areas to attract international tourism. In this debt-ridden country, which is also one of the poorest in the world,<sup>5</sup> national parks have served as a crucial source of foreign exchange. In addition, during the 1980s and 1990s the World Bank and IMF were presiding over attempts to transform Tanzania's socialist economy to a market-oriented form of capitalism through “structural adjustment” policies. These financial institutions, along with other multilateral and bilateral development agencies, were anxious to encourage tourism—one of the largest items in global GNP<sup>6</sup>—as a development strategy for Tanzania and other poorer countries. Thus, the marine park fit comfortably into the agendas of both government officials and development organizations. Consequently, in a joint effort between international organizations and Tanzanian national ministries, an organizational and legal

framework was ultimately approved in the mid-1990s that would serve as the basis not only for the Mafia Island Marine Park, but as a prototype for future marine parks throughout Tanzania.

Unlike the situation in many wildlife parks on the mainland, Mafia's residents were largely supportive of the concept of a marine park.<sup>7</sup> Many depended heavily on fishing for their livelihoods and were angered by the practice of "dynamite fishing," an illegal technique used primarily by non-resident fishers from Dar es Salaam operating in the waters around Mafia. The dynamite blasts created underwater shock waves, which killed or stunned the fish that then floated to the surface and were scooped into boats, providing fishers with large harvests that required minimal (although risky) effort. Dynamiting, however, also ravaged the coral reefs that shelter fish and on which fish feed—reefs that are known on Mafia as the *nyumba ya samaki* or "home of the fish." According to residents, the underwater landscape was increasingly turning into a "desert" (*jangwa*) and the numbers of fish were decreasing. Although many residents on Mafia had reservations about the creation of a marine park, and worried in particular about potential restrictions on their own fishing practices, most were more concerned with the need to stop dynamiting. In a planning workshop held on Mafia in 1991, representatives of Mafia's villages, once assured of residents' rights to participation, of help in halting dynamiting, and of the creation of jobs and economic opportunities within the park, enthusiastically agreed to support the incipient marine park (MTNRE 1992; T. R. Young 1993).

However, the 1995 Ecotourism Seminar was the first meeting—as representatives of the ten villages located within the marine park would ruefully point out—to which they had been invited since the initial planning workshop in 1991. While the seminar had been called by WWF to discuss ways to ameliorate any detrimental social and environmental effects associated with tourism within the park, village representatives politely but persistently steered the discussion to more fundamental issues about the set-up and running of the park. Although the park had been described in the project's draft general management plan as "for the people and by the people" (GMP 1993:iv), residents made it clear that even the most basic information about the park had not been shared with them. The growing tensions surrounding the park emerged in striking form that afternoon. When television journalists from Dar es Salaam and their camera crew began conducting interviews on the hotel's luxurious patio, village representatives, after conferring in hushed tones, put forward a spokesperson to address the television camera in KiSwahili. In a move that would startle national and international representatives at the seminar, the village delegate boldly told the camera that members of the government agency that was entrusted with overseeing the creation of the marine park had in fact been "cooperating" with dynamite fishers, and that Mafia residents wanted the government agency removed

from involvement in the park. Although the content of the message surprised few present, the openness of the accusation created a stir at the workshop (although many non-KiSwahili-speaking participants would only belatedly hear of the accusation, if at all). Perhaps even more startling than the words of the village representative was the subsequent broadcasting of this interview on national television and radio in the heady days preceding Tanzania's 1995 multiparty election, the first since the beginnings of one-party rule in 1965.

#### CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE AGE OF THE "GLOBAL"

The contestation at the 1995 Ecotourism Seminar offers a brief glimpse of the social struggles which occurred during the implementation process of the Mafia Island Marine Park between 1994 and 1997. The goal of this book is to capture the nature of those struggles—what I refer to as the “social drama” of the marine park—in terms of the day-to-day tensions and alliances found among Mafia residents, government officials, and representatives of international organizations as each group attempted to control and define the incipient park. Although Mafia residents were initially both hopeful and wary of the marine park, their position had turned to one of strong support by the time I finished my fieldwork in 1997. Yet as documented in the epilogue to this book, the “social drama” of the marine park has been an ongoing one filled with occasionally dramatic reversals. When I returned to Mafia in 2000, many residents now claimed they hated the park, stating that it was waging a “war” against them and their livelihoods. In this book, I have attempted to make sense of these evolving struggles, considering the broader socioeconomic, political, and historical contexts in which such contestation has occurred. The goal of attempting to understand how this once promising project came to be widely hated by Mafia residents is, I believe, an important one. The answers suggest issues that should be addressed, not only by scholars of East Africa, environmentalists, or aid workers, but also by those interested in thinking critically about interactions between various parts of the world in the first years of a new millennium.

Increasingly, we hear the world in which we live characterized as a “global” one. In both the popular media and among academics from many regions, ideas of globalization have emerged as a dominant framework for thinking about the contemporary era.<sup>8</sup> Although the concept itself has taken on different meanings among various observers, this range of perspectives has been linked by a common assumption that interactions among regions across the globe are intensifying at an unprecedented rate. In the business press, globalization is linked with growing integration powered by an invigorated form of free market capitalism; in anthropological and cultural studies, it is associated with an intensification of cultural “flows” and population

movements between various parts of the world; and in post–Cold War political theory, it has led to debates over the ability of global processes to bypass, and thus undermine the integrity of, nation-states. Yet, how does a place like Mafia and its social drama fit into such conceptual frameworks?

Within accounts of globalization, sub-Saharan Africa holds a peculiar place. An apparently exceptional region, in recent years it has experienced greater isolation on many fronts, leading James Ferguson (1999) to theorize that globalization in Africa may mean a state of “disconnect” rather than intensifying interconnections. In recent decades, many regions of the continent have suffered not only growing impoverishment and, in all too many cases, violence, but also a contraction, rather than expansion, of international trade and an increasing sense of neglect on a world scene. In Africa, a heightened interdependency with other regions has appeared; however, as the 1995 Ecotourism Seminar suggests, this has occurred more in relation to international organizations than to the free market mechanisms championed by neoliberal reformers. And, ironically, the will to give among richer countries has decreased at the same time that the realities of crippling international debt and growing poverty have generated an intensified reliance upon international development institutions and organizations. Yet, development institutions have also been transformed during this period. Recent years have witnessed an exponential growth in non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, which are increasingly charged with carrying out development interventions, while development paradigms now counterpoise market models with ideas of environmental sustainability and local participation or “empowerment.” It might be argued that an analysis of globalization in Africa should focus on precisely these themes. Indeed, some scholars have identified the harbingers of a global era in such trends, stressing either their potentially progressive political possibilities or pointing to the disturbing specter of new forms of governmentality.<sup>9</sup> Although this book centers upon these transformations, it nevertheless makes a different argument. Rather than providing evidence for the impact of globalization, I argue that the social drama of Mafia’s marine park instead serves to challenge the concept of the global itself.

When I began my research on Mafia in the mid-1990s, I had not intended to make such an argument. Initially, I conceived of my project as providing a portrait of globalization from the perspective of sub-Saharan Africa by way of anthropology’s trademark emphasis on the “local.” A global analytical framework seemed useful in challenging assumptions that states, cultures, and societies are bounded and relatively autonomous entities—a popular viewpoint in previous decades even if many observers recognized far messier realities. Eric Wolf once colorfully described this perspective as a world conceived as so many billiard balls careening off each other on a global pool table (1982:6). In my research on Mafia, the “billiard ball” view of the world made little sense given the long history of cosmopolitanism along the

Swahili coast, the failure of fish in Mafia's waters to observe national borders, and the fact that struggles over the Mafia Island Marine Park regularly crossed—and cross-cut—not only national boundaries but those presumed to exist between so-called First and Third Worlds. Indeed, globalization seemed an apt way to understand the social drama of the Mafia Island Marine Park, which focused on the power-laden interactions among individuals and institutions with origins on a range of continents. In writing this book, however, it became increasingly clear that the concept of globalization, even in its many manifestations, failed to fully account for what had been occurring on Mafia. In order to understand why, it is necessary to take a brief detour and consider the assumptions commonly bound up with this concept.

*“Globalization”: The New Narrative of Modernity*

As Gibson-Graham (1996/1997) and others have argued, globalization is associated with a certain set of ideas.<sup>10</sup> Commonly imagined as an abstracted, even supralocal, force, globalization is often thought to happen “above” day-to-day life in ways that determine what occurs at the local “level” below and to be integrating various parts of the planet in an almost evolutionary fashion. Although many early discussions of “global” dynamics had been formulated by scholars on the political left, who were interested in the far-ranging impacts of European colonialism as well as capitalism,<sup>11</sup> this terminology came to be widely superseded during the 1990s by usages common on Wall Street and among the business press. This shared vocabulary suggests not only a common assumption among many on both ends of the political spectrum that capitalism is systemic and proceeds in a teleological fashion, but also a mutual desire to understand how capitalism has been changing in the contemporary era. Eventually, the concept of the global developed into a belief vigorously propounded in business circles that, in a post-Cold War era, globalization was an inevitable and unstoppable process of expanding free markets, and that those governments and individuals who failed to adapt to the juggernaut would be left behind. As such, globalization has come to be either celebrated or castigated by a range of commentators.<sup>12</sup>

Many anthropologists have also drawn upon the framework of the global, both challenging and supporting some of its central tenets.<sup>13</sup> For example, scholars of anthropology and cultural studies have contested the belief that local people are simply victims of broader processes, noting that people throughout the world give new meaning to borrowed goods and concepts, thereby “localizing” global phenomena. They have also pointed out that global cultural flows do not simply represent a one-way traffic between such power centers as the United States and their peripheries, as models of cultural imperialism presuppose, but also regularly occur across regions of the “Third World” (Appadurai 1996).<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, some anthropological ac-

counts have perhaps not gone far enough in their critical engagement with conceptions of the global. The language of “flows” can give such dynamics an abstract and homogenizing quality that contradicts anthropologists’ own ethnographic focus on the specific. More seriously, there has sometimes been a tendency to accept, rather than challenge, the belief that the contemporary period represents a radical break with the past that has created a new and fundamentally different era. In the introduction to a recent anthropological volume on globalization, for example, history itself has been relegated to a single footnote.<sup>15</sup> As anthropologists and other scholars move to adopt the framework of the global, it might be helpful to ponder more closely why this concept has proven to be so successful as a theoretical construct in recent years. Is the exponential expansion of global discourse to be attributed solely to serious observation and analysis, or is there something more at work?

Some might argue that globalization narratives are appealing simply because such accounts describe real changes happening in the contemporary world. Indeed, the shifting nature of capitalism, the social implications of new technologies, and the post–Cold War realignments of people and places *are* having significant impacts in many regions. However, the important question, I would suggest, is not whether change is occurring, but whether common narratives of globalization serve to elucidate—or to obscure—the nature of those changes. From the vantage point of Mafia, I would argue that many of the assumptions commonly equated with globalization have proven problematic. Although it might be possible to view Mafia’s internationally sponsored marine park and its growing (if still tiny) tourism trade in terms of heightened global connections, a historical perspective suggests a more complicated reality. Mafia as part of the ancient and dynamic Indian Ocean trading world was, if anything, more thoroughly associated with cultural borrowing, interregional trade, and mixed populations than Mafia in the present, an observation that challenges the idea that the contemporary period represents a new and radically different condition.<sup>16</sup> Although acknowledging that global dynamics occurred in the past does not address the crucial question of how those dynamics potentially differed from those of the present, it does usefully challenge the assumption that the contemporary period represents a radical break in human history and makes clear that the present can only be understood *in relation to*, rather than apart from, the past.

Mafia’s social drama further contradicts commonplace accounts of globalization by challenging ideas of how power works in the current era. Many contemporary debates center upon the ability of global dynamics to side-step and thus undercut the authority of nation-states, whether through new technologies, the movements of capital, or a growing body of international organizations (for example, Strange 1996). And, indeed, expanding NGO networks and other international institutions are playing an increasingly powerful role in determining national agendas in heavily indebted countries

like Tanzania. I argue in this book, however, that the expanding influence of international organizations, like those involved in the Mafia Island Marine Park, is having a more complicated effect, and ironically may serve to buttress governmental elites while potentially undermining the state itself. Other accounts of globalization have implied that power moves in a single direction, with global forces impacting upon local residents whether for good or ill. On Mafia, however, we see island residents who are actively creating alliances or attempting to bypass more powerful actors, representatives of international institutions who are failing to control the course of events, and presumably marginalized national elites who are moving to centerstage—all dynamics unexplored in commonplace accounts of the global.

If the dynamics on Mafia are not unique—and I strongly suspect they are not—why then have the assumptions associated with globalization narratives proven so persuasive? Some scholars have pointed to the parallels between ideas of globalization and those of “modernity” and “modernization” (Cooper 2001; Tsing 2001; Rouse 1999). In this analysis, I seek to push such insights further by contending that these concepts are not merely similar, but that the idea of globalization itself represents the latest incarnation of modernist narratives. Although the concept of the modern may take on different meanings and be put to a range of uses in various parts of the world (Pigg 1997; Rofel 1998; Donham 1999; Piot 1999), modernist narratives in their dominant form generally suggest that history moves progressively “forward,” that it is characterized by ever increasing rationality and prosperity, that capitalism (or its modernist alter ego, socialism) serves as the primary motor for social transformation, and that a profound rupture exists between the supposedly antithetical conditions of the modern and the traditional. Like globalization, modernization has been similarly portrayed as an evolutionary force, which serves to determine what happens “below” and which penetrates, connects or infiltrates various parts of the world and transforms preexisting social processes in its own image. Indeed, the excitement and the worry that is generated by the scepter of globalization shows striking parallels with that linked to ideas of the “creative destruction” of modernity in previous eras.<sup>17</sup>

This is not to say that ideas of globalization do not in any way differ from prior modernist narratives. Most crucially, the meanings of nation-states, culture, and ethnic difference have shifted noticeably. During the twentieth century, the nation-state was generally held up as the proper embodiment of cultural and ethnic difference as well as identity (despite nineteenth century linkages between cosmopolitanism and capitalism [Polyani 1944]). In the contemporary period, the value of cosmopolitanism has once again been resurrected, ostensibly in a more egalitarian postcolonial fashion, while the role of nation-states has been downplayed and the idea of fixed cultural and national identities has been challenged. Even here, however, older understandings of modernity can quickly reassert themselves. For example, some ob-

servers have viewed the apparent post–Cold War surge in fundamentalism, civil wars, and identity movements as a particularist response to the homogenizing tendencies of globalization (Giddens 2000; Friedman 2000), much as the traditional once served as a counterpoint to a universalizing modernity.

Just as the categories “modern” and “traditional” have been used to label types of people, there is also an emerging tendency to map the ostensibly spatial metaphors of global and local onto particular groups. For example, Mafia residents, along with many other rural-dwellers of what used to be called the Third World, are now commonly classified by visiting international tourists as “locals.” This terminology encourages the tendency to think of residents as strictly bound to a particular place, despite the cosmopolitan histories of places like the East African coast. Paralleling the use of the term “native” under European colonialism, the label “local” implies a similar kind of incarceration in space. Not surprisingly, there has also been a vicarious association of Euro-Americans with global dynamics which are thought to emanate from places like the United States, and, on Mafia, Euro-Americans were widely assumed to be cosmopolitan and influential actors in a way that island residents were not. Such usages ignore the reality that all people are necessarily both local and global actors (if we choose to use those terms). All people are global actors because everywhere individuals exist in relation to—affecting as well as being affected by—dynamics that extend beyond the borders of the nation-states in which they live. At the same time, all individuals are local actors who operate in both time and space, whether within corporate boardrooms in Tokyo or the United States, factory shop floors in Mexico, or tiny islands in the Indian Ocean.

This is not to deny that some actors wield considerably more power in transnational arenas than others. Buying a Coca-Cola in rural Tanzania is not equivalent to deciding to close three clothing factories on different continents, although both are acts with global implications. The concept of the global, however, encourages us to attribute such disparities in influence to the apparent reality that certain actors operate at global rather than local *levels*, thereby offering a false spatialization of social processes that ignores the particular mechanisms by which some individuals come to be more powerful than others. Given contemporary anthropologists’ skill at critiquing the loaded symbolism of the terms *modern* and *traditional*, a dualism with numerous links to the concept of the global and local, anthropologists are well positioned to help disentangle the implications of these more current ideas for how we think about the contemporary world.

### *Analyzing a Social Drama*

It has become a familiar trope in cultural analyses to muse about the presumed historical ruptures of the current globalizing period by opening with a

series of “snapshots” of culture-out-of-place, perhaps African cloth sellers operating in France, rural-dwellers in Asia driving water buffalo past gleaming multinational factories, American tourists photographing former headhunters in the Amazon, or even poor fishermen on an Indian Ocean isle attending an international ecotourism conference. The excitement generated by such images relies upon the symbolic transgression of the locations where stereotypically modern and traditional peoples should be and what they should be doing. Thus, such tropes ironically reproduce rather than transcend these categories, while they ignore the possibility that social and cultural “hybridity” may be more the historical norm than the exception. As historian Frederick Cooper (2001) asks (in a sentiment that many anthropologists might echo), should we not instead be concerned with following the specific pathways and connections, as well as disconnections and breaks, that make up the contemporary social terrain—pathways that patently fail to be captured in the image of a snapshot or even the concept of the global? These pathways, networks, and institutional linkages are not uniform across space, as the idea of flows suggest, but rather uneven, discontinuous, and contested, or “lumpy” in Cooper’s terminology. In this book, I have joined other anthropologists in seeking to capture this lumpiness, combining the insights of ethnographies of global dynamics with a critique of the concept itself.<sup>18</sup>

This book also seeks to convey a humanist portrayal of those individuals and groups who participate in, or are excluded from, various interconnections across geographic regions. Like Abu-Lughod (1993) and others, I worry about the potential of abstracted discourses, including those of conservation and development as well as globalization, to erase particularities of people, places, and history in ways that serve to dehumanize those being discussed. Following her lead, I have similarly sought to create an “anthropology of the particular” that relies upon tactical humanism as a representational strategy (Abu-Lughod 1991, 1993). At the same time, I have tried to create an ethnography that is sensitive to transregional dynamics without resorting to potentially misleading assumptions of supralocal global forces. George Marcus (1998) has made the excellent suggestion that anthropologists should create multisited ethnographies, or works based on research conducted in several geographic locations, as a tool for capturing complex regional interdependencies. *Rough Waters* attempts to achieve this same objective by utilizing yet another methodology, one drawn from a prior period in anthropology’s history—the social drama.

According to Victor Turner’s 1950s formulation, “social dramas,” or analyses of conflict over extended periods of time, help to elucidate the broader structures at work within societies, as well as how such tensions come to be resolved (1957). My own use of a social drama draws even more heavily upon the work of Max Gluckman, who was Turner’s teacher and the intellectual force behind the Manchester school of anthropology (Kuper 1973:137–

47). In a groundbreaking analysis that departed from then existing norms of presenting societies as static and bounded, Gluckman analyzed a power-laden event which occurred in 1938—a “social situation” in his parlance—the ceremonial opening of a bridge in Zululand attended by British colonial officials, European expatriates, and African aristocrats and commoners (1958). Although Gluckman’s and Turner’s accounts were directed toward more functionalist questions of how conflict and tension are overcome in order to maintain societal cohesiveness, my own analysis offers a more open-ended exploration of the ways in which conflicts and alliances among different categories of actors can serve as a map of broader power relationships. Following the various strands of the social drama of the Mafia Island Marine Park outward in order to explore their historical, institutional, socio-cultural, and economic linkages (as well as their disconnections) offers a window onto a contemporary social terrain that crosscuts presumed boundaries of First World and Third World as well as global and local “levels,” while remaining focused on the day-to-day lives of actual people. Utilizing such a perspective allows those social spaces that are excluded from snapshots of the global to come into view, and permits us to explore the myriad (although still lumpy) linkages between various regions of the world.

#### *The Lessons of a Social Drama*

But where exactly does the social drama of the Mafia Island Marine Park take us and what can we learn from it? As a self-reflexively “new” kind of international project, the Mafia Island Marine Park has sought to combine the institutions and ideas of conservation and development into a form of sustainable development that centers around ecotourism and that ostensibly counters more authoritarian institutional models by encouraging community participation among residents. The hopes, worries, and conflicts surrounding the many facets of the marine park draw attention to a broad range of issues. These issues include islanders’ perspectives on the region’s history, the meaning of “community,” and the role of fishing in economic life. It also includes the history of conservation and development policies, the role of knowledge, bureaucracy, and tourism in structuring social relationships, and the different meanings given to nature, development, and participation among various park actors. Finally, this analysis considers the fit—or lack of fit—between such dynamics and overarching frameworks of globalization.

In trying to make sense of the numerous strands of this social drama, this book has had to rely upon a broad range of literatures, two of which I will single out for attention here. Rather than utilizing the ecological models historically common in anthropological theorizing of the environment, this book has drawn inspiration from the work of political ecologists, primarily geographers, who have brought political and historical questions to bear on

environmental analyses (although I have sought to add a more “cultural” perspective to such accounts, as fellow anthropologist Donald Moore [1993] has suggested).<sup>19</sup> To an even greater degree, this book has been influenced by an emerging critical literature on development. Rather than simply contributing to technical discussions of why particular projects succeed or (more often) fail, this literature takes “development” itself as its object of analysis and explores the ideas, knowledge practices, and organizational dynamics of international and national projects and policies (Ferguson 1994; Gupta 1998; Pigg 1996, 1997; Escobar 1995; Hodgson 2001; Benjamin 2000; Cooper and Packard 1997; T. Mitchell 1995; Crush 1995). In particular, James Ferguson’s now classic account of a development project in Lesotho (1994) offers an important model for rethinking international projects. In addition to addressing how ideas of development have been premised on particular power-laden assumptions about First and Third World countries, Ferguson examined the social consequences of the institutional apparatus of a development project itself. He argued that the technocentric orientation of development ideas and institutions disguised the political effects of development projects, including such unintended consequences as the way governmental elites might use such projects to further their own authority and control. This book draws upon Ferguson’s work, but also focuses on a different kind of project and utilizes a somewhat different analytical and methodological orientation. Consequently, it explores a range of issues left unexamined in Ferguson’s account.

As a new type of international project, the Mafia Island Marine Park was consciously created to counter critiques leveled against an older generation of projects, including the one analyzed by Ferguson. The marine park was intended to address charges that national parks, which generally have been based upon exclusionary preservationist models, disregard the economic welfare of poor citizens and are authoritarian in their orientation. Paralleling common trends among development institutions, the design of the marine park sought to encourage “sustainable development” through ecotourism and to incorporate the participation of affected communities. This book suggests that Ferguson’s insights into the social implications of technocentrism continue to hold relevance for the ways in which participation and communities are conceptualized within this new generation of projects. However, as the analytical focus of this book shifts from the institutional apparatus privileged by Ferguson to the human interrelationships occurring in and around the marine park itself, still other dynamics come into view.<sup>20</sup> Such dynamics include the ways in which such institutions are contested (successfully or not) by “target” populations, how individuals and groups create alliances as well as suffer exclusions, and the ways in which ideas of development, nature, and participation are variously understood, appropriated, disputed, and used.

Such points of contestation and reinterpretation, in turn, raise questions about the theoretical paradigms that have increasingly been used to understand development. Many critical development scholars, as well as social theorists concerned with “modern” institutions more broadly, have drawn heavily upon the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault. And, indeed, the insights afforded by Foucault have been powerful. His work has drawn attention to power dynamics in arenas outside of formal state authority through its focus on the “disciplinary” techniques of modern institutions and forms of knowledge (for example, Foucault 1972, 1977, 1978, 1994). In contrast to liberal assumptions that emphasize the role of modern institutions in creating free individuals, Foucault’s account suggests that modern disciplinary techniques as well as the forms of subjectivity that such disciplines generate and through which individuals learn to “discipline” themselves, are inherently implicated within broader power relationships. As utilized by critical development theorists, such perspectives have offered important insights into how development institutions and paradigms, as forms of modern social organization and knowledge, underwrite broader international hierarchies and serve to shape how individuals conceptualize themselves and a larger social world. Foucauldian insights, as will become clear, are evident throughout this volume.

Yet, there are also aspects of this legacy that are potentially limiting. Despite Foucault’s critique of teleological ideas of history, there is an implicit sense in his accounts in which “modernity,” or the transition to it, continues to exist as something that requires explanation. Such accounts thereby implicitly draw attention to what is presumed to be qualitatively unique about Western societies or “modernity” more generally. At the same time, the Foucauldian emphasis upon institutions and discourses, rather than human actors (even while acknowledging the ability of disciplinary regimes to generate new subjectivities as well as resistance), draws attention away from the multiple interpretations and uses to which development and conservation—along with other modern ideas and institutions—may be put.

There is a growing interest in examining the multiple interpretations and uses of development (for example, Hodgson 2001; Pigg 1996, 1992; Walley 2003). Although the concept of development has disturbing historical origins in colonial-era European evolutionary thought, like all concepts, it is open to ambiguities, conflicting meanings, and reinterpretation. For example, as Cooper and Packard note, independence-era nationalists appropriated the colonialist conception of development and sought to transform it into a language of entitlement (Cooper and Packard 1997). On Mafia, rather than politically appropriating the concept of *maendeleo* or development, residents have instead mapped it onto broader historical understandings of wealth and economic relations. Similarly, what are often referred to as modern institutions have also been put to multiple uses within the marine park. For exam-

ple, contestation over the apparatus of park bureaucracy itself formed a significant strand in the social drama of Mafia's marine park (see chapter 7). In addition, the fact that bureaucracies *can* institutionalize rights and counter abuses of power (while also imposing their will upon the less powerful) is a point that may be too easily neglected in some Foucauldian accounts. On Mafia, the vigorous attempts of certain government officials to oppose the institutionalized participation of islanders in an effort to consolidate their own authority underscores such a reality. In sum, this analysis of daily interactions within an international project draws attention to the conflicting ways in which "modern" institutions and ideas are understood and used by particular individuals and groups. This is not to suggest, however, that social phenomena are infinitely malleable or that contestation and reinterpretation should be invariably romanticized as the "resistance" of marginalized groups (particularly since the powerful engage in similar tactics). In the end, the ability of individuals to contest, appropriate, and reinterpret may be most useful in analytical terms because it draws into relief the broader power relationships in which all actors are embedded.<sup>21</sup>

Ultimately, the social drama of the Mafia Island Marine Park suggests a reality in which history is both structured by existing power relationships and open-ended, and in which everyday social relationships consist of practices and ideas with multiple historical and social genealogies. Although such practices and ideas often come to be labeled either modern or traditional, particularly in non-western contexts, there is nothing inherently oppositional about such phenomena. For example, Mafia residents countered their exclusion from park bureaucracy (despite the official language of participation) by drawing upon historically salient models of patron–client relationships in an effort to find individuals who could influence the bureaucracy on their behalf. Similarly, Mafia residents depended upon noncommodified networks of reciprocity, at the same time that they were thoroughly enmeshed in markets, and they failed to view scientific paradigms in opposition to popular knowledge.

Such "mixed" phenomena can be, and have been, interpreted in various ways. The most common interpretation in both First World and Third World countries is to assume that such realities represent an incomplete transition from traditional to modern ideas and practices. For postcolonial theorists, some of whom seek to make Foucault's ideas applicable to nonwestern parts of the world, such phenomena may instead suggest a condition of "hybridity," a terminology that implies that the modern and the traditional are simultaneously distinct and intertwined, much as a biological hybrid mixes two separate species.<sup>22</sup> For some Marxists, the persistence of "traditional" practices stems from their functionality within the contemporary world. For example, the tendency of capitalists to pay lower wages to laborers who also utilize subsistence strategies has been seen in this light.<sup>23</sup> In their own way,

each of these viewpoints privileges the perspective of the modern, assuming the “modern” to be the dominant factor or the logic to which other logics must defer. Even theories of “hybridity” problematically assume the unique ability of modernity to create such “mixed” social dynamics.

In yet another theoretical vein, some anthropologists have emphasized that “traditions” are constantly reworked and assume new meanings in different contexts (without necessarily presuming a functionalist purpose),<sup>24</sup> while others have emphasized the very different symbolic understandings that “modernity” may take on for various groups (for example, Donham 1999, Pigg 1996, Rofel 1998). Pushing such assertions further might suggest an alternative way of thinking about the world that does not unduly privilege the modern. I would argue that such apparently “mixed” phenomena might instead force us to recognize that the social worlds in which we all live are comprised of a patchwork of dynamics with varying social and historical origins, not all of which follow or are being subsumed by an overarching logic of capitalism or modernity. In this patchwork world, techniques of power and the subjectivities they create may reflect different histories, may overlap, coexist, and be in a constant state of transformation (with non-modernist dynamics being as potentially problematic as modern ones). It is toward this view of the world that some scholars, who are pushing the boundaries of poststructuralist paradigms, appear to point (Mitchell 1998; Gibson-Graham 1996). At the same time, however, depicting social life in terms of a diversity of ideas and practices does not necessitate throwing one’s hands up in despair at the world’s complexity. Historical trends do indeed “move” in certain directions. However, this is a product of the social logics at work within particular social and economic relationships, networks, and institutions. It is not because there is a teleological totalizing force at work that is transforming the world as narratives of modernity and, their latest offspring, globalization, both suggest. In short, rather than arguing that abstracted global processes bind people in different parts of the world together, might we not instead emphasize a common humanity that is uniformly worked from patchwork cloth?

Finally, it should be clearly stated that although this analysis is often critical of the processes at work within the Mafia Island Marine Park, it is not intended as an attack on development—if what is meant by “development” is an increased standard of living and greater equality for more than a small percentage of a population. Nor is this work a critique of environmentalism. On the contrary, it demonstrates how crucial environmental issues are to poorer people such as those on Mafia, who are heavily dependent upon natural resources, even if such issues are discussed in terms not easily recognized by many Western environmentalists. Although I do not believe, as some imply, that poorer or “indigenous” people are inherently better ecologists, I do believe that a “better” environmentalism is necessarily one that addresses

the inequities of poverty and access to natural resources both across and within so-called First World and Third World. Perhaps most importantly, this book does not imply that all efforts at reform are useless. Rather it argues that current efforts to reform the ideas and practices of development and conservation institutions have been, at best, superficial and that there is a pressing need for more radical forms of change. Finally, if the dynamics presented in this book are messy and complex, this should not be a cause for despair. Such messiness might represent the appropriate starting point from which both our thinking and our political action should begin.

On Mafia, residents speak of *maji makali* or the “fierce” or “rough” waters that endanger the lives of fishers as well as travelers. Yet, this sense of the ocean as dangerous is paralleled by the recognition that the possibility of sustaining life rests on their ability to harvest from the sea, a need that has dramatically increased in recent years. Residents have held a similar ambivalence toward the Mafia Island Marine Park. On the one hand, they have expressed high hopes that the park can assist them in maintaining the marine resources upon which they depend; on the other, the park holds the potential to forbid access to natural resources necessary for survival. It is through these rough waters that this book follows the social drama of the Mafia Island Marine Park.

#### NEGOTIATING THE ROLE OF RESEARCHER

In an ethnographic project that focuses on the interrelationships among a range of actors, it is crucial to acknowledge how the researcher is positioned in this mix. Anthropologists have increasingly come to recognize that, while accustomed to thinking of ourselves as observers, we are also actors, and our own particular social location is an inescapable part of our work. The point in analyzing our own positioning is neither narcissism nor the belief that this is somehow more “objective.” Rather, it points to the recognition that cultural anthropology is in essence dialogic, the product of interrelationships and interactions among people, and that this interaction is intrinsic to the work we produce (for example, Haraway 1983; Rabinow 1977; Crapanzano 1980; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fischer 1986; and Clifford 1988).

Before describing my relationship with other individuals and groups on Mafia, I should mention how I myself arrived there. I did not originally intend to conduct research on the Mafia Island Marine Park. In fact, I had not intended to work on Mafia at all, but rather to study tourism on neighboring Zanzibar Island. A growing interest in environmental issues and a desire to do something “useful,” however, made me dissatisfied with this choice. Consequently, I was intrigued when I was invited by an expatriate

from the United States who owned a hotel in Zanzibar to come to Chole Island in the Mafia archipelago where he and a partner were setting up a community-based tourism initiative. At the time, I knew little about Mafia, which lay well to the south of Zanzibar, other than what I had gathered from reading Pat Caplan's 1975 ethnography, at that time almost the only published social scientific work done on Mafia since a German geographer visited the islands in the 1890s.<sup>25</sup> Mafia seemed to be best known among tourists, academics, and many Tanzanians themselves for being "unknown." Intrigued by the idea of working with island residents as they negotiated the economic and social shoals of tourism development via this community-based project, I decided to split my research time between Zanzibar and Mafia. In exchange for a place to live, I agreed to help the budding tourism initiative by teaching English to adults on Chole and by offering various kinds of assistance to the elected committees of island residents that were to help run the project. I quickly became drawn into life on Chole and eventually moved my research entirely to Mafia. I shortly realized, however, that Chole's residents were more concerned with fish than with tourists. This realization led me to redirect my attention to the growing controversy surrounding what was ultimately the catalyst for Mafia's expanding tourism industry as well as the potential protector of its fish—the Mafia Island Marine Park.

In 1994, when I first arrived on Chole, an island with less than 800 residents, my own social positioning would prove instrumental to the types of relationships that I would develop. Because I was initially known to the island's residents as someone who had volunteered to teach English, a subject many people were eager to learn, and because I was associated with a project that many viewed with high hopes, I was in the enviable position of being viewed as someone useful to have around Chole. During my first weeks, I was surprised by the small gifts I received when I walked around the island, and invariably returned home with my hands and pockets full of oranges, mangoes, unripe coconuts, and boiled eggs. Because Chole was so small, and because most of its residents were bound by ties of kinship and marriage, it was relatively easy to forge links to the various social networks on the island, and I quickly developed a sense of belonging that contrasted sharply with my prior experiences in East Africa, first as a high school teacher in rural western Kenya and later as a student and researcher in Zanzibar Town. As my attachment to certain individuals and families on Chole grew, so did my desire to repay their hospitality and generosity.

My growing desire to be useful, was, I believe, paralleled by the desire of many people on Chole that I *be* useful. Although many residents were never entirely clear about the nature of anthropology as a discipline—most preferred to think of me in terms of the known and respected category of

“teacher”—they, nonetheless, were interested in my assuming roles that might be of use to them. When I first arrived, there was only one person on Chole who spoke English. Many islanders were therefore eager for assistance in communicating with the growing number of Euro-Americans who were coming to Mafia as a result either of the tourism industry or the marine park. Some of these visitors held positions of considerable influence and represented a potential source of jobs or other benefits to islanders; others were merely vacationing, but residents hoped that the visitors would stimulate a market for local wares and services. Even though many tourists and expatriate workers seemed untroubled by their failure to speak KiSwahili, people on Chole, in accordance with the cosmopolitan spirit that has long characterized the coast, were troubled by their inability to communicate or even greet these newcomers, an unthinkable affront to coastal standards of politeness. An older man on Chole expressed a common frustration when he informed me that, “People are coming to our island, yet we stand around like *bubu* (deaf-mutes), unable to speak to them.” Thus, in addition to teaching informal English classes, I was often called upon to serve as translator.

The roles that people on Chole most desired for me to play, however, were those of information source and potential liaison. As a researcher and a “European,” I had access to people and to information that they did not. In an atmosphere where secrecy and the withholding of knowledge was a primary technique for consolidating and maintaining power, a willingness to share information was highly valued. I was also at times called upon to serve as an intermediary with individuals involved in Chole’s tourist camp or with the marine park. Some people clearly hoped that what I might say, or later write in my book or *ripoti*, could serve as a means to communicate with more powerful others who could not, or would not, otherwise hear their viewpoints.

Although my relationships with people on Chole were marked by a closeness built, in some cases, on affection and friendship, and in others on mutual self-interest, my relationships with other actors on Mafia were at times more fraught. As is already clear, government officials played a central role in the unfolding marine park drama, both by virtue of their being members of a national and educated elite and in their role as an interface between international organizations and Mafia’s residents. Government officials assigned to Mafia District, the Maritime Division,<sup>26</sup> and the marine park were overwhelmingly male, hailed from the mainland, and lived in the government administrative center of Kilindoni on Mafia’s main island.

Although government officials were central actors in the marine park drama, I had considerably less interaction with them than I did with people on Chole. Difficulties were posed both by geography and my own social positioning. The journey to and from the government center, while not far in terms of kilometers was a difficult one, often requiring an entire day’s travel.

Those living on Chole regularly complained of the erratic service of the “ferry,” a sailboat dependent on the vagaries of wind and weather that was the only public transportation on or off of Chole Island (the ferry captain himself was kept to this thankless job only by the social pressure of island elders). Once the ferry deposited Chole residents in Utende village on the main island, passengers faced even greater difficulties trying to travel the 15 km into Kilindoni. One often-broken and dangerously overcrowded pick-up truck traveled from Utende into Kilindoni and back each day (following a schedule even more erratic than the winds that powered the ferry). Like other Chole residents, I considered myself lucky if I was able to squeeze into or on top of the truck—especially since the less fortunate were left to walk through the sand and heat. Even when I managed to make my way into Kilindoni, I found that my ability to interact socially with government bureaucrats was limited. Formal interviews, not surprisingly, elicited vague pronouncements meant for public consumption. Informal interactions, the stuff of which anthropological understandings are built, were limited for other reasons. As a young, unmarried woman, any attempts on my part to spend time informally with male government officials would have been misinterpreted by both Mafia’s residents and by the officials themselves—a situation of which I was keenly aware.

This situation posed a striking contrast to the one on Chole where I had informal access to many homes, and would spend hours visiting and gossiping with friends, hearing what people said in relaxed moments both to myself and others. Although I worried about this unevenness of access, I also recognized that overly close relationships with government officials would have threatened the trust I had developed with people on Chole who viewed such officials with suspicion. People on Mafia often complained about government bureaucrats, arguing that the officials preferred to spend their time in Kilindoni rather than addressing the needs of district residents. Many felt that government officials were not to be trusted and best ignored, or viewed them, as in the case of dynamite fishing, as outright adversaries. As time progressed, I also noticed that as I became closer to island residents, some government officials appeared increasingly wary of me, a dynamic that, ironically, further cemented my relationships with Chole residents. Increased trust in one arena clearly meant increased suspicion in another, and in the end I was forced to recognize that there was no “objective” space outside of already existing social relationships in which I could conduct research.

My research possibilities on Mafia were also strongly shaped by my being an *mzungu* (the KiSwahili term which encapsulates all “Europeans” including those from the United States), as well as by where I lived and the access to other categories of people that this position afforded. When I first arrived on Chole, I stayed in one of two tents pitched in a deserted portion of the island that would eventually become the tourist camp, a location that turned

out to be an excellent observation point for the social interactions with which my research was concerned. Initially I was the only *mzungu* in residence, and during my stays in 1994 and 1995, those who frequented the camp were largely Chole residents—the committee members overseeing community aspects of the project, day laborers working construction, and long-term employees of the camp. The camp quickly became an informal social gathering place for those who worked there and for many who did not. Consequently, there were always opportunities to participate in casual conversations, to ask questions, and to watch the processes by which residents were negotiating this tourist initiative.

During the 19 months (over the course of three years) in which I lived on Chole, the camp grew to the point where it was difficult to recall the plot of bush on which it was originally sited. When I left Chole in 1997, the camp consisted of seven large canvas safari tents under plaited palm frond roofs built with mangrove poles. There was also a coral and cement office and store room, several latrines (I had originally used the bush), landscaped showering stalls, and a canopied dining area with a large table around which various European and American workers as well as the odd tourist, would gather for meals. (By the time of my visit in 2000, the camp had become even more elegant and luxurious, with magnificent wooden tree houses perched in the baobob trees along the water's edge and with guests enjoying lantern-lit meals within the island's stone ruins with *zumari* or horn music playing in the background.)

Although during my latter periods of fieldwork in 1996 and 1997, I often missed the “old days” spent socializing and chatting with Chole residents in the camp, these changes brought new research possibilities as well. Conversations held at the central dining table, over meals of beans and rice when there were only “workers,” or crab claws, fancy hors d'oeuvres, pastas, and grilled fish when there were guests, became an important source of information for my work. When the tour operators who had created Chole's camp were in residence, they brought news of the expatriate-dominated tourism industry, as well as development and conservation circles in Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar. In addition to friends and guests, they also brought various volunteers or others who agreed to work on Chole for several month stints, often with minimal pay. At various points, development workers, tourism industry personnel, naturalists, construction workers, journalists, teachers, filmmakers and an eclectic assortment of others, including an archaeologist, a geologist, a landscape architect, and a performance studies professor all spent time in Chole's camp. Although a few Africans stayed at various points, including several Zanzibari employees and a handful of professionals from mainland Tanzania and Kenya, the vast majority of those who worked and stayed in the camp were *wazungu* (pl. of *mzungu*) hailing from all parts of the “West,” including Britain, the United States, Holland, Germany, and Italy.

Over those evening meals, I learned far more about the social workings of East Africa's development world, as well as its tourism industry, than I could have anticipated. Particularly on those occasions when dinner guests included central figures in the expatriate worlds of Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam, or those involved in Mafia's tourist industry and marine park, dining table conversation centered on the inner workings and political machinations of government ministries, international organizations, and expatriate-owned businesses involved in conservation and development within Tanzania as well as on Mafia. Just as information, both accurate and inaccurate, rapidly circulated through gossip networks among Mafia residents, so too gossip was equally central to the expatriate world—with one major difference. Because development workers, employees of international organizations, and even moderate-level investors play a substantial role in determining national policies in a country like Tanzania, one of the peculiarities of expatriate circles was that individual "Europeans" (to use the KiSwahili translation) could travel in far higher social and political circles in such countries than they could have in their home countries—a phenomenon as consistent today as it was under colonialism. Even Europeans visiting for short periods could with relative ease gain access to these numerically small networks by virtue of national and cultural ties. Thus, "Europeans" could routinely gain informal access to information far beyond the reach of most nonelite Tanzanians.

Although there were various shoals to negotiate in dealing with government officials, there were also more shoals than I had anticipated in interactions with fellow *wazungu*. Although I was deeply dependent upon, and grateful for, the support and assistance provided by numerous fellow Euro-Americans, living in a tourist site within an expatriate-dominated industry at times presented unanticipated moments of awkwardness. We all possess "cultural scripts" for imagining what "others" are like, and many Tanzanians held particular visions of *wazungu* just as most Europeans held particular assumptions about Africans. However, it is undeniable that these scripts are also implicated in power relationships between groups, and living in a tourist site meant that I was often in the uncomfortable position of having to negotiate between these power-laden scripts, not only for myself but for others. On numerous occasions, I was asked by European tourists to act as a translator or in other ways to mediate their relationships with people on Chole. If visitors behaved in ways that were impolite by coastal standards (as sometimes happened), it was difficult not to worry that such behavior would reflect badly on me as a fellow *mzungu*.

Although in general Chole residents were remarkably welcoming of visitors, they were annoyed by the failure of some *wazungu* to dress appropriately, to take photos without asking permission, or to fail to respond to greetings that they did not understand. "They don't know this is not the proper way to act here," many people would tolerantly acknowledge. How-

ever, at times, such cultural “miscommunications” seemed to shade into something more disturbing, namely, the particular constellation of power relationships in which we are all enmeshed as residents of so-called First and Third Worlds. Perhaps influenced by stereotypical images of Africans common in the news media or having grown accustomed to Tanzanians as service personnel in high-end hotels and restaurants, some visitors treated Chole’s residents as cultural backdrop rather than individuals. Whereas most European visitors came to East Africa precisely because they were open-minded, others shared the dismissive stereotypes about Africans common to much of European history. Such attitudes were disturbing to me, not because they were different from those with which I had grown up, but precisely because they were embarrassingly similar. Although island residents acknowledged the problematic behavior of some *wazungu*, I think I sometimes found these incidents more awkward than Chole residents, who were busy worrying about their own cultural literacy in relation to visitors.

At the same time, other Europeans may also have felt ambivalence about having an anthropologist in their midst. Although some short-term visitors to Mafia seemed to romanticize the role of the anthropologist, as well as the act of establishing “rapport” with islanders, a few Europeans, particularly those who were well established within expatriate circles in places like Utende tended toward the opposite extreme. Some *wazungu* who had been born in East Africa or had lived there for long periods were justifiably tired of the stream of researchers who came for short stays and then left to publish grand pronouncements about the region. Others simply assumed that research such as mine was unimportant: After all where were the educated research assistants, expatriate-style housing, four-wheel drive vehicle, and large-scale budget associated with “serious” academics (particularly those linked with the ubiquitous aid projects)? In general, such tensions suggest the need to examine the social positioning of different groups of Euro-Americans in relation to each other (for instance, as researchers, businesspeople, aid workers, missionaries, environmentalists, tourists, and African citizens), just as it would be necessary to identify the social divisions found among diverse groups of Tanzanians.

Finally, I had to admit that my own social positioning, including a particular class background, worked to shape my perceptions of, and interactions with, various park actors. However unlikely it seemed, Chole, with its diverse population bound by a dense web of social and familial ties rooted in the area over several generations, held strong parallels with the ethnic, working-class urban neighborhood in the United States where I was raised. On Chole, both women and men made sure that I maintained the social networks to which they had introduced me, by encouraging me to attend weddings, funerals, and other *mashuguli* (social events) when appropriate, by hinting that it was time to visit particular individuals who might be feeling slighted

socially, or by using guilt to chastise me when I let other concerns like my research take precedence over social obligations. Their concerns spoke of a place where the maintenance of thick networks of social ties was highly valued and reminded me of my own family and neighborhood. In addition, the cynical indifference that men and women displayed in casual conversation toward those in power spoke volumes about how they felt themselves to be positioned outside such structures. Despite the obvious differences in culture and standard of living between Chole and the Southeast Side of Chicago, there were structural similarities that at times made life on Chole feel strangely familiar. In particular, I was disturbed by the condescension many educated “experts” and government officials showed Chole’s residents, in part because it reminded me of more muted social slights that my own family members, some with similarly limited educational backgrounds, had also experienced.

Although anthropologists regularly find themselves mediating between cultural worlds and even class positions, I was often aware of the similarities between the role that I played on Mafia and at home in Chicago. On Chole, I was often asked to help deal in small ways with a bureaucratic and elite world outside Mafia. For example, one afternoon, I found myself sitting in the home of a family to which I had become close, helping an elderly man who had gone blind from diabetes and his unschooled wife make logical piles out of heaps of medical bills, prescriptions, and instructions, many of which were written in English, the language of expertise, rather than KiSwahili, the language of communication. Earlier that day, I had read aloud to them from the KiSwahili version of the self-help medical guide “Where There Is No Doctor,” which I had found in Dar es Salaam after much difficulty, and we shared information about his illness. Sitting on that floor, I was struck by the parallels with my situation only a few months earlier when I had been called home from Tanzania to visit my ailing father in Chicago. At that time, I had similarly sat on the floor sorting through medical bills and insurance forms, explaining bureaucratic procedures and pill schedules, and offering condensed readings from books about heart disease. The contexts were very different, and yet similar structural positions were at work. This incident, along with countless others, underscored for me that First and Third Worlds were far less distant than I had been raised to believe.

#### WRITING THE PARTICULAR: THE ORGANIZATION OF THIS BOOK

Although the process of building relationships with various actors during fieldwork is a complex one, so too is the process of committing the ambiguities of research into a written form. Writing an ethnography of the “particular” can also create specific problems when the topic is as politically

charged as the one addressed in this book. Descriptions of real people and events risk invading the privacy of the people presented therein, a risk only partially offset by the use of pseudonyms. Focusing on particular events and struggles not only at the village level but in the context of public forums also means potentially alienating public figures and organizations whose identities are not easily concealed (and, clearly, the primary players in the struggles over the Mafia Island Marine Park will be recognizable to those involved in the park regardless of my efforts at disguise). As anthropology increasingly invades the territory of journalism and takes as its subjects public figures more accustomed to its conventions, it is appropriate to consider how this affects the ethics of doing anthropology. While an insight offered in an unguarded moment of personal confession is often considered the most telling kind of information for anthropologists, when our subjects are public figures whose identities are less easily concealed, should this alter the nature of what we commit to paper? I have tried to address this issue in two ways. First, I have followed anthropological conventions and used pseudonyms when referring to individuals, as well as to tourism establishments and a government ministry, in an admittedly imperfect effort to protect the privacy of those involved. I have also, at times, given less-detailed descriptions than I would have liked. In particular, writing about corruption, a topic not easily documented or cited, poses difficulties for researchers. Corruption, however, is central to how Mafia residents understand the dynamics of the marine park and other international projects, and there is no way to make sense of their actions without addressing this issue. Although many Mafia residents *believe* such claims to be true, causing them to act in particular ways that are important to this research, this book, clearly, can itself make no claims to the accuracy or inaccuracy of such views.

In writing this book, I have begun with the conceptual heart of the analysis, the “social drama” itself. Part 1 consists of a single chapter, “Battling for the Marine Park,” and examines the struggles over the Mafia Island Marine Park among Mafia residents, government officials and representatives of international organizations during the period of the park’s implementation between 1994 and 1997. The second part of this book includes three chapters focusing on those actors in the preceding drama with which I am most concerned—residents of Chole Island within the Mafia archipelago. Although Chole residents may be seen by some as exemplars of the “local,” I contest such a view, considering how life for Chole residents is shaped in complex ways by national, regional, and transregional dynamics both in the present and in the past. Chapter 2, “‘When People Were as Worthless as Insects’: History, Popular Memory, and Tourism on Chole,” explores the historical narratives told by Chole residents and asks what such narratives reveal about residents’ understandings of power and their relationships with groups and institutions beyond Mafia. Chapter 3, “The Making and Unmaking of ‘Community,’” considers the various meanings of “community,” a central concept

to planners of participatory conservation and development projects and one that, along with the “local,” is often used as a counterpoint to ideas of the “global.” Chapter 4, “Where There Is No Nature,” challenges the tendency of Euro-American environmentalists to view rural residents of the Third World as embedded in “nature” without exploring what nature means—and does not mean—to people like those on Mafia. It explores fishing practices on Chole as well as the relationship between market and nonmarket practices and considers how such processes are related to broader national and transnational hierarchies.

The third and final section of this book includes three chapters focusing on the marine park itself, its historical predecessors and how the implementation of the park has played out in day-to-day life on Mafia. Chapter 5, “Establishing Experts: Conservation and Development Policies from Colonialism to Independence,” considers the historical rise of national parks, conservation policies, and development paradigms within Tanzania and how such histories shape the social drama of the Mafia Island Marine Park. Chapter 6, “Pushing Paper and Power: Bureaucracy and Knowledge within a National Marine Park,” acknowledges that although “globalization” is widely associated with the spread of multinational capitalism, it has also been linked to the expanding influence of international organizations and the bureaucracies that they create. This chapter considers bureaucracy itself to be a site of struggle within the marine park and explores how the valorization and exclusion of particular kinds of knowledge within park institutions works to marginalize Mafia residents despite the official emphasis on participation. The final chapter, “Tourist Encounters: Alternate Readings of Nature and ‘Development,’” considers the different meanings assigned to development by various park actors as well as the social implications of the particular form of “development” being championed within the marine park—tourism.

Finally, the epilogue, “Participating in the Twenty-First Century,” resumes the social drama of the marine park which began this book. Based on information gathered during a return visit to Mafia during the summer of 2000, it follows the contestation over the marine park since 1997, exploring some occasionally dramatic reversals. In offering this final installment of Mafia’s “social drama,” I argue for the necessity of gaining critical distance on commonplace narratives of globalization as well as technocentric understandings of conservation and development in order to explore the complex power relationships at work in the contemporary era. I argue that the drama of the marine park offers a vision of the world in which modern and nonmodern elements come together in a way that contests totalizing narratives of both modernity and globalization. By taking into account such complex dynamics, we might be better able to understand the interrelationships between humans and the natural environments of which we are a part, allowing us to explore possibilities for countering the degradation of nature in ways that address, rather than exacerbate, broader social inequalities.