

Development Consumers:

An Ethnography of “The Poorest of the Poor” and International Aid  
in Rural Tanzania

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## **Abbreviations**

CD	Community Development
EC	European Community
GAD	Gender and Development
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMR	infant mortality rate
MFP	Malangali Forestry Program
MP	Member of Parliament
MSS	Malangali Secondary School
MWSS	Malangali Water Supply Scheme
NGO	non-governmental organization
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RWMP	Regional Water Master Plan
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
TFA	Tanzania Farmers' Association
TGNP	Tanzania Gender Networking Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VWC	Village Water Committee
WID	Women in Development
WIS	Wider Impact Study

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## **Dedication**

For the inspiration of their humanitarianism  
and their intellects;

For their extraordinary love and care;

For giving me the world;

I dedicate this work to my grandparents:

the memory of Joyce S. Adler

Irving Adler

Rose Sparer

and the memory of Max Sparer

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

If the new partnership the President will be espousing succeeds, these people  
– these extra people –  
these people that are going to be born between now and the year 2020  
will end up not being wards of the international community,  
but possibly consumers of American and other products;  
perhaps products that they produce on their own as well.  
If modern science and technology combines with a renewed commitment to education  
and health care, these people will be productive participants in growing economies.

So if all goes well with development, in other words,  
we Americans will pay less for humanitarian disasters,  
protect ourselves better against the infectious diseases that result from poverty and  
environmental decay,  
and we'll discover new markets for American exports.

Now, that's the President's mission – to create a new partnership based on mutual respect,  
democratic values and a common commitment to achieve sustainable development  
based on economic and political freedom.

Brian Atwood, USAID Administrator  
The White House, 20 March 1998

When senior advisors to the President of the United States address a live television  
audience from a podium in the White House, their words portend policy directions that  
will have important effects. On the occasion of Brian Atwood's remarks, the White  
House was preparing the media and the public for the first ever major tour of sub-Saharan  
Africa by an American president. Atwood's words carefully merge a distillation of decades  
of experience by agencies such as his with "development" in Africa, with the considered  
judgement of policy experts about how to best achieve development objectives – and  
promote specific interests – in years to come. The objectives Atwood lays forth for Africa  
– economic productivity, environmental protection, democracy, sustainability – are the

focus of myriad studies<sup>1</sup> and billions of dollars of aid and activity. How did the objectives of international aid programs come to take particular forms such as those undergirding Atwood's speech? What have been the effects of these understandings on the actions and policies that affect residents of rural Africa? How do residents of rural Africa who face conditions of extreme adversity interact with programs that seek to bring them "development"? What are their own understandings and objectives for dealing with and overcoming harsh conditions of material poverty? In sum, what is the connection between the pronouncements of international development "experts" and the lives of people who remain among the world's poorest despite decades of local, national, and international actions aimed at addressing their poverty? In this dissertation I address these questions by looking at the lives of the residents of Malangali, Tanzania, and their relations with people from elsewhere with whom they are intertwined.

This is a political ethnography that examines the interaction of global activities with people in one small area far from the world's centers of population or power. What first brought me to Malangali in 1992 was what I then saw as an economic question, and now seven years later see is also an intensely political one. Tanzania has remained ranked throughout the 1990s as one of the four poorest countries on the World Bank's list of

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<sup>1</sup> Contemporary studies of development projects number in the thousands, including specific project reviews, policy documents, and academic studies. Among the current journals devoted to general aspects of the topic are *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, *Development*, *Development and Change*, *Development Policy Review*, *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, *Environment and Development Economics*, *The Journal of Developing Areas*, *Journal of Development Assistance*, *Journal of Development Economics*, *The Journal of Development Studies*, *Journal of International Development*, *Oxford Development Studies*, *Review of Development Economics*, *The World Bank Economic Review*, *World Development*.

basic national wealth indicators.<sup>2</sup> The people of Malangali, in the Iringa region of the southern highlands, have been classified in several documents as among the worst off of Tanzanians, “the poorest of the poor.”<sup>3</sup> They have been so categorized despite more than 60 years of development-type programs aimed at improving their material conditions. What follows is the story of Malangali residents and the people who would try to transform them. It is also the story of the attempts of all involved to make sense of the complexities and contradictions that underlie the experiences of lives in an era of rapid transformation in contemporary Africa.

In this dissertation I make several claims about the intersection of what has come

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<sup>2</sup> World Bank rankings are based on crude estimates of Gross National Product per capita, expressed in dollar terms. In 1990, Tanzania was ranked number four, with an estimated per capita GNP of \$160. In 1991 the estimate was \$130, placing the country at number three. By 1993 the ranking fell to number two, with an estimated GNP of \$100 per person. In 1994 it was back up to third, with \$110/ capita, and in 1996 the estimate of \$140/ capita raised Tanzania’s ranking to fourth again. My research shows Tanzanian statistical information to be quite unreliable, so all of these figures should be viewed as wide approximations – a conclusion to which the Bank arrived when it overhauled its world development data and stopped ranking countries by basic indicators in 1998. See World Bank 1990, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1996b, and 1999.

<sup>3</sup>Wardle (1988: 11), for example, writes for the aid agency at the center of this study that “Concern’s Tanzania activities aim to be in line with the organization’s overall objectives.... The policy adopted [in Dublin in 1987] regarding long-term operations i.e. development, was to ‘concentrate on the provision of services to the poorest of the poor.’ Groups of poor people were not rigorously defined ‘but vary from case to case as circumstances require; they include poor ethnic groups, poor strata of society, and other identifiable groups such as refugees, nomads, women and children.’ Iringa was chosen as one of the poorer regions of Tanzania and within the region activities have on the whole focused upon poorer divisions [including Malangali] and disadvantaged groups.” A Concern newsletter distributed in Ireland eight years later echoes, “A period of drought and bad harvests in 1978 prompted Concern Worldwide’s first intervention in Tanzania. The Iringa Region, in the Southern highlands, was identified as one of the poorest in the country” (Concern 1996:2).

The assertion that Iringa is among the poorest regions in the country is, on the face of it, questionable. No corroborating statistics are presented, though the southern highlands have long had the reputation as “Tanzania’s breadbasket.” It is likely that some rhetorical manipulation was involved in this claim: Concern works among the poorest, it is working in Iringa, therefore we must demonstrate that Iringa is among the poorest. At greater depth, though, the claim is not hard to justify. While the region may not rank as the absolute worst-off by measures such as agricultural production, a large number of people throughout this large land area, living on what I calculate to be about \$100 per person each year, are materially about as far from wealthy as is possible for a population not threatened with war or political dislocation. To claim that the people of Malangali are among “the poorest of the poor” is not completely accurate, but given the material conditions of their lives, it is an entirely reasonable general assessment.

to be called development and the lived experiences of people in places like Malangali, claims that many readers will find contentious. I argue, first of all, that Malangali residents are sophisticated consumers of development who make choices based on their opportunities and constraints as they understand them. This contention stands in contrast to established writings (discussed below) that posit in development a processual transformation to modernity, and it stands in contrast to thinkers who see development as an unwelcome imposition of external values. I maintain that Malangali residents are thoroughly embedded in the modern world, so efforts to transform or protect them must be understood through an analysis of the social, political, and economic systems in which they live. I contend that aid programs often address the concerns, assumptions, and ideologies of the people paying for aid activities, rather than actual conditions or aims of rural African residents. I also argue, however, that rural Africans face serious problems of poverty and inequity as a result of their position at the margins of the world economy. Efforts to transform these conditions – misguided though they may sometimes be – are part of a fight that must continue to be waged. I conclude that development programs are often unable to achieve their aims because they do not address issues in ways relevant to the conditions of people's lives. Even when program goals and local goals converge, the resources available, while placating funders' social consciences, are almost never adequate to address the inequities that perpetuate conditions of material poverty. I propose this dissertation as a case study in which analysis of the social creation and enactment of development in rural Africa may help us understand what development is and is not, can and cannot claim to be.

To understand my analysis, it is necessary to see how it diverges from most writing about development, and where it fits within the literature upon which it expands. Here I briefly outline the next section, “Theories,” which explores these writings in some detail. Much writing and popular thought sees development as a *set of goals*: economic growth, food security, environmental protection, social equity for marginalized groups such as women and children, universal access to clean water and health care and schools, democratic participation. While the obstacles in the way of satisfactory resolution of these goals are often acknowledged, their very expression leads to a deterministic set of actions (and, importantly, non-actions) that circumscribe the ways most people think about development. In these writings, development is a science of economics, or a science of ecology, or a science of technology, or a science of education. A second approach in the literature treats development as a *set of institutions* constituted in pursuit of previously expressed goals – development as a science of politics or a science of management. Institutional forms and constraints take precedence, including structures of governance and the organizations necessary to distribute aid or create an enabling environment for prosperous and civil societies. I approach development from a third direction, viewing it neither as a set of goals nor as a set of institutions, but rather as a *set of relations* among people. Development, inasmuch as it exists, is a social creation that comprises expectations borne of historical experience, systems of power and belief, and notions of modernity, propriety, and efficacy. In the chapters that follow I examine these relations and the ways they interact with the goals and institutions that delimit them, in order to understand how development has come to be constituted and the place it holds for

Europeans and for rural Africans.

The title of this dissertation, “Development Consumers,” refers not just to residents of Malangali, but also to planners and practitioners of development programs, and to institutional funders and private donors of aid to Africa. In Chapter 8 I develop the concept of consumption, suggesting that development ideas are consumed in a manner similar to the mechanism by which the consumption of commodities involves both the movement of goods and the movement of ideas about those goods from public to private spheres. Development constitutes a set, or rather, sets of ideas that define for both African and European audiences not only what the problems are that face people in rural Africa, but also what solutions are available for individual Africans and Europeans to embrace. By seeing Malangali residents as consumers of development, I examine factors that go into their consumption decisions, factors that include their personal experiences and goals as well as their notions of power and progress. Further, I propose, based especially on research in Ireland, that individual European donors to aid agencies are development consumers who use their charitable donations to buy salves for consciences that feel guilty because of the knowledge that, while they enjoy their lives of plenty, Africans far away are living in poverty. The clientele of development projects are not in fact “the poorest of the poor” in rural Africa, but rather the theorists, donors, and designers of international aid programs. What occurs in the development moment in Malangali is the result of rural Tanzanians, endowed with their knowledge, hopes, and expectations, interacting with programs designed to meet the intellectual and emotional needs of a diverse group of Europeans.



The remainder of this chapter consists of three sections. First, I will discuss the theoretical issues just outlined, and their importance for this study. Second, I will describe the setting of this study, in Malangali and secondary fieldsites such as Dar es Salaam and Dublin. Third, I will discuss the methods by which I conducted my research and crafted the dissertation. In this structure I presage the shape of the ethnographic chapters that follow: in each chapter I chart academic and European perspectives on African development, discuss Malangali perspectives on the same issues, and conclude with the experience of interactions in the field.<sup>4</sup>

Before discussing theories, settings, and methods, however, I wish to make clear my own position vis a vis the political circumstances of which I write. I will develop throughout this work the argument with which I will conclude: that within the economic anthropology of Africa are pressing issues of right and wrong. “[D]evelopment theory cannot be content with merely showing why nothing can be done.... [T]o remain a useful intellectual endeavor today, it must surely start out from an explicit engagement with [Africa’s victimization by a market-driven world] and the fundamental and long-term political questions it raises” (Leys 1996: 191-5). I agree with many of the elemental analyses that motivate development work: in Malangali, too many people die far younger and face much harsher material conditions than ought to exist in a world of plenty. In the course of my work in Tanzania I have cradled dozens of newborns while contemplating their futures. In contrast to the 83 years that a girl born today in Japan can expect to

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<sup>4</sup>Chapter 6, in which the ethnography takes place in Dublin, diverges from this pattern geographically, but retains the general rhythm of discussing development thought first, then the thoughts of non-specialists, and finally the experience of their interactions in Ireland.

live, a girl born in Tanzania today has a life expectancy of only 53 years,<sup>5</sup> though I have known many who have not reached their first birthdays. During their lives, many people who we meet in the following pages have experienced hunger, prolonged preventable illness, and exclusion from educational and work opportunities of which they are aware. In these lives lived on the margin, they have almost no voice in the political discussions that impinge on their lives and few resources to provide for their own security. As Colin Leys discusses, “[t]hese are the facts of the African tragedy: the issue is not whether they will happen, but whether they can be prevented from getting worse, and gradually brought to an end” (Leys 1996: 188). My reasons for writing this ethnography are not only to tell the stories of the people of Malangali, but to learn from their experiences and, if possible, to work toward an end to the inevitability of their privation.

When I write about people engaged in development activities, then, I am writing in part about efforts to overcome the wrongs of material poverty. This is a fight waged every day by residents of places like Malangali, sometimes for reasons of social justice and always motivated by survival. The fight is also waged by people working explicitly for what they see as the greater good. These people, Africans and Europeans working for state, religious, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), engage the issues of poverty in many direct and indirect ways. As with the residents of places like Malangali, their

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<sup>5</sup> These life expectancy figures are 1995 estimates from Bos 1998: 53-4, a compendium of World Bank statistics. The Central Intelligence Agency *World Factbook*, which provides source material for many journalists and authors, lists 1999 estimates of 83.35 years for women in Japan and 48.57 years for Tanzanian women (<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook>). At least for the case of Tanzania, such estimates should be viewed extremely round figures. It is beyond dispute, however, that women in most of sub-Saharan Africa have life expectancies that are decades shorter than their contemporaries in Japan and Europe (Howson, Harrison, and Law 1996).

backgrounds are many, their motivations are varied, and their understandings differ. This dissertation, neither a hagiography nor an indictment, tracks the complicated interplay of these many actors and their various goals. I believe that only by exploring these interactions can we understand present efforts to combat the problems of poverty. Only by understanding present efforts can we make the radical revisions, revisions of thought and of policy, necessary to even consider winning the fight.

It is therefore important to emphasize that I find many of the people of whom I write to be admirable women and men doing the best they can given the constraints they face. The dissertation focuses especially on the eleven years in which the Irish NGO Concern was active in Malangali division.<sup>6</sup> The interactions between Malangali residents and Concern are, I believe, an excellent case study for similar development encounters in many parts of Africa.<sup>7</sup> Yet by placing Concern at the center of a critical inquiry into the development endeavor, I subject them to the unusually harsh glare of a close scrutiny that may read to some as a condemnation. Let me state from the outset, then, that I think Concern made many mistakes during their time in Malangali. Some mistakes might have been avoided in the course of events, but many stemmed from intrinsically problematic understandings of their work in Tanzania that this dissertation will discuss at length. I stress, however, that the people working for Concern are there, in places like Malangali,

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<sup>6</sup>One advantage of studying Concern is that, except in Ireland, the organization is relatively unknown. Thus the (non-Irish) reader can pay more attention to the intended larger discussion of development issues, rather than the specifics of the particular NGO.

<sup>7</sup> Many projects that are broadly similar can be found throughout Tanzania and elsewhere in Africa. For a sampling, see Young 1983, Dowswell 1989, Kerkhof 1990, Netherlands Development Cooperation 1994, and especially the directory of development agencies and projects I catalogue in the *Yale Africa Guide InterActive* at [http://swahili.africa.yale.edu/links/Development\\_and\\_Social\\_Action/](http://swahili.africa.yale.edu/links/Development_and_Social_Action/).

trying to make a difference among people toward whom most of the world is entirely indifferent. They are committing resources and passion in very personal ways to fighting against the material injustices facing some of the world's most powerless people. If they do not ultimately make lasting progress in their efforts to make better the plight of "the poorest of the poor," at least they are making the effort. I hope readers who work for Concern or organizations engaged in similar work will see in this dissertation, rather than pure criticism, an analysis that may contribute in some small way to their future efforts.

Readers of recent popular works about development in Africa may find this dissertation's relatively kindly disposition toward development practitioners somewhat surprising. Researchers have unveiled portraits of the development industry that show systematic arrogance and abuse in the name of aid and charity. These writers depict corruption and incompetence at the U.N. (Hancock 1989), the World Bank and IMF (Caufield 1996, Bandow and Vásquez 1994, Kiltgaard 1990), within African governments (Rugumamu 1997), and at international aid organizations such as Save the Children and Care (Maren 1997). These are extremely important aspects of what passes for international assistance, and occur in many of the aid interactions that affect people in Malangali. Concern is not immune to such criticism; I could detail many ways large and small in which funds are frittered away before they reach their intended beneficiaries. I choose not to do so, however. Such a discussion would detract from my larger interest, which is to explore what happens with the financial and intellectual resources that *do* become available in places like Malangali. But more importantly, this is not Michael Maren's story of *The Road to Hell*. If I found conditions in rural Tanzania were like those

he witnessed in Somalia, I would not hesitate to write about them. Unlike many of the cynical and avaricious people and agencies depicted in these recent books, most of the Tanzanians and expatriates I encountered feel some commitment to achieving development, in whatever way they define the term. People work hard, funds are spent, changes occur. Although sometimes pockmarked with ignorance, hubris, and dishonesty, the dirt road to Malangali is paved with the good intentions of aid workers, government personnel, and the residents who must travel it.

The story of Malangali involves a large cast of characters, all with their own tales to tell. Malangali residents are frequently cast as objects for development, an undifferentiated group of African peasants on whom to experiment with such propositions as *Ujamaa* (African Socialism) and the other programs discussed below. In this dissertation I take issue with the one-dimensional portrayal of rural Africans that is common in development writing,<sup>8</sup> as well as the similarly flat ways in which development agents are sometimes depicted – whether as heroes in the writings of aid proponents, or villains in the literature discussed above. I attempt to give voice to a range of Malangali residents who express many differing perspectives on the circumstances of their lives. I hope that the fond regard in which I hold many of the people among whom I lived does not in the end cast them in a similarly uncomplicated light. Malangali residents display the full range of virtue and vice of people everywhere. I wish to convey some of that breadth in these pages, to add color to the monochrome characteristic of development

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<sup>8</sup>The Concern brochure (n.d.) discussed in Chapter 2, and the Concern and European Community textbook (1990) discussed in Chapter 5 are only two examples of a vast literature that portrays the rural poor as voiceless and incapable of providing for themselves. Escobar (1995) produces a thorough genesis of the literature and agencies that craft such “regimes of representation” for the economically powerless.

writing. If the color tends toward a rosy hue, I should say I enjoy enormously my time in Malangali, where I have built a home and return as often as possible. I also have a heuristic aim in such a presentation; often lost in the writing about development issues is the humanity of the people “targeted” for development assistance. In later chapters I discuss the effects of the intellectual depersonalization of rural Africans on the development programs that seek to assist them. Part of my argument against such objectification is a narrative that deals with larger economic and political themes while still foregrounding individual stories.

### **Theories**

I chose Malangali as a field site after traversing Tanzania in search of a place that combined the social conditions and theoretical parameters I wished to explore. I sought an area that had an established international aid program and that was ascribed the range of problems typically associated with rural African poverty. A further criterion was that the aid program have had tangible results of some sort, that it was *doing* something. This last was a difficult bar to jump, I learned in my travels. By the time an aid program has hired expatriate staff, purchased vehicles, built office headquarters, and arranged housing, funds are often lacking for comprehensive project design and implementation. Malangali was one of the few projects I visited that was not a shipwreck, where I could study the interactions of Tanzanians with aid activity rather than with aid failure.

While Concern’s experience in Malangali was atypical in terms of achieving results, its approach to its work has in many ways remained a paradigmatic implementation of the shifting currents of development understanding since 1985. The program started

out with a blueprint forestry project. By its second year it added agricultural and women's projects. In 1987 Concern took on a water supply scheme for much of the area. These four projects form the bases for the discussions of the next four chapters. With the addition of a horticulture project and "community development," and work in the primary schools, but with the notable exclusion of health and livestock,<sup>9</sup> Concern effectively mounted a rural development program that reflected and transformed with the development currents of the 1980s and 1990s. Investigations of the understandings of development that lead agencies such as Concern to embark upon work in places such as Malangali, and the models by which people have interpreted and can interpret undertakings such as these, form the recurring theoretical project of this dissertation.

**Goals**        The central questions for investigation in this dissertation involve the set of human relations and activities known as "development."<sup>10</sup> I take an anthropological approach to the problem, which means investigating the meanings and motivations by which people are involved with development in their lives. Much of how people understand the development phenomenon comes from fields other than anthropology that seek to achieve certain objectives for change. Both technical and popular analyses derive from theories based in disciplines such as economics, organization, political science, ecology, demographics, and even psychology. In this section I explore how development

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<sup>9</sup>Livestock services were intentionally excluded on the rationale that farmers with livestock were better off, by definition not among "the poorest of the poor" whom Concern hoped to help. At some point minor efforts were made to promote raising small animals, from guinea pigs to big pigs, but this project never became an organizational priority. Health care is discussed in chapters 5 and 9.

<sup>10</sup>This dissertation does not place "development" in quotation marks throughout, as Ferguson (1990) does, because such an orthography can distract the reader from the flow of the discussion. I agree entirely with Ferguson's objective, however. "Development" is a word fraught with multiple political meanings, and should be read as such throughout, as should terms such as "expert," "participation," and "sustainability."

has been theorized as a set of goals. I review briefly the theories of development in the various disciplines that have helped shape the ways lives in Malangali today are lived, understood, and acted upon. Within this discussion, I preview the importance of these theoretical underpinnings for the ethnography that follows.

The concepts on which most development activities have been premised have been well elaborated by Arndt (1987), Leys (1996), Gardner and Lewis (1996), and Rist (1997), among others. The origins of development thought can be traced to nineteenth century notions of a social scale from primitive barbarism to cultured civilization (Sarmiento 1845). Morgan's theory of social evolution, that human history developed in stages from savage to civilized, was adapted by Marx and Engels (Marx 1965, Engels 1972, Leacock 1972) to explain the phases societies must pass through on the road from primitive to industrial communism, and by Weber (1956) to explain the advent of industrial capitalism. Freud equated "primitive" people, the equivalent of Morgan's savages, with psychically underdeveloped children. For Freud, "the process of human civilization and the developmental or educative process of individual human beings... are very similar in nature, if not the very same process applied to different kinds of object" (Freud 1961 (1930): 97-8). This conception was on parallel with many of the justifications for colonial rule. The welfare of subject peoples – minimum standards of nutrition, health, and education – became at least nominally important to colonial regimes, to be addressed largely through economic measures that benefitted the metropole (Arndt 1987: 28; see also Hochschild 1998 for a detailed discussion of how the rhetoric of improvement for Africans facilitated the colonial project of control and exploitation).



In the post-war era, concerns for social welfare took form in modernization theory, which “is essentially evolutionary; countries are envisaged as being at different stages of a linear path which leads ultimately to an industrialized, urban and ordered society” (Gardner and Lewis 1996: 12). Many of the goals for development activity for the past half century, particularly in Asia and Latin America, have been geared toward creating economies and landscapes that resemble the idealized high culture of Paris, London, and Madrid (Chambers 1997, Scott 1998). Modernization theory in its neoclassical forms (Singer 1949, Shultz 1953, Lewis 1955, Myrdal 1957, Hirschman 1958), implicit or explicit, has been at the core of many decades of national development plans and international efforts such as World Bank lending (Escobar 1995: 162), plans that have metamorphosed from Keynesian government intervention to contemporary free-market fetishism.<sup>11</sup> Rostow (1960) succinctly acknowledged the Marxist legacy of neoclassical development models while proposing solidly non-communist outcomes. He posited a five stage theory of evolutionary growth from traditional society, through a crucial period of capitalist “take off,” and ending in an age of high mass consumption. Much subsequent macro-development activity has centered rhetorically on enabling the preconditions for take off. “Structural adjustment,” the International Monetary Fund’s current answer to what ails most every country in Africa (as well as much of Asia, Latin America, and the former Soviet bloc), derives from this goal to achieve development by “getting the markets

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<sup>11</sup> Keynes himself did not address the economies of what was at the time the colonized world in his major works, where “one searches almost entirely in vain for any signs of interest in or concern for the poor outside Europe” (Arndt 1987: 32). Arndt goes on to demonstrate how later economists applied Keynesian foundations to the post-war policies outside of Europe. Leys chronicles the demise of Keynesian economic policies in Europe and the United States to the advent of free-market fundamentalism heralded by the elections of Thatcher and Reagan in 1979-80 (Leys 1996: 21).

right” (Hardy 1986, George and Sabelli 1994, Mihevc 1995, Leys 1996, Hoogvelt 1997).

Many critiques of neoclassical development models also remain firmly wedded to evolutionary concepts. Arndt (1987: 130-1) points out that most neo-Marxists of the 1960s and 1970s had little to say about development per se; rather, they expounded on the ways Marx had not foreseen that the achievement of the goal of socialist egalitarian prosperity was to be subverted by capitalism and colonialism. Beginning with Paul Baran (1957), the leftist counterpoint to development called for a reinterpretation of economic history to account for the exclusion of subject peoples, and the reconsideration of policy to rectify the historical injustices of political economy. Prebisch (1964), at the helm of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America, demonstrated the unequal distribution of the benefits of capitalist growth between the “center” and the “periphery” of the international economy. He argued that peripheral countries, which produce primary products and buy secondary products, do not generate the internal capacity to secure their own prosperity and therefore depend on the demands of European industry. His solution was the development of import substitution industries to satisfy internal demand and keep capital circulating as a rearguard method for the periphery to catch up. In Prebisch’s wake, dependency theorists argued that, “by presenting all countries as being on the same linear path, [economists] completely neglect historical and political factors which have made the playing field very far from level” (Gardner and Lewis 1996: 15). Dependency theorists “postulated that underdevelopment is a part and parcel of this historical process of global development of the international system” (Oswaldo Sunkel, quoted in Arndt 1987: 121). Frank (1969) expanded on this reinterpretation of history by arguing that

underdevelopment was not just a by-product of capitalist expansion, but in fact had been actively instigated by it, a view which Wallerstein's developed for the world system (1974) and that Walter Rodney applied to the African context while at the University of Dar es Salaam (1972). Though more focused on equity than many neoclassical economists, these radical critiques remained oriented toward the goal of a development model for all that resembled European modernism.

A real alternate vision to modernization was Nyerere's African Socialism, which I discuss in more detail beginning on page 96. The African Socialist ideal sought prosperity through agrarian collectivization. Along with late Maoism, Nyerere's vision refuted the modernization hypothesis by proposing to circumvent industrialization in a way that would address social needs. Today, however, as post-Mao China seeks to build a thriving industrial capitalism, post-Nyerere Tanzania has abandoned socialist philosophy in favor of a governmental capitulation to the neoclassical monetarist modernization mandates of the IMF and a resigned acceptance of limited governmental and aid efforts to address basic needs. In this context, I discuss austerity and authority in the face of structural adjustment and the decline of socialist ideology in the final section of Chapter 7.

A second challenge to modernization theory, which proved to have more durability, came from the realm of ecology and demographics. The notion that the Earth has finite resources that can support a finite population is directly at odds with the neoclassical economic promise of unlimited growth. Modernizing development from this perspective may bring about an imminent ecological catastrophe (Rist 1997: 196), which would not only make prosperity impossible in the non-wealthy world, but also threaten

the privileges of the wealthy. Unfettered economic growth, particularly heavy industry, is seen as dangerous, to be supplanted by the goals of environmentally-friendly land use patterns such as reversing perceived deforestation, stopping a perceived expansion of deserts, and organic approaches to agriculture. Neo-Malthusian ecological thought, including the vague notion of “sustainable development” that has been a key catch-all term in the 1990s (Adams 1993),<sup>12</sup> remains important in the ways many development projects are conceived (see, for example, Ghai and Vivian 1992, UN 1993). These ecological and demographic notions (particularly the forms they have taken in the 1980s and 1990s),<sup>13</sup> which contribute significantly to the lived experiences of rural Africans international aid (Hoben 1995), will be examined at greater length in subsequent chapters.

A third set of approaches to development that has been increasingly dominant since the 1970s, and that is especially significant for many aid activities in Malangali, dispenses with grand visions of socialist or capitalist or green endpoints in favor of addressing particular goals on more case-specific programmatic bases. These approaches emphasize social welfare issues through “poverty eradication” or “basic needs” or

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<sup>12</sup> Robert Chambers provides a useful definition: “Sustainability means that long-term perspectives should apply to all policies and actions, with sustainable well-being and sustainable livelihoods as objectives for present and future generations” (Chambers 1997: 11). He is curiously non-analytical in his embrace of such a chameleon-like term, however, despite his insightful debunking of other development shibboleths as reductionism that “we can expect... to remain robustly sustainable” (1997: 49).

<sup>13</sup> Of the melding of Malthusianism and sustainability, one anthropologist writes: “The flourishing of the new rhetoric of sustainable development and globalization reflects their special appeal to Western policy-makers and capitalists, precisely because they help obscure how the current ‘free market’ regime is exacerbating, rather than resolving, the social and environmental problems that confront most developing countries; and how, far from engendering global harmony, the dynamics of an unrestrained world market are actually accelerating a process of economic and ideological polarization.... It is also reviving the time-tested myths of legitimation of capitalism. Malthusian thinking, the most consistent feature of which is its resolute defense of inequality, is once again being enlisted to justify, defend or enlarge the rights of private property” (Ross 1998: 200-1).

“appropriate technology” or “integrated rural development” or “participatory development.” They represent pragmatic attempts to achieve limited results in the face of the immense constraints that inhibit a modicum of prosperity in much of the non-wealthy world. By the 1970s it was clear that development policies that focused on increasing overall national wealth indicators in the poorest countries were in fact leaving out or further impoverishing the least privileged. Robert McNamara (1972, 1973), then president of the World Bank, signaled an official recognition of this problem, and led his organization on a rhetorical shift toward eradicating poverty through a focus on basic needs, accompanied by \$19 billion of loan programs over fourteen years (Chambers 1997: 17). Many staple goals of development aid – education, child health, clean water, food security – are addressed under the aegis of meeting particular deficiencies through projects that may or may not improve aggregate economic standards. Sometimes, as with some World Bank projects arising from MacNamara’s reign, the justifications for such approaches are that attention to basic needs now will create enabling conditions for more equitable development later (Escobar 1995: 160). Proponents of “appropriate technology,” following Shumacher (1973), seek to address discrete problems with small-scale solutions as a rejection of the ability of “big development” to address local needs. “Integrated rural development” (a phrase that went out of fashion by the early 1980s, though describing an approach to projects that remains common among aid organizations in rural Tanzania) seeks to address several local goals with a package of locally instituted (though not locally designed) solutions (Ruttan 1975, Kweba 1983, A.J.B. Mitchell 1984,

De Janvry and Sadoulet 1989).<sup>14</sup> “Participatory” approaches to development, as both a goal and a means, grew in importance alongside the spread of methods of “Participatory Rural Appraisal” (PRA) (Cohen and Uphoff 1980, Oakley and Marsden 1984, Taylor 1992). As propounded by Robert Chambers, participatory approaches attempt to “share methods which local people can use for their own appraisal, analysis, planning, action, monitoring and evaluation” (Chambers 1997: 103). When participation is subject to review, however, we learn that, “[d]espite the best intentions and the most participatory techniques, these new-style NGO efforts may thus retain substantial elements of paternalism.... As a result, participatory initiatives have all too often had only an instrumental value in ensuring the efficient promotion of interests of dominant powers, rather than actually empowering the poor” (Macdonald 1995: 208-224). The variety of justifications and designs for projects within the shifting terminological sands of this set of approaches without overarching endpoints is substantial (for example, ILO 1982, Taylor and Mackenzie 1992). I suggest that such projects have attained ascendance largely in the absence of a unifying theory of development, and often in frustration at the continued exacerbation of problems of material poverty despite so many years of development programs. Instead, much development activity represents attempts by people or groups to address immediate goals that seem within reach given project knowledge, resources, and predispositions. “Development” in practice combines a catch-all mix of modernization,

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<sup>14</sup> “Integrated Rural Development” is a catch phrase that, similar to many terms in development, refers to a wide variety of efforts with very little in common. Colombia’s Integrated Rural Development program, for example, was a large-scale undertaking that was to include infrastructure as well as agricultural production and marketing (Escobar 1995), while the program studied in Malangali, which could fit under the same moniker involved a much smaller area, a less ambitious set of goals, and only a few million dollars.

equity, idealist, ecological, and defeatist premises. The implications of this theoretical stew of development goals for the people of places like Malangali will unfold throughout the chapters that follow.

**Institutions**            Integrally related to the goals of development are the institutions through which people hope to effect change: structures of governance and the organizations necessary to distribute aid or create an enabling environment for prosperous and civil societies. Topics of African governance, including issues of democratization and public accountability, are by and large beyond the scope of this dissertation and are the subject of a large literature focusing on political and organizational science (including Young 1982, Berg and Whitaker 1986, Chabal 1986, Chazan et al 1988, Hyden and Bratton 1992, Bratton and van de Walle 1994, Ake 1996, Leftwich 1996, Tripp 1997). For purposes of an ethnography of the development encounter in Malangali, it is important to note that governance has throughout the 1990s been one of the guiding topics in the policies and theories of organizations that control the finances to which governments in Africa must pay obeisance, including the World Bank and the bilateral aid departments of Northern countries. The role of government, as propounded by the World Bank (1995: 7), is that “[g]overnments need to provide goods and services – law and order, national security, and an environment conducive to business and the smooth functioning of civil society – that only the state can provide” (World Bank 1995: 7; also see World Bank 1992). Nations are therefore subject to political mandates, including regular multi-party elections, tied to “orthodox economic conditionality and the fundamentals of ‘market-friendly’ development” (Schmitz 1995: 71). Such calls for

agency-directed free-market populism are paradoxical: “more ‘participation’ ends up reinforcing the Bank’s role, even though more real democracy in developing countries would quite likely reduce it” (Schmitz 1995: 58). Actual democratization, however, may be beside the point. “Governance provides a new tool-kit, an instrument of control, an additional conditionality for the time when the traditional blame-the-victim defense again becomes necessary” (George and Sabelli 1994: 142). As Schmitz concludes, “‘governance’ ultimately puts the onus on *existing* governments... ‘successfully’ to manage the *prevailing* capitalist political economy of globalization, and notably to manage the resulting social tensions in such a way that the lid does not blow off and threaten the entire elite development regime” (Schmitz 1995: 67).

Schmitz argues that the extent of democratic development that large international institutions find workable

is a privatized form which celebrates the freedom of supposedly voluntary exchange within a state-less ‘civil society.’ In effect, this arena for the participatory enterprise is completely delinked from any societal process of democratization – via historical-political struggles – at the level of the state and who ought to determine public policies (Schmitz 1995: 57).

“Civil society,” the medium through which the conventional compromise between the state and the diverse sectors of the nation is renegotiated (Yudice 1998), is advocated by its proponents as a “bottom-up horizontal vectoring which redefines political and economic democracy” (Shet 1987, cited in Watts 1995: 59). In some ideals, civil society is not only to fulfill many functions of the state, but to exist in opposition to it (Bayart 1986). One avenue through which theorists project an enabling environment for the development goals of prosperity and growth are institutions of “civic community” (Putnam



1993: 86) through the rise of local associations. Esman and Uphoff (1984: 40) argue, “we cannot visualize any strategy of rural development combining growth in productivity with broad distribution of benefits in which participatory local organizations are not prominent.” Seeing an alternative to conventional development in both goals and institutional methods, Watts envisions “new configurations of state markets and civil organizations unencumbered by outmoded or ideological notions of central planning or unhindered free markets.... [E]conomies are built around trust, obligation, accountability” (Watts 1995: 58). Yet such a vision does not fully engage the histories or existing structures of development institutions and their interactions with rural Africa, and may actually revive “the modernization barometer” when African associational life does not resemble Western organizational forms (Tripp 1997: 199). In Mozambique, where planners invoke models of civil society, “top-down vertical ties are taking precedence over a bottom-up thrust” (Mittelman and Pasha 1997: 211). Macdonald argues that this focus “in fact attempts to restrict the political sphere by ensuring that all relevant decisions are made by national and international elites, while the popular sector is caught up in... organizational activity at the margins of the political system” (Macdonald 1992, cited in Schmitz 1995: 74).

In Malangali local civil organizations are neither a lynchpin of the strategies of the government or any aid agencies, nor viewed by area residents as important in their efforts to negotiate with larger structures for the achievement of development goals. I suggest, in fact, that Malangali residents have learned to limit their local organizations to a local and non-controversial scope, lest they run afoul of the shifting mandates from government and

international agencies with which they have decades of experience. Malangali is politically stable, but stable in the knowledge that economic conditions are unlikely to make most people better off. The area has neither chaos nor effective governance nor emergent local institutions to fulfill the functions of government on a local level, although there exists a thriving effigy of official governmental structure that provides the semblance of institutional coherence and activity. I argue in Chapter 7 that many of the functions of government are tasks that the heavily-indebted government of Tanzania, under the straightjacket of IMF structural adjustment mandates, is unable to undertake in Malangali, and has therefore abrogated to aid agencies to attempt in its name. For reasons I discuss in that chapter, area residents respect the rule of law administered by government agents, but accord much authority and legitimacy to ideas and actions promoted by these international institutions that are neither democratic nor governmental. Such non-governmental organizations occupy a prominent place among institutions working toward development goals in Tanzania, as well as featuring highly in the literature about development in rural Africa.

Concern is a NGO in many ways similar to Oxfam across the Irish Sea. The organization represents itself, and is conceived by the Irish public, as a charity dependent on the private contributions of individual Irish donors. This perception, the subject of Chapter 6, has important consequences for the shape of the projects in Malangali. For most of Concern's development work, as with many European and North American NGOs, private contributions make up only a small part of the context of money and ideas that support projects like Malangali. The tensions within the many interests represented

by funders as well as agency staff have a significant influence on aid work in rural Africa.

It is worth briefly considering the literature about NGOs, particularly because these writings contribute to the self-definitions of organizations like Concern about the work they undertake. Many writings about NGOs are laudatory:

Fortunately, the non-governmental organizations founded in the Third World in recent years are already implementing sustainable development and are increasingly challenging and sometimes changing government policy. Confronted by catastrophic changes in their own lives, people in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are organizing their own communities in partnership with committed professionals. In doing so they are inventing alternatives to a dismal human future (J. Fisher 1993: 4).

Julie Fisher's encomium is echoed in publications of the World Bank (Paul and Israel 1991) and the OECD (OECD 1988, Smillie and Helmich 1993). Riddell and Robinson (1995) strike a note of caution, remarking:

There is still insufficient evidence of what [NGOs] have achieved in the past, as there is of the differing influence of the range of internal and external factors which influence performance, to be able to draw conclusions about the impact of NGOs in poverty alleviation (p. 96).

Despite these reservations, these authors agree with the conclusion that NGOs are by and large a force for good. In the conclusion to their edited 1997 volume that examines the relationship between NGOs, states, and donors, Hulme and Edwards warn of a gradual process in which NGOs move closer and closer to the support of donor interests. Their resolution is that "the successful NGOs of the twenty-first century are likely to be those that maintain a clear and independent focus and specialization, within networks and alliances that work synergistically to achieve broad but common goals" (p. 282).

Such optimism is both anthropologically puzzling, as discussed by William Fisher (1997), and politically logical. Within the study of social structure, NGOs are a cipher –

as a group they are defined only by what they are presumed to *not* be, which is governmental. They are contrasted specifically to three types of governmental development organizations: recipient states, donor states (bilateral aid), and the official organizations of groups of states (multilateral aid) such as the World Bank, UN, and OECD. What NGOs *are* may be anything from a local cooperative organization to a massive, multi-tentacled player such as CARE,<sup>15</sup> and as William Fisher notes, “may move in either democratic or oligarchic directions,... may serve as both extensions of regimes or practice, like development, and as sources of alternatives to such regimes” (1997: 458). Financing may be raised locally, through charitable donations, or through direct contracts with governmental organizations or other NGOs. Often NGOs are simply consulting firms. Concern is a hybrid that conceives of and portrays itself as a charity in existence because of private donations, despite its dependence on governmental funding.

Politically, the positive attention paid to NGOs makes perfect sense. First, much of the laudatory literature is written by people who earn their livings working for NGOs. Such people are unlikely to voice loud criticisms of the system that employs them even where they fault aspects of particular organizations. (Hulme and Edwards, for example, are both important members of the NGO industry, perhaps accounting for the modesty of their cautions quoted above.) Second, it is in the interests of governments as well as NGOs to promote this system of delivering aid. The World Bank or USAID or the

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<sup>15</sup> Smillie (1995: 22) identifies no fewer than eighteen variations on the theme of “non-governmental organization”, ranging from “MO” (membership organization) to “GONGO” (government organized non-governmental organization). He writes (1995: 36, with word order rearranged for clarity), “Even if the image of NGOs as being what governments are not (bureaucratic, rigid, directive, stultifying of local initiative) ignores the close links most NGOs have with governments, the term is probably here to stay, at least through the end of this book.”

Tanzanian government bear much less accountability if projects managed through NGOs do not work out. Funding agencies and recipient governments alike can pass responsibility for failure to particular implementing agencies yet share successes, all the while promoting the NGO system. With almost everybody agreeing that NGOs are a good thing, they continue to proliferate and attract funds, despite the fact that the term is vacant. In the case of Concern in Malangali, non-governmental status means the agency owed some reporting accountability to the European governments that provided major funding, owed some accountability to the Tanzanian government, but could largely design programs along its own criteria. It is not at all clear, however, that NGO-managed development appears to residents of places like Malangali to be any different than projects of similar size and objectives run by governmental, bilateral, or multilateral institutions.

**Relations** By disentangling the diversity of goals and institutions that are variously understood to constitute development, we can come to see that whatever else it is, development is a social creation fashioned largely in the understandings of those who engage it. As such, development might best be analyzed through the perspectives of anthropology, which provides tools for the study of relationships between cultural conceptions and the material world. The relationship of anthropology to development, however, has long been complicated by the embeddedness of many anthropologists within the systems of knowledge from which development activities have emerged. In this section I look first to the historical entanglement of anthropology and development, and then to the ways that contemporary anthropological approaches can reveal the set of human relations that encompasses the experiences of people in Malangali.

Interaction with the institutions formulating development policy has long been a subject of concern for anthropology, nowhere more so than Malangali. The first ethnography situated within the Hehe kingdom, the kingdom of the primary ethnic group to which Malangali residents claim membership, was written by anthropologist G. Gordon Brown in cooperation with a colonial administrator. The purpose was specifically to assist the latter in his efforts to control and advance the people of Iringa. Called *Anthropology in Action* (Brown and Hutt 1935), the anthropologist presented his research as specific answers to the administrator's queries about social, political, and economic organization, including many recommendations about how such knowledge could promote the goals of governance. While this book ranked among the era's most explicit in linking anthropology with policies of development and colonial control, it emerged from an existing tradition. Ferguson (1997) traces the link to the earliest days of anthropology discussed above, when Lewis Henry Morgan proposed that the scheme of human evolution was "to develop a barbarian out of a savage, and a civilized man out of this barbarian" (Morgan 1877: 554, cited in Ferguson 1997: 153). When anthropology adopted fieldwork among remote peoples as its primary research method, questions of governance quickly intruded. Anthropologists found themselves among the few intermediaries between the people they studied and the advancing colonial project. Rivers proposed by 1912 that anthropology could soften "the rapid and destructive change" faced by colonial subjects (Ferguson 1997: 156), and British anthropologists such as Evans-Pritchard, following the calls of Malinowski, found themselves interpreting local customs for colonial authorities. The governance these academicians sought to influence

first involved control, closely followed by extraction of resources. Such objectives did not sit well with high-minded colonialists nor constituencies at home; in a complex process, the mission of colonialism in Africa became inextricably linked to the rhetoric of civilizing, Christianizing, and improving the material lives of the subject peoples (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991). It was impossible to practice anthropology in areas that were not affected by colonialism, and for many it was preferable, as it was for Brown, to try serving some mitigating, interpretive role between subject and ruler. Applied anthropology developed between the wars in Britain, France and the US, out of the parallel desires of governments and social scientists. The former needed to govern, while the latter wished to understand and protect the lives of subject peoples while sometimes helping the project of governance (Asad 1973, Gardner and Lewis 1996: 29-32, Pels 1997).

The Second World War precipitated rapid changes in power relations between colonies and metropolises, with attendant consequences for anthropology (Ferguson 1997). Peoples the world over, beginning with India, demanded and soon won their independence. It became imperative to explain how people who had been labeled weak or “primitive” could take their places on the world stage as junior partners in the great struggle between capitalist and socialist schemes of global order. Anthropologists had to contend with a shifting intellectual climate, discussed above, that meant, “instead of development being a colonial initiative – requiring authority as well as expertise – it was being discussed as a natural unfolding of a universal social process, which human agents could facilitate but which was driven by history” (Cooper 1997: 64). Of the colonial goals

of control, extraction, and improvement, only the latter remained an explicit priority of the newly independent governments. The first two goals continued to be important to post-colonial governments, but generally were obfuscated by development rhetoric. Former colonial powers and the emergent nuclear superpowers acceded to, and often sought to direct, the redefined development agenda. Essentially, anthropologists could either contribute to the development endeavor (and thus implicate themselves in the project of modernizing transformation), or remain on the sidelines describing the fast-vanishing practices of people perceived as maintaining traditional lives.

Applied research was arguably marginal within anthropology throughout the 1970s and remains so in the US to this day.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, because development activities have become ubiquitous and often inextricable in the lives of the people among whom anthropologists work, the study of development has remained near the realm of the discipline's major concerns. Development, from a contemporary anthropological perspective, exists as a social creation that comprises expectations born of historical experience, systems of power and belief, and the goals and institutions discussed in the previous sections.

The 1990s have witnessed many efforts to bridge descriptive (theoretical) and applied (development) anthropology. Most influential for this dissertation are two books:

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<sup>16</sup>In Britain, many anthropologists became involved in development activities as a direct result of Thatcher's assault on the academy. According to Martin Walsh, a Cambridge scholar/ development practitioner working in Iringa, radical cuts in the funding of teaching positions in the British academy in the 1980s forced many graduating PhDs to undertake applied work if they had any wish to remain in the discipline. The lucky few who held academic posts found engagement with development matters an essential method of obtaining research funding. With a surge in American anthropology PhDs in the 1990s and a simultaneous decline in the number of tenure-track university positions, a similar trend may now be underway in the United States.



Ferguson's 1990 ethnography provides a pathbreaking prototype for examining international development agencies as social creations and social creators in rural African contexts; Escobar (1995) follows with a close textual analysis of the premises underlying Latin American development agencies. Ferguson's detailed account shows how the development imagination of rural Lesotho is completely at odds with area residents' appreciation of their own situations. He details the creation of an ahistorical agrarian Lesotho peasant in development thought, as opposed to the historically enmeshed people he knew in his research. Ferguson displays the disjuncture between planners' efforts to direct livestock production as an enterprise for short-term profit, and the needs of residents to use cattle as a form of savings and security. His discussion of the way that development planners conceive of inadequate local subsistence agricultural capacity (which, he shows, overlooks a long history of agrarian commercialization and pricing issues), while area residents see agriculture as a supplement to the wages from migrant labor on which most households depend, is reflected in the agricultural experiences of Malangali residents discussed in the next chapter. Ferguson describes an approach to analysis of the development encounter that informs the entire ethnography. I follow the approaches of Ferguson and Escobar by tracing discourses of development through institutions, projects, documents, and ways of seeing non-wealthy peoples. I expand on their project by including research among individual aid donors from the wealthy world (as distinct from people working within development agencies), exploring ways development is fashioned largely in dialogue with a public that shares a particular vision of problems and options facing people in places like Tanzania. Where I diverge from their approaches is in

challenging the current of dichotomization between development thought, on the one hand, and the thinking of non-wealthy development “subjects” on the other. I propose that development thought *does* influence the thinking of rural Africans in ways that change the cultural landscape as well as interacting with it: interactions that are understudied, are crucial to what occurs in the development encounter, and that are central to the project of this dissertation.<sup>17</sup>

Several ethnographic writings have examined people within aid agencies as social actors, in order to understand how particular aid activities and perspectives come into existence. Tendler (1975) wrote an early analysis of the people within USAID, based on her years as an employee for the organization. She shows how the demands of career advancement and reporting lead to relations between staff and project that often overlook needs of recipient populations. Robertson (1984) details the personal and political considerations for planners, with a case study of a government endeavor in Malaysia. Escobar (1995) provides the most comprehensive insights into the theoretical understandings of development planners, particularly in Latin America. His stimulating documentation of thought trends in development, however, never quite makes the

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<sup>17</sup> Ferguson writes (1990: 16), “Empirically, ‘development’ projects in Lesotho do not generally bring about any significant reduction in poverty, but neither do they characteristically introduce any new relations of production (capitalist or otherwise), or bring about significant economic transformations. They do not bring about ‘development’ in either of the two senses identified above [capitalist modernization or amelioration of poverty], nor are they set up in such a way that they ever could.” My dispute is not with Ferguson’s analysis that the goals of development are rarely met, but with his conclusion that the instrument effects are the expanding of bureaucratic state power and the depoliticizing of both poverty and the state (p. 255) – without *also* according that some local benefits may accrue and that aspects of development ideology may come to be reflected in the worldviews of with local actors. Grillo points to similar weaknesses with the analyses of Ferguson and Escobar, noting that they illustrate a tendency “to see development as a monolithic enterprise, heavily controlled from the top, convinced of the superiority of its own wisdom and impervious to local knowledge or indeed common-sense experience, a single gaze or voice which is all-powerful and beyond influence” (Grillo 1997: 20).

ethnographic leap he leads you to anticipate, leaving the reader with much to think about but little solid description of the inner workings of development agencies. Hoben (1995) presents a brief but compelling overview of the production of policy narratives about agriculture and the environment in Ethiopia, and the attendant consequences for rural residents. Hancock (1989) and Maren (1997), meanwhile, both give detailed insiders' accounts of aid agencies, reaching conclusions that do not fully correspond with my findings about development agencies as institutions chiefly concerned with funding and self-preservation. One challenge for the ethnography that follows is to investigate development agents as acting within and producing the socially created contexts of their institutions.

Ethnographic writings about development from the perspectives of people who are to be acted upon by development are many, but until recently few have delved into the social creation of the development process itself. Many articles engage the misunderstandings of local conditions by development agencies that have led to the misapplication or failure of particular development projects (see Pitt 1976, Grillo and Rew 1985, Green 1986, van Willigen, Rylko-Bauer, and McElroy 1989, Chaiken and Fleuret 1990), while rarely questioning the framework within which development institutions operate beyond suggesting that anthropologists bring a "critical eye" (Luce 1990: 40). In contrast, a few recent works map the routes that anthropology can follow in uncovering the set of relations that constitute development, particularly contributors to Moore and Schmitz (1995) and Grillo and Stirrat (1997), and work by Pigg (1992, 1997) and Harrison (1995). These authors discuss the necessity of examining how people designing

and running aid projects come to advocate the type of work they undertake, as well as examining what people constituted as development subjects make of the endeavor. The analysis of development actors in these works is often at the level of “discourse,” defined by Grillo (1997: 12) as language that “identifies appropriate and legitimate ways of practicing development as well as speaking and thinking about it.” Discourse shapes thought, and thought shapes action. Development action, however, occurs not just in the realm of discourse, but also in contexts where actors must interpret how best to apply their views of the world to situations that unfold around them. It is in investigating these contexts as well as the discourses that contribute to shaping them that anthropology can contribute a nuanced approach to development. In discussing her work in Nepal, Pigg notes that it is partial, remarking that a “comprehensive ethnography of development activities would be a vast undertaking, given the multiple and dispersed sites that become linked through policy and implementation” (Pigg 1997: 260). Grillo, speaking of Harrison’s work (1995), makes a similar observation, noting that the dissertation moves, “disconcertingly at times, from a discussion of development discourse to detailed village-level studies, and then back to aid organizations. It was manifestly not straightforward to write, and there is no easy, obvious and accepted method for moving between levels and representing voices” (Grillo 1997: 27). With these warnings about the complexities and pitfalls of such an undertaking duly in mind, this dissertation attempts to contribute to the approaches signaled by these efforts at ethnographic analysis of development personnel, locations, and discourse.

Close ethnographic analysis, however, has left some development planners groping

as they seek to “operationalize” social scientific observations, as Ferguson foresaw it would (1990: 284).<sup>18</sup> Studies such as Ferguson’s are, after all, each specific to a time and place, so the situations of other development projects are bound to be different in many ways. Mair, in an important call for greater involvement of anthropologists in development, suggests that it would be “irrelevant and impertinent” for ethnographers to involve themselves at a macro level. Instead, she says,

[I]n addition to specific warnings, they can give to people responsible for the implementation of development projects, and possibly to outsiders called in to evaluate such projects, some indication of the essential information on the nature of the societies they are dealing with which may help them in the conclusions they may draw (1984: p. 10-11).

Concern Tanzania’s country director Paul Murphy had read and admired Ferguson’s book, yet could not see the ways much of the material might be relevant to the projects he was overseeing. His decision eventually to hire me as a consultant reflected his wish to understand Concern’s project areas from a social-science perspective, but also reflects the ways that planners may consider local ethnographic research as inapplicable to other sites.

This dissertation attempts to integrate the approaches of local specificity and institutional analysis, thereby producing an ethnography that may speak to readers in situations removed from Malangali in time and space. I reject Mair’s suggestion that anthropologists limit themselves to commenting on particular projects while leaving larger

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<sup>18</sup>In 1993 I was involved in correspondence with a World Bank staffer about designing a summer internship. My interest was in gaining an internal perspective following Ferguson’s provocative chapter about how the World Bank generates Country Reports that reflect particular understandings of the problems facing impoverished people and the “blueprint development” (Roe 1991) solutions available for them; he was interested in producing a report that could be “operationalizeable.” This is just one example of the disparity between the approaches of theoretical anthropology and development agents, in which the anthropological objective is unpacking conceptual frameworks, while the practitioner values action. The internship never happened.

policy considerations in the hands of those with a different kind of expertise. In 1982, Allan Hoben, in a review article, listed ten ways that anthropology might contribute to the project Mair outlines. Almost as an afterthought, Hoben proposes that the most valuable contribution of anthropology to development work “is to challenge and clarify, and hence help revise, explicit and implicit assumptions made by those responsible for planning and implementing development policies” (Hoben 1982: 370). I contribute to a small but growing literature that takes up this project (Ferguson 1990, Mitchell 1991, Escobar 1995, Everett 1995, Moore and Schmitz 1995, Harrison 1995, Hoben 1995, Cooper and Packard 1997, Grillo and Stirrat 1997, Pigg 1992 and 1997), and that analyzes development expertise itself as a social construct, thereby calling into question the marginalization of anthropology and the elevation of other specializations within the arena of international aid. Writings about African agriculture and forestry issues, gender and feminist theory, altruism, and consumption also influence the direction of this dissertation; discussion of these literatures appears within the relevant sections of the chapters that follow. I hope this dissertation contributes to understanding the tapestry of development by weaving the warp of an African locality with the woof an European-created social institution.

Map 1.1: Topographical Map of Central Malangali Division

## Map 1.2: Detailed Map of Research Area<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The village of Ipilimo is referred to as “Iyayi” on this map. Iyayi was its name during villagization.



## Settings

The stories of Malangali take place in an administrative division, similar to a county, about 650 kilometers southwest of Dar es Salaam. Roughly 30,000 people live in the 23 “villages” that comprise Malangali division.<sup>20</sup> My primary field research was in subvillages of three villages, Isimikinyi, Ipilimo, and Tambalang'ombe. I lived in a fourth village between the other three, the divisional center Mwilavila.<sup>21</sup> This small area, which I traversed by foot, is the focus of this dissertation, but the stories of Malangali cannot be told without attention to farther geographic reaches that I conceive extending outward in concentric valences from the village nucleus. During the course of field research I also visited most other villages in the division, as well as parts of the two neighboring divisions Wanging'ombe and Sadani. Research often took me to the district headquarters in Mafinga and the regional capital, Iringa town, as well as three times to the capital of neighboring Mbeya region. People, goods, and ideas regularly flow among these places, as

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<sup>20</sup> Despite the nominal success of villagization programs in the area in the 1970s, most residents of Malangali Division do not live in central residential areas with easy access to government services and outlying agricultural zones, as envisioned by *Ujamaa* planners. “Villages” in the area refer instead to large geographical units, sometimes larger than Manhattan, with no empty land area that is not deemed part of one or another village. Within these areas, people tend to cluster their houses in a few areas commonly called “subvillages,” though again the official definition of a subvillage conforms to a line drawn on a map. In all but a few areas, even these relatively concentrated settlements consist of houses that are hundreds of feet apart. Many people build in the middle of their farms, as close as they can to family or friends while still maintaining proximity to as many natural resources (fertile land, water, firewood) as possible. Government services are few and far between, and rarely seem to enter into people’s decisions about where to build. I consequently avoid referring to area residents as “villagers” in this dissertation; if I refer generically to, for example, “residents of Isimikinyi village,” I mean that set of people the government has defined as living within certain arbitrary boundaries, be they in the dense central cluster or on an isolated homestead several kilometers away. For an alternative argument that the concept of village and villagers does have analytical merit, see the 1985 volume edited by R. G. Abrahams.

<sup>21</sup>The little town of Mwilavila is also often referred to as Malangali village, and appears that way on maps. In order not to confuse the reader, but with apologies to certain senior residents who wish to reclaim the name Malangali for the central town, in this dissertation I use Malangali to refer to the division, and Mwilavila to refer to the town.

well as the nearby tea plantations I sometimes visited. At a farther orbit, but still charging the atmosphere of Malangali, are the offices and officials I visited in Dar es Salaam, and those of international agencies in Nairobi. As will be developed in the dissertation, people at the farthest distances from Malangali influence the course of local history, economy, and even ideology; the focus on Malangali entails research in such places as Dublin, London, Washington, and Tokyo. Seen from Dublin, Malangali is at the world's periphery, but from the perspective of many rural Tanzanians, Malangali is the core and Dublin the periphery. I demonstrate that they are interlinked, that neither can be fully understood without the other, and that we must view them together to understand the global condition of modernity.<sup>22</sup>

Malangali is a rural area with many physical links to the rest of the world. Its physical features, including its agricultural and forest ecology, will be described in the chapters where they are especially significant. The primary economic activity within the division is agriculture, especially maize farming. People engage in many other means of making a livelihood, including small businesses and labor migration. Migration is made easier by the tarmac road that marks the southern boundary of the division and extends from Dar to Lusaka. While the division averages less than 1000mm of rain a year, more moist areas nearby support tea plantations and seasonal rice farming. The scruffy miombo

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<sup>22</sup>The research for this study fits within an emerging anthropological reevaluation of fieldwork and location. "The field' (in the among the 'so-and-so' sense)," write Gupta and Ferguson (1997a: 37), should often yield to "more of a sense of a mode of study that cares about, and pays attention to, the interlocking of multiple sites and locations." Adds Des Chene (1997: 80), "The world is far too large and complex to hold sacred the connected, smallish plot of land known as 'the field' as the only vantage point from which to observe it, and still hold out hope of having much to say about it." See also Marcus 1995 and Hastrup and Olwig 1996 for reviews of the potential and practice of multisite ethnography.

forest that covers much of the area rubs up against the thick pine Sao Hill forest plantation that provides most of Tanzania's paper pulp, and the Njombe wattle plantations that are harvested for the world's leather tanneries. 45 kilometers to the south, at the market town of Makambako, is a stop on the Chinese-funded railroad that links Zambia's copper belt to the coast at Dar es Salaam. If market conditions are right, trucks drive the 18 kilometers to Mwilavila from the main road in search of maize, sugar cane, tomatoes, or other crops, or in search of laborers for sugar cane or sisal plantations in Morogoro and Tanga. An oil pipeline runs along the main highway to fuel Zambia. I never did learn whether the microwave relay tower at Nyololo Njiapanda village is associated with the pipeline or carried telephone signals over our heads from one city to the next.

**History**<sup>23</sup> Semaphore signals in Tanzania's southern highlands were passed from mountain to mountain by German colonists early in the twentieth century, as one old stone tower with a 100 kilometers view stands in reminder. I learned from an old man, who explained how his grandfather happened to settle in the area, that what is now Mwilavila was once a resting point on a caravan route to the interior. It was subsequently the site of a pivotal battle between Germany and Britain in the first World War, which

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<sup>23</sup>This dissertation does not explore many of the complexities of historical experience and representation, although both would add valuable perspective to the subject matter. While I have gathered many oral histories from Malangali residents and development personnel, I have not engaged in a systematic investigation of the ways that people's representations of the past influence their actions and interpretations of the present. The challenge to do so has been posed to anthropologists frequently in the past decade, notably by (Roseberry 1989), John and Jean Comaroff (1992), Faubion (1993) and Richard Fox (1991), and taken up by many in recent years, most particularly in Tanzania by Sally Falk Moore (1986), Steven Feierman (1990), James Ellison (1999), and historian Kathleen Smythe (1997). To date I have not had an opportunity to conduct extensive archival research or speak with certain interesting but far-flung individuals; I hope to revisit this subject in future research.

looms larger in the British colonial records of the time<sup>24</sup> than it does in local lore. The British colonial surveyors bypassed Mwilavila when they charted the Great North Road, or the Cape-to-Cairo Highway, a dirt track that passes 12 kilometers to the south.<sup>25</sup>

Mwilavila became the site of the Malangali Secondary School (MSS), the first government secondary school in Tanzania, in 1928.<sup>26</sup> Unlike mission schools with a religious thrust established elsewhere in Iringa region, Malangali Secondary School aimed to teach promising young men skills that would enable “self reliance.” Students came from all over the colony, but efforts soon extended to some work with local residents, including agriculture and skills such as carpentry.<sup>27</sup> Although the school in its early days aimed at only minor transformations among local residents, MSS is significant as the first organized foreign aid project to focus on the Malangali area.

Malangali was drawn firmly into wider Tanzanian political and economic systems since well before the founding of the school. Many excellent studies (Walsh 1984, Lucas 1997, Redmayne 1964, Iliffe 1979) contribute to an understanding of regional history in the context of national circumstances. Malangali is at the historical border of two kingdoms, today conceived as ethnic groups and often during the past century referred to

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<sup>24</sup>I came across these records while undertaking preliminary archival research at the Public Records Office in Kew in 1992. I regret not making note of the catalogue numbers at the time, as an opportunity to revisit the colonial records has not occurred.

<sup>25</sup>The history of the roads to and around Malangali was related to me by an executive at the nearby Brooke Bond tea plantation, a Britisher several decades resident in the area.

<sup>26</sup>The diaries of the school's founder, W.B. Mumford, are at Rhodes House Library in Oxford. I hope someday to visit these records to complete a missing historical perspective on the Malangali area.

<sup>27</sup>Among my many debts to Mwalimu Bakari, a greatly respected local man who was educated at the University of Dar es Salaam in the early days of independence and who then came back to Malangali to teach, is his lengthy oral history of the school. His history has been supplemented by discussions with area elders and other teachers at the school.

as distinct “tribes”: the Hehe and the Bena.<sup>28</sup> A people who call themselves Sangu live at the bottom of the escarpment on the western edge of the division, and have long historical interactions with the area (Walsh 1984). In the historical summary of her 1997 dissertation of a Bena village 100 kilometers to the south, Kimberley Lucas ties together the written and oral accounts of the relationship between these two groups. The founding legend tells of four brothers who moved to the region and started the Hehe, Bena, Sangu, and Ngoni dynasties. To this day the Hehe and Bena languages are mutually intelligible. Malangali is far from the centers of both kingdoms, so apparently vacillated between identifying with one or the other depending on the relative strengths of the rulers. The area identified itself as Hehe at the time of German colonization, which occurred soon after a ruler named Mkwawa had asserted his strong dominion to the farthest historic reaches of Hehe empire. When the Germans finally defeated Mkwawa at Iringa in 1898, twelve years after claiming the rest of the country at Berlin (see Redmayne 1964 and Iliffe 1979 for discussion of Hehe resistance, and Pakenham 1991 and Hochschild 1998 for the politics of the Berlin conference), Malangali retained its Hehe identity.

German colonization brought about significant changes that prefigured many economic processes that have continued throughout the century. Malangali residents had long experience with taxation in the form of tribute payments of cattle and labor to whichever leader they owed fealty. The German administration replaced tribute with demands of taxation, payable in cash. Cash was available mostly by working on

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<sup>28</sup>Ethnicity and identification are discussed at length in Chapter 7.

plantations elsewhere in the colony. As Lucas demonstrates for Ubena, a German administrator estimated that by 1914 roughly 50% of area men had some experience migrating for wage labor (Lucas 1997). Wage labor migration, as will be expanded upon in the next chapter, has continued to play an important role for people from Malangali throughout the British and independence periods. Along with monetization, the century has seen a steadily expanding integration of the (usually agricultural) products of local labor within regional and global economic spheres. Perhaps the defining economic feature of the twentieth century has been the dislocation of the factors affecting cropping and labor allocation decisions to ever farther removes from the homestead. By the time the MSS began educating Tanzanians for self reliance in 1928, they had already been subject to agricultural, taxation, and labor mandates by colonial authorities for more than 30 years.

The advent of independence in 1961 did not signal immediate changes in Malangali interactions with structures of authority. The British had effectively preempted the authority of people with hereditary claims to power (Redmayne 1964, Walsh 1984), and the independence government amplified the role of state-appointed bureaucrats. The most famous rural campaign of the first president, Julius Nyerere, was *Ujamaa* villagization in the early 1970s. *Ujamaa* has drawn more than its share of scholarly attention, discussed on page 97, though it is only within the 1990s that sufficient time has elapsed for writers to place it in its historical perspective. *Ujamaa* was an important marker in people's lives in Malangali, not only as a time when many people had to move but also as the era of massive adult literacy campaigns, the institution of universal

primary education,<sup>29</sup> and the era of collective farming. The lasting significance of *Ujamaa* is that it serves as the paradigmatic example of official mandates trying to transform local lives. In dozens of conversations, Malangali residents recalled without anger being moved (they always use the passive causative *kuhamishwa*, to be made to move, rather than the active *kuhama*, to move) and being made to work three days a week on communal farms. They patiently explained the various reasons *Ujamaa* did not work for their families using language and tone similar to the way they talk about current development activities. *Ujamaa* was one major episode in a series of attempted actions visited upon rural Tanzanians.

The post-Nyerere period is the time in which I focus this dissertation. During his tenure as Tanzania's second president from 1985 to 1995, Ali Hassan Mwinyi oversaw the dismantlement of the socialist state in the face of International Monetary Fund (IMF) mandates for "structural adjustment" of the Tanzanian economy. Coincident with Mwinyi's accession, Concern arrived in Malangali in September 1985 and was active in the division until beginning their planned phase-out in 1995, with almost all support ended by 1997. From the vantage of Malangali residents, the ensuing changes resembled the arbitrary policy shifts of the Nyerere era, which themselves were continuities of the oscillations of the German and British colonial regimes. Within the context of these larger transformations, the development programs promoted by Concern were an

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<sup>29</sup>Buchert (1994) provides a comprehensive discussion of educational policies and their results in Tanzania. Speaking of adult functional literacy, which reached much of the population but often did not move beyond "to teach and learn how to read and write and count" (159), she argues, "it could only have met with the planned goal of long-term change in attitudes and skills if it had been closely related to wider socio-economic and political opportunities and had been implemented in due consideration of the local context" (162).

important subset of interactions between Malangali residents and extralocal power structures. In contrast to discussions that focus on the technical specifics of development programs, to the exclusion of wider economic and political processes, I make these wider processes integral to the analysis at the local level.<sup>30</sup> Historical contexts will be discussed more fully at relevant points in the subsequent chapters.

### **Methods**

The methods by which I conducted the research for this dissertation, and by which I assembled the ethnography, both situate this study within and set it apart from many analyses of both development and rural Africa. In this section I discuss the influences on the way I designed the study, the ways I carried out the work, and the considerations of voice and representation shaping the text you are reading. By examining extralocal as well as village-level influences on life in contemporary Malangali, I have joined in an on-going expansion of the anthropological method, discussed above, to include histories, places, and processes beyond the village here and now. The bulk of the research consisted of fairly standard participant observation in Malangali division, as well as one formal survey of area residents (see Appendix 1). I also had the opportunity to work for five months within Concern as a consultant for a study the agency conducted, and spent many hours with Concern's African staff talking about their lives and work. Research also took me far afield of "the field," including secondary field research in urban Dublin (see Appendix 2 for the formal survey of Irish residents), and interviews with

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<sup>30</sup>Almost all planning studies and annual reports written by Concern for Malangali give minimal or no consideration to wider historical and political considerations, including those listed in the bibliography. Further examples for Iringa region include JNSP 1984, and Kerkhof 1990, and Kilimo-Sasakawa-Global 2000 1992.



influential people in Dar es Salaam, London, and Washington. I employed the anthropologist's main technique, inserting myself in situations where I did not necessarily belong, with people in all these places.

**Fieldwork**            A challenge of ethnographic field research is to become welcome in places to which one was not invited. My first visit to Malangali was arranged by one Concern expatriate with whom I spoke in Iringa town in June 1992. The several days I spent in the division in August of that year were a surprise to the Malangali field staff, and went mostly unnoticed by area residents. I returned for another brief stay in 1993, but only after the Tanzanian Commission on Science and Technology approved my research plan in 1995 did I make formal introductions to the local government, Concern, and Malangali residents.

Concern was<sup>31</sup> gracious in helping me establish myself with proper introductions to local officials, the help of several individual employees in finding a house and getting around the area, and time spent evaluating my research project in the face of then current conditions. Our relationship for the first ten months formally covered four elements: housing for my first week, hitchhiking privileges if Concern transport was going my way, the use of their Iringa safe to store my laptop, and the use of their postal box to receive mail. My quasi-affiliated status was a delicate issue throughout the research period. I was welcome to sit in on many meetings that dealt with work matters, but sometimes recused myself or was asked to leave for personnel discussions. I tried to act like a hitchhiker, but

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<sup>31</sup>A note on orthography: except for direct quotations of published material, I use American spelling and grammatical conventions throughout this work. Thus, Concern was, rather than Concern were – with apologies to readers outside of the US.

often the drivers would detour many kilometers to get me to a destination – until I was employed as a consultant, when my rights to transport became part of the institutional tension over vehicles. Similarly, after the first couple of months I usually stayed as an invited guest in Concern housing when in Iringa town, but a new expatriate administrator went apoplectic when he found me, Goldilocks-like, asleep in my normal room after a meeting Concern paid me to attend. Early on I became a de facto computer advisor to the Iringa office, though I made it a point to forget any confidential details I learned while repairing the machines. What I learned about the internal workings of an aid organization reflects a combination of close personal relationships, many friendly acquaintances, and even a few antipathies. Situations such as meetings and interviews were arenas in which I formally gathered “data,” but I learned just as much over coffees and beers.

My relationships with Malangali residents took much longer to establish. Malangali has by now a seventy year history of resident expatriates, almost all of whom arrived expecting in one way or another to change people’s lives. The two anthropologists whose research brought them to Malangali, G. Gordon Brown (1936) and Alison Redmayne (1964), visited only briefly for counterpoint to their main field research in more central zones of the old Hehe kingdom. Other than spouses and brief visitors, the expatriates who had lived in Malangali came either to teach, preach, or do development outreach. People therefore assumed I fit into one of those pre-existing categories. With area residents I tried to distance myself as much as possible from Concern, from other aid organizations, and from the government. It took some time before people came to more or

less accept my explanation for my presence in Malangali. After many months when I would arrive by foot, spend hours conversing with no apparent agenda, and never try to deliver an extension message, people came to accept that my interest was, as I said, writing this book.

As with Concern personnel, I quickly became close friends with some area residents despite the fuzzy purpose behind my local tenure. On a typical day in the field I would rise with the sun and walk by the Concern office, on the other side of town, at about 8 a.m. There I would find out if any cars were going somewhere I needed to go, see if there were any upcoming meetings I might want to attend, and catch up on the morning gossip. Then I would call Molly the dog and we would walk to one of the three research villages. If I had made appointments, I would visit particular houses; otherwise I dropped in on whoever was home. Often the trail led to whichever house was selling homebrew that day, since that is where many people would be congregated. After several hours of talk, sometimes including taped interviews and/ or lunch, Molly and I would walk home by mid-afternoon. In the early evening I usually went out again, visiting people in Mwilavila village or hanging out with Concern personnel who might be visiting. People shared many crucial insights during unstructured evenings when libations led to loosened tongues. Thankfully, many of my friends among area residents are tea-totaling Muslims or Lutherans. Still, much that I learned came in casual conversations with no notebook or tape recorder in hand. Much “data” was etched in my memory, to be written down a few days later or recycled into future conversations.

I conducted one formal survey (see Appendix 1) of about 250 households in the

four subvillages in which I worked. I designed the survey in consultation with David Storey, Concern's technical advisor, and Prosper Mhando, a devoted agricultural extension officer, among others. I designed the questions to be non-invasive, asking "Did you earn any money from selling maize this year?" for example, rather than asking for specific cash amounts. Initially I went from house to house administering the survey by myself. I found, however, that people gave terse answers but opened up in conversation after the survey forms were put away. The surveys came to seem an evil necessity. They were necessary because people expected that a researcher would come with a form and a clipboard, and because I got some helpful introductory data that could be useful for comparative or statistical purposes. They were evil because, as Chambers (1983) discusses, they swallowed up time and energy while producing only the illusion of accurate information. I therefore designed a focused strategy for the surveys. I trained sixteen advanced secondary students to conduct the interviews, first holding a three hour seminar introducing them to anthropology and the purpose of my research, then taking them in pairs to the nearest research village where they could watch me administer the questionnaire and I could watch them each twice. When the training was complete, we arranged three days when we went to the three villages and divided up to visit every household on the maps I had drawn earlier. With that chore out of the way, I was free to wander around visiting people as a bona fide student for the remainder of my time in Malangali.

I initially planned systematic research that would allow quantifiable data of a random cross-section of households. After much frustration I learned that my research

area, with homesteads spread out over more than 100 hot and rugged square kilometers, is ill-suited for such enumeration. In areas with no telephones or motor transport, unforeseen circumstances such as work or funerals often cause missed meetings. Interviews can go astray for any number of reasons, such as one discussion I recorded with a woman who was talkative until her husband came home, sat down, and dominated the rest of the conversation. My biggest problem, though, was that I was interested in too many aspects of what people said. Often the conversation would veer from the prescribed topic to things like love, beliefs, or justice. What follows, then, arises from the people I talked to and the things we talked about – but it does not pretend to represent all possible perspectives on all issues discussed.

Often fieldwork was laughter, teasing, gossip, and eventually friendship. My notion that the fieldworker should be unobtrusive, even invisible, was in direct contrast to my hosts' expectations that I would be vocal and informative. After a while I learned to loosen up, become a character. I started telling jokes, arguing, participating in oratorical gamesmanship on political topics. (As a foreigner, I never did express direct opinions about Tanzanian political figures, many of whom I have interviewed. Men appreciated delicately phrased oratory about controversial issues, so often I was called on to voice my views. At first I hesitated to say anything, but later learned that staking a position somewhat outside of the mainstream is a useful way to get people talking.) I rode a mountain bike all over the region, greeting strangers in the Hehe language as I peddled past them up hills, and sometimes borrowed a little motorcycle from one of Concern's Tanzanian staffers that I rode too fast on dirt tracks. I often spent Sundays flying a light

aircraft from a mission 50 kilometers away. After many months of such behavior, the chairman of Isimikinyi village suggested I find a local girl to marry. I demurred, but followed up on the invitation to build a house on land I was given. The process of designing the house, finding materials and building the structure was an unstructured field experience that was endlessly informative. So were the daily unplanned occurrences, such as spelunking with some young men, bantering with teenage girls in a mango tree, milking cows, shelling maize, preparing for weddings. The more I shed my reserved professional hauteur in favor of a relaxed *joie de vivre*, the more people opened up to me as a person, rather than treating me as a resident alien.

The main fieldwork period was followed by research in Ireland in 1997 and a return to Malangali in 1998. The Irish research, discussed primarily in Chapter 6, provided an opportunity to talk with individual donors to Concern and other charities, as well as giving me the chance to discuss Concern's time in Malangali with senior Concern staff and former Tanzania personnel. The one-month return visit to Tanzania, while distressingly brief, proved crucial to the final dissertation. During that time I was able to follow up on several threads that needed more consideration, or areas in which important developments had occurred in the intervening eighteen months. I brought the second draft of this dissertation with me to Malangali, and discussed my conclusions at length with dozens of area residents. Happily, I found that many of my interpretations were not too disagreeable to the people with whom I reviewed the findings. Some of what I wrote initially, however, was proven misguided by the 1998 visit, so has been revised accordingly.

**Teamwork**

In addition to the self-directed field research described above, I became part of another research project that involved me to some extent inside the structure of the aid agency. In our first meeting, Concern country director Paul Murphy mentioned plans for a “Wider Impact Study,” always referred to as “the WIS,” to assess Concern’s decade in Malangali. I was then involved in periodic planning discussions for the study, and it became clear that I should be involved in the research in some capacity. The study design, in which I had no formal role, included meetings with many regional officials and other personnel, some of which I attended, and an expensive British consultant who flew in for a two week planning marathon. The study was slated to start in July 1996. During that same week, Paul and I finally formalized my contract in Dar es Salaam. I regret the timing, because I think we could have designed a stronger social-scientific study had we more time to plan the details for Malangali. Even so, I learned a lot, both from the facts gathered by the study team and from the process of working within the organization. My contract period was for two days a week, including write-up time, during the last five months of my time in Tanzania.

Concern paid special bonuses to nine of their extension staff in Malangali and a similar number at their project site in Ismani to participate as researchers for the WIS.<sup>32</sup> The Ismani staff came the 200 kilometers to Malangali for a week-long training in July, during which we worked on research methods and strategies. We combined the Concern research leaders’ experience in Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) with the

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<sup>32</sup>My own salary was, if calculated hourly, slightly higher than the minimum wage in the United States – which meant I earned in a day what Concern’s Tanzanian employees earned in a month. This money was important to my ability to extend my research period several months longer than planned.

ethnographic method of semi-structured interviews. The field staff became enthusiastic about some of the things they were learning from the research that gave them new perspective on their work as extension officers. Their interest was tempered, though, by the knowledge that their contracts with Concern would end almost immediately as part of the organization's pullout from the area.

The final WIS report remains unavailable as of this writing, in May of 1999, so will probably never be circulated outside of Concern's Dublin headquarters. If it warrants attention as such, it will be useful for organizational self-awareness within Concern. The WIS is unlikely, though, to make any long term difference within Malangali, because most of the researchers have found employment elsewhere in the wake of the Concern withdrawal. This dissertation draws in part on ideas I began to write or conceive during the WIS, and in some cases on data I learned during WIS research. Inasmuch as this is a dissertation about Concern in Malangali, however, the focus is fundamentally different than that of the WIS. The WIS sought to evaluate the *impact* of Concern's decade in Malangali, while this dissertation is about the *contexts* of the economic situation in Malangali of which Concern formed a part.

**Drama** I turn now to discuss issues of authority and representation within anthropological writing that are important in the design of this dissertation. Ethnography presents challenges to both writer and reader. Many of these issues have been discussed extensively, particularly in Clifford and Marcus 1986. The incorporation of postmodernism into anthropological thought posed many questions about what we know, how we know it, and how we express both knowledge and ignorance in writing. The



classic ethnographies were subjected to inspection and reevaluation. How, for example, could E. E. Evans-Pritchard write three definitive monographs about the Nuer (1940, 1951, 1956) based on 11 months of field research among people whose language he barely spoke, in the middle of serious displacements caused by a war he hardly mentions? (Hutchinson 1996: 30-2). Anthropology by the 1980s had moved beyond the functionalist claims that people such as the Nuer had a static culture that existed outside of time and circumstance. By the 1980s questions arose about the existence of the very cultural categories by which groups were demarcated – *the Nuer*, *the Hehe*. Most anthropologists today try to include historical, political, and economic factors that have contributed to the situations of the people about whom we write. Clarity about the wider context of our studies has not, however, necessarily made the project of reading or writing the ethnographies any clearer.

Whether or not they are acknowledged or addressed, questions and assumptions about authority permeate the reading and writing of every ethnography. Evans-Pritchard provided one model, using his preface to assert that he can present “a true outline” (Evans-Pritchard 1940: 15) because “I, unlike most readers, know the Nuer” (p. 9). Were anthropology only so much butterfly collecting, we could accept this approach toward the presentation of “scientific” data. If anthropology has learned anything from its encounter with postmodernist theory, it is that the data we record are based largely on subjective experience (Tyler 1986). Their presentation as ethnography must therefore be similarly subjective.

This line of reasoning can veer toward the nihilistic. Instead of claiming to know

everything about a people, the anthropologist can make claims to having no general knowledge. Kondo presents a particularly introspective account of her fieldwork, focusing on what her subjective experience taught her about “the complicated tangle of ironies and ambiguities we create for ourselves, and that are created for us,” (Kondo 1990: 308) more than about broader statements about Japanese society. (Her broader analyses are blanketed in the thematic search for identity.) Kondo’s ethnographic experiment is to place the experiential “I” in the field along with the observational “eye.” This approach quickly limits itself. Ethnography is about the people we are learning from, and only occasionally about what they teach us about ourselves.

The challenge of ethnographic writing, then, lies in reconciling subjectivity and objectivity. The ethnography is *about* people living in a certain time and place, yet the “facts” available to the researcher are contingent on unique and perhaps illusory experience. Although we may include material other than direct observation, such as surveys and historical documentation, we recognize that these too have their biases and errors. Can we still produce a work that claims to be in any way a presentation of objective truth? Can we allow for the subjectivities of research data without overwhelming the reader with doubts about the accuracy and purpose of the work? In this dissertation I attempt, through the experiment of dramatic narrative, to provide affirmative answers to both questions.

Part of the experiment is to show the data in the contexts in which they were gathered. Geertz did something similar in *The Religion of Java* (1960), peppering his ethnography with relatively raw excerpts from his fieldnotes; dramatic narrative is an

attempt to revise “thick description” into a more readable reconstruction. My hope is that by offering this context for understanding the data, the reader will be able to evaluate who is saying what, and why. In Chapter 5, *Women*, for example, it is important to know something about the individuals with whom I spoke, rather than implying by omission that any one person speaks for all members of a particular category such as “young mother.” Sometimes speakers responded to events when in other situations they might have remained silent or voiced other views. Such is the inconsistency of life, but such subtleties do not come across in many conventional ethnographic narratives. My model in presenting stories such as Mtindo’s (Chapter 3) and Pekee’s (Chapter 5) is drawn from Mintz’s *Worker in the Cane* (1960), where Don Taso’s voice rings through in all his moods and memories. This dissertation gives no individual the textual primacy of Don Taso, but includes the stories of several people whom I got to know quite well during my field research.

**Accuracy**                      The situations in which anthropological research occurs often influence the accuracy of the data gathered. First, even the quotations transcribed directly from recorded interviews are the product of their particular moment. Public personalities such as politicians and development agency personnel with whom I spoke were acutely aware of the tape recorder or notebook between us, and tailored their remarks accordingly.<sup>33</sup> Rural residents often forgot about the little machine until it clicked after an hour’s recording, but the words captured on cassette nonetheless are influenced by the

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<sup>33</sup>The leader of one national political party addressed his remarks directly to the tape recorder on the couch between us, and even reached down to turn the unit off before he answered one question he thought might be sensitive.

unusual setting of sitting in a quiet room discussing life histories with an enigmatic foreigner. And what of the many informative occasions that I could neither record nor make notes of at the moment? I sketched many of these events in notes at the end of the day or week, but sometimes the significant element of the conversation did not become apparent until much later. Anthropologists can neither present such material as indisputable fact, nor leave out important contributions to their understandings of their experiences.

Problems of accuracy even occur with notes taken at meetings that I only observed, where I could scribble relatively innocuously while the principals discussed the business at hand. Meetings conducted in English moved too fast for me to capture everything being said. For most meetings I had to either translate from Swahili on the fly or write sentence fragments as they flew by, garnering what Geertz styles a “catch-as-catch-can translation of what the informant said rather than his [sic] exact words” (Geertz 1960: 385). Even now I cannot understand every word I hear in Swahili, nor the side comments that may pass in a variety of local languages. (The notes show a steady improvement in my rapid translation capabilities as the research period progressed, which adds another level of potential inaccuracy to the early research.) At times meetings entailed mind-numbing tedium, so the notes taper off or wander into detailed descriptions of the participants and the place. If lucky, I managed to write down the important details as they were being spoken, but often several minutes would pass before I was jolted by the discussion to begin anew a rapid recounting of the event.

**Detail**            No perfect method exists to retain and convey the anthropological field

experience. Pictures and video are perhaps the most deceptive of all, as scenes recorded for the benefit of the camera usually obscure the presence of machine, photographer, and the “observational selectivity” of the editing process.<sup>34</sup> The filmmaker of the 1987 documentary *Cannibal Tours*, Dennis O’Rourke, confronts this problem in a way that provides another model for this dissertation’s form. He includes scenes showing the interviewees’ obvious discomfort with the camera, side comments to their compatriots, and evident attempts at self-aggrandizement. The viewer is aware of camera, cinematographer, and context. This awareness *enhances* the ability to appreciate the people and the scenes.

What is the place of such details in written ethnography? For example, on page 215 I depict a visit to a spring. In passing, I overheard two women wondering whether my inspection, 100 kilometers from the research area where people knew me, foretold the coming of an aid project. The remarks were fleeting, and did not even strike me until I mentioned them to a Tanzanian fellow researcher after we walked away. Were I to mention the remarks outside of a dramatic narrative, the loss of context might distort their significance: “Women in Sadani thought the visit of a European to their spring could signal an imminent aid project,” perhaps, or “Women in Sadani were considering the idea of a water assistance project.” The fact is, in this case I know nothing about what they thought or wanted, only a fragment of what they speculated privately. Nor do I discuss the significance of the remarks, the casual association of a European’s presence with a development program with which they may choose to involve themselves, until the

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<sup>34</sup> John Collier Jr. is one of several scholars to discuss these issues in Rollwagen 1988.

concluding chapters. The remarks are not strictly relevant to a discussion about the water supply scheme back in Malangali, 100 kilometers away, which is the main thrust of the chapter. Yet there the remarks are, caught in the ethnographer's gaze, demanding a conscious decision about whether to include them in the reported field of view or leave them on the cutting-room floor.

Similarly, information I learned about changing forest cover from Baba Eustacia, portrayed in Chapter 3, came in the context of a sentimental journey to his daughter's wedding. Were his reminiscences affected by the truckload of singing women with whom we traveled? Certainly the experience of traveling through the countryside is an important factor in how people interact with forests. A filmmaker would capture the singing, the bouncing, and Baba Eustacia pointing unprompted to areas of deforestation and regrowth. An academic discussion that leaves out such details might be leaving out essential information.

On the other hand, many details distract unnecessarily from the intellectual points of the discussion. Ethnography differs from travelogue in the effort to draw academic lessons from the field experience. Whether presented as drama, story, or "just the facts" (e.g., "A barren area to the south is said to have been thriving miombo woodland in the 1960s" in the example of Baba Eustacia), editing decisions must convey the central point. Unlike particle physics, though, the details often have a way of contradicting themselves. While Evans-Pritchard could diagram a neat model of a segmentary lineage system, did he present a "vision of Nuer social life... at times so unified as to preclude the possibility of ideological struggle among groups within it" (Hutchinson 1996: 31)? Had he allowed for

such texture he would not have undermined his description of the model social organization that Nuer held to describe their world. Generations of anthropology students merely would have grappled with a more complex story, and in the process gained a richer picture of Nuer experience. But leaving out the messy details also served a purpose, for the basic model he describes is now well understood by people dealing with similar social orders elsewhere.

Without details, the reader is restricted to the author's interpretations of the facts. While it is possible to disagree with the ethnographer's conclusions based on other knowledge of the topic, it can be extremely difficult to discern alternative shades of meaning. Statements derive their authority from an absolute imbalance between the writer and most everyone else: the writer was there, you were not. The reader has no way to question whether the fieldworker heard properly, understood correctly, or was being teased or lobbied. In this, anthropology is unusual among the disciplines. In the sciences, research must be supported by reams of observational or experimental data that allow others to analyze or repeat the results. Economists and mathematicians lay bare their formulae. Literary theorists have their texts and historians their archives, all open to inspection and reinterpretation by others. Anthropologists, however, write interpretive fragments of problematic data that can never be repeated – even by the researchers themselves, even in the same places with the same people but at different times. The reader cannot hope to have the same experiences.

**Notes**            Can notes taken in the field be held as the raw scientific data of the anthropological project? In *Fieldnotes* (1990), Roger Sanjek and his contributors discuss

the possibility of opening research notes to public review. Such an approach might be useful in some cases, but holds many problems. First is the issue of confidentiality. Notes contain many details of people's sexual and financial secrets and interpersonal politics that would be inappropriate to reveal indiscriminately. Notes contain real names in cases where people require pseudonyms or have spoken explicitly off the record. Second, reading the notes can be torturous. Written in notebooks with Bic pens, on random scraps of paper, balanced on a knee, scribbled in candlelight, fieldnotes are not usually up to publication standards. But even if they were coaxed into shape, a third problem makes them a poor substitute for hard data. The notes only detail fragments of the participant observers' experiences. Quotations may appear without the surrounding context, with just a word or two to trigger the researcher's memory. Long descriptive passages may include nothing of moment. Most importantly, perhaps, is that the notes themselves are the process of on-the-spot editorial decisions about what is and is not worthy of record. Entire days may be summed up in a single sentence, while specific moments may garner paragraphs. Fieldnotes are thus only the raw material from which a coherent ethnography can be written.

In this dissertation I employ dramatic narrative as a descriptive device that addresses some of the problems with ethnographic writing. I take specific scenes that illustrate particular points, and present them as my notes and memory indicate they occurred. I try to reserve my comments and interpretations for the main text, so that the reader may appreciate the scenes as momentary glimpses into the field experience. Of course, the scenes themselves are the result of a heavy-handed editorial process. I have



chosen particular moments out of many possible situations, and have selected exactly what the reader will and will not encounter. I have a deliberate agenda, which is to convince the reader of the conclusions my observations lead me to make about the development endeavor in Tanzania. Dramatic presentation is in part a heuristic means to assert the basis for my claims. Yet the form also allows the reader to make limited alternative observations, and allows the writer to suggest areas where the data are interesting but ambiguous. Not least, I hope that the form is engaging, making this work pleasant to read and easy to remember.

Many choices went into the recounting of the scenes. Some of the scenes are taken almost verbatim from fieldnotes, with extraneous elements cut and descriptive background inserted. These scenes, even the direct transcriptions from tape, are subject to all of the observational biases discussed above. Other scenes are reconstructed from notes written after the event. The dialogue in a few, though, is a pastiche. The scene that opens Chapter 4, for example, is a composite of two tours of the Malangali Water Supply Scheme I observed in 1993 and 1996, as well as information from an extensive report written in 1993 by one water engineer, a taped interview and many casual conversations with another in 1995 and 1996, and further conversations with the first engineer in Ireland in 1997. Everything in the scene was said in some form by one of the characters portrayed, but the exact wording is my own. The source for each scene is indicated in the text or the footnotes.

In most cases, early readers insisted on a restrained approach toward details, so the text contains fewer descriptive digressions than might be necessary to describe events in

all their richness. Nevertheless, a reader might sense a certain tension between the task of academic writing and the pleasure of conveying vivid experiences. Again unlike other disciplines, anthropology demands involvement with the research topic on a human level. I hope the dramatic form enables personalities to shine through, while still maintaining focus on the research findings.

**Memory**                    The reconstructions of the scenes depend a lot on memory, which is far from perfect – what Unni Wikan called (in discussion) “headnotes.” As one anonymous anthropologist ruminates,

Are memories fieldnotes? I use them that way, even though they aren’t the same kind of evidence. It took a while for me to be able to rely on my memory. But I *had* to, since the idea of what I was doing had changed, and I had memories but no notes. I had to say, “Well, I saw that happen” (Jackson 1990: 21).

Important details may be forgotten, or wrongly remembered. What is here presented as dramatic dialogue often appears in the notes as description: “She talked about the time when...” In such cases my imagination fills in where memory leaves off, as I recall the flavor of the conversation without recourse to the exact words. This is a distinct problem with ethnography, because apparent quotations are often cloudy concoctions from the mists of memory. Along with the footnotes to indicate the specificity of apparent quotations, I offer three defenses for this approach to the ethnography. The first is that drafts of all five Africa-based ethnographic chapters were completed within seven months of my return from the field, and the chapter set in Ireland was written during and immediately after the research there. Thus time had little opportunity to haze over recollections of the observational experiences. Second are actual test cases of my memory, where scenes first sketched without reference to the notes erred in only a few minor

details when subsequently compared to the synchronous notebook, such as the interview with Graham Bashford in Chapter 7 conducted in 1992 and written up in 1998. Third, many of the events portrayed in the scenes were the subject of many conversations later that etched both incident and expressions into my mind. During the fieldwork period I was also conducting research for a lexicographic project, and so paid particular attention to people's turns of phrase. Reconstructed dialogue is therefore often faithful both to individuals' styles of speech and to content that was subjected to a confirmation process. Although I cannot vouch for the exact accuracy of any dialogue except that from recorded interviews, I only present scenes that I believe are a fair rendition of events experienced and things expressed.

**Names**        The intimate stories of many people appear in this ethnography, raising concerns about identity and anonymity. I follow a simple, arbitrary convention, using the real names of public figures and pseudonyms for most residents of Malangali division who did not explicitly confirm that they want their identities revealed. The reason for this is that public figures had the choice of whether or not to talk with me, could be reasonably expected to know the conventions of research and attribution, and had made the decision to insert themselves into the lives of the people of Malangali. On the other hand, most Malangali residents had little exposure to the subtleties of publishing speech, and had little choice about the arrival and insertion of this researcher into their lives. I have not gone to great lengths to mask identities because people have little to lose from what I discuss herein, and because a diligent (obsessive?) reader could go to Malangali and figure out all the people with whom I had spent time anyway. Pseudonymity is in most cases a courtesy,

not a necessity, and in some cases Malangali residents specifically asked that I mention their names in the dissertation. Those individuals appear by their own names. Those people whose identities are masked bear names in these pages that are in one way or another small puns on their real names or personalities.

**Theater**                    The form used in this ethnography implies drama, but not theater. Lives are dramatic; theater is successful when it transposes that drama to a fictitious stage. Theater tames the emotions found in the wild – comedy, joy, romance, grief, tragedy – encapsulating such feelings in constructed events that will resonate with audiences who have had such experiences themselves. But in theater lines are scripted by a playwright, the stage is built by a designer. Events have beginnings, climax, and conclusions. Lives follow no such script, a point Steinbeck makes in his play (and subsequent novella) *Of Mice and Men*. People interact with their compatriots and their settings in ways based on their personalities, experiences, needs, desires, moods, and constraints. Functionalist anthropology falls short because it holds implicit the assumption that people within a culture will react basically the same way to a given circumstance – that culture provides a script into which people are locked throughout their lives. Culture certainly provides limits – a Southern Baptist will under no circumstances bow to the east and give praise to Allah – but usually does not describe exactly how any but the most ritualized situation will be enacted. People take actions to transform their own circumstances, and circumstances change despite the actions people take.

Victor Turner's discussions of "social drama" highlight elements of conflict, structure, and process. In early writings he turns to the dramas of conflict as a way "to

observe the crucial principles of the social structure in their operation” (Turner 1957: 93). In later writings, though, he acknowledges, by reference to Gulliver’s work in Tanzania (Gulliver 1971), “the cumulative effect of an endless series of minor incidents, cases, and events that might be quite as significant in affecting and changing relationships as the more overtly dramatic encounters” (Turner 1982: 71). Some of the events depicted in this ethnography display the passionate reflexivity that Turner argues lies at the heart of social drama, but many occur in the mundane progression of life’s daily progress. This dissertation is about how people perceive the circumstances of material poverty in Malangali, what they attempt to do about it, and the results of these actions. Their actions are improvised, based on real and imagined options and constraints, and quite dramatic.

**Audience**                      Some events chronicled in this ethnography were initially staged with audience in mind, while others were meant to occur off-camera. The recreation of these events here engages still other audiences far removed from the original enactments. Both aspects of the audience bear consideration.

In some cases the events I witnessed during the course of my research were clearly aimed at one or more audiences. The most obvious is a public theater presentation described in Chapter 5, which was a propaganda effort targeting rural women and men. The presidential visit in Chapter 7 was pitched even wider; Malangali residents and the Concern directorate were backdrops for press reports touting the president’s commitment to his rural citizens and to cooperation with international agencies. Such public events are planned carefully for dramatic effect on the target audiences, be they peasant families

or voters or international donors. The audience is often fully conscious of the attempts to manipulate them, as shown by the comments of the men in Chapter 8 listening to their MP's exhortations that they plant tobacco.<sup>35</sup> The public responses may therefore differ from individuals' private, off-stage thoughts and actions. On the other hand, public attempts at manipulation may sway people, as happened with some ethnically charged remarks at a pre-election political rally in Malangali. Whether effective or not, such "sophisticated instruments of social reflexivity" occurred precisely because they might influence the audience (Turner 1986: 38).

Other events are less didactic in nature, their staging only partial. The several meetings portrayed in the following pages had agendas that represented the goals of one or more participants. The scenes in which Concern and government officials meet with village committees depict efforts by these people to sway action *without* the difficulties of large-scale propaganda campaigns. While the orations were made for public effect, they were yet intended to avoid public inspection. Some activities of public interest are meant to be even more private, such as efforts to persuade contact farmers to adopt extension messages in order to achieve a demonstration effect. In such events, the staging provides a setting but the outcome is uncertain, because there is no guarantee the audience will react as hoped. Individual performance is therefore paramount as the various players attempt to advance their positions. They often lose sight of the staging in the process, instead remaining immersed in the real drama of their lives.

Everyday events may be performative, but the actors are rarely thinking about their

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<sup>35</sup> See Haugerud 1995 for a complete discussion of the dynamics of public meetings in East Africa.

audience. A person may sigh when sitting down next to others, for example, but remain silent when sitting down alone. Many aspects of life are done with other people present; their presence may influence actions of which neither actor nor audience are cognizant. Some scenes in this ethnography depict events that participants were not thinking of as public moments. Participant observation grants the researcher the opportunity to witness many private moments where the actors consider themselves to be off-stage. The presence of the anthropologist has some effect on these events, but such an effect is often no more significant than the exaggerated sigh. It is sharing these little pieces of life – professional voyeurism – that makes the field experience enjoyable. Such events also sometimes yield more insight than hours of formal interviews. Perhaps it is unfair to take these moments and retell them to anonymous strangers. In recounting the scenes I strive to balance the privacy of people in their homes with the interest of portraiture for an audience the actors may not even know exists, and for which they were by no means performing.

I must also mention that some events were performed specifically for my benefit, sometimes with a mind toward the wider audience I might reach. People were eager to show me how they live. They had many reasons, including friendship and embarrassment at my ignorance. In the late stages of fieldwork, when people began to think I was more than a transient figure in their lives, they went out of their way to provide lessons so that I could fit in better. But they also made open remarks about things I should write in my book for overseas readers, or things I should tell the development agency. Sometimes they expressed opinions, sometimes they lobbied for particular types of aid. While people were

talking with me, it is possible they were addressing you.

All writing is aimed toward particular audiences, be it an office memo or a Stephen King blockbuster. This ethnography was written with several audiences in mind. The immediate audience is a small group of dissertation readers, who by no means agree with everything herein. Many other scholars have also been kind enough to offer comments on early drafts. I of course hope that the dissertation will prove interesting to other scholars of Africa, anthropology, and issues of poverty and international aid. Some parts of the ethnography are particularly geared toward an academic audience steeped in anthropological literature, and other parts may speak mostly to scholars of Tanzania. In an effort to communicate with non-Tanzanianist readers, the use of Swahili terms is kept to the minimum possible. I also feel accountable toward a specific audience of development personnel as I write – I am hopeful that the friendly reception an early draft received among a group of international development students is a harbinger that the analysis in these pages may prove useful within the aid industry. The people at the Irish charity Concern particularly gave me quite a bit of their time and their confidence, including paying me as a consultant for a research project of their own. Though parts of this dissertation may seem unfairly harsh for some Concern personnel, I do not mask the opinions I express exactly because I respect the aims they are trying to achieve. Too much writing about development issues exempts development agencies from scrutiny; I hope by subjecting the agency to the same scrutiny I give the people of Malangali that the former will find things to appreciate. I also hope that other people directly involved in the implementation of projects in Tanzania and elsewhere will find items of interest. Not



least, I write with the hope that a more general audience might find in this narrative an appropriate introduction to issues of importance in contemporary Africa, and will be engaged and provoked by the pages that follow.