FOOD, CULTURE, AND SURVIVAL IN AN AFRICAN CITY

KAREN COEN FLYNN

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For
K. C. Flynn
and
Jeanne and Donald Coen

In memory of
Edwin Lugeleka

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Glossary of Kiswahili Terms

ardhi	land, soil
bafumu	magicians or diviners
bangi	marijuana
biashara ndogo ndogo	very small business
chai	hot tea with milk
chakula cha maskini	poor person's food
chapati	a soft wheat tortilla
chungu	clay cooking pot
dagaa	tiny freshwater sardines
daladala	minibuses, vans, or pickup trucks used as public transport
dawa	medicine
dawa ya kienyeji	traditional or indigenous medicine
dona	coarsely ground maize flour
futari	first food eaten after a day of fasting
kahogo	a type of rice
kanga	pieces of colorfully printed cloth worn as wraps by many African girls and women
kesho on delivery	Tomorrow on delivery
kikango	frying pan
Kila Mtu Afanye Kazi	Everyone Must Work
Kilimo cha Kufa na Kupona	Agriculture for Life and Death
kopo	a tin can used as a measure or scoop
kukaa	to live, to stay
kuleana	a nongovernmental organization supporting street children
kunyenga	slang for non-consensual, anal-penetrative sex among males, particularly street boys
maandazi	deep-fried wheat-flour donuts
mafiga	three stones arranged around hot coals used to support a cooking pot or grill

magenge	small commercial food stands
magumu	hard, difficult
malaya	prostitute (in general) or a prostitute stationed at a guest house
mama wa nyumbani	literally, mothers of the house, homemakers
Mama Nitilie	slang term used to refer to women who sell cooked food on the streets in urban areas
matoke	plantains or cooking bananas
mboga	vegetable
mchele wa China	rice from China
mchicha	amaranth or Chinese spinach
mchuzi	gravy or sauce
mganga/waganga	practitioner/s of traditional or indigenous medicine
mitumba	secondhand clothes
mjomba	literally, maternal uncle; but also slang for an older male friend
mkokoteni/mikokoteni	large wheelbarrow/s or cart/s
mpesa	money tree
mtama	sorghum/millet
mtumbwi/mitumbwi	sailboat/s
pappadam	crisp flat bread
pisholi	a type of rice
rafiki/marafiki	friend/s, slang for lover/s
rahisi	easy
sadaka	alms
samba	magic medicines (Sukuma language)
sembe	finely ground maize flour
shuguli ndogo ndogo	very small business or activities
siyo ngumu	not hard or difficult
sufuria	round handleless aluminum cooking pots
sukuma wiki	to stretch out the week; also slang for spinach
sungusungu	neighborhood vigilante groups
super	a type of rice
tabia	custom, habit
tambi	imported spaghetti noodles
uchangumfu	cheerfulness
uchesi	humor
ugali	stiff porridge made by mixing maize, cassava, or millet flour into boiling water

ujamaa	brotherhood, familyhood
uji	watery gruel made from millet, wheat, maize, or cassava flour
vitumbua	deep-fried rice cakes
wahuni	hooligans
watoto wa mitaani	street children
watu wa mitaani	street people
watembezi	street-walking prostitutes
zawadi	a gift or gifts

1

Introduction

Today millions of people consume an unprecedented quantity, quality and variety of food while millions of others live with chronic hunger. We humans are to blame; global food supplies are plentiful enough to feed everyone. Because access to food is not only a biological need but widely recognized as a basic human right, it also is a fundamental gauge of power and powerlessness whether one is assessing the relationships between the world's nations or a group of destitute women enduring life on the streets (Counihan and Van Esterik 1997). Clearly the goal of contemporary advocacy and policymaking should be the complete eradication of food deprivation and in this era of recurring and unprecedented suffering in countries such as Sudan, Sierre Leone, Burkina Faso and Lesotho, the people of sub-Saharan Africa should rank at the top of our concern. It is Africans who struggle disproportionately per capita compared with other world-region populations against the inseparable horrors of hunger, poverty, and HIV/AIDS. Deprivation has long been associated with rural Africa, but today urban poverty is increasing at alarming rates. In this book I attempt to work toward this goal by imparting what I have learned about food, culture and survival in an African city.

Without grocery stores, supermarkets, food-delivery services, or convenience stores, how do people acquire food in urban Africa? Because of historical concerns about rural food supplies, little is known about food consumption in Africa's cities, particularly the rapidly growing provincial ones (see figure 1.1). But given much of the continent's marginal status in world affairs, why should we even care? I believe it is crucial for people worldwide to understand how city dwellers in Africa feed themselves not only because of the stark ethical questions raised by food inequalities, but because of the economic costs involved as well. Many African countries are experiencing the rapid burgeoning of unplanned and under-financed cities. These urban centers are usually the seats of governments as well as the sites of protests against

Figure 1.1 Africa.

Source: Adapted by Ann E. Donkin from U.N. Map #4045 Rev.4~Jan 2004.

them; nothing prompts civil unrest faster than the rising cost of staple foods (Thompson 1971; Tilly 1975; Bates 1981; Taylor 1996; Ferguson 1999; Bentley 2001). Contemporary international connections fostered by business, governmental, news media and communication links virtually guarantee that a food crisis in one place will be felt in others far away. At present food crises result in a variety of costly at-a-distance responses, ranging from an outpouring of private charity or governmental aid to military intervention. Just as assuredly many of the same entrepreneurs doing business in today's food economies are already working to fill Africa's cities of tomorrow with the very grocery stores, supermarkets, food-delivery services, and convenience stores absent there today. For these reasons understanding how urban

residents feed themselves is vital not only to protecting human rights and maintaining civil order in Africa, but to controlling governmental costs worldwide and maintaining the viability of our intimately intertwined open-market systems. As Amnesty International executive director William Schulz (2001) so plainly states in the title of his book, one reason governments and citizens of the industrialized world need to care about human rights abuses, which surely include such things as chronic hunger and famine, is because it is "in our own best interest" to do so.

I learned about the food-acquisition strategies forming the basis of this book during 10 months of anthropological research in Mwanza, Tanzania (see figure 1.2). While comparative poverty measures are fraught with conceptual and practical complications, it is not difficult to argue that African economic performance in general during the past 25 years has lagged behind the other world regions. In the 1980s the average per capita gross domestic product of African countries wallowed 5 percentage points behind the average for all low-income countries worldwide; in the 1990s the breach widened to 6.2 percentage points (Collier and Gunning 1999: 64). In regard to Tanzania specifically, statistics can convey a mixed message. For example while the country looked relatively well-off in 2002 when globally it ranked eighty-ninth out of 208 in terms of gross national income, it also ranked two hundred and seventh out of 208 in terms of per capita purchasing power parity[1] in international dollars[2] (World Bank 2003). Statistics aside Tanzania is one of the poorer countries in the poorest region in the world.

I carried out this research between October 1993 and July 1994. This was a period of rapid change not only in Mwanza but also in many other parts of Tanzania. By the time I started my study the government had permitted greater economic freedom for nearly a decade and many private entrepreneurs had entered the national economy. While the ideological transformations fashioned by the more free-market capitalist deregulation of the former largely state-controlled socialist economy were extreme (such as permitting private entrepreneurs to enter and personally profit from the staple food trade), the actual food-related changes experienced by Tanzania's urban dwellers were much less dramatic. This is not to say that many people have not suffered from drastic declines in their purchasing power and other hardships. But during this time Tanzania's urban residents did not riot like others who took to the streets when faced with diminishing supplies and skyrocketing food prices. When the government

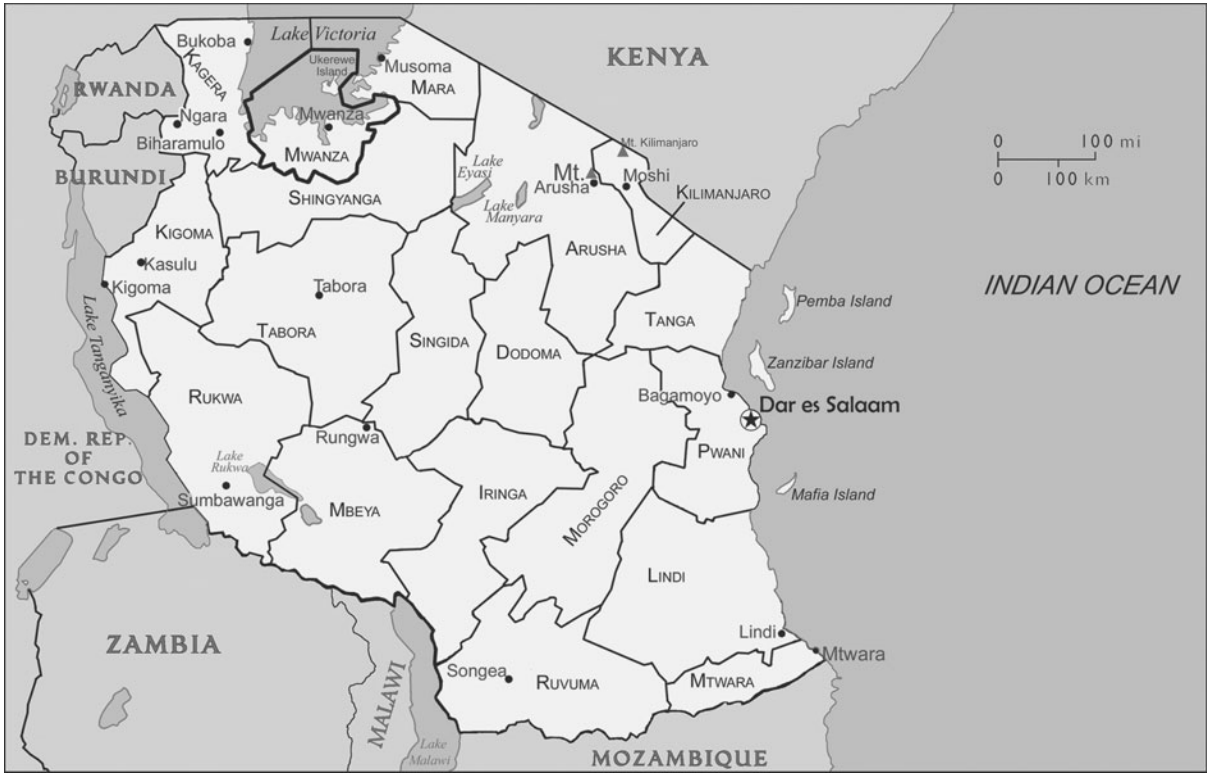

Figure 1.2 Tanzania.

Source: Adapted by Ann E. Donkin from National Geographic Society 1998.

withdrew its maize subsidy, in particular, it succeeded in doing so without public uproar because the presence of unofficial markets had made the subsidy irrelevant to many of those it was originally meant to support.

In regard to the staple food trade, the colonial and post-colonial Tanzanian governments can not be easily categorized as either "free" or "state controlled." After gaining independence from Britain in 1961, Tanzania embarked on a quest to eradicate poverty, ignorance and disease by emphasizing egalitarian principles. In 1967 President Julius Nyerere specifically looked to ideals defined under his formulation of "African Socialism" to take the nation on a path of state- as opposed to market-led economic development and prosperity (Bryceson 1993). During the 1980s the deregulation of Tanzania's socialist economy was in large part compelled by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund through their structural adjustment programs. In 1993–94 all aid connected with these donors was contingent on the Tanzanian government's successful achievement of certain financial and policy goals. These included reducing the role of the state and augmenting the private sector's involvement in the economy as well as collecting taxes, increasing exports, and improving the nation's balance of payments with its international partners. Yet it also was a time of deteriorating international trade terms, increasing taxation, layoffs, and widespread economic stagnation. Most of Mwanza's residents endured the daily pressures imposed by a deteriorating system of public works, failing electrical-, telephone-, and water-supply services, rampant inflation, the proliferation of slum housing, and the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Researcher Deborah Bryceson observed that throughout Tanzania "the 1980s witnessed a growing acceptance of the role of the private trader in urban staple food supply" (1993: 202). I learned in Mwanza that traders and the deregulation process was viewed in many ways ranging from complete dismay to guarded acceptance.[3] One woman, 18-year-old Shida who was expecting her first child, favored government reintervention. "The government should set food prices," she explained, "or else people will not be able to afford to eat. My husband's [truck driving] wages are too meager to feed us now and prices keep going higher. How will we feed our child?" Others held more tolerant views. Deepak was a store clerk in his late thirties. "In the past it was very hard to get food from the government shops," he recounted. "We had to stand in long lines for many hours. Now there are no lines and it is easier to get food, but the food is more expensive. But I understand that everyone has to make a profit."

During the course of my research I found that in general Mwanza's inhabitants were remarkably successful in acquiring food, although most of the people in this study found that doing so was very time-consuming and physically taxing. Feeding oneself involved more than it does in many parts of United States, where one makes a weekly drive to the neighborhood grocery store, plucks processed and uniformly packaged foods from brightly lit shelves or refrigerated cases, places them in a wheeled cart, has the prepriced items totaled by computer and pays for everything by cash, check or credit, debit or food-stamp card—all within the span of an hour or so. In many areas throughout the United States, there are grocery stores, supermarkets, convenient drug and department stores that are open during both daylight and nighttime hours. Some are open for 24 hours a day everyday.

Mwanza's shoppers purchased unprocessed, unpackaged and unrefrigerated fish, meat, grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables from vendors selling off of the ground, at rickety wooden tables on the street or in poorly maintained market buildings that were open to the heat of the day, the damp of the rainy season and monkeys, birds, rats, flies, mosquitoes, and other pests. Many foods were available seasonally only and their quality and quantity fluctuated daily, even hourly. Retail prices varied for different customers depending on their prior shopping experience, their bargaining skills, and their familiarity with individual vendors. Purchased foods often were wrapped in newspaper provided by the vendor or placed in reused paper sacks or plastic bags supplied by the buyer. Most people traveled to the markets and back again on foot, bicycle, and/or via densely crowded *daladala* (privately owned minivans and small buses that provided public transport) because motorbikes, cars, and trucks largely were unaffordable. For those not fortunate enough to live nearby, a trip to the market could involve walking anywhere from several blocks to a kilometer or more. Most people carried their groceries home in their hands or, in the case of women, on their heads. As elsewhere in Tanzania, in Mwanza women were the primary "porters" and they could be seen carrying groceries along with a child or two while commonly any males they were walking with, actually behind, walked unencumbered (TGNP 1993: 114). While Mwanza's town center was relatively flat, the surrounding neighborhoods stretched up into the hills and climbing the rutted dirt roads and rocky walking trails with a load of groceries was challenging. In addition for those living in multilevel apartment buildings, there were no elevators. Shopping also had to be accomplished during daylight hours, often between 9:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.,

because the markets and most shops open only during that time. Once people had their purchases home, Mwanza's warm climate and the widespread unavailability of electricity and refrigeration contributed to the rapid decay of food and dictated almost daily trips to the marketplace. Because day-to-day food provisioning required so much time and effort, the task of overseeing a given group's food supply often filled much of the day of one designated person. If this person failed at the task the group went hungry.

Individuals' perspectives and personal accounts comprise the heart of this book. It is based on the descriptions and stories of hundreds of people, including young men who sold staple grains in Mwanza's open-air markets and low-income women who grew tomatoes, chilies, and onions on tiny city plots. The story includes accounts of wealthy women who strove to secure long-term household food supplies through extensive plantings of maize on more distant peri-urban farms as well as descriptions of destitute men who survived via the pooled begging income of their food-support group. Also here are the narratives of street girls who acquired food through informal sexual exchanges as well as accounts of street boys who obtained food by way of one-time jobs and begging. These accounts are now 10 years old and undoubtedly many things in Tanzania have changed. Since the time of my departure in 1994, the World Bank and IMF have continued to press the Tanzanian government to embrace additional political and economic reforms. Some sustainable changes have been made, notably in regard to multiparty elections, international trade, and exchange-rate policies. Yet the extent to which these reforms have affected the elements of the local food system in Mwanza appears to be minimal. I base this assessment on my own observations made during a return visit to Mwanza in July 2000, as well as on economists Paul Collier and Jan Willem Gunning's (1999) view that it has proven much more difficult for structural adjustment policies to bring about changes in Tanzania's basic infrastructure and fundamental institutions.

I have two goals in this book. One is to augment the ethnographic record on urban Tanzania by illustrating how different people in Mwanza fed themselves in the early 1990s. In so doing I hope to contribute to a better understanding of African food issues (in a time other than one of crisis) as well as build on our understanding of the history of modern Africa. My second goal is to explore the nature of certain food-related exchanges and in turn to challenge assumptions about their place or lack thereof in food-acquisition theory and in turn in policymaking. Because I view Mwanza as representative of many struggling provincial cities in other poor countries, I believe

that some of the food-provisioning processes described in the following chapters may be reflective of urban survival elsewhere and that any theoretical and policy-related observations made herein will likely have applicability beyond Mwanza. It is my hope that improving our knowledge of the social relations involved in urban African food consumption and, in turn, further refining the theoretical and policy frameworks for analyzing hunger and promoting survival, will eliminate future food crises and lead to a higher standard of living among all of the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa.

Mwanza

When British explorer John Hanning Speke arrived at the future site of Mwanza on the southern shore of Lake Victoria on August 3, 1858, he found the hills comprising much of the region's landscape to be reminiscent of

> the long sweeping waves of the Atlantic Ocean; and where the hills are fewest, and in lines, they resemble small breakers curling on the tops of the rollers, all irregularly arranged, as though disturbed by different currents of wind. (Speke 1864 as quoted in Heijnen 1968: 7)

On the southeastern approach to Mwanza the undulating hills Speke described are closer together, as if the rhythm of their placement had been thwarted by the lakeshore. Mwanza is bound by the lake and marshy areas to the north and by a long narrow gulf that bears the city's name on the west. The relatively cool equatorial climate in which daily temperatures hover around 80 degrees Fahrenheit (27 degrees centigrade) is fostered by the town's elevation at 3,700-plus feet above sea level. The semiarid area receives approximately 30 to 50 inches (76 to 127 centimeters) of rain a year usually between October and November and again between February and April. Spotty and irregular rains may cause flash floods in one area while neighboring locales suffer from persistent drought.

In Speke's day Mwanza was little more than a fishing village; the town was not officially "founded" until 1892 when it served as a remote outpost for the colonial German government (1891–1914). Today Mwanza (see figure 1.3) rests in the northern reaches of a vast area commonly referred to as "Sukumaland" after the Wasukuma,[4] Tanzania's most populous ethnic group. Historically the Wasukuma were agro-pastoralists who found the environment suitable for raising large herds of cattle and cultivating grains such as sorghum and

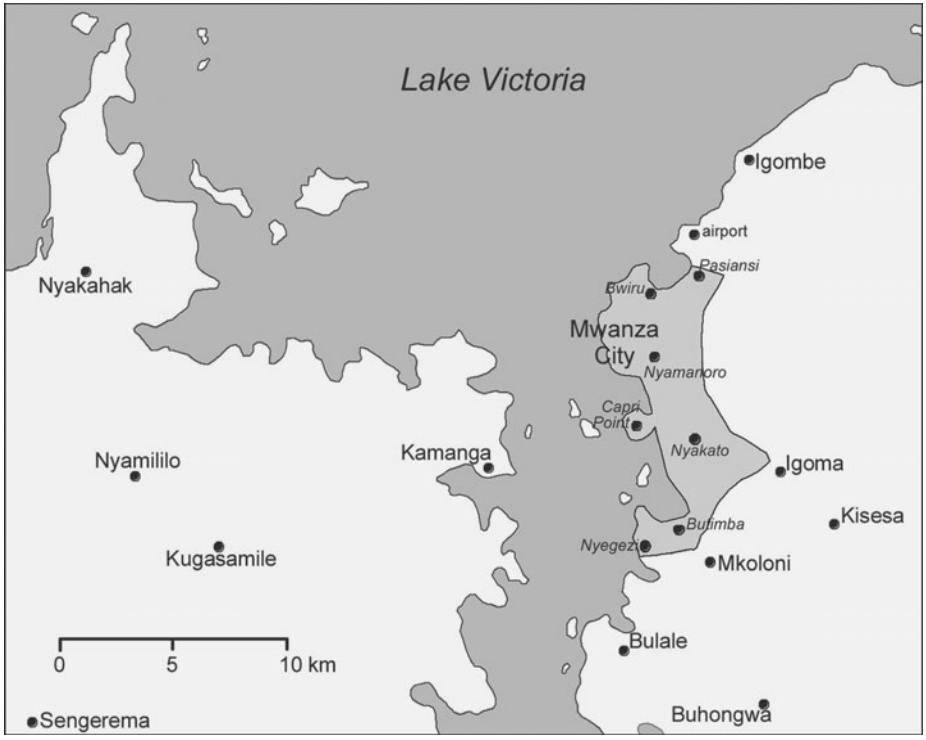

Figure 1.3 Mwanza and the surrounding region.

Source: Adapted by Ann E. Donkin from United Republic of Tanzania~Surveys and Mapping Division 1978.

bulrush millet. While cotton was already known to the Wasukuma prior to the territory's colonization in the late 1800s, the German administration promoted its production and export and today the region is the country's primary cotton producer. Later during the British colonial era (1914–61) the region became a gold mining center and the mines, especially those of the Geita Gold Mining Company, offered the primary source of wage employment. At this time sisal was cultivated on several large estates and the British also pushed for the production and export of sorghum, millet, wheat, rice, and maize grown on both smallholder plots and a few commercial farms.

Mwanza was officially designated a "municipality" in 1980 and redesignated a "city" several years after the completion of this study. For simplicity I usually refer to Mwanza as a "city" throughout this text. At the time of my research Mwanza's official geographical boundaries exceeded a total of 470 square miles, though two-thirds of this area extended over the lake. Of the 160 square miles of land, only 37 square miles is urbanized and this is where the majority of my research took place (Mwanza Master Plan (1992–2012) 1992). In 1993–94 Mwanza (see figures 1.4 and 1.5) was the industrial, commercial, and administrative center for the Lake Zone, which included Mwanza, Mara, Kagera, and Shinyanga regions. It was a major transport terminal for ferry, rail, air, and road travel, and had several regionally important medical centers. The city was home to numerous textile and leather factories, fish processing plants, a soda bottling company, and other enterprises related to finance, construction, and manufacturing.

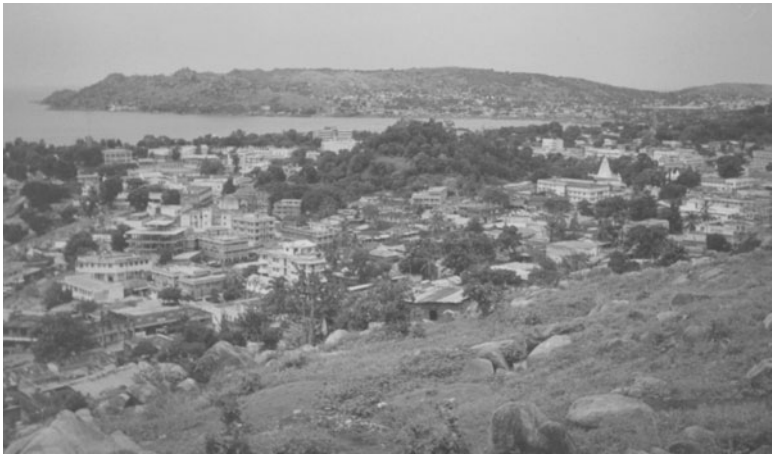

Figure 1.4 Overlooking the city of Mwanza.

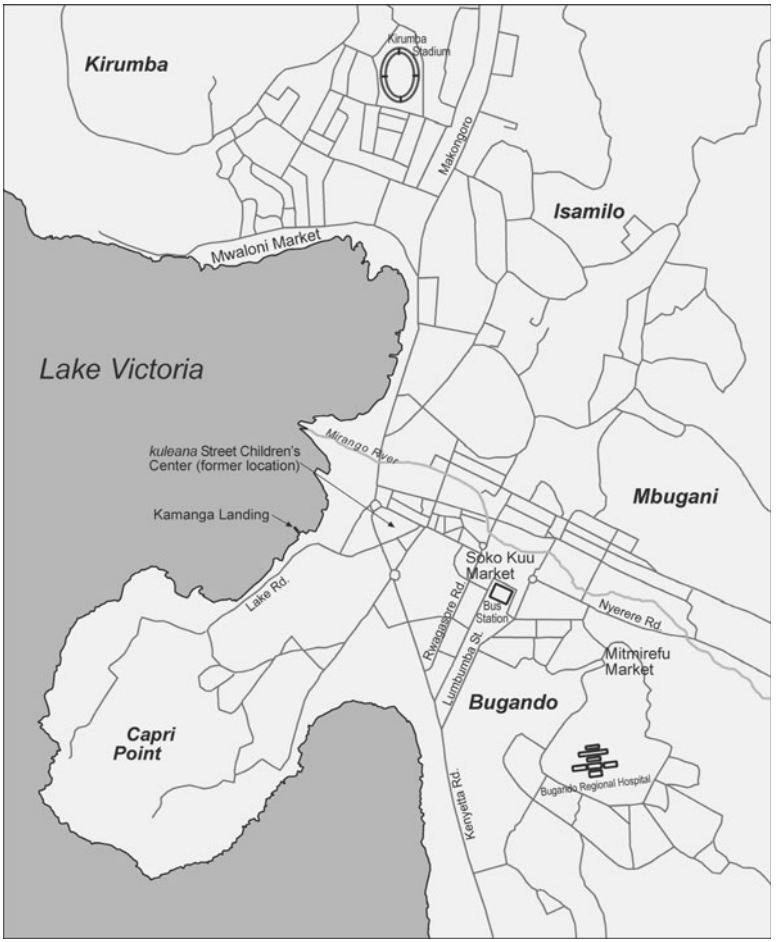

Figure 1.5 Mwanza.

Source: Adapted by Ann E. Donkin from United Republic of Tanzania~Surveys and Mapping.

In 1992 greater Mwanza had a population of approximately 277,000. Tanzania's government planners predict that the population will continue to rise rapidly and exceed 1.3 million by the year 2011 (Mwanza Master Plan (1992–2012) 1992). Increasing birth rates and lengthening life spans contribute to Mwanza's growth, and over 63 percent of the municipality's 1988 population was under 14 years of age. The town's employment and educational opportunities also attracted large numbers of male and female immigrants from both the surrounding region and other parts of the country, a process reflected

in Mwanza's multiethnic, polyglot population. First- or second-generation African arrivals made up the vast majority of those living in town (Mwanza Master Plan (1992–2012) 1992; Bryceson 1985a). The 1957 census, the last to differentiate town dwellers along "racial" lines, found that 77 percent of the population was African. The rest were Asians (18 percent), Europeans (2 percent), Arabs (1 percent), and others (2 percent). Since Independence the proportion of Africans has risen due to increases in African immigration, decreases in Asian immigration and the emigration of European colonial administrators (Tanganyika African Census Report (1957) 1963; Tanganyika Report on the Census of Non-Native Population (1957) 1958; Flynn 1999).

While all of the people in this study considered themselves African, they concurrently considered themselves to be of either African or Asian descent. "Africans" included people who were affiliated not only with the Sukuma ethnic group but also those of the Nyamwezi, Jita, Ha, Haya, Kuria, Chagga, Swahili, and Luguru groups. Some of the Africans included in this study originated from other countries, such as Burundi and Rwanda. The umbrella term "Asian" is commonly used in East Africa to refer to people of Indian or Pakistani ancestry, including Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and those belonging to related sects (Bienen 1974; Mangat 1969). There were significant differences among Mwanza's Asians in regard to Hindu/Muslim splits, allegiance to the Aga Khan, and issues pertaining to the historical partition of India. Yet the strong bonds of ethnicity, place of origin, and a shared history of "otherness" in relation to the Africans and Europeans in East Africa had contributed to the formation of a common Asian identity in Mwanza.

A Framework for Exploring Food Consumption in Mwanza

For 40 years the more influential researchers addressing urban food supplies in Africa have framed many of the most useful approaches in the ongoing analysis of African food supplies in general.[5] These include an emphasis on the influence of global markets and government policy, the factors motivating food production and distribution, as well as environmental science and political economy. Early on most of these economists, political scientists, and anthropologists dealt independently with urban food issues. Today's researchers are more commonly and successfully taking an interdisciplinary approach to their studies. Anthropologist Jane Guyer's groundbreaking volume *Feeding African Cities* (1987) was the fundamental inspiration for my

research. By broadly exploring African urban food supplies in terms of their regional social histories, she brings together an assessment of social, economic, and political aspects of urban systems as they change over time. In this book I attempt to build on Guyer's insightful work and I discuss her particular analytical approach later in this chapter.

The primary analytical framework through which I view food-acquisition in Mwanza was originally shaped by economist Amartya Sen, whose work is characterized by its emphasis on both economic and ethical concerns. Sen is perhaps best known for his theoretical originality concerning particular causes of starvation. Recognized for its elegant simplicity, wide applicability and vital importance, Sen's entitlement approach provides a basic framework for assessing the causes of famines by asking how social relations—not food supplies—determine who does or does not go hungry (Sen 1977, 1981; Dreze and Sen 1989).

According to Sen an "entitlement" is the relationship between people and certain commodities such as food. "Entitlement" also implies "rights." As development analyst Charles Gore recognizes, Sen makes this connection clear when he asserts that

> It is usual to characterize rights as relationships that hold between distinct agents e.g. between one person and another, or between one person and the state. In contrast, a person's entitlements are the totality of things he can have by virtue of his rights . . . . In the social context, a person's entitlements would depend, among other things, on all the rights he has *vis-à-vis* others and others *vis-à-vis* him. If a right is best thought of as a relationship of one agent to another, entitlements represent a relationship between an agent and things[6]—based on the set of *all* rights relevant to him. (Sen as quoted by Gore 1993: 430, emphasis original)

His entitlement approach is based on the idea that in market economies a person's success in acquiring food is directly related to the legitimate ownership, via production, exchange, or one-way transfer of a commodity (or commodities) that can be exchanged for food. An entitlement framework of analysis involves exploring the relationships among a person's *endowment bundle, entitlement set*, and *exchange entitlement*. The *endowment bundle* refers to all of the resources, tangible and intangible, legally owned by a person. Of course the specific possibilities of ownership can differ depending on the type of economic system under scrutiny. The *entitlement set* includes the various combinations of goods and services that an individual can legally acquire at a given time by exchanging one's endowment bundle. *Exchange*

entitlement (sometimes also referred to as "exchange entitlement mapping") is the possibilities of exchange that are open to each individual owner at a particular time. Exchange entitlement and hunger are inversely related—the risk of starvation increases as one's exchange entitlement decreases. This is especially true in cases where one lacks opportunities to benefit from what Sen refers to as "non-entitlement transfers" such as charity (Sen 1981: 3).

An entitlement approach is not a universal explanation of cause. "[F]amines *can* certainly take place *without* shifts in exchange entitlement," Sen recognizes, such as among those "who typically eat what they produce, e.g., hunters, or peasants in an economy with little exchange" (1977: 35, emphasis original). Yet the approach's wide applicability rests on the way it complements the "food shortage" and "political crisis" schools of thought (Messer and Shipton 2002: 229; Devereux 2001: 248). Related to the Malthusian[7] model that stresses the catastrophic outcomes of overpopulation and environmental destruction, the food-shortage school has been represented in the past by researchers such as biological anthropologist William Stini (1975), who argues that stunting among Colombian toddlers was adaptive because it permitted a greater number of adults to survive in the midst of chronic food shortages,[8] and more recently by the work of geographer Michael Mortimore (1988), who emphasizes the role of drought, poor soils, and pest infestation in causing food shortages. The entitlement approach also complements the analytical approach based on political crises such as "unfavorable or hostile government policies, conflict and war [and] failures of international response" that also can set off food shortages and famines (Devereux 1991). In southern Sudan during the 1980s and 1990s, Dinka agropastoralists suffered from the effects of ongoing cattle raids that were "either tacitly condoned or actively sponsored by the government in Khartoum" until over half a million people were displaced, their herds cut in half and 70,000 people died in the famine of 1998 (Devereux 2001: 256). Triggered neither by the environment nor a decrease in entitlement as governed by legal market-economy exchanges, political crises have an important place in any "taxonomy" of food shortages and famine (Devereux 1991). While the environment and political crises can be powerful and merciless determinants of food supplies, neither explain the causes of severe food shortages that have occurred amid existing and increasing food supplies or in politically stable communities. With the entitlement approach we are equipped to explore the causes of starvation by investigating people's ability to access food. In addition Sen's analytical framework underscores the importance of

viewing communities more realistically as collections of different individuals and groups, rather than as homogenous, monolithic entities.

Issues pertaining to people's access to food were at the forefront of my research. I did not observe any starvation during my fieldwork in Mwanza, but I did witness vast differences in people's abilities to acquire food. I recognize that there are differences between "famine," which Sen's early work addresses specifically, and the "chronic hunger" that he takes up in later work (see Sen 1987) and that I learned of from Mwanza's poorest residents. Both terms are used widely and in varying ways by economists, policymakers, and anthropologists,[9] yet I perceive of them in terms of events, conditions, and relationships. More specifically I view famine as an event that involves acute, involuntary food deprivation due to food shortages and/or inaccessibility for many people. I see famine as a condition in which people involuntarily endure a subjective sensation of hunger, need, and pain, a related decrease in immunity from illness and a corresponding risk of death. In addition a famine is about social relationships and the distinct changes therein that often fall along a continuum of interaction between a total break between persons (with a corresponding loss of meaning) and complete engagement (with a matching increase in violent struggle). In other words ". . . a cherished aunt may become a detached migrant, an adolescent a gang looter, or a child a chattel pledge" (Shipton 1990: 357). I regard chronic hunger, too, as an event but a more sustained one of less-intense food deprivation for one or more people. Chronic hunger also is a condition involving a subjective sensation of want, need, or pain that, like famine, can make one more susceptible to malnutrition, disease, and death. I think chronic hunger also is about the severing and/or intensifying of social relationships (a beloved sister becomes pregnant out of wedlock and is shunned, one loving mother's son becomes another's stepson and is refused care, or street boys mercilessly beat up street girls in struggles over prime begging areas). In addition hunger is a "form of evaluation" and means of characterization (Weiss 1996: 146). Some Africans refer to preharvest times as "seasons of hunger" and may characterize the foods eaten then as "hunger foods" (Ogbu 1973; Colson 1979; Hansen and McMillan 1986). These characterizations may extend beyond a given staple to people themselves. Where a main staple is associated with men's production activities, in spite of women's labor contributions, "hunger foods" may be associated solely with women's cultivation so that "hunger is a way of devaluating certain food-related activities and (more importantly) the agents of these activities" (Weiss 1996: 146). But chronic hunger

also is about the long-term lack of access to support networks insuring clean water, shelter, education, employment, health care, and/or services.[10]

Despite these differences several circumstances in Mwanza suggested that an entitlement approach would be effective in helping to explain variations in people's food-acquisition opportunities. Even though the city experienced seasonal shortages of particular foods, the population was able to sustain itself year-round through marketplace or shop purchases, pooling of food-related goods and services, gift exchanges, urban farming, and begging. Food availability was not a problem. In addition the town was populated primarily by Africans, with Asians and Arabs comprising a small minority. Despite this ethnic diversity all of the street people and the very poor were Africans. This implied that certain social inequalities distinguished Asians and Arabs from Africans, which was indeed the case. For many years Asians, in particular, have enjoyed greater wealth because of their role as village- and town-based merchant capitalists. During the last few generations the kin-centered and ethnically encapsulated nature of their business ventures has been key in allowing Mwanza's Asians to build commercial networks that span East Africa, India, Pakistan, Western Europe, and the United States. Accordingly many Asians have greater access not only to transport, financial/credit, and communication services, but also to educational opportunities and kin support systems. On the contrary Mwanza's Africans have generational roots in less prosperous peasant farming or migrant labor. Many were recent immigrants to Mwanza whose connections with kin living in other towns or the countryside were newly challenged by prohibitively high transport costs. Because of their relative poverty and diminishing support networks, most Africans had fewer exchange entitlements through which they could gain access to food and they were at greater risk of experiencing chronic hunger.

The entitlement approach to analyzing starvation is set forth in explicit detail in Sen's *Poverty and Famines* (1981) and is elaborated on in his other works (see Sen 1984, 1989; Dreze and Sen 1989). Other researchers have used his approach to examine famine elsewhere in the world, such as in the Sudan (de Waal 1989, 1990), Ethiopia (Devereux 1988), Ireland (McGregor 1990), South Asia (Harris 1990), and Malawi (Vaughan 1987, 1992). These and other tests have led to varying critiques of Sen's work, but his paradigm has survived intact and continuing refinements only have increased the strength and utility of the approach (Osmani 1995; Patnaik 1991; Goswami 1990; Arnold 1988; Reutlinger 1984).

In this book I aspire to contribute to interdisciplinary knowledge by examining social life through a perspective highlighting the more personal and qualitative side of economic processes often analyzed more abstractly and quantitatively by others such as Sen (Counihan 1997; Plattner 1989). So for me the question remains in what ways can anthropological theory inform Sen's entitlement approach? I believe the most practical course of action is to offer anthropological perspectives on the three core concepts Sen uses when discussing entitlement, these being "legitimate," "ownership," and "commodities." Because all three concepts may be framed with a Western bias that if left unrecognized could restrict their broader utility, I believe it is vital to explore these out the outset in African contexts to facilitate an understanding of people's food entitlement in Mwanza.

I address these concepts in reverse order. First, Sen describes the "things" which people have entitlement to as "commodities." The "nature" of commodities has been the subject of lengthy theoretical debate in terms of what commodities embody, their dichotomous association with gifts, exchangeability, and "objectification," relationship to debt, "use-value" versus "exchange-value," and power of alienation (Marx 1906; Mauss 1967; Bourdieu 1977; Simmel 1978; Taussig 1980; Gregory 1980, 1982). Fascinatingly, many of these characteristics coalesce in anthropologist Arjun Appadurai's (1986) view of commodities as things that transform depending on the circumstances of a given exchange. In other words he sees commodities as "things-in-motion" that derive their value through exchange among particular people at certain moments in time. This recognition of the "social life of things" permits him to fundamentally "obliterate" the long-standing theoretical distinction between commodities and gifts by highlighting how over time the same object can be part of a range of exchange activities (i.e., an item may be purchased at a market, exchanged via barter with a neighbor and given to the neighbor's mother as a gift) (Weiss 1996: 13; Humphrey and Hugh-Jones 1992).

Appadurai defines "commodities" as "things that, at a certain *phase* in their careers and in a particular *context*," meet the "standards and criteria (symbolic, classificatory, and moral) that define the exchangeability of things in any particular social and historical context" (1986: 16, 14, emphasis original). In regard to the first half of this definition and how it relates to life in Mwanza and many other regions of Africa, such "things" are not only goods that people produce, but also people themselves. The concept of "wealth-in-people" emphasizes the vital role that the accumulation of links to other supportive persons

can play in human survival (Miers and Kopytoff 1977; also see Hyden (1980); Bledsoe (1980); Berry (1993); Guyer and Eno Belinga (1995)). What's more Guyer and geologist/poet S. M. Eno Belinga (1995) draw out the vital connections between wealth-in-people and wealth-in-knowledge. The exchange and composition of various bodies of knowledge, especially in regard to people's labor skills, was central to the food entitlement success of many people in Mwanza. Otherwise known as "human capital" or "knowledge capital," economists today recognize that "[b]oth for individuals and for businesses, it is the size and quality of these immaterial assets that determine success in competitive markets and conditions of life for ordinary people" (Fogel 2000: 2).

Focusing now on the latter half of Appadurai's definition, it easily could be interpreted that a thing's potential to become a commodity is dependent on its cultural context. Yet Appadurai argues that such a "gloss" masks "a variety of complexities" (1986: 14). So that while in more stable societies it is possible to determine a taxonomy of things that usually are exchangeable within certain parameters of meaning and value, such as the "spheres of exchange" that anthropologist Paul Bohannon (1955) observed in operation among the Tiv of Nigeria, there are some contexts in which these types of routine rules seem to fall away irrelevantly. Appadurai mentions two such instances that are pertinent to discussing food in Mwanza. The first is commodity exchange across cultural boundaries, where culture-bound meanings (such as a commodity's importance to "fashion," or "healthy" nutrition) are immaterial and that "all that is agreed upon is price (whether monetary or not) and a minimum set of conventions regarding the transaction itself" (14). The other case involves intercultural commodity exchange, where the parties to an exchange retain very different ideas about the value of the objects at hand. These types of cases often occur under conditions of dire hardship such as when "a Bengali male . . . abandons his wife to prostitution in exchange for a meal, or a Turkana woman . . . sells critical pieces of her personal jewelry for a week's food." These people, observes Appadurai, "are engaging in transactions that may be seen as legitimate in extreme circumstances, but could hardly be regarded as operating under a . . . shared framework of valuation between buyer and seller" (14).

Second, Sen refers to the concept of "ownership" but the question is whose ownership? Sen's unit of analysis has caused considerable debate among theorists because he shifts between the individual, the household or economic "classes" of people, such as "sharecroppers" and "pastoralists" (Devereux 2001: 253; Osmani 1995; Gore 1993).

When talking about ownership in Africa one is really talking about control, and while control often is vested in individuals it is also commonly placed in the hands of groups (Gluckman 1965). Such is the case with all kinds of goods, but it is especially so with land, though this does not mean that everyone in a family, lineage, or community always enjoys equal access. Even those who are granted identical rights often are caught up in conflict and negotiation. In addition to the units of analysis, any understanding of ownership in much of Africa is further complicated by the nature of property rights. For example land may be controlled not only by way of purchase, with ownership reflected in titles, but via the investment of one's labor as well. So in spite of land registration and the increasing stabilization of administrative boundaries, "both property rights and political spheres of influence have remained contested and flexible" (Berry 1993: 9, 1988; Kauzeni et al. 1993; Shipton 1984, 1988, 1989). In addition as discussed in the following chapters people in Mwanza and elsewhere in Africa can have gradations of political, economic, age-related, and gender-based control over other people (Eisenstadt and Lemarchand 1981; Bernardi 1985; Hay and Stichter 1995). I agree with economist Stephen Devereux (2001) who suggests that any analysis of ownership "above the level of the individual—such as the extended family, the lineage group, or clan, the 'community' and occupation groups or economic classes—[must apply] . . . collective or bargaining analysis" because who maintains ownership "is likely to be a source of tension and conflict rather than consensus" (254).

Third, Sen not only speaks of the ownership of commodities, but argues that in regard to the entitlement approach ownership must be recognized as "legitimate." Charles Gore (1993) observes that in his early works Sen equated rules of legitimacy with legal rights enforced by the state (Gore 1993). Later Sen expands his conceptualization of the rules of entitlement to include socially shared, moral rights as found within families and households (see Sen 1987; Dreze and Sen 1989). Yet even though Sen broadens his view of the rules of entitlement, Gore observes that he appears to have done so vaguely and only in respect to the domestic sphere. In the end, Gore argues, Sen's view "is not analytically specified" (Gore 1993: 438).

In Africa determining legitimacy of ownership or custody of goods, land, or people can be problematic because so many locales are governed by a combination of statutory and customary law (Woodman and Obilade 1995; Kuria 1987; Moore 1986; Munalula and Mwenda 1984; Abrahams 1981). Anthropologist Sally Falk Moore (1986) describes how "the law" has changed between 1880 and 1980 among

the Wachagga living on and around Mt. Kilimanjaro. Prior to the German annexation of the area, Moore observes, Chagga law was an integral part of the Chagga chiefdom. As elsewhere in Tanzania, what is now referred to as "customary law" was

> constituted out of the residue left after the modification of the Chagga polity. Nowhere was the content of that residue fully detailed. . . . The colonial and postcolonial governments reduced "customary law" for the [Wac]hagga to a set of local ethnic conventions largely (but not exclusively) confined to relations of kinship. As such it was a small segment of the plural legal system of the state. Yet "customary law" remained a critical element in the lives of rural people on the mountain because it determined access to land, and because it framed the structure of the family and lineage on which the whole system of social support was founded. (317)

During the past century the social and economic milieu has changed radically for the Wachagga, as it has for many Tanzanians who now participate in a cash economy, attend school and spend time living in towns or cities. Concurrently the conventional understanding of "customary law" has changed very little, because "as labeled, it is an entity which was conceived as static" (Moore 1986: 317). Yet the practice of customary law has continued to change freely. Land has become valuable for producing cash crops, the cash economy has wrought changes in household gender relations, and schooling and economic crisis have changed parents' control over the education and labor of children. While these transformations have in turn changed Chagga norms, there is no formal means by which to acknowledge that "customary law" has taken these changes into account. Moreover customary law among the Wachagga and other ethnic groups in Tanzania is treated by the state as "culturally legitimate" but at the same time "obsolete." In the meantime the Wachagga "have in fact been using their traditions as one of a number of resources out of which to construct new arrangements to suit their ever-changing situations" (Moore 1986: 317; TGNP 1993; Coulson 1982).

Moving beyond these concerns for including both statutory and customary laws in any assessment of entitlement, Gore also calls for including a person's legitimate rights to food as permitted by social laws governed by the moral economy (1993). I found that one of the most potent forces shaping people's food entitlement in Mwanza was a deep-seated moral economy. A moral economy is based on socially shared and socially enforced moral rules regarding food. In other words moral economies shape and are shaped by forces such as the

meanings assigned to staple foods, their production and supplies, people's access to these supplies, and food-related divisions of labor. Moral economies vary between places, groups, and over time, so the presence of moral economies in Mwanza was by no means unique (see Thompson 1971, 1975, 1991; Scott 1976; Watts 1983; Bryceson 1990, 1993). In regard to Tanzania as a whole, researcher Deborah Bryceson (1990) observes that there is a general moral economy stemming from most people's experiences with an irregular supply of quality food. This situation of "food insecurity," she argues, is in and of itself a limiting factor that hinders Tanzanians' abilities to increase their food production. "Food insecurity, arising from the vicissitudes of the weather," she explains,

> has profoundly influenced the development of the division of labour in Tanzania. Food insecurity leads to small-scale, risk averse tactics on the part of all economic agents who are reacting to very basic material uncertainty, i.e. whether or not they and their households will have a sufficient supply of food. The moral content and the social organisation of the division of labour have evolved around persistent food insecurity. (1990: 15)

Being closely tied to an irregular food supply, this moral economy originates from the agricultural basis of Tanzanian society. Of the 23 million Tanzanians who comprised the 1988 population, 18.4 million were small-scale farmers who labored to feed themselves and their families by growing their own staple foods. While both women and men often had specific responsibilities in food crop production, the majority of the agricultural labor today falls on women's shoulders and females are closely associated with the growing of food crops in Tanzania and elsewhere in Africa (Bryceson 1993, 1985b, 1980a; Mbilinyi 1991; Gladwin 1991; Schoepf and Schoepf 1990; Swantz 1985; Henn 1983). Many of these men and women exchanged part of their food or cash crops to acquire staples they did not grow, such as vegetable oil, tea, sugar, and salt. They sought cash to pay taxes, school fees, medical costs, and to buy consumer goods. Nonetheless food-production know-how and activities were integral to their daily lives as well as a cultural ideal. This widespread philosophical emphasis on food production may stem from the wide availability of land in rural Tanzania. While levels of soil fertility and the availability of water varied greatly across the terrain, Tanzania continues to have a relatively low ratio of people to land. In Mwanza I found the pervasive idea that if one cannot find enough food to survive in the city then

one should return to the rural areas and grow food. This perception was most readily apparent in the city government's repatriation campaigns in which the destitute were routinely rounded-up by police, herded onto trucks, and subsequently dropped-off in the countryside to farm.

The persistent character of this moral economy of food production also was found among many of Mwanza's other residents. In the same breath that people complained about shortages of certain foods or high food prices, town residents usually mentioned the nation's farmers. Explained Bibi Koku, who was a practicing midwife, a mother of four, and a wife of a farmer who cultivated land outside Mwanza town, "Tanzania's food problems are simple. The peasants are not growing enough food." Other critics not only blamed the rural population but town dwellers as well. "Acquiring food is difficult," explained Mama Aisha, a 42-year-old tire salesperson, mother of four, and wife of a taxi driver, "because many living in town do not want to concern themselves with farming." Despite the transition that many of Mwanza's residents had made in their move to the city—a shift from growing food to purchasing food—the production of food remained a strategic and idealistic priority.

In addition staple food was widely viewed as a commodity "above" market principles that was "subject to the society's sense of moral justice" (Bryceson 1993: 180). In the past, generally speaking, when the people living in what is now Tanzania faced the misfortune of a poor harvest communal stores among extended families and/or local communities were tapped to ensure everyone's access to food. Given the nature of many rural settlements, firmly delimited in membership and space and organized around an age- and gender-based division of labor and authority, a principle of egalitarianism was intricately linked to the moral economy of food. Of course contemporary Mwanza represents a settlement vastly different from historical rural ones in geographic and demographic scale as well as in its ethnic and cultural diversity, expanding division of labor, and differentiating socioeconomic classes. But when it comes to the meaning of staple food (grown by women) and people's rights to accessing it via a "just price" (reasonably affordable to poorer consumers) and various means of food redistribution (household pooling, gift exchanges, and private charity), Bryceson astutely argues that "it would be a mistake to overlook [in urban areas] the persistence of a deeply-entrenched moral economy of public food security . . . which bears some similarity to the past" (1993: 204).

While an entitlement approach to food provisioning, framed in terms of both state-enforced laws and moral economies, informs my

analysis throughout this book, I believe that Sen's entitlement approach can be refined even further. Central to my perspective is the vital role of private charity or charitable exchanges in many people's food acquisition strategies. This is a particularly powerful means of acquiring food that Sen purposefully excludes from his entitlement approach, but one which I believe clearly fits within the analytical frame's explanatory logic (Flynn 1997, 1999; and Flynn and Behrman 2002). While Sen does not make explicit why he views charity as a "non-entitlement transfer," he appears to base this view on the assumption that the distribution of private charity involves only a one-way transfer and has little to do with legal entitlements sanctioned and guaranteed by governments (1981: 3). Yet by ignoring the benefits that alms-givers receive in the process of offering charity to alms-takers, Sen overlooks the two-way nature of the exchange. For example in Mwanza alms-givers acknowledged acquiring greater prestige in the community and/or gaining opportunities for religious salvation in exchange for the food, money, or clothing they gave to the poor. In addition when Sen determines the legitimacy of a food transaction in terms of its legality at a given moment, he inadvertently removes from the given social situation crucial dimensions pertaining to time and social process.

This kind of snapshot-in-time perspective results in blinding one to what anthropologist Sally Falk Moore (1983) recognizes as the continuous making, transforming and unmaking of state-enforced law. More specifically, as economist Robert William Fogel (2000) discerns, there is a very fine line between many wide-reaching and life-sustaining nonlegal entitlements (hot meals and cash assistance provided by faith-based organizations and other nongovernmental organizations) and legal ones (food stamps and other forms of welfare) (Fogel 2000). The key point here is that in the moment that a particular form of nonlegal charity becomes one sanctioned by law and guaranteed by the state, the survival of tens of thousands of people may already depend on it. I argue in this book that by acknowledging the significance of private charitable exchanges to food entitlement in Mwanza and elsewhere, we can more accurately measure food consumption and more realistically assess the diversity of food consumers. In turn this should improve the effectiveness of food policymaking, especially as it pertains to the chronic hunger of the poorest and most marginalized members of society.

By offering additional refinements, other researchers have enhanced the utility of Sen's entitlement approach in ways that are crucial to understanding food-provisioning processes in Mwanza. Historian

Megan Vaughan's fine-tuning of the entitlement approach is particularly relevant. Vaughan tested Sen's ideas by examining how food distribution within families changed during the 1949 famine in Blantyre District, Malawi. She found that it was married women in particular who were the most vulnerable to hunger and death (Vaughan 1987). "If Sen's 'entitlement theory' is going to be used practically," Vaughan concluded, ". . . then 'entitlement' based on marriage, on age and sex needs to be fed into the model along with those based on production or exchange. The politics of the family may emerge as being an important factor in defining who suffers in any food shortage" (1992: 85).

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter Dreze and Sen, too, have emphasized more recently the importance of examining gender relations within the family, recognizing that "one of the difficult fields of 'food battle' is that of intrafamily divisions" (Dreze and Sen 1989: 50). Yet another vital dimension of food entitlement to consider is the construction of gender relations *outside* the family. Anthropologist Jane Guyer suggests that comparing women's and men's relationships to food within the vague conceptual boundaries of "family" units may cloud the issues (Guyer 1986; Guyer and Peters 1987; Netting et al. 1984; Dwyer and Bruce 1988). She observes that people's connections to food usually are based on the fact that men and women have different rights and responsibilities and perform separate activities. In other words there is a gender-based division of labor. "It is clearly more precise," argues Guyer,

> to regard the influences of production and consumption on each other as a function of gender relations than to perceive them as a relationship between "nested units." In Africa, it still matters precisely who has resources to allocate. Men and women have different resources—as well as different constraints on their choices, different responsibilities to meet with their incomes and different possibilities for spreading the risk of failure. (1986: 96)

This broadening of Sen's entitlement approach to include assessments of how people's access to food is affected by issues pertaining to gender as well as charitable distribution, which is gendered itself, provides a more full and realistic portrait of entitlement strategies. Yet in regard to these foregoing gender and family-centered observations, viewing all of the different food-provisioning situations I came across in Mwanza simply in terms of whether they occurred inside or outside of families easily could have distracted me from the reality at

hand. It is important to recognize that some of Mwanza's residents struggled to feed themselves and others within an array of non-family units. Later in this text I examine how Mwanza's destitute children and adults presented opportunities to explore gender-related entitlement issues outside of the family because they often lived entirely on the streets and commonly were estranged from their blood relatives and extended families.

Another principal analytical frame through which I explore food provisioning in Mwanza was developed by Guyer (1987). In addition to her work on gender and household food issues noted above, her approach to researching urban food supplies in terms of regional social histories is key to this study not only in its attempt to integrate the analysis of urban processes that are often viewed separately, but in providing the incentive for me to take a regional and historical view of the social factors shaping and shaped by people's entitlement to food. Yet as her perspective extends beyond city borders to even more vague regional ones, the indeterminacy of Guyer's spatial boundaries leaves open to debate the point where a regional focus on food supplies becomes a national or international one. An analysis of food supplies in Mwanza—defined in terms of the administrative limits of the greater Mwanza region—is analytically productive for particular staple foods, but only up to a point. Regionally grown maize usually feeds the city between March and August; from September to February supplies are acquired from Tanzania's main maize-producing regions to the south. Not only do seasonal factors affect the spatial range of analysis but so does the weather. In years when the local rains are late or entirely absent there may not be a regional maize harvest and Mwanza is then dependent on supplies from elsewhere year-round. If national supply areas are unable to meet demand, international sources may be tapped directly by the state, private importers or individual town residents themselves. At that point staple-food supply in Mwanza becomes much more than a regional affair.

Nonetheless Guyer's emphasis on the relationship in food systems between local economies and government policies highlights effectively how various organizations link material goods and political dynamics. Of course she recognizes that an approach based on political-economy does not always tell the entire story. During her research in Yaounde, Cameroon, Guyer learned that despite shifts in the state's food policies the actual supply record "shows less fluctuation in market prices or volume than one might expect from the convulsive politics of market control" (1987: 145). This evidence suggests that the city was supplied by sources outside the official market.

This same situation has existed in Mwanza during recent decades in large part because Tanzania has a long history of unstable food availability in conjunction with a wide array of food-control policies.[11] Unofficial markets emerged throughout the country as a result of the opportunities born of the artificially low profit margins imposed by price controls and the inefficient state-marketing system. Yet the amount of smuggling that existed in and around the highly convoluted mainland and island shorelines of Lake Victoria did not escape the notice of national authorities. It was in Mwanza that the 1983 Anti-Sabotage Campaign was first announced with the aim of jailing unofficial marketers nationwide. But the campaign was largely unsuccessful. Estimates place the amount of marketed maize sold nationwide through familial and interpersonal connections between 1971 and 1987 at two-thirds of the national supply.[12]

In spite of the large-scale deregulation of the staple-grain economy in Tanzania, at the time of my study significant political barriers remained. Some outspoken government administrators, multinational donor representatives and businesspeople who participated in my study blamed remaining obstacles on the nation's regional commissioners.[13] These powerful officials regularly banned trade across their administrative borders out of fear that their constituents (primarily small-scale maize farmers and, in the case of Mwanza, fishermen) would oversell their food harvests and consequently cause regional food shortages and higher prices later in the year. In 1993 Mwanza's authorities banned the export of fresh fish fearing that neighboring Kenya's higher prices would attract catches initially destined for Mwanza, subsequently driving Mwanza's fish prices higher. Still some people ignored the ban. As 40-year-old fisherman Juma explained, "If I net fish in the western islands I bring them to Mwanza to sell. If I net fish along the northern islands I take them to traders on the Kenya border." The fisherman justified ignoring the ban not only because he could make more money by selling in Kenya but also because he was so frustrated with the government's contradictory policies. "The government has freed us to sell merchandise," he argued. "I quit my job at Mwatex [a textile factory] seven years ago. I bought a boat and went into business. Then they ban our trade for months at a time. How am I to survive? It is necessary for me to pay school fees [for four children]. I must pay [market] taxes. . . . My family will starve if I listen to the government."

When regional authorities banned trade, people not only ignored the injunctions but food supplies did not move according to the liberalized market principles of supply and demand. This resulted in

the supply and price problems the regional commissioners originally were trying to avoid, especially in regions such as Mwanza that depended on imports from the maize-exporting regions to the south. "They [the regional commissioners] interfere when they have no knowledge of the actual maize supply," remarked 30-year-old Robert, a maize wholesaler at Mwanza's central marketplace. "We will still get maize here . . . from regions where trade is banned, but it costs more. When drivers have to pay policemen's bribes the transport costs go up for everyone."

While Mwanza's geography, food supplies, and government regulations greatly influenced residents' food entitlement, my particular approach to food provisioning and consumption allowed me to explore other forces beyond the region's political economy. Building on anthropologists Ulf Hannerz's ideas on urban cultures and Sally Falk Moore's views on social process, I viewed Mwanza's residents as comprising a "complex culture" wherein survival was dependent on publicly meaningful "forms," both material ones and immaterial ones, which flowed processually though unequally among people differentiated by extensive divisions of labor and knowledge (Hannerz 1992: 5; Moore 1987). Certainly one's survival was largely dependent on access to material goods such as money, food, water, and shelter. Yet concurrently immaterial forms, such as people's food-related knowledge, beliefs in various moral economies as well as their ideological commitments, personal preferences, and expertise, impacted one's own and often others' chances of survival.

While it is impossible to describe the beliefs, ideological commitments, and knowledge of all of the city's residents, the comments of certain individuals and groups were particularly telling when framed in terms of their food provisioning and consumption activities. I learned how people's survival was directly affected by asymmetries in their particular types of knowledge (about farming techniques, begging strategies, or the use of traditional medicines to attract business) and their differences in ideological commitments (concerning an ethic of self-reliance or the belief that religious salvation or the acquisition of greater prestige in the community was achievable through the distribution of charity).

From this perspective I was able to acquire a better understanding of the subtleties of Mwanza's complex culture by delving into the analysis of food-related knowledge and the ways in which people's entitlement to food was influenced by the production, dissemination, restriction, and interpretation of various forms of knowledge. According to Hannerz this view is key to understanding not only material and

immaterial connections within a given city but also between cities, whether neighboring or on different sides of the globe. For Hannerz it is all about the present-day, worldwide processes fostering cultural mixing or "creolization" and the place of complex cultures therein (1987: 551, 552). While I would temper Hannerz's assertion by emphasizing that many of these creole interconnections are more regional than global in scope, this approach to food provisioning not only facilitated my understanding of the close associations between food, culture, and survival in and around the city limits, but also the strong links between the food-related divisions of knowledge in Mwanza and those elsewhere in the region, nation, and world.

During my research and the writing of this book, I have attempted to integrate my ethnographic data describing Mwanza's complex urban culture and regional political economy with my analytical concern for understanding different people's entitlement to food. My approach is grounded in anthropology, yet it is based more specifically in what anthropologist Parker Shipton calls "cultural economy" (1990: 354). According to Shipton this approach strives to navigate some of the stepping stones that are beginning to assuage part of the disciplinary divide between anthropology and economics. It is a perspective rooted in "a balanced and eclectic realism," argues Shipton, "guided by modest and accessible theory, neither averse to nuanced broad comparison nor shy of causality, and acquiescent to practical application. Cultural economy includes the rich and the powerful for anthropological scrutiny . . . as well as the down and out" (1990: 354). In this way I explore the valuable lessons I learned from the city's residents about the roles of income, gender, knowledge, charity, age, sex, and power in their survival in Mwanza.

Chapter 2, "Researching Food in Mwanza" outlines my methodology in exploring the cultural economy of food-provisioning in Mwanza. In chapter 3, "Changing Patterns of Consumption: Effects and Determinants," I explore city residents' changing food preferences and consumption patterns over time. Because most people relied heavily on purchased foods, I present important aspects about Mwanza's marketplaces and marketing practices that influenced people's food consumption practices. In chapter 4, "Mwanza's African and Asian Households," I provide a general overview of the food-provisioning tasks in a "typical" day of one family as well as explore differentiation among Mwanza's Asian and African households. My objective in chapter 5, "Historical Transformations in Household Composition," is to highlight changes that have occurred in Mwanza's households over the past 50 years and to relate them to modifications

in food-provisioning processes and people's food entitlement. Chapter 6, "Pooling, Straddling, Juggling, and Balancing on One Foot," addresses gender relations involved in intrahousehold income distribution, decisionmaking, and labor allocation as well as extrahousehold support networks and recent changes therein. Who comprised Mwanza's urban farmers and why they engage in urban agriculture are explored in chapter 7, "Farming the City." In chapter 8, "Food, Gender, and Survival Among Street Adults," I examine food entitlement among Mwanza's poorest adults and explore the ways in which gender, illness, and local ideologies affected street adults' survival strategies. Chapter 9, "Lessons on Food, Childhood, and Work from Street Girls and Boys," explores food acquisition and life on the streets for the city's youngest and most marginalized residents. Chapter 10, "Food Entitlement, Charity, and the 'City,' " brings together my observations on food entitlement in Mwanza, the characterization of urban areas, and my reasoning for including charity in any assessment of food entitlement.

2

Researching Food in Mwanza

While based on the well-known anthropological practices of observation, formal interviews, casual discussions, network analysis, and archival research, my field methods were most strongly shaped by the basic considerations of where I could go and with whom I could speak. For instance prior to my arrival in Mwanza, I was interested in not only interviewing fishermen[1] but also going out on Lake Victoria with them to learn more about how, where, when, what, and with whom they fished as well as how they preserved their catches in the equatorial sun. But my plans quickly faded in light of my assistants' "reluctance" and the discouragement of market officials and some fishermen themselves who argued, among other points, that the many illegal fish and beer smugglers plying the lake between Kenya and Tanzania made it too dangerous.

I undertook 10 months of research in Mwanza between October 1993 and July 1994 as part of the Ph.D. degree requirements of Harvard University's Department of Anthropology. During my study I collected the perceptions, opinions, and personal life stories of 357 people: 210 marketplace vendors, marketplace administrators, agricultural researchers, and government officials; 7 traditional healers; 71 low-, middle-, and high-income African and Asian women; 23 other male and female consumers; 18 destitute women and men; and 28 street girls and boys.[2] The data I acquired during the various phases of my fieldwork were from nonrandom samples. It was impossible to carry out a random survey because there was no official and systematic documentation of either the total town population or—for those with access to shelter—residents' addresses. In light of Mwanza's population in 1993–94, which was estimated at over one-quarter million officially and one-half million unofficially, my sample is small and not statistically representative. Nonetheless I believe that the rich ethnographic data provided by these participants begins to fill out the picture of food acquisition and consumption in Mwanza (see figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Author shopping in a fruit market. Photo by Michael Thompson.

During my first few weeks in Mwanza I was made starkly aware of some of the research challenges I would face. Not surprisingly the most basic of these concerned language. My initial experiences talking with people in the food trade proved difficult, especially in Mwaloni, Mwanza's largest wholesale marketplace. Not only were the vast majority of the vendors and laborers males, which made my presence there as a solitary American female incredibly conspicuous, but when speaking they used a great deal of local slang and had an unfamiliar accent. So, though I had a basic understanding of Kiswahili, the country's lingua franca, from my studies of the language in the U.S. and coastal Tanzania prior to beginning my fieldwork, from early on I often employed native-speaking research assistants to aid in data collection.

In addition to offering fluency in the local language, these assistants were instrumental in facilitating many of my initial contacts with various research participants. Virtually all of the interviews were carried out in Kiswahili with the exception of those that were done in English with all of the government officials, all of the Asian men and women, and two African women. Though Kiswahili was a second language for many of the participants, often it was the primary language they used

in the markets, in their homes, and on the streets. My assistant(s) and I usually took notes at the time of an interview if the circumstances permitted and then compared them when the interview was completed. Then I collected the notes and did the Kiswahili-to-English translation myself.

Three recent secondary-school graduates graciously assisted me during most of my time in Mwanza. Philbert Bugeke, Agripina Cosmas, and Gilbert Maganga are fluent in English, as well as energetic and thorough assistants who took part in most of the interviews of marketplace vendors, about half of the discussions with consumers and several of the conversations with street children. Emma John, another new secondary-school graduate and a staff member at the local street children's center, also helped with interviewing some of the street children. Almost all of the interviews of Asian women included herein were arranged and attended by Rinku Vasnu, yet another recent secondary school graduate.

Another assistant, Pelagia Lugeleka, was vital to the success of this project. As kind and empathetic as she is witty and wise, Pelagia taught many years at a local secondary school and who, at the time of my fieldwork, was a counselor at the street children's center, she had lived in Mwanza for over 30 years and was familiar with many of the destitute women, men, and children who lived or spent their days on the streets. Respectfully called "Mama" Lugeleka by those who know her, she is fluent in English, Kiswahili, Kihaya, and Kisukuma, and brought to this project not only sensitivity, insight, and intelligence but a personal concern for the people we spoke with and issues we explored.

By and large the majority of the people we approached for interviews consented quickly and whole heartedly to our request. I chose to begin my study among food vendors in Mwanza's marketplaces because these businesspeople were readily identifiable and worked in food-provisioning venues that were easily demarcated. Several vendors declined based on their time and business constraints. One wholesale grain vendor gruffly waved me off saying that he would only talk to me if my study would help him get a business loan. I couldn't blame him.

Most of the marketplace vendors and government officials were interviewed using a formal, largely open-ended questionnaire. We asked them first about basic demographic information then turned to questioning them about their businesses or roles, their successes, challenges, and place in the city's food-provisioning networks. All of these participants were interviewed at their place of business or in their office. Interviews usually took about 30 to 45 minutes. Nearly 40 of them

were approached again for follow-up discussions and to clear up any remaining questions. I had the opportunity to speak with and observe some of these vendors countless times because I repeatedly purchased goods from them throughout my stay in the city.

My ethnographic portrait of Mwanza's consumers is based on a mosaic of provisioning scenes as seen through the eyes and described in the personal accounts of 71 African and Asian women. The women included in this study lived in the town center, Capri Point, Isamilo, Mwaloni, Kirumba, and Bugando. Forty-three of these participants are representative of a snowball sample, with the initial informants contacted through my own network of friends, acquaintances or research assistants, and additional participants found via my initial informants' contacts. The other 28 are representative of a judgment sample, who were approached with the interest of the spatial location of their dwelling in mind, so as to include informants from a variety of different neighborhoods around Mwanza. This was important because specific neighborhoods in Mwanza are associated, sometimes closely sometimes loosely, with a household's relative income.

All of these women were interviewed either inside or just outside their houses or apartments. Our formal interviews with these women gathered basic census information and used open-ended questions to elicit in-depth descriptions of people's unique life histories and their changing roles and strategies in food production, distribution, and consumption processes. Interviews typically lasted from 30 to 90 minutes, depending on the length of informants' answers. The vast majority of the women were interviewed individually, and at their convenience, which was usually in the mid-morning or mid-afternoon when they had some time to relax outside the company of other adults, although they often had young children with them. Even though the majority of these women were interviewed only once, I was in regular contact with 12 of them because I bought meals prepared by them in their homes, rented housing from them, taught them English or simply shared friendships with them.

Of the 19 women out of this sample of 71 who engaged in urban agriculture, 12 are from the snowball sample, and 7 from the judgment sample. Again the judgment sample was based on neighborhood to include women from a variety of household-income levels, but also local topography because this readily impacted people's cultivation practices. For example in regard to those with kitchen gardens, their cultivation practices may be influenced by the fact that some neighborhoods are located in wet, fertile low-lying areas near the lake while others are found on the rock-strewn, drier slopes of steep hills. Sixteen of

these women were interviewed once, and three participants were contacted a second time to complete interviews that had been cut short by their time limitations.

Additional information peppered throughout this book was acquired from 23 other male and female consumers. These participants were interviewed either formally or informally at their homes, in the marketplaces or while walking down the sidewalk. Interviews ranged between 10 and 30 minutes and covered a wide-range of provisioning questions related to food preferences, experiences with food shortages, their roles or lack thereof in provisioning any others, and their views on the survival strategies of street adults and children.

My research on Mwanza's most destitute residents was certainly the most challenging. Historical statistics and recent census data on street people and the very poor in Mwanza are either unavailable or difficult to come by. However based on my periodic observations made during brief visits to Mwanza in 1991, 1992 and during my fieldwork in 1993–94, it was clear that the city had a very large destitute community. Many of the indigent and their children were recognizable from their tattered clothing or disease-ravaged bodies, while others would have blended in with the crowd if it were not for their requests for alms. At any given time several people could be seen begging on almost every street in the town center, and groups of destitute people often solicited money from travelers at the ferry landings and from shoppers at the town's marketplaces.

On my first two visits to Mwanza I observed shockingly large crowds, hundreds in size, of destitute men, women, and children seeking nighttime cover in many storefront doorways along Nyerere Road. I learned later that not long after my departure in 1992 police once again resumed the physical and verbal abuse, round-up or arrest of those sleeping on the streets. These intermittent sweeps or "Back to the Land" campaigns have been since 1920 the official answer to growing urbanization, urban poverty, and food shortages throughout the nation. These rural repatriation drives legitimized by laws such as the Townships (Removal of Undesirable Persons) Ordinance of 1944, the *Kilimo cha Kufa na Kupona* (Agriculture for Life or Death) campaign of 1974–75, and those associated with the Human Resources Deployment Act of 1983, involved the police and military in roundups of the urban destitute and others lacking proof of employment. Under the law destitute people could be identified as "loiterers" and "criminals," and trucked out into the countryside under the premise that they would work growing crops. Despite their long history these campaigns usually failed to accomplish anything more than temporarily

clearing the streets. As soon as they were dropped off in the rural areas, and given any meager food rations and/or cash to begin their new lives, many of the "repatriated" began to make their way back to town (Heijnen 1968; Bryceson 1990; Lugalla 1995).

Yet because they feared these repatriation campaigns, these men, women, and children usually resisted being interviewed. Prior to beginning my research into the food practices of Mwanza's destitute adults, my encounters with them were uncomfortable and brief. Their numbers, dire poverty, disfigurement, and constant entreaties were sometimes overwhelming, and my reactions ran the gamut from optimistically offering my pocket change or buying them snacks sold on the streets to defeatedly ignoring their pleas without a glance. Through friendships with some of Mwanza's street children, I learned that despite their desperate impoverishment and hunger what they yearned for the most was to be respected by their peers and the general public. The children endured ridicule, physical abuse, and theft at the hands of other street children outside their primary circle of friends. They suffered from persecution by the police and *sungusungu*[3] (neighborhood vigilante groups), and exploitation by employers. The children also were shunned by the rest of the general public.

Despite all of this, to be denied greetings by their peers and others in town was one of the most demeaning affronts experienced by the children. Greetings, which vary according to age and sex, are very important among the Kiswahili speakers of East Africa. With this lesson in mind, I began to exchange proper greetings with the children as well as the adults living on the streets. These simple exchanges provided me with a culturally appropriate framework in which to express my respect and interest in their lives. Through greeting-based inquiries into the street adults' health, their children's health, and the goings-on around town, I developed a personal rapport with several impoverished men and women.

In addition my frequent visits to the *kuleana* Center for Children's Rights, the nongovernmental agency offering medical, legal, educational, and nutritional support to approximately 120 of Mwanza's street children, were conspicuous because the center was located in the heart of the business district. Subsequently some locals thought I was a staff member and did not hesitate to give me their unsolicited opinion of the street children. I was approached on numerous occasions in the food marketplaces by vendors who complained about the young "thieves" I supposedly was "aiding." Business and community leaders occasionally called me into their offices to suggest that the children's center be relocated out of town (and out of sight). On more pleasant

occasions, shopkeepers offered me free tins of biscuits to take to the children. Street women also approached me to ask for the center's help in treating their sick or hungry children. The discussions I had with these women gave me the encouragement I needed to pursue this study of destitute adults' survival strategies.

In spite of what I felt were considerable inroads in gaining the confidence of one man and four women, the man and two of the women became suspect when I began to ask them questions about their backgrounds and personal lives. In short I had won their respect and interest in my project, but I had not gained enough of their confidence to interview them myself. Pelagia Lugeleka did all but three of the formal interviews among the destitute and very poor adults.

The 18 street adults included in this part of the study were contacted through my own small network and Mama Lugeleka's larger one. Interviews were guided by a combination of a short questionnaire used to acquire some basic census information and open-ended questions employed to spark descriptions of people's life histories, memorable events, and food-related concerns. Most of the 18 adults included in this study were interviewed once, but four were approached again for follow-up discussions. Interviews usually were done one-on-one and out in the open, such as under the trees near the post office, on a footpath along the train tracks or near the central marketplace (Flynn 1999).

My inquiry into street children's lives was shaped by the existence of the children's center, which was a central meeting place for me and my assistants. Our daily visits there contributed to our familiarity with many of the street children. The 28 children included in this study were formally interviewed once, but because I was in such close contact with most of them I was able to reconfirm information over the course of weeks and even months, depending on the amount of time this very mobile population spent in town. I acquired much of the information about the boys, in particular, during countless informal discussions with them while walking either individually or in groups through the streets or marketplaces, while sitting near the bus stand, ferry ports, or post office, or while hanging around my house or the street children's center. More formal one-on-one interviews exploring the children's life histories and survival strategies usually took place at or near *kuleana*. My long-term contact with them was helpful, because some of the children, especially the girls, periodically altered their personal stories. While I could never judge the "truthfulness" of any of my research participants' comments, the variability of some children's life histories were telling. Understandably many of the girls and boys we interviewed were very suspect of adults' intentions. Some

children occasionally embellished their experiences with abuse to gain sympathy. Others apparently fabricated stories of their parents' wealth and social prominence in hope of gaining access to certain street-children's networks. Emma John helped by interviewing several of the more shy boys. Mama Lugeleka was instrumental in collecting some of the information from the street girls, who were much less forthcoming to me about their life stories. Long conversations with *kuleana* staff members Mary Plummer, Concilia John, and Sarah Newton also helped me to understand the particular hardships the girls endured.

As a final note, all of the names of people used in this book are fictitious, except those of my research assistants, the children's center, university and research institute staff, and Tanzanian government and international agency officials.

3

Changing Patterns of Consumption: Effects and Determinants

From atop the city's water-storage tanks high on a nearby hillside, Mwanza appeared to hold the warm shallow waters of Lake Victoria in a fertile green embrace. Massive, dark green mango trees shaded the neighborhoods below with their fruit-laden canopies. At the lakeshore's Mwaloni marketplace rough-hewn wooden *mitumbwi* (sailboats) delivered catches of fresh tilapia and Nile perch, and in the middle distance overloaded exhaust-spewing trucks filled with hundred-kilo sacks of maize slowly navigated deeply rutted Kenyatta Road. Food appeared to be plentiful and easily accessible. The thousands of town residents who depended on it were scarcely noticeable, their size and numbers diminished by distance.

Street level provided an entirely different impression. Billowing dust stirred by buses, taxis, street hawkers, and pedestrians obscured the shimmering calm of the lake. Vendors' wobbly weathered tables, bridging the open sewer, might provide staging for small pyramids of tomatoes. The plastic bags swinging at women's sides might hold small, arching fish filets. Single kilos of maize-flour rolled up in brown paper sacks might balance nonchalantly on young girls' heads. People now appeared in abundance and food only in modest amounts.

During discussions with Mwanza's residents my perception of local food supplies easily shifts again. From interviews with town planners I learned that Mwanza is situated in a "food-deficit" area. From discussions with maize traders I discover that their supply trucks have been bogged down for days on muddy roads to the south. And from conversations with young mothers I find that feeding their children takes almost all of their time, energy, and money.

History teaches that at the time of my fieldwork in Mwanza food is much more widely and regularly available than it had been in the

recent past. Between the mid-1970s and the early 1990s Tanzania, along with many other African countries, endured an era of economic hardship. This period was characterized by decreases in gross domestic product, falling wages (particularly for those in the urban areas), and exorbitant tax rates and amounts of revenue siphoning on export goods by the state and private corporations (Jamal 1995; Mbilinyi 1991). Economist Vali Jamal (1995) provides two telling statistical measures of the adversity endured by many Tanzanians at this time. First he argues that if the absolute minimum intake for the average adult is set at 2,200 kcal/day, which is the same number of calories provided by two-thirds of a kilogram of maize meal, a staple grain, then the 1991 minimum monthly wage would have fed "only three persons—on maize meal alone, and *uncooked* at that" (Jamal 1995: 159, emphasis original).

Second he suggests that a broader picture of economic hardship can be discerned by examining wage-earning Tanzanians' relationships to total-poverty lines. Originally calculated using March 1984 prices and adjusted for other years using the consumer-price index, Jamal established poverty lines for a family of five. His poverty measures also were founded on "baskets" comprised of both food and nonfood items. The food component again was based on a daily per capita diet of 2,200 calories that was weighted 75 percent maize meal, 15 percent beans, 5 percent fats, and 5 percent sugar. The nonfood component included necessities such as clothing, rent, transport, fuel, and water, but omitted other needs such as school fees, medicines, and entertainment as well as tea, spices, milk, and meat. Anyone falling below such austere poverty lines was viewed as experiencing dire hardship. "At its maximum [in 1974]," Jamal observes,

> 40 percent of the minimum wage would have sufficed to purchase the minimum needs . . . basket; in other words, 60 percent of the income would be available to purchase more discretionary items. By 1984, the minimum wage had fallen below the minimum basket, and by 1988, below even the minimum food [component]. Since then, the real wage measured against the consumer price index has improved (though not against the maize meal price), and by 1991, the minimum wage would purchase 20 days' worth of basic goods. If we were to add the other essential items—medicine, transport, and the like—the minimum wage would be exhausted within 12 to 15 days. (1995: 160)

This insight begs the question, "How did people survive?" The following chapters will provide some of the answers—they include rural–urban interhousehold exchanges, informal-sector and work-for-food employment, urban farming, and nongovernmental charity—but

it is vital to recognize as Jamal does that this type of statistical information tells only part of the story. For example in Tanzania during the 1970s and 1980s the average wage usually was higher than the minimum wage. In 1990 the average wage was one-and-one-half times higher than the minimum wage. If the 1990 minimum wage bought 20 days of supplies, the average wage could cover a month's needs. Yet as Jamal concludes even the average wage would still provide one with only a very poor standard of living (Jamal 1995).

When I asked women in 1993–94 about changes in their food-consumption habits, most of them described past difficulties rather than present-day ordeals. A common theme in their stories involved the government, which frequently imposed food rationing in various parts of the country during both the colonial and early independent eras. According to these women maize rationing was more routine in Mwanza between the 1970s and mid-1980s as a result of shortages created by drought and the inefficiencies in the government-controlled marketing system. Euphrasia, 40 years old, recounted that

> there were historical times when it was clear that there were food shortages and hunger here in Mwanza. Foods such as maize were available only in special stores that rationed the food aid coming from America, China, Japan, etc. . . . Everyone in the family would wake up at about 3:00 or 4:00 a.m. to line up and wait. Then it was purchased and divided among the family. At other times we lost out at the store and returned home without food. Then we just slept or went hungry all day.

While most people associated food troubles with the past, some still had trouble getting enough to eat.[1] Bibi Aziza, 44 years old, and her husband were secondary-school teachers who had long supported six others in their household, but now also fed the wife and children of her brother who had recently died of AIDS. She explained, "It is not easy to get food because there are so many mouths to feed and the weather is so dry. Our income is small and must be dispersed among many." Beyond people's changing obligations to feed others and rising food prices in the midst of a threatening drought, government-related obstacles also continued to pose food problems for people in Mwanza. At the end of March 1994 civil servants throughout Tanzania experienced a delay of at least several days in receiving their wage payments because a new banking provision mandated that the Central Bank endorse all government checks prior to their being cashed. Unpaid workers in Dar es Salaam were quoted as saying that because of this latest government-imposed hurdle they had "empty pockets" and would have to endure a "hungry" Easter weekend

(*Daily News*, April 1, 1994). While liberalization of the national grain trade had contributed to reducing the threat of staple-food shortages, Mwanza's residents continued to face various challenges in acquiring food.

These brief examples demonstrate that patterns of food consumption in Mwanza varied over time due to both local and supralocal influences. Because townspeople acquired food primarily through purchases, I describe in this chapter some of the key features of Mwanza's marketplaces and offer specific examples of vendors' marketing strategies. I will then turn to a discussion of how people's food preferences shaped their purchasing decisions as well as how these preferences had changed over time.

Mwanza's Marketplaces

What I found particularly interesting about the ways in which people in Mwanza fed themselves was that even though the specific combinations of food-acquisition strategies varied, the city's residents gained entitlement to food much like their counterparts in the countryside, that is through production, purchase, and in-kind distribution.[2] For the majority of the people included in this study, purchases were their primary form of exchange entitlement. Some people were compensated, at least partially, with food in exchange for their labor. These included servers waiting on customers in roadside cafes, marketplace laborers off-loading sacks of dried fish, as well as clerks stocking shelves in retail food shops. People acquired food on a regular basis through intrahousehold pooling, interhousehold exchanges, nongovernmental charity, or urban agriculture.[3] Some people acquired food through barter, too. Yet even though on occasion I overheard vegetable vendors bartering for one another's different produce, none of the women in my survey reported bartering for food.

People also exchanged food as gifts. Gifts of food usually were offered when family, friends, and/or neighbors came to visit or food gifts were exchanged on special occasions such as during Hindu festivals, on Christmas, at funerals, and during the month of Rhamadan. Sometimes food gifts were offered for no particular reason other than that there were leftovers from a meal and the giver had no means to preserve them. Specific types of gift foods varied considerably, though items such as sugar, meat, rice, cassava, and kidney beans were commonly exchanged between those living in town. Pineapples, oranges, or dried fish were often brought by those coming from nearby lakeside areas or Ukerewe and Ukara islands. Beans and potatoes were

regularly brought by people from Kigoma and other areas to the southwest. Canned goods, candy, and beer were bestowed commonly by people coming from Dar es Salaam, Kenya, India, and Europe.

Because of the primacy of food purchases to most people's survival, cash was extremely important. In Sen's terms cash was the central resource of these people's "endowment bundle," and Tanzanian shillings usually were exchanged between buyers and sellers at the time purchases were made.[4] As 38-year-old homemaker Mama China put it, "Getting food is no problem as long as we have money." She and her husband, who owned and operated a small grain mill, supported their six children and a housegirl with his income.

Food provisions, or in Sen's terms the food-based elements of people's "entitlement set," could be purchased in many different places throughout town. White bread, fruit, and vegetables were sold by roving vendors who carried their goods through the streets. Cow's milk dipped from large cans mounted on the back of young men's bicycles could be bought at one's door. Grains, legumes, fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, nuts, and spices could be obtained at various open-air marketplaces as well as at makeshift stalls on the marketplace peripheries, near ferry landings and at the bus and railway stations. Imported goods such as Italian spaghetti and tomato paste, British baked beans and canned mushrooms, and Kenyan peanut butter, margarine, sugar, tea, coffee, biscuits, and cheese were available at the few largely Asian-run shops and some roadside kiosks (see figure 3.1). *Maandazi* (deep-fried wheat-flour donuts), *vitumbua* (deep-fried rice cakes), *uji* (watery gruel made from millet, wheat, maize, or cassava flour), peanuts, mangoes, oranges, and tomatoes were widely available from women and children selling them in front of their houses and flats. Hot *ugali* (a stiff porridge made by mixing maize, cassava, or millet flour into boiling water), *chapati* (a soft wheat tortilla), or rice served with a relish of *mchicha* (amaranth or Chinese spinach), kidney beans, chicken, goat, or beef were commonly offered in small cafes. Prepared Indian, Chinese, and European cuisine were available in several hotels and restaurants.

According to most of the women in this study, the bulk of their foods were purchased from Mwanza's municipal marketplaces and other small ones. In 1993–94 there were 12 municipal marketplaces, defined as such because their administration and upkeep fell under the jurisdiction of Mwanza's municipal government. Three were particularly large marketplaces: Soko Kuu was Mwanza town's central marketplace; Mwaloni was situated on the lakefront and recognized by municipal officials as East Africa's largest marketplace based on the amount of merchandise that

Figure 3.1 Row of kiosks. Comparable to convenient stores in many parts of the world, a row of kiosks offer a limited variety of food and other items such as bottled soda and water, eggs, peanuts, cashews, toilet paper, cigarettes, pens, and paper.

passed through it; and Mabatini was located a few kilometers to the east from the town center at the site of numerous grain mills. The others were smaller neighborhood or village marketplaces: Kirumba, Igoma, Igombe, Mkuyuni, Nyamanoro, Pasiansi, two marketplaces in Nyakato, and Igogo. In addition large groups of vendors could be found selling goods at other locations around town, such as at Mitimirefu marketplace and Rwagasore Street. While all of Mwanza's food vendors except for those selling fresh produce were subject to the same licensing and tax requirements, vendors in the municipal marketplaces were more closely policed than those elsewhere.

Mwaloni, a bustling open-air marketplace on a crescent-shaped beach, was tightly hemmed in by the lake in front, a steep hill to one side, crowded Kirumba neighborhood to the rear and marshes to the other side. The marketplace was one of Mwanza's oldest. In the 1930s nearly 80 percent of the Asian-owned dhows plying the lake were stationed there. At the time of this study it was primarily a wholesale marketplace where traders and local retailers bought in bulk. Those working and buying there were predominantly male (see figure 3.2). Only a handful of females worked in the marketplace, besides some very poor women employed by the traders to recover

Figure 3.2 Wholesale fish market. A wholesale fish vendor (standing at center) overseeing the delivery of dried fillets of Nile perch.

from the dirt any kernels of maize or rice that had spilled out of their worn burlap sacks. In this very male realm local women who fried and sold fish on the streets or those who purchased foods in bulk for a restaurant stood out among the sea of male faces. The most conspicuous women were the richly clad Zairean buyers wearing brightly colored dresses, lots of gold jewelry, and turbans. They made the long drive to Mwanza to sell Zairean gold and filled their massive trucks with dried *dagaa* (tiny sardines) and other fish to sell back home.

Mwaloni's primary merchandise included fish, maize, cassava, fruit, and wooden poles that was delivered by boat, off-loaded by hand, inventoried on rough-hewn pallets and eventually sold and carried away in people's arms, on women's heads, or in small handcarts, *mikokoteni* (large wheelbarrows pushed and pulled by one to three men) (see figure 3.3), cars, canoes, boats, or trucks. The fresh fish was destined for Mwanza town and neighboring markets, whereas the dried and heavily salted fish was destined for Dar es Salaam, Iringa, and Zaire. Most of the maize, cassava, and fruit were consumed within the region, and the wooden poles from Ukerewe Island were used as concrete supports during construction in town.

At the time of this study the city government had a complicated relationship with Mwaloni's and other marketplaces' entrepreneurs.

Figure 3.3 *Mikokoteni*. Photo by Michael Thompson. *Mikokoteni* (large wheelbarrows) parked outside a large marketplace. Often pushed or pulled by two or more young men, these unwieldy handcarts were a primary means of moving bulk foods around the city, especially from wholesale to retail markets.

Though desiring fervently to promote trade, city administrators also were keen to collect taxes to meet, among other governmental responsibilities, the city budget. These aspirations aside, the reality was that in 1993–94 the city government was pressed for resources to pay for basic services. For example at that time many of Mwanza's secondary schools stopped serving students lunch because the government could no longer afford to pay its suppliers. The burden of feeding the students then fell on the children themselves or their caregivers, who had to adjust their household budgets accordingly (*Daily News*, April 4, 1994).

There were seven municipal tax collectors stationed at Mwaloni and carrying out their mission in the marketplace posed considerable challenges. "There are many difficulties," remarked J. M. Molai, Municipal Economic Officer and Acting Trade Officer of Mwanza.[5]

> The tax collectors work from 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. every day of the week. It's too hot and too long. We need to have shifts, but we don't. During the rainy season there is a lot of fish, cassava and fruit coming from the islands but who wants to be at [muddy] Mwaloni with their good shoes during the rains?

Not only was the physical setting overwhelming for those seeking to make a living regulating market exchanges, but the social scene

was as well. Molai explained that the tax collectors make only minimum wage,

> they make friends with the traders, and get free pineapple, fish, maize, etc. . . . Though once this happens instead of the traders answering to them, the tax collectors are dependent on the traders. But if he is friends with some traders and lets them avoid taxes, but does not do the same for other traders, word gets around. Then the tax collectors are caught in the middle.

Mwaloni's marketplace master concurred with Molai by noting that, "the revenue collectors take a lot of verbal abuse. Several of them are not very popular."[6]

Molai also described how in 1992 the Regional Commissioner had established a task force to review tax-collection procedures and curb corruption at Mwaloni. As a result several collectors were fired and some traders fined. "Before the task force," Molai noted, "we were collecting about one million shillings [US $2,000] a month. During the task force collections rose to four million [US $8,000], then they went down again afterwards."

In the same way that tax collection posed challenges to government officials, buying food in the marketplaces posed considerable difficulties for Mwanza's consumers. At peak hours in the morning and mid-afternoon Soko Kuu usually contained a crowd of characters. There were wholesalers or their drivers guarding their battered and dust-covered trucks, sweating laborers off-loading the wholesalers' merchandise, and municipal tax collectors counting the laborers' loads. Mostly male vendors sold grain, wood, and fresh and dried fish stacked on pallets on the ground, while a few women sold perishables, used clothing, cooking utensils, and handicrafts on the marketplace perimeter. There were customers pushing through the crowd to make their purchases, joined by an occasional thief stealing fruit or a partial sack of grain, as well as the destitute begging for handouts. The resulting clamor was augmented by Soko Kuu's location between busy Rwagasore and Market streets, the congested Mwadeco bus station and a crowded taxi stand where often mufflerless, exhaust-belching buses, trucks, and cars approached, idled, and accelerated away with thunderous roars. The entire marketplace was intermittently subsumed under clouds of dust, exhaust, and the ubiquitous black flies, all the while permeated by the pungent scents of sweat, overripe mangoes, raw beef, and fish.

The physical layout of Soko Kuu further complicated the scene. Because it had been erected piecemeal over many years, the 200-plus

food vendors of primarily Sukuma, Jita, Kerewe, Kuria, Ha, Haya, Nyamwezi, and Chagga descent did business in a variety of structures and settings. About 50 young, male grain/legume sellers were housed in the newest and one of the largest buildings in the marketplace. It was a neatly organized, open-air but metal-roofed structure with built-in concrete counters and floors. Though I expected to find greater variation among vendors in terms of the products they offered for sale, everyone was selling virtually the same types of items for the same price.[7] Some other 40 men and women selling spices, nuts, flour, beans, and rice worked in a maze of narrow passageways formed by warped wooden tables on uneven ground under a makeshift roof of dark blue and green plastic sheeting that cast an eerie hue. A large group of onion, tomato, and fruit sellers, mostly women, sat out in the open with their produce displayed on frayed burlap sacks spread on the ground over patches of mud, around shallow puddles, and between a grid of deep, open drainage ditches that carried away what appeared to be a combination of water run-off, human waste, spoiled food scraps, and the occasional dead rat.

Strategies of Buying and Selling: Humor, Gifts, and *Dawa ya Kienyeji*

What was particularly interesting about these marketplaces as a whole was that different vendors sold virtually identical grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables of comparable size, color, quality and freshness for virtually the same price (see figure 3.4). Even the Wachagga sold beans, which are viewed as "women's food," assert anthropologists Mary Howard and Ann Millard. They argue that around Mt. Kilimanjaro, the Wachagga's ancestral home, "[i]t would be demeaning for a man to stand by a stall and attempt to sell a woman's crop" (1997: 151). I found that the Wachagga were respectfully stereotyped as clever entrepreneurs by the vendors in Mwanza's marketplaces and that among Wachagga bean sellers there was indeed a far greater concern for making money than for the gendered associations of food.

When asked how they decided to buy from one vendor as opposed to another, almost all of the women in this study mentioned price as a key determinant. When pressed further some women, such as 42-year-old Rose, noted that a vendor's friendliness also attracted her. "I have bought bananas and oranges from the same woman for years," said Rose. "We always greet each other as sisters. We help each other. She gives me a good price and I buy from her every time."

Figure 3.4 Bulk foods in Soko Kuu. Cow peas, rice, kidney beans, and maize flour for sale in Mwanza's Soko Kuu, the central market. In some areas of the marketplace, vendors sold comparable foods for the same price while sitting at virtually identical tables. Vendors' adopted a variety of marketing strategies to compete with their peers, such as including a *zawadi* (gift) along with a purchase or employing *dawa ya kienyeji* (traditional medicine) to attract customers or bring about good luck in business.

Three of my research assistants and I undertook a nonrandom survey of 209 vendors at marketplaces throughout the city and its surrounding area. The inquiry confirmed that most vendors recognized the importance of *uchangumfu* (cheerfulness) and *uchesi* (humor) in attracting customers. Some vendors tried to win customers by engaging them in small talk; a few others performed as virtual stand-up comedians. Thirty-four-year-old John, a papaya vendor who spoke fluent Kiswahili and Kikerewe, tried to take advantage of the ethnic diversity of his customers by learning a few key phrases in Kisukuma and Kijita. In short most vendors understood that success in the food trade was closely related to their ability to attract customers through their greetings, jokes, and stories. "Success," as Abdallah, a 52-year-old maize and cassava trader at Mwaloni succinctly put it, "is solely dependent upon your tongue and how you twist it."

Many women mentioned that their favorite vendors often offered them an extra *zawadi* (gift) with their purchases, such as an additional piece of fruit or two or another half *kopo* (a tin can used as a measure) of grain or flour. This practice permitted vendors to demonstrate their generosity and commitment to individual buyers while seemingly

blurring, as Appadurai (1986) would argue traditional, Western conceptual boundaries between a "commodity purchase" and a "gift exchange." This tactic was employed widely throughout Mwanza's marketplaces; it was done quickly, quietly, and with only enough emphasis to attract the notice of the buyer. Anthropologist Gracia Clark (1994) argues that this practice of contributing "add-ons" to a customer's purchase is beneficial to the seller in the context of open market stalls where price negotiations can be overheard. This subtle type of "quantity bargaining" allows a vendor to give a buyer a price break without advertising it to the competition (132). In the strict price-regulated markets of Peru in the 1980s, understated quantity bargaining such as this helped to cover up vendors' price variations (Babb 1989).

Like food vendors in Zimbabwe, Ghana, and elsewhere in Africa, a few vendors in Mwanza offered credit to any customers they felt they could trust (Bohannon and Dalton 1962; Horn 1994; Clark 1994). Credit not only helped to enhance their business relationships with their customers, but also gave vendors the opportunity to make another sale at the time their customers returned to settle their debts. However most vendors demanded payment at the time of sale. The phrase "*Kesho*, on delivery" (literally, Tomorrow, on delivery), was a polite tongue-in-cheek way in which some marketplace vendors expressed their so-called credit terms. It was an especially common refrain among the large wholesalers in Mwanza's marketplaces, who reportedly first heard it from farmers in the surrounding countryside. It acknowledged the sense of trust instilled by the practice of extending credit to a buyer until "tomorrow," while at the same time emphasizing that payment was actually expected immediately on delivery of the goods. The phrase suggested that the region's farmers and businesspeople no longer accepted chits or vague credit terms from anyone except their most trusted customers. Mwanza's market vendors appeared to operate in much the same way.

In addition to the above mentioned strategies, some vendors sought out a particular form of specialized knowledge to help them secretly attract customers. This involved the use of what was called *dawa* (medicine), more specifically *dawa ya kienyeji* (traditional or indigenous medicine). During her study of market women in Harare, Zimbabwe, researcher Nancy Horn (1994) commonly heard vendors make accusations that their more successful peers used some sort of "magic" to attract customers, but she does not elaborate on what this was. In Mwanza the term *dawa* was used in a broad sense inclusive of a wide range of organic and inorganic materials used pharmacologically

as well as in witchcraft. *Dawa*, magic, witchcraft, and the practitioners of these arts (pl. *waganga*, sing. *mganga*) are commonly referred to in historical descriptions of life among the Wasukuma (see Cory 1949, 1953; Tomecko, n.d.). Historically these *waganga* or *bafumu* (sing. *nfumu*; magicians or diviners) included male and female rainmaking specialists, medical herbalists, diviners, and clairvoyants.

My research into the use of *dawa* as a marketing tool encompassed a sample of 23 grain, legume and/or fresh produce vendors (20 men and three women), and seven practicing and one former *waganga*. Fifteen of the 23 vendors (65.2 percent) flatly stated that they did not believe in using *dawa* for business purposes. Fourteen acknowledged that they had heard of using *dawa* to attract customers and said that they believed *dawa* use was common among their peers. Only one vendor said that he had never heard of it. Of the remaining eight sellers who expressed an interest in *dawa*: three (13 percent) would neither deny nor confirm their belief and/or use; one (4.3 percent) said he wanted to try it, and four (17.4 percent), three men and one woman, openly explained that they relied on it in their businesses.

The majority of the vendors with whom we spoke were extremely guarded in revealing any specifics about *dawa*, let alone their own experiences with it. The use of *dawa* is frowned on by the government and perhaps this was one reason vendors were reluctant to discuss it.[8] Only 40-year-old grain vendor Samuel described how he employed his specialized knowledge of *dawa*, though he made it very clear that he did not want other traders to learn that he used it. "I began to use *dawa* in 1980," he recounted,

> After I saw that my business was not good. . . . I use a kind of *dawa* made from banana leaves. They are ground and mixed with clean river water, which should not have any green algae in it. This *dawa* is not easy to get because my *mganga* travels to a distant place to obtain the water.

Samuel continued to explain that once he had his *dawa* he poured it into a clean clay pot, which he put under his sales counter at the marketplace. "The *dawa* should be used at night," he cautioned, "because your competitors should not see it. If your competitor does see it or is told about your medicine, it will be spoiled and not work. [Plus] you will never be able to sell your merchandise again."

The self-described activities of the eight *waganga* included in this study ranged from exorcising malevolent spirits and treating those afflicted with AIDS to bringing peace, love, and wealth to their clients. All eight said that their customers included Africans, Arabs,

and Asians who were not only marketplace vendors, but also teachers, store owners, and other businesspeople as well. The *waganga* were more forthcoming than the traders on the use of *dawa* in the market place. One said that marketplace vendors often put spells on each other and that many come to him to have them removed. Another explained that he was regularly approached by people who wished to destroy their competitors' businesses, but that he was unable to help them because such malevolent acts were outside the scope of his work.

According to one *mganga* medicines that actually attracted customers did not exist. "If there were medicines like this," he argued, "sellers would leave selling and start a better [more profitable] business or just retire." This view was corroborated by some of the vendors themselves. "It is obvious that no such medicine exists because all of the same traders continue to be here together—every day," argued one vendor.

The *waganga* explained that they worked with the marketplace vendors to help them increase their luck. "If used according to the specific laws of the medicine, *dawa* will bring a seller many customers to buy his merchandise, even if the customers do not want to," explained 48-year-old Mgeni. Improving one's luck could be accomplished in two ways. One consisted of combining clean lukewarm water with leaves from a *mpesa* (money tree). According to Mgeni,

> You put the mixture in a big clean clay pot, then you wash with it, but before you wash you say a few words that are known only to the vendor and the *mganga*. When you wash you should not use soap of any kind, and when you finish washing you should not use anything to dry yourself. Just wait until your body dries. Once you are dry there is another kind of *dawa* that is in the form of a powder. Mix this with salve oil and spread it on your body. Then you are ready to go do your business.

Three other *waganga* explained this same process. They also noted that after these preliminary actions were completed additional conditions must be met to ensure the trader's success. One should neither quarrel with other traders nor have sex with anyone other than a spouse during the four to six days that the *dawa* is its most powerful.

Another way *waganga* assisted traders to improve their luck in business was through what two *waganga* vaguely described as "star purification." Forty-one-year-old Robert, a former *mganga* who had recently entered the maize trade, described how everyone has a star in the night sky from which they acquired luck. "If your star is clear and bright you will have good luck," he divulged. "But if your star is dirty

or tarnished you will have bad luck and need the help of a *mganga* to purify it."

These kinds of *dawa* appear to have historical roots among the Wasukuma. These medicines correspond closely with "*samba*" medicines in Cory's classification of "magic medicines" (Cory 1949). "*Samba*," wrote Cory, "is the generic name for all magic medicines which are supposed to have the effect of making a man popular, liked by everyone, visited by many, listened to by influential neighbors, and successful in all walks of life" (Cory 1949: 18).

The use of *dawa* by marketplace vendors was never mentioned by the 71 female consumers in this study. Only 14 of the 71 were asked about *dawa* specifically because I learned about it only as I was completing my field study. Of these 14 only three had heard that vendors used it as a marketing strategy. None of them believed in its efficacy. "If the merchandise is fresh and offered for a cheap price," said Mama Fatima, 36, "then I buy it. I am not driven by witchcraft."

Food Preferences

Contemporary Tanzanians eat a very starchy diet. Almost three-quarters of the foods they eat by weight are cereal and root crops (Bryceson 1993). On a national basis the main staples include maize, rice, *mtama* (sorghum/millet), *matoke* (plantains, cooked bananas), cassava, sweet potatoes, barley, white potatoes, and wheat. Preferences for one starchy staple over another varied largely by region. In combination these staples were eaten with a relish, referred to as *mboga* (vegetables), and again there were regional and seasonal preferences for these accompaniments. *Mboga* included among other items kidney beans, spinach, and other leafy greens. In spite of their being referred to in this context as "vegetables," people also ate goat, beef, chicken, and fish as relish. Preferably the dish would also include *mchuzi* or "gravy/sauce." These elements can be seen as what Weismantel calls "validators," that is, "ingredient[s] that [are] so central to the composition of a . . . meal that [their] presence defines the meal (1988: 125; Weiss 1996). Maize-based *ugali* is a primary validator of a meal in Mwanza region, plantains is the validator in neighboring Kagera region, and rice is the validator along parts of the Indian Ocean coast. In spite of this regional variability, and that individual entitlement to these staples can vary drastically in relation to quantity and quality, Tanzanians lacked any broadly systematic, class-specific patterns of food consumption or in other words what anthropologist Jack Goody (1982) refers to as "high" and "low" cuisines (see also

Bourdieu 1984). Nonetheless I found some interesting historical and contemporary differences in food preferences between rural and urban dwellers, high- and low-income households, the young and old, and various ethnic groups.

According to the 1976/77 Household Budget Survey[9] urban consumers ate almost five times more rice and wheat than their rural counterparts who relied more heavily on *mtama*, plantains, sweet potatoes, and yams. Yet government intervention played a significant role in spurring changes in contemporary food preferences, particularly for maize.[10] Prior to the imposition of British rule in 1914, the main staple consumed in Sukumaland was porridge made by stirring ground *mtama* into boiling water. At that time *mtama* was regarded by the Wasukuma as equal in importance to cattle (Miracle 1966; Cory 1953).

Contemporaneously maize was a staple in small pockets of the country, but considered unimportant or even nonexistent in most others. The early history of maize in East Africa is sketchy at best. Dating from the seventeenth century there are references to maize in Zanzibar and around the mouth of the Ruvuma River (Miracle 1966). But the historical record is silent up until the onset of British rule when colonial officers attempted to spur maize production to meet the growing food needs of laborers at the sisal plantations, to lessen the colony's dependence on maize imports from Kenya during the 1929 world depression and to feed troops during World War II. Especially after 1942 government officials' efforts were directed toward supporting European capitalized grain production by way of planting bonuses, loans, and guaranteed prices (Bryceson 1987, 1993; Miracle 1966). In spite of these incentives local demand outpaced production and people were fed primarily from imports from Kenya and Uganda.

By the early 1950s the country experienced its first maize surpluses. In 1958 the Ministry of Social Services sought information on the relationship between dietary changes and an increase in the availability of disposable income. Nutrition teams surveyed 20 districts throughout the country. Maize was found to be displacing *mtama* and cassava in 6 districts and in 10 others maize had become the primary staple. Yet in six of the districts where maize was already a primary staple it was discovered that high-income groups were beginning to prefer wheat or rice over maize. Maize was apparently becoming the staple of low- and middle-income groups, while more costly rice and wheat products were preferred among those who could afford them (Miracle 1966).

During the 1970s the National Maize Project was implemented alongside the government's *ujamaa* villagization program[11] in Arusha, Dodoma, Iringa, Kilimanjaro, Mbeya, Morogoro, Rukwa, Ruvuma, Tabora, and Tanga regions. The project grew out of the socialist government's earlier attempts to establish collective maize production in Iringa region to undermine a number of rich "capitalist" maize-producing peasants in Ismani (Bryceson 1993: 64). First funded by the World Bank in 1975 and later administered by the Tanzania Rural Development Bank until 1982, the project's overall influence did not meet the project's goals but did double the amount of marketed maize in Ruvuma and Mbeya and quadrupled it in Rukwa (Bryceson 1993). The National Maize Project made maize somewhat more popular in Mwanza district, but greater shifts were seen during the 1980s when the general public became more familiar with the grain and acceptance became more widespread (H. A. Mbamba, personal communication).[12]

In 1993–94 maize and rice were much more popular in Mwanza town than *mtama*, which was still consumed widely in the surrounding countryside, especially in nearby Magu and Kwimba districts (H. A. Mbamba, personal communication). Maize did not always grow particularly well in Mwanza region, but if the rains were good there could be bumper crops produced around the perimeter of the lake and in Geita and Sengerema districts to the west. Depending on the rains maize also could grow well in Shinyanga region directly to the south. When these neighboring areas' supplies were depleted, Mwanza's grain wholesalers imported maize from the "Big Four" maize-producing regions in southern Tanzania: Iringa, Mbeya, Rukwa, and Ruvuma.

The growing popularity of maize over *mtama* during this century also is due to their competing "folk classifications" in regard to palpability, color, and cleanliness (Messer 1984a: 220; McCance and Widdowson 1956). The vast majority of the consumers interviewed during my 1993–94 study noted they preferred to eat maize because it was "white" and not the "color of *ardhi* (land, soil)" like *mtama*. It also was commonly described as "cleaner" than *mtama* because its light color allowed impurities to be found more easily. Two grades of maize flour were widely available in Mwanza: *dona* and *sembe*. Flour produced by soaking maize kernels in water and grinding them into flour was called *dona*. If the process was repeated a second time, the product was then referred to as *sembe*. Reminiscent of anthropologist Sidney Mintz's description of the historical trajectory of refined white sugar, which once was coveted in many world regions for its "purity,"

in Mwanza *sembe* was preferred over *dona* because it was "smoother," "sweeter," "cleaner," and "whiter" (Mintz 1985). Yet some preferred *dona* because it was considered to be "more filling" and better at keeping hunger at bay. Some people were aware that the additional processing made *sembe* lose some of its nutritional value, but they preferred it anyway. Mr. Paul, a 28-year-old grain seller, described,

> (Millet makes the body strong) but people don't like to use millet for *ugali*, only *uji*. *Dona* is heavier than *sembe* and also makes the body strong, but people don't like it because it is yellow and coarse. Customers like clean white *ugali* made with *sembe*, but *sembe* will not make the body strong. . . . I like to eat *sembe*.

Mtama was viewed negatively for other reasons besides its dark color. It was considered a "poor people's food" and "hunger food." "There were times in the past when there were food shortages here in Mwanza," noted 38-year-old Rashida, a low-income mother of four. "We ate *uji* made from *mtama* at noon and at night. It was not easy to get enough to satisfy our hunger. Now we eat ugali. It is much sweeter on the tongue and easier on the stomach." Tanzanian farmers also considered *mtama* to be "poor people's food" as well as a crop with narrow profit margins and little demand (*Daily News*, January 29, 1994). *Mtama* presented production challenges, as well. During cultivation *mtama* is more vulnerable to damage by birds because the grain is exposed. *Mtama* also is more difficult to harvest because the grain must be forcibly knocked from the stalk.

In spite of *mtama*'s fall from favor the Tanzanian government and United Nations continue to push for increased *mtama* as well as cassava production and research because of these crops' drought resistance. "The present famine in [nearby] Magu and Kuimba districts is due to drought," explained Kyamba Japhgi, Assistant Planning Officer for Mwanza region,

> But it is also due to the choice of crops people grow. People like to grow maize not millet or sorghum. Last year this region had an average of 600 ml. of rain—enough to grow cassava but not enough to grow maize. But people try to grow maize because it is easier to prepare and can even be eaten right off the cob.[13]

Yet inconsistencies have arisen amid officials' calls to grow *mtama* and the crop-buying policies of the National Milling Corporation (NMC), the monopsony formerly charged with collecting and distributing staple grains throughout the country. In the past the NMC was

concerned with marketing maize, rice, and *mtama*, but in recent years the now scaled-down NMC has focused on maize, rice, and beans in the same way as the private food marketers with whom it competes. Ward, village, and district cooperatives no longer have the NMC as an outlet for their *mtama* so farmers are growing less of it (Mr. Mtambo, personal communication).[14]

Other divergences exist between officials' views of food as a strategic commodity, farmers' views on crop profitability and consumers' preferred foods. The government is calling for cassava production because it can save lives during famines even though it promotes malnutrition over the long run. Farmers are cutting back on *mtama* production despite its high nutritional content because it is increasingly disdained by urban residents and, therefore, unprofitable to grow. Mwanza's residents are purchasing maize because they find it tasty and convenient to prepare in spite of the fact its local supply and price vary greatly throughout the year (Shipton 1990; *Business Times*, May 20, 1994).

Many of Mwanza's residents also are eating more rice. Again the government has played an important role in this development. Rice has been grown in Mwanza region since the end of the 1970s when it was first introduced by the government as a cash crop and exported to Kenya and Zaire. Now it is eaten domestically and is no longer grown for export. Four types of rice were commonly available in Mwanza: *pisholi, kahogo, super*, and *mchele wa China* (rice from China). According to Mwanza's rice vendors *pisholi* was their biggest seller because customers liked how it remained intact and grew fluffy when cooked. Not surprisingly *pisholi* was the most expensive type of rice.

Agricultural scientists in Tanzania have established that Tanzanians are eating three times more rice now than they were 20 years ago because people who historically have eaten mainly *ugali* now want a more varied diet (*Daily News*, March 5, 1994). "We eat more rice now than we did 10 years ago," Mama Shukuru said. "It is very expensive but we like the taste." In an environment where basic resources often are difficult to come by and very expensive, rice also has offered people a significant resource-saving alternative. "Rice cooks quickly," explained 23-year-old Batini, a low-income female who lived by herself. "*Mtama*, *dona* and [cooking] bananas take longer. When I cook rice I don't need as much charcoal or water." Rice also is a practical choice because it can be stored for up to four or five years, unlike maize that attracts insects and mold within months. For this reason local scientists view rice as an excellent "insurance" food for stockpiling and use during times of hunger (H. A. Mbamba,

personal communication). Others preferred rice simply because of the novelty. A young female server at one of Mwanza's many cafes explained that rice was preferred by young people "because it recently came from Europe and young people always like to have those things that their elders did not have when they were young."

As more people began to eat rice, debates raged on the subject of rice production versus rice importation. According to the Tanzanian press Mwanza region was second after Shinyanga region in rice production during 1994 (*The Express*, March 3–5, 1994). At that time the Shinyanga regional government was calling for people to grow cotton instead of rice because cotton generated foreign exchange, yet local scientists and journalists argued that importing rice to meet the growing demand for it only depleted the country of foreign exchange (H. A. Mbamba, personal communication; *The Express*, March 3–5, 1994).

Since 1977 rice was made available to Tanzanians in the form of international aid—especially via the Japanese. According to the national press over 5,000 tons of rice was donated to the Tanzanian government in January 1994 "with a view to help alleviate serious food shortages created by prolonged drought affecting some areas of Tanzania." Yet the rice was destined for distribution in Tanga, Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Dodoma regions, and Zanzibar—some of the country's most urbanized areas—underscoring the importance urban areas hold in considerations of aid distribution and political stability (*Daily News*, January 28, 1994; Rau 1991). Mwanza region's Assistant Planning Officer, Kyamba Japhgi, argued that for the last two years the Japanese have been making especially generous gifts of rice in an attempt to win over more palates and create a large rice-import market to enter in the future (Kyamba Japhgi, personal communication).

People's preferences for "white" foods seemed to contribute to the growing popularity of not only maize and rice, but also European- and U.S-style, leavened wheat-based white bread. Bread was a relatively new arrival in Mwanza and was available in shops as well as from street vendors. "My husband and I like to eat bread because it is white and sweet," noted 48-year-old, middle-income Lemmy. "The plastic wrap keeps it soft and clean." People preferred bread's convenience, too Dipu, a 28-year-old Asian clerk who worked in a fabric shop, explained that, "My wife and I like to eat bread with Tanbond [margarine] for breakfast. It is good with *chai*. It does not need to be cooked so if [my wife] is busy with the baby I can take it by myself. It is expensive but I like to eat it."

Vegetables, meat, fish, dairy products, cooking bananas as well as a long list of other domestically grown and imported foodstuffs also were widely available in Mwanza town. Likewise a seemingly infinite number of issues affected different people's food preferences and choices. Some Asians subscribed to strict vegetarianism on religious grounds and/or used many more spices in their cooking than the Africans, while others did not. Young and old Africans commonly were split between their preferences for rice and maize, respectively. Others preferred imported spaghetti. Immigrants from the western lake areas preferred cooked bananas, the regional staple. Despite this mix Mwanza's residents repeatedly raised several specific issues that guided their choices in food.

Because the vast majority of Mwanza's residents relied on purchased foods, food prices often dictated what people ate. Price considerations came into starkest relief among the destitute, especially among the poorest women. Their survival depended on watery gruel prepared with *mtama*, which was one of the least expensive ready-to-eat foods available on Mwanza's streets. Yet price sensitivity was evident among Mwanza's other residents, as well. Explained Mama Shukuru, a 36-year-old middle-income mother of five,

> The most expensive food is wheat flour. It is used by bakeries, restaurants and other businesses. I usually do not buy it. I buy rice, potatoes, *ugali*, fish and kidney beans because these are the least expensive foods to get. The cheapest food is cassava flour and I buy it so that we will not go hungry when money is in short supply.

While food prices fluctuated according to seasonal availability, many kinds of staples were available year round. The only exceptions were some fruits and vegetables. There was no regularly occurring preharvest "hungry period" in town as many of Mwanza's formerly rural residents had experienced in their pasts. Yet this is not to say that no one went hungry or had to go without their favorite type of food. Chronic hunger was present in Mwanza, especially among many of the town's street adults and street children. Others, especially those who lived on a relatively low income, experienced self-imposed "hungry" or "weak" periods in regard to specific foods to avoid paying high prices. According to Anna, 19 years old and a low-income mother of one,

> My husband prefers *sembe* but now that the price is rising he tells me to buy *dona* instead. Last year at this time [preharvest] we stopped buying

> maize flour and ate sweet potatoes or cassava flour. They were cheaper. My husband likes them but I do not. I need to eat maize flour. It makes me so much stronger.

Given the importance of agriculture in the communities surrounding Mwanza, seasonal cycles affected not only food prices but also consumers' purchasing power. Mama Mwajuma was a marketplace vendor who sold sweet bananas, *sembe, dona*, rice, and cassava flour. "Every day I am here," she revealed,

> but my business is seasonal. I always have merchandise to sell, but people don't always have money. From June through December food is cheap because it is the harvest time and the locals can afford it. Life is easy for me. At that time the cotton farmers have a lot of money to spend after they sell their crop. In January and February business is bad. From March through May business is really bad. Prices are high and many people do not have enough money. It is a hard time for me, too. To make matters worse, I must pay the municipal authorities for my vendor's license in April.

Unfortunately vendors' seasonal expectations of consumers' buying power were not always met, especially in regard to the region's cotton farmers. Food production in Mwanza region was closely related to cotton production because many of the same small-scale farmers who sold food crops to Mwanza's marketplace suppliers also grew cotton. Historically all farmers were required by the government to allot one acre of their farms to cotton production. Those who did not comply were threatened with the denial of social services or the prospect of being taken to court. While the regulations mandating cotton production had been suspended in 1990, many people continued to grow cotton and in May 1993 there was a huge cotton harvest (Kyamba Japhgi, personal communication).

Yet in 1994 there was no cotton crop. Regional government officials such as Kyamba Japhgi asserted that the crop had failed due to drought. However researchers at Mwanza's neighboring Nyegezi Agricultural College argued that the reason there was no crop in 1994 was because the Nyanza Cooperative Union, the government organization that purchases the vast majority of the region's cotton,[15] had not yet paid the farmers for their 1992 crop. The 1992 price was originally set by the government at 94 shillings per kilo of cotton. By April 1994 the government had just begun to pay farmers for the 1992 crop, but it was offering only 60 shillings per kilo instead. In this way the purchasing power of the district farmers who relied on

Mwanza's marketplaces for their purchased foods was directly tied to the vulnerabilities of regional, national, and international cotton markets as well as government budget shortfalls.

Religious holidays also affected patterns of food consumption, and none did so more in 1993–94 than Rhamadan, the Muslim holy month of fasting. Ironically the month-long fast engaged in by many Muslims that requires avoiding all food and drink from sunrise until sunset forced food prices up nearly 50 percent on average in Mwanza as well as throughout the country (*Daily News*, February 11, 1994, March 6, 1994). Even though Rhamadan is recognized as a fast, greater amounts of certain foods were eaten during nightly feasting and during the four-day celebration of Id al Fitr that marks the end of daytime fasting. Many Muslims preferred rice during their nighttime meal and in Mwanza the price of a kilo of rice rose from 220 shillings to 300 shillings. Sweet potatoes were often eaten by those who could not afford rice or maize flour. Yet during the fast in 1994 sweet potatoes went from 2,500 shillings per large burlap sack prior to Rhamadan to a high of 7,000 shillings during Rhamadan and back then down to 2,000 shillings after Rhamadan. Price hikes and speculative hoarding by traders often forced Muslims and non-Muslims alike to choose other foods at this time. As one Dar es Salaam resident reportedly explained, "*Futari* [first food taken after a day of fasting] related items, like cassava and sweet potatoes, have disappeared at marketplaces hence forcing low-income earners to switch to other food items like *tambi* [imported spaghetti noodles]" (*Daily News*, February 11, 1994).

Because of the relationship between Rhamadan and higher food prices, at this time some residents viewed the Muslim community with disdain. A middle-aged Lutheran postal worker blamed the high food prices on "the Muslims and the weather." He complained that, "The drought makes life difficult and I can barely feed my family. But the Muslims make life even more difficult with their fasting." Others blame the government. "It is high time the government consults with the traders on which prices will be fair to both parties," argued one Dar es Salaam resident (*Daily News*, February 11, 1994). In Mwanza 18-year-old Shida argued that, "Because it is possible for food prices to climb beyond our means, the government should impose stronger price controls during Rhamadan."

Others blamed price hikes on the season. Vendors in Mwanza claimed that the 1994 fast had the unfortunate timing of falling between mid-February and mid-March when low preharvest supplies were driving prices higher. The nation had been experiencing

widespread drought that according to traders in Mwanza and Dar es Salaam also caused prices to rise (*Daily News*, March 6, 1994).

Yet there were clues that other forces were at work. Rhamadan falls at different times in the seasonal cycle from year to year, so preharvest shortages do not always affect prices. In addition many consumers said they automatically prepared for Rhamadan-related price hikes each year. Articles and editorials, such as the one entitled "Ensure Fair Food Prices During Rhamadan," also started appearing in the nation's newspapers several weeks before the fast was scheduled to begin (*Daily News*, February 14, 1994). "The price hikes are expected," explained grain wholesaler Madawa,

> because business now is very different than it was when I started 10 years ago. Now there is profit and development. This is because the trade is free. Before trade liberalization, big traders hid merchandise and waited for times of hunger to sell at a high price. They used to do that prior to Rhamadan as well. Now, because there are so many traders trying to sell, this [speculative hoarding] is not done. But another change has affected pricing, especially around Rhamadan. In the past it was very difficult to do business because the people in the villages did not know how to do business with people from town. . . . Now the villagers know about pricing and business. They know that the Muslims will pay high prices to break their fast at night. So the farmers raise prices during Rhamadan and we must raise our prices, too.

Yet not everyone's food choices in Mwanza were determined by price. *Tabia* (custom or habit) was a common explanation for people's differing preferences in Mwanza town. "One of the foods with the highest price is maize," said Shida. "But we usually buy it anyway because we are accustomed to eating *ugali*." Noted Christiani, a 42-year-old high-income mother of nine, "There are Asians who eat only vegetables. That is their custom. But I love to eat meat very much. Meat and plantains. That is my custom. That is what we ate at home in Bukoba [in Kagera region]."

Age-related food preferences also were explained in terms of custom. Some were recognized as being life-cycle based while others were seen as generational. Eighteen-year-old Aza described how both types of age considerations often guided people's food preferences.

> The elderly eat *ugali*, spinach and sweet potatoes. My grandmother has always done this. Younger adults eat rice with beans and cooked bananas with meat because these are newer foods. Children prefer

white potatoes that have been mashed. This is considered to be children's food. Babies drink mother's milk since that is all they can eat.

Concepts of the origin of illness also affected people's food choices. Some beliefs appeared to be more unique to particular individuals, such as the affluent Asian businessman who said he avoided eating raw mangoes because, "That is another way [other than from mosquito bites] that people get sick with malaria." Other beliefs were more commonly held. For instance because the majority of Mwanza's residents shared their meals with others out of the same bowl, many people considered it extremely important that one wash his or her hands prior to eating. Some people noted that hand washing cut down on the transmission of germs, but many others explained that it was done simply to keep the food "clean" by controlling the introduction of "dust" and "dirt." The temperature of cooked foods guided people's preferences, too. Hot foods were preferred over cooled ones because, as 48-year-old fried-fish seller Mama Bene noted, "Cold foods make you sick." Temperature also was a concern of raw-meat vendors in the marketplaces. "This beef will spoil after a day or two," remarked one young male meat vendor in Soko Kuu. "It is important to keep it in the shade and cool." When he was asked whether the flies he occasionally brushed away had any effect on the meat he nodded "no" and reiterated that his biggest problem was the heat of day and his lack of access to any refrigeration. Some of Mwanza's vegetarian population, many of whom were Asian, were repulsed not only by the thought of eating animal flesh but also by the thought of doing so after it had sat around in the hot municipal marketplaces. As one Asian man in his mid-twenties declared, "I don't know how people can eat [meat]. The marketplace smells of it and it has flies and maggots on it. I could never eat it."

Some of Mwanza's residents had a keen awareness of people's food preferences in neighboring countries, took advantage of this knowledge during refugee crises, and were not reluctant to complain about international food aid they themselves had received in the past. Because it shared a border with Burundi and Rwanda, western Tanzania became home to large numbers of refugees escaping civil unrest and genocide in 1993–94 and refugee food preferences were the topic of local newspaper articles and discussions among residents. For example the national English-language newspaper, the *Daily News*, ran a series on the plight of Burundian refugees housed in the dilapidated sports stadium in Kigoma town on Lake Tanganyika. Reportedly refugees chose to work as casual laborers, to sell sundries

on the streets, or to start small-scale businesses to earn money to buy their own food, rather than eat the free rations provided by the Tanzanian government and donor agencies. "We cook our own food because we don't want the maize-flour *ugali*," one refugee woman was quoted in the newspaper as saying. Instead many refugees preferred to eat cassava-flour *ugali* with Lake Tanganyika *dagaa* (sardines) (*Daily News*, November 15 and 16, 1993).

Knowledge of refugees' preferences also contributed to the success of some of Mwanza's businessmen. Very few of the city's grain traders could afford to make the bulk purchases and pay the transport costs necessary to supply the Burundian refugee camps in Kigoma, or the massive Rwandan refugee camps built at Kasulu. Those who did supply the camps were Mwanza's wealthiest residents, Asians who were either in the transport business or pooled their financial resources with other Asians to win the lucrative contracts awarded by the United Nations High Commission on Refugees. One middle-aged Asian man set up a radio-based communications network between Mwanza and several maize-supply areas in western Mwanza and Kagera regions to coordinate his crop purchases and his deliveries of truck loads of maize to the refugee camps at Kasulu and Ngara. Another Asian bypassed aid-agency supply efforts completely and arranged to sell Lake Victoria sardines directly to the refugees.[16] "Business is best when you know what the refugees want," said one middle-aged Asian refugee-camp supplier. "Don't waste time taking maize even if the [donor agencies] pay good prices. Sardines are selling at a premium. That is the refugees' preferred food."

Tanzanians themselves have received enormous amounts of food aid during food shortages and famines over the years. In this way international political economies affected food consumption in Mwanza. Historically the nation's particular brand of African Socialism allowed it to walk a fine line in its relations with both Western democratic countries such as the United States and India and Eastern communist-bloc countries such as the U.S.S.R, North Korea, and China. During my study many of Mwanza's residents were particularly opinionated about the type of food-relief different countries had provided them over the years, especially if they did not like it. During a major drought in the early 1970s, food shortages in Mwanza town were common. Oryoba, a 28-year-old mill operator, described his memory of the 1974 famine.

> I remember a severe famine that happened here in Mwanza and the situation was such that food was completely unavailable. Many people

> lost their lives due to the famine of 1974. Afterward we received aid from the United States that provided maize flour. But it was dark yellow and we were told it was called "pig corn." They sent us their surplus, but it was maize that they would not even feed their animals!

Observed one 34-year-old bus driver, who in 1994 frequented famine-stricken Kuimba district in eastern Mwanza region, "A lot of food relief is sent from Japan. They send canned fish. The people eat it if they are starving, but they really don't like it at all. They often sell it. I see people bringing it on my bus to sell in Mwanza."

The foregoing discussion provides examples of some of the ways in which food consumption patterns have changed in Mwanza during recent history. This evidence suggests that the individual and localized strategies that gave shape to these consumption patterns were closely intertwined with systems and processes that extended well beyond Mwanza's boundaries. People's choices in food were influenced by a wide-range of forces including taste, palpability, price, government budget shortfalls, the dietary doctrines of Islam, or the international political economy.

These interrelationships hold important ramifications for the concept of urban cultures. A food-related division of knowledge, or perhaps more precisely, a division of priorities shapes Mwanza's particular food-based cultural milieu. Herein government officials, farmers, and consumers emphasize the significance of particular foods and market-place vendors employ different strategies to attract customers. At the same time it is evident that some of the associations between Mwanza's food-related culture and its physical locale are attenuated, because consumers preferring white bread to cassava-based *ugali* may be more closely linked through their ideas about preferred foods to someone on the other side of the world than they are to their own neighbors.

4

Mwanza's African and Asian Households

Though it would not be fair to say that the food-entitlement processes I encountered in Mwanza were organized exclusively by gender, it was obvious that females of all ages were closely associated with all aspects of provisioning, including shopping for food, tending urban gardens, and preparing, serving, and cleaning up after meals. Certainly many girls' and women's roles and strategies were central to food provisioning processes. My pilot study of 20 women proved that provisioning "units" could not always be bound in terms of females or even individuals just to simplify the ethnographic context. Few of these women were entirely self-reliant or acted independently when it came to feeding themselves and their children, husbands or male or female partners (including short-term boyfriends/girlfriends, long-term lovers, companions, and room-and/or housemates), siblings, extended families, guests, neighbors, and others in need. They were closely involved with other women, children, and men in food-related income generation, decisionmaking, and labor allocation as well as food acquisition, preparation, distribution, and consumption.

The information presented in this chapter is based on interviews with 71 women. I describe the social units within which most of these women worked to feed themselves and their dependents as their "households." I use this term hesitantly because its utility is the object of ongoing anthropological debate. The primary points of contention are that the theoretical assumptions often associated with the concept of a household may wrongly imply that social structures surrounding the home and hearth are homogenous throughout a given community, unified in their workings, impervious to external influences and/or unchanging in their composition (Yanagisako 1979; Oppong 1983; Vaughan 1983; Wilk and Netting 1984; Guyer and Peters 1987; Bruce 1989; Hansen 1992a; Smith and Wallerstein 1992).

The numerous turns this debate has taken emphasize the complexity of these issues. For instance 30 years ago anthropologist Meyer Fortes challenged the view of domestic groups as unchanging. He demonstrated how Ashanti households underwent "developmental cycles" of change as members married, reproduced, matured, and died (1972: 3; 1949). Yet while this classic anthropological concept has widespread applicability, it is less effective in situations where unforeseen circumstances either force or draw people away from their household. Many households in Mwanza were good examples of this. Some households had experienced unforeseen membership changes as extended family arrived and departed to take advantage of employment and healthcare opportunities in Mwanza or elsewhere. In other cases a household's dependents varied over time as family or friends visited from their more permanent communities elsewhere or sought temporary refuge from civil upheavals or even genocide in neighboring Burundi and Rwanda.

Nonetheless to discuss the city's food provisioning and consumption processes it is necessary to delineate links between certain social units, and I believe that the social structures that most consistently came to the forefront in women's descriptions are best described in terms of households. I use the term to refer to the persons involved in feeding themselves and any others on a regular—usually daily—basis. I found that this processual definition not only permitted me to more precisely delineate food-based groupings, it also allowed for the social variability found in complex cultures like Mwanza's by leaving households' conceptual boundaries indeterminate in time and space. First and foremost it moves beyond the structural limits of the family and, as I will show among homeless adults and children in chapters 8 and 9, even the dwelling-based existence of a "home" (whether simply a room in a boarding house or a free-standing, duplex or multiplex dwelling, or an apartment flat).

Yet my definition presented semantic challenges. When asked how many people "lived" (*kukaa*) in his house, 22-year-old Kahama replied, "It really depends. Five people keep their belongings there, 15 sleep there and five or six eat there." Household composition appeared vastly different when viewed through food-provisioning processes than it might if viewed in terms of property storage or sleeping arrangements. Further it is important to recognize that the households in this study were not necessarily bound economic units because members had different degrees of control over their incomes and may have allocated their earnings for independent or extrahousehold purposes. Nor were these structures always cooperative units. Members

did not always share equally or even willingly in provisioning processes and some such processes were divisive outright. For instance as documented elsewhere in the world, customary patriarchal patterns of eating among rural and urban Tanzanians resulted in the unequal distribution of food types and amounts within households; food was offered first to adults males, then to male children and finally to female adults and children (Weismantel 1988; Charles and Kerr 1988; Delphy 1995; Swantz 1985; Moore 1986; Howard and Millard 1997). In spite of these issues, I found that defining households in this way was effective in delineating relevant food entitlement processes. For now I leave loosely defined what constitutes "regular" involvement in feeding a household and over what maximum distance people maintain this involvement. I explore these indeterminacies in greater detail as part of my discussion of extrahousehold alliances in chapter 5.

It is no overstatement to say that Mwanza's households included a wide variety of structures. Members differed in income and education levels, age, sex, marital status, ethnic affiliation, and religion. Polygyny—or the male practice of taking more than one wife at a time—was practiced by some people in Mwanza, though none of the households in my sample were polygynous ones. The smaller households in this study contained only single women (none of the households in my study had single men), while the largest included wives and husbands, their children, stepchildren, and domestic workers. Still others contained grandmothers and their grandchildren, uncles and nieces, or sisters and brothers. Taken individually I refer to these people as "household members" and collectively they make up a "domestic group." In turn an entire domestic group may or may not be comprised of kin who are related by blood or marriage.

In addition the meanings individuals assigned and the symbolic understandings they held of food-related alliances with others affected household-provisioning decisions and actions. Provisioning processes were a common nexus of social relations pertaining to income/wealth, power, labor, and ethnicity. People from different income levels and socioeconomic classes converged in households among employers and domestic workers or as informally adoptive families and adopted street boys. Variations in power were evident in household members' access to food or money, and their roles in making food-related decisions. Labor relations were continually reestablished among household members in regard to food purchasing and preparation. Ethnic relations were negotiated between Asian and Africans as Asian employers determined what pay was suitable for their African domestic workers

and these domestic workers governed the access of Asian employers to their labor. These types of relations are discussed in more detail in the present and later chapters after some of the more elementary activities inherent in household provisioning are outlined below.

Time, Distance, and Technology

In Mwanza the most basic household-provisioning processes, such as shopping, meal preparation, and managing leftover food, were complicated by time, distance, and the shortage of labor-saving technologies. Some of these challenges may be seen in the food-related tasks in a typical day of 36-year-old Mama Shukuru, her husband, and their three sons (12, 11, and 6 years old) and two daughters (14 and 9 years old). Mama Shukuru worked as a homemaker who also sold home-fried fish near the railway station several days a week. Her husband was a mailroom clerk for the National Housing Corporation. I categorized Mama Shukuru's household as a middle-income one as discussed later in this chapter. On most days Mama Shukuru and her family ate a breakfast consisting of *chai* (hot tea with milk) and leftover rice or *ugali* from the previous night's supper. The leftover rice or *ugali* was kept overnight in the thin, easily dented *sufuria* (round, handleless tin pots with wide lips around the circumference that were manufactured in graduated sizes so that one could be inverted on another to act as a lid) in which the food was cooked initially and subsequently reheated on a small charcoal stove. *Chai* is widely consumed in Mwanza as well as throughout East Africa by both Africans and Asians alike. While *chai* was easily prepared by combining boiling water, tea leaves, and milk, acquiring the ingredients was more difficult. The easiest part was acquiring the tea leaves. Mama Shukuru usually bought an inexpensive Tanzanian brand at a nearby shop. She preferred to sweeten the *chai* with sugar that was available at the marketplace, but it was a relatively expensive luxury and she only purchased it if she felt she could afford it. The milk was part of a liter delivered the day before by a young man who sold it door-to-door. Upon delivery Mama Shukuru filtered and boiled the milk to rid it of any impurities. She did not have a refrigerator so after it cooled she stored it in a cool, dark corner. On particularly hot sunny days or if the milk vendor was running late the milk would go sour and curdle when it was eventually boiled. In this case it was set outside for the family's watchdog to drink.

The most difficult aspect of making tea was acquiring water. Ironically water was hard to come by in spite of the town's location on the second largest freshwater lake in the world. There was one

municipal water intake site on Capri Point from which water was distributed to other areas in the neighborhood as well as to those of Isamilo, Pasiansi, Bugando, Igoma, Nyegezi, Bwiru, and Butimba (Mwanza Master Plan (1992–2012) 1992). Only a small fraction of Mwanza's population had water piped into their homes and this was restricted to those living in the town center, Capri Point, Isamilo, and parts of Igogo. Only a third of the town's residents had access to municipal water connections at all, which were usually in the form of unevenly distributed fauceted standpipes found in certain neighborhoods. Those who did not have access to a public water tap acquired water via private intakes from the lake or private shallow wells. Others collected water by hand directly from the murky lakeshore, or less frequently from the few local springs and streams, in large plastic barrels, jugs, buckets, and bottles and carried it home on foot or by bicycle or cart. Others such as the infirm or elderly paid up to 200 shillings (US $0.40) per five-gallon bucket to have it delivered by young boys or men with bicycles or carts.

The municipal water system could not cope with contemporary demands because it had been designed in 1967 to serve a much smaller population of 15,000, les than one half of the city's 35,000 residents at the time (Plummer 1999). In 1993–94 contemporary town planners were frustrated in their attempts to upgrade the system because there were no drawings available depicting the existing system's location and capacity (Alfred Luanda, personal communication).[1] Given the variability of water access Mama Shukuru was relatively lucky that she and her children could regularly collect it from a public tap that was only 25 meters away from their door.

Not only was the acquisition of water difficult but the avoidance of water-borne illnesses such as amoebic dysentery, schistosomiasis, typhoid, cholera, and intestinal worms was a constant challenge. Like the water system the sewage and drainage system was built during the colonial era and designed to serve a much smaller population. At the time of my research of Tanzania's 20 regional centers only eight, including Mwanza, had a central sewage system. Yet in Mwanza the central business district alone was served by a sewer pipe that was designed to carry the waste out of the city for treatment, but unfortunately the pumps serving the system fell into disrepair and stopped working in 1990. Septic tanks were used in high-income low-density areas such as Capri Point and Isamilo as well as some other planned high-density areas. Much more numerous soak-away systems, pit latrines or the simple outdoors serve the rest of the municipality, especially in unplanned and squatter areas (Plummer 1999; Mwanza

Master Plan (1992–2012) 1992; Kulaba 1985). By the late 1990s it was estimated that over 900,000 gallons of raw sewage ran into the lake on a daily basis via a river canal running through the central business district (Plummer 1999). Even more waste ran into the lake when locally heavy thunderstorms created flash floods that washed away untreated human waste from makeshift pit latrines and garbage pits as well as improperly disposed of used motor oil and other pollutants from the open sewers.

At the time of my study Mwanza had two large water supply tanks on a hill in Isamilo. Mary Plummer (1999) learned that calcium hypochlorite was added to these tanks several times a day, though she notes that "it is impossible to accurately monitor how thoroughly the disinfecting chemical gets mixed into the contents of the tanks before water is pumped into the city's distribution system" (56). In light of Mwanza's water situation, Mama Shukuru religiously filtered, boiled, cooled, and filtered again all of her family's drinking water, using precious fuel and time to purify it. Others without the resources to acquire safe drinking water had to resort to drinking unpurified water thus running the risk of acquiring bacterial infections and parasites. Plummer cites a 1996 study of 817 children in Mkolani ward that found 14 percent of the children 13 years old and younger were infected with schistosome worms and 25 percent had hookworms or roundworms. Plummer also notes that there were 1,124 reported cases of cholera in Mwanza in the first six weeks of 1998. At least 50 people died as a result (1999: 58). Provisioning one's family with safe water not only took time, money, physical strength, and cooking fuel—but could have immediate life and death consequences if one failed at the task.

After breakfast Mama Shukuru's two daughters routinely rinsed the dishes while she prepared to go to the marketplace. Children, especially girls, contributed in many ways to feeding their households. They washed dishes, picked impurities from rice, and washed and cut vegetables. The boys also helped in Mama Shukuru's kitchen by collecting water and making small purchases at nearby shops and kiosks. But food shopping in most of the households in this study was usually the responsibility of one person, and Mama Shukuru's was no exception. She was the one responsible for making the bulk of the food purchases at the city's marketplaces and preparing meals. If she was ill or otherwise unable to shop or cook her family sought food from their neighbors, bought snacks on the streets or went to sleep hungry.

Mama Shukuru made most of her purchases at Soko Kuu and Mwaloni marketplaces. Generally the amount of time Mwanza's

residents spent food shopping has varied considerably over recent decades in conjunction with changes in government policies. Shopping in 1993–94 had become less time-consuming than in the past when people had to wait in lengthy lines for rationed goods, but consumers still complained about the large amounts of time it took to buy food. Like those elsewhere many of Mwanza's food shoppers not only considered price constraints but their time restrictions as well when it came to deciding what to buy (Messer 1984b). Ever since the government began lifting price controls on staple foods, prices have fluctuated on daily, weekly, and seasonal bases. These fluctuations have spurred marketplace shoppers to make time-consuming price comparisons and undertake sometimes lengthy negotiations with vendors.

Not only did shopping take a significant amount of time, but purchases had to be made frequently because many dwellings lacked the space to store foods in bulk. Fruits, vegetables, meat, and bread rotted quickly in Mwanza's warm climate and most people like Mama Shukuru did not have refrigerators. Even those who could afford refrigerators and/or freezers as well as pay for the electricity to run them (roughly 10 percent of the Africans and 80 percent of the Asians in this study) had to adapt to hours- or days-long blackouts due to rationing (four-hour blackouts were scheduled two evenings a week in most of Mwanza's electrified neighborhoods) or unforeseen electrical grid maintenance problems. Cold-storage problems multiplied when cash was in short supply and when appliance repairs and the payment of electric bills, kickbacks, and bribes (to help hasten official electrical repairs) were delayed. Illegal hookups were common, but overall these served only a fraction of the municipal population (Lugalla 1995). Preserving food also was difficult due to the unavailability of airtight and pest-resistant containers. Ants, grain bores, weevils, rats, and other vermin were an unrelenting menace. Because of these storage and preservation challenges Mama Shukuru usually spent one-and-one-half hours on buying food three times a week. The other women in this study reported spending anywhere from 20 minutes to two hours per outing making their regular food purchases. Two-thirds of the households in this study sent at least one member to a municipal marketplace three times or more per week; half of those households sent someone every day.

At the marketplace Mama Shukuru often bought the same ingredients commonly found in many town dwellers' diets. One of the primary foods she purchased was maize flour to make *ugali*. Mama Shukuru often purchased two kilos of *sembe* at a time. It was slightly

more expensive than *dona* at 120 as opposed to 80 shillings per kilo, but her family preferred *sembe*'s sweeter taste and cleaner appearance. Mama Shukuru also found it simpler and faster to cook because the flour was finer and absorbed water more easily.

Typically Mama Shukuru also purchased a kilo or two of rice and *mchicha* (amaranth or Chinese spinach), sweet potatoes, kidney beans, cooking bananas, Irish potatoes, Nile perch fillets or more desirable and expensive tilapia (another type of fish), cassava flour (also for *ugali*), wheat flour for *chapati*, and fruit such as bananas, mangoes, and oranges. *Mchicha* in particular was very inexpensive and widely available. *Mchicha* was preferred to European spinach because it did not reduce in volume when boiled. It is a common relish eaten with *ugali*, although Mwanza's very poor made meals of it by itself. Some of Mwanza's residents, like many Kenyans, referred to this green spinach as *sukuma wiki* (literally, to stretch out the week) or *chakula cha maskini* (a poor person's food) (Freeman 1991). Others balked at the suggestion that there were particular meanings associated with the food they ate. "The type of food you eat does not tell people much about you," asserted 20-year-old Edward, a recent secondary-school graduate. "That is a rather foolish belief of some people. [What you eat] tells how much you care about a balanced diet. Some people may talk when they see you eating greens and say that you are an animal, but they do not know the [biological] function of food."

For Mama Shukuru and the majority of Mwanza's residents covering the distance between the marketplace and one's home was not only time-consuming but also physically taxing. Some went by car or truck, others went by costly, cramped and overcrowded *daladala* (privately owned commercial minibuses, vans, or pickup trucks) and some went by bicycle or motorbike. However most people like Mama Shukuru walked. Those who went on foot carried their heavy parcels home in woven plastic or sisal bags, banana-frond baskets or plastic grocery sacks. These sacks were named for the fictional characters or advertising printed on them so they often were referred to as "Rambo," "Marlboro," or "Muzamills," the name of a prominent dry-goods store based in Stone Town, Zanzibar. They were widely available for sale throughout the streets for anywhere from 10 to 50 shillings depending on the size. Those who shopped on foot often took their domestic workers along to help them carry their parcels and others paid street children, usually boys, a meager fee to help them home.

Getting around town on foot with or without heavy parcels was neither easy nor safe. During regular business hours (weekdays between 8:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.), the sidewalks along Mwanza's main arteries

were clogged with displays of clothing, mattresses, or sheets of corrugated iron. Walkways were usually crammed with workers repairing bicycles, stripping salvageable rubber from used tires, or unloading goods from trucks. Most sidewalks were simply crowded with men, women, and children grilling cassava root, exchanging greetings and simply hanging around. These activities forced pedestrians off the sidewalks and into the way of bicycle, motorbike, car, truck, and bus traffic. Many streets were bordered by open sewers that made the trip home with one's parcels even more harrowing, especially during the rains when the sewers overflowed and people were forced to balance precariously as they jumped between high spots on the road and any rocks, bricks, and other debris that could be used as stepping stones (see figure 4.1). Walking after dark, too, was risky due to the dirt roads' deep ruts and seemingly bottomless holes left open and unmarked during repairs of buried telephone-cables or water-pipes.

On her return from the marketplace Mama Shukuru often stopped to buy vegetables at the home of a neighbor woman who sold inexpensive tomatoes, onions, and green peppers that she grew in a nearby plot. Once home Mama Shukuru prepared a lunch that consisted typically of *ugali* with small pieces of Nile perch. She cooked for her husband and their children. Most of the time the two older children were able to eat lunch between classes at their secondary school.

Figure 4.1 Kenyatta Road. Navigating the busy traffic and open sewers (far right) along dusty Kenyatta Road.

Just as shopping could be tedious and time-consuming so, too, could meal preparation. Other than the fully prepared foods available at the food stands, kiosks, restaurants, or along the streets, few partly prepared foods were available. Machine-processed or powdered vegetables used to make soups, sauces, or other dishes were unheard of except in one or two of the most expensive food shops. These goods usually were imported from either Kenya or Europe and that added to their costs. Few foods were cleaned prior to purchase. Sand and stones had to be picked from rice and beans, pesticides rinsed from grains, diesel soot, and road grit washed from fruits and vegetables and scales and bones removed from fish. Kitchen technology also was very basic. Because they were prohibitively expensive only the city's wealthiest people owned labor-saving kitchen devices such as electric kettles, hot plates, ovens, and stoves with multiple burners. Many of Mwanza's cooks, especially the Africans, prepared foods in a simple *chungu* (clay cooking pot), *kikango* (frying pan), or *sufuria* (tin pot). These were heated over *mafiga* (three stones arranged around hot coals) or small charcoal or kerosene stoves that held one pot at a time.

Electricity, kerosene, and charcoal were used as fuel, but charcoal was much less expensive and more widely used. Most of the charcoal used in Mwanza was imported in large burlap bags from Ukerewe Island, neighboring lakeshore areas, and the region's western districts where the trees used in charcoal production were more plentiful. The widespread availability of charcoal at the municipal and neighborhood marketplaces, along the streets, from door-to-door vendors and street children who had scavenged unburned bits from trash heaps, greatly lessened women's burdens of providing cooking fuel for their kitchens. Unlike their urban counterparts, rural women continue to rely on tree branches, bushes, scrub, and pieces of wood found on the ground. The Wasukuma have deforested the scrub and woodlands that once covered much of the region and women in the countryside walk many kilometers a day in search of wood for cooking fuel. Though convenient the environmental impact of coal burning is extreme and unless another inexpensive source of cooking fuel is found in the near future deforestation in the greater Mwanza region will likely continue. I witnessed the speed and scale with which a large population in search of cooking fuel could decimate surrounding woodlands on two visits to the Rawandan refugee camp at Ngara in neighboring Kagera region, an eight-hour drive west of Mwanza. Within the first six weeks of the camps existence, it appeared that almost every source of wood on the surrounding hills had been cut down. A month later an endless stream several kilometers long of

men, women, children, and even toddlers could be seen walking away from the camp in search of fuel, while another stream made its way back to camp carrying tree trunks, stumps, branches, and underbrush.

After dusk the family gathered again for their evening meal that commonly consisted of rice and kidney beans or sweet potatoes and *dagaa* (tiny sardines harvested from the lake). If Mama Shukuru was running short of an item such as salt, she would send one of her children to get it at a nearby roadside kiosk. Kiosks were in essence Mwanza's own version of the American "convenience" store. Some kiosks were boxy makeshift structures constructed from salvaged wood or recycled pieces of corrugated iron. The better-built ones were provided to entrepreneurs by the local soda bottling company through special financial agreement. These kiosks were brightly painted with Coca-Cola, Pepsi, or Fanta logos and more secure from theft. Kiosks usually had only enough room for a vendor and a small inventory of goods such as sodas, cigarettes, margarine, eggs, oil, salt, and imported cartons of heat-treated, long-lasting milk. Though prices could be slightly higher than those at the marketplace, kiosks were located near people's houses, had extended business hours, and offered regular customers special credit terms in times of need.

Regarding any cooked food they offered, the kiosks were viewed by many in the same way as were the food stands and street-based vendors, that is, as sources of tasty and convenient but potentially spoiled or contaminated food. Parents often permitted their children to buy cooked foods only from vendors in their immediate neighborhoods because their preparation practices and cleanliness could be more closely and regularly scrutinized. This practice was based on the assumption that any outbreak of illness associated with cooked-food vendors would be heard of quickly via neighborhood gossip.

After the evening meal, Mama Shukuru and her daughters routinely washed the cooking pots and eating utensils with water, sandy grit to remove any cooked on food and, if they could afford it, a small amount of bottled dish soap to remove any oily film. They also stored any leftovers. Mama Shukuru's eldest daughter referred to leftovers in English as "sleeping foods" because they were kept the night and eaten in the morning. Because food was such a precious commodity, food waste was kept to a bare minimum in most households. People were expected to finish all of the food and beverages, including water, set before them. If there were leftovers people sometimes ate them as snacks or at the next meal. In the meantime leftovers were covered and stored where they would be less likely to be bothered by mice or invaded by Mwanza's large armies of tiny reddish-brown ants.

Those who had access to a refrigerator could more easily preserve food and it appeared from their descriptions that they were more likely to eat any surplus food themselves rather than give it away. Yet among households that did not have access to refrigeration, leftovers were occasionally thrown away but more commonly offered before they spoiled to domestic workers, friends, neighborhood children, and the destitute living on the streets. In some cases the disposition of a given leftover depended on what type of food it was. According to 29-year-old middle-income Hasina, "If food is plentiful, such as rice, we will eat it later. But if it is *ugali* we throw it away because it is not good to eat after it has cooled."

Kitchen waste such as burned or spoiled food, peels, cuttings, and packaging usually were burned or disposed of in makeshift garbage pits, on undeveloped plots used communally as neighborhood refuse sites, and in roadside trash heaps. Neighbors commonly argued over the location of these pits, sites, and heaps because they attracted the destitute as well as dogs, cats, rats, and birds. In the crowded town center these dumps were usually right outside people's houses and apartments. It was common to walk by a garbage heap one day only to see a sign erected there the next day forbidding the dumping of garbage. By then garbage was collecting in a pile located several doors down. A day or two later the same sign would be moved to the new dump site by someone who lived nearby, and so on. . . . Some people went as far as to post a child or elderly family member outside their door to chase away would-be dumpers. One of my neighbors often screamed from his balcony or occasionally shot a pistol into the air to deter people from starting a trash heap outside his door. Once a week the municipal garbage truck would pass by and a couple of men could be seen throwing the refuse with pitch forks, rakes, or shovels into the truck bed. They often threw the garbage so high into the air that much of it missed the truck completely and landed all over the road. (When I first witnessed this I thought the men were just trying to be momentarily funny.) During the dry season the garbage left in the road was pulverized by passing traffic, but when it rained the streets and open sewers could be awash for hours with rotting kitchen refuse.

With the small daily food budget, narrow range of staple foods and limited cooking technology, people's purchasing and planning skills, such as Mama Shukuru's, contributed greatly to the quality and quantity of the foods eaten by their household members. She not only had the knowledge of how to prepare foods to stretch her food budget but also knew which marketplace vendors could help her acquire the freshest produce at the lowest price. While there were

many energy- and time-consuming challenges to feeding her household, the fact that she was able to regularly nurture the personalized relationships she had with some of Mwanza's food vendors contributed to the success she had provisioning herself and her family.

Acquiring Money to Buy Food: Contemporary Differentiation among Mwanza's Households

Almost 30 years prior to my study the primary employer in Mwanza town was the government. A 1966 survey of 1,800-plus men and women found that nearly 22 percent of those who "worked for pay or profit" did so for the government or town council. This is not surprising given the nation's socialist political economy and Mwanza's central administrative role in the district and region. The town also was the home of the government-controlled cooperative union that oversaw the sale of cotton, the country's chief export at the time (Heijnen 1968).

In my study only 16 percent of those who worked (7 or 10 percent of the women and 11 or 28 percent of their husbands or male partners) were employed by the government. While my sample is not representative of the city as a whole, I believe I can rightly argue that nowadays people in Mwanza pay for food with money acquired from a combination of sources. In the literature on Tanzania and other poor countries, the economy is divided into two conceptual categories: the more "formal" or government-regulated economy; and the "informal" or largely unregulated and untaxed economy (Hart 1973; Tripp 1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1997; Maliyamkono and Bagachwa 1990). The informal sector is commonly referred to as "*machingas*" in Tanzania. In neighboring Kenya the informal economy is aptly called "j*ua kali*" (hot sun) because many of these unregulated activities take place out in the open. Common informal sector activities in Mwanza included producing and selling food on the streets (penny candies, peanuts, fruit, and vegetables) or at small stands (these ranged from simple open-air business settings centered around a woman, her charcoal stove, and several cooking and serving implements to larger, covered food-cooking and vending and/or seating areas operated by several women), sewing and mending clothes, blacksmithing knives and other small tools, building wooden beds, chairs and tables, and repairing watches, tires, radios, and cars. Employment opportunities in Tanzania also can be distinguished even further between wage/salary employment and self/family employment in both the formal and

informal sectors, though none of these categories is mutually exclusive (TGNP 1993).

Many of the husbands, partners, brothers, uncles, and sons of the 71 women who were included in this survey and held waged or salaried positions in formal public-sector jobs worked as government officials, clerks, teachers, or electrical company workers. The 39 men formally employed in the private sector worked as lawyers, commercial farmers, and fishermen, and in local shops, medical clinics, and fish or grain marketplaces. While women held positions in government, schools, and private firms, they always constituted a minority therein and worked at the lower-skilled/poorer-paying jobs. Two women worked in nursing. This was the only occupational field in Tanzania where women made up more than half the workforce (TGNP 1993).

Some of the formal ways people acquired money in Mwanza varied predictably with monthly or seasonal changes, or less predictably according to unforseen crises. Mwanza's commercial truck drivers worked long hours during maize and cotton harvests. Many also were employed around the clock beginning in mid-April 1994 stocking the Rwandan refugee camps following the civil violence and genocide in that country. But truck drivers suffered lay offs during heavy rains when the region's dirt roads become impassable. Others' work was periodic as well. *Dagaa* (sardine) fishermen spent dark, moonless nights on the lake attracting their catch with the glow of kerosene lanterns hanging from their boats. But these fishermen were idle on nights when a bright moon distracted and dispersed their tiny prey.

More informal types of work for both men and women included self- or family-run ventures that were often small and home-based. In and around Mwanza fishing, agriculture, and small-scale trade provided many middle-income men and women with the bulk of their cash. Nine women sold homegrown vegetables, homemade *uji*, *maandazi*, fried fish and frozen juice cups, or home-raised eggs, milk, pork, and chickens along the street in the town center or at their homes in the surrounding neighborhoods (see figure 4.2). Three regularly sold home-brewed beer or liquor. Others purchased cigarettes and penny candy for their children to resell on the streets. One wealthy woman who had the capital to invest in her business start-ups raised pigs for slaughter in her backyard as well as oversaw a roadside kiosk. In Mwanza these activities were commonly referred to as *biashara ndogo ndogo* or *shuguli ndogo ndogo* (very small businesses or activities). While some informal work included illicit activities (with no legal counterpart in Tanzanian society, such as drug selling, prostitution,

Figure 4.2 *Mama Nitilie.* Many women, known as *Mama Nitilies* sell food along Mwanza's streets and walking paths. This woman is selling homemade *maandazi* (donuts) and packages of peanuts.

and bribery), the activities discussed in this chapter were licit ones. For example selling maize without a municipal license was technically forbidden but viewed herein as licit because one could legally acquire such a license (Tripp 1990).

The proliferation of the number of those involved in the informal sector is in large part a result of the financial hardships caused by a sharp fall in real wages between 1979 and 1984 and by the state's withdrawal of nutritional, health and education subsidies in the mid-1980s. In Mwanza there was money to be made in the informal sector and even those with formal sector jobs took advantage of the opportunities. Lemmy was a 48-year-old secondary school teacher whose official pay was 10,000 shillings a month (US $20.00). But she made three or four times her formal wage by also selling milk. She sold the eight or so liters her cow produced every day at 160 shillings per liter (8 liters × 160 shillings × 30 days per month = TS 38,400 (US $76.80). On the whole women and children were concentrated

in informal sector jobs, which generally required little capital and no education. Many of these jobs generated little income and were considered low status. These occupations also were age and sex-specific. Children often walked through the streets selling handfuls of penny candies, gum, peanuts, or cigarettes that they acquired through wholesalers and women usually washed laundry, cooked, cleaned, and sewed.

Involvement in Tanzania's informal economy was vital to many people's survival, but because these activities were not taxed the informal sector was a highly politicized and contentious arena. Even though these activities were officially recognized by the government as depriving the state of tax revenue and foreign exchange, they were condoned and openly practiced by many Tanzanian bureaucrats and politicians (*Daily News*, November 22, 1993). Speaking in May 1987 President Ali Hassan Mwinyi went as far as to acknowledge that "Since the government could not afford to pay people adequate salaries, they should be free to do various income generating activities to support themselves" (Maliyamkono and Bagachwa 1990: 32; Tripp 1990b). Yet Mwanza's informal workers, especially vendors on the streets, often were caught between those local government officials who claimed to support them one moment and who harassed them the next.

People's involvement in *biashara ndogo ndogo* could be occasional or sporadic. This was true especially among many low-income earners who had little savings to fall back on in times of need. Mama Kato, 23, worked as a low-paid shop clerk. She was married to a rookie policeman and together they worked to support their two young children. But sometimes their meager earnings fell short. "When food prices increase before the harvests," she lamented, "we have problems getting food because our income is small. At these times we do our best to buy food with the profits we make by selling [homegrown] tomatoes and bananas."

Not only did informal work increase the amount of money people could spend on food, but the availability of inexpensive, home-produced foodstuffs on the streets contributed to holding down the cost of food purchases. This was especially important for low-income groups who bought more of their foodstuffs off the streets. Street vendors and the roadside kiosks eased some of the burden involved with acquiring food by increasing its availability across the urban landscape and remaining open when the municipal marketplaces and private shops were closed.

Household Composition and Income

Recognizing the diversity found among Mwanza's households is key to understanding the urban food-provisioning scene because different household members had different food-related knowledge, options, strategies, connections, capabilities, values, preferences, and needs. This was all the more evident when examining the changing boundaries demarcating household composition in the last half of this century.

African households have been studied by many colonial and independent governments over the past 50 years and household surveys were first undertaken in Tanzania during the 1950s to examine income and domestic consumption among low-paid unskilled laborers in Dar es Salaam, Tanga, and Mwanza. In 1969 the government carried out the first mainland survey of both urban and rural households of all sizes and incomes levels (Household Budget Survey (1976/77) 1985). As an awareness of household differentiation grew among government statisticians, so did their recognition of problems with their analyses. As a result between the 1976/77 and 1991/92 household budget surveys there was a shift in emphasis to accommodate for significant income, gender, and household-composition complexities. "Formal-wage" comparisons became "total-income" comparisons and the "nondomestic" contributions of females to household incomes were quantified separately from those of the "head of household," who in the past was usually a male. The latter survey also distinguished between home-produced foods and those purchased in the marketplace. In addition domestic workers were recognized as household members in the 1991/92 survey if they shared meals with the rest of the household and recognized "the head of household as being their head as well" (Household Budget Survey (1976/77) 1985; Household Budget Survey (1991/91) 1993; Guyer 1988). Recently the household "head" was defined as "the person recognized as such by the rest of the members of the household. . . . Often he/she is responsible for financial support and welfare of the household members" (Household Budget Survey (1991/92) 1993).

In my study differences between households were framed in the following ways. On the most general level households were divided along ethnic lines because the distinction of whether someone was a Mwafrika (African) or Mhindi (Asian) was very commonly made by town residents in everyday discourse. While Africans and Asians easily intermixed in housing blocks, on the job, at schools, and on the streets, racial and cultural distinctions were reinforced in other ways.

For instance while Africans expressed little concern about marrying a spouse of a similar ethnic background, and 13 of the 20 African couples on which this data was available included marriages or partnerships between men and women from different ethnic groups, African/Asian relationships were rare and there were no interethnic marriages or partnerships among the 71 African and Asian households included in this study. Although African/Asian distinctions were dropped from government surveys after Independence, they are made herein because households were influential centers in establishing people's ideas about ethnic identity. In addition some of the cultural and socioeconomic differences that commonly set Mwanza's Africans and Asians apart in everyday activities were evident in some provisioning-related processes.

To highlight women's roles and strategies in particular, African and Asian households were further subdivided according to the type of relationship the women reported having with other adults in their household. All of the women framed their descriptions in terms of their relationships, or lack thereof, with males. These women may have had female partners, but because same-sex partnerships were fervently looked down on in Mwanza I did not ask the women in my study specifically if they were lesbians and none of them mentioned it voluntarily. The extent to which gays and lesbians are marginalized and systematically discriminated against in Tanzania was made all the more evident in April 2004 when the parliament of Zanzibar, which along with the Island of Pemba has its own government that oversees the internal affairs of these Indian Ocean islands of the United Republic of Tanzania, passed a bill outlawing homosexuality (BBC News World Edition 2004). Thus households are divided between independent single women (including never-married, abandoned, divorced, or widowed women), married women (including women whose husbands either lived with them or participated in provisioning processes from afar on a regular basis), and unmarried women with male partners (including sexual partners, companions, brothers, and uncles). The legality of reported marriage unions was not aggressively investigated; nonetheless, women who referred to partners as "husbands" were casually pressed to disclose whether they were referring to them as such in a colloquial or more formal sense. As a result the reported marital status of several of these women may have differed from Tanzanian politico-jural "reality." In the same vein "partnerships" were not explored in detail to determine the extent to which these unions were semi-regular or occasional, or involved mistresses, "outside" wives, "guest" husbands, and so on (Karanja 1987: 247, 1994; Carael 1994: 256; Hoodfar 1988: 134).

Households also were classified as either high, middle or low income. Again these distinctions were somewhat arbitrary out of methodological necessity. Deborah Bryceson learned during her research in 1988 that in comparison to the other Tanzanian towns in which she worked people in Mwanza often ignored or deflected questions about their income (Bryceson 1993: 157). During my study I found people were either reluctant or unable to discuss actual income amounts. Nonetheless they were very willing to point out or describe the durable goods they owned and explain their average weekly food expenditures. So I used a combination of criteria to classify households: reported monetary and food-in-kind income; links to extrahousehold food or food-related support; material possessions such as refrigerators, freezers, electric cookers, televisions, and cars; and their reported weekly or monthly food expenditures (see figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3 Wealthy family. Members of a wealthy family pose for a photograph outside their home on Christmas morning. Homes like these are constructed with cement and stucco walls and have tile or corrugated iron roofs. The girls' fancy dresses, the young man's motorbike and the house's electrical hook-up (upper right) are luxuries in Mwanza.

Table 4.1 African household types and income

Household type	#	(%)	Income level	#	(%)
Married	34	(67)	low	10	(20)
			middle	20	(39)
			high	4	(8)
Unmarried	6	(12)	low	5	(10)
			middle	0	(0)
			high	1	(2)
Single	11	(21)	low	9	(17)
			middle	2	(4)
			high	0	(0)
Total	51	(100)		51	(100)

Table 4.2 Asian household types and income

Household type	#	(%)	Income level	#	(%)
Married	14	(70)	low	0	(0)
			middle	4	(20)
			high	10	(50)
Single	6	(30)	low	0	(0)
			middle	6	(30)
			high	0	(0)
Total	20	(100)		20	(100)

The majority of the 51 African households contained married couples (see table 4.1). Virtually half of all of the households were characterized as low income, and the greater part of these included single females.

The 20 Asian households were divided between those with married women and those with single women (see table 4.2). Half of the Asian households were middle income and the other half high income. All of the female-headed households were middle income.

WOMEN, MEN, AND WORK IN MWANZA

Low-Income African Households

Unmarried Couples

In four out of the five low-income households composed of unmarried companions both partners worked at both formal and informal jobs (see table 4.3). Four of the males were formally employed. The fifth male was the unemployed elderly uncle of a young woman who worked as a counselor at a local street-children center.

Table 4.3 Low-income African households

Name	Age	Birthplace (region or country)	Occupation	Partner's occupation	Children	Domestic employees	Years in town	Education
Unmarried women								
Natalie	35	Shinyanga	charcoal sales	market vendor	3	0	10	none
Euphrasia	40	Mara	midwife/beer sales	fisherman	4	1 housegirl	8	standard 8
Rashida	38	Shinyanga	office clerk	truck driver	4	0	6	standard 7
Kazi	20	Kigoma	uji sales	clinic orderly (brother)	0	0	5	standard 7
Sanura	20	Mwanza	counselor	unemployed (uncle)	0	0	20	form 4
Married women								
Mama Kato	23	Rukwa	shop clerk	policeman	2	0	13	form 6
Mama Chaina	33		maandazi sales	box vendor	4	0	20	
Bibi Rose	42	Mwanza	biashara ndogo ndogo	unemployed	10	0	23	
Mama Joy	25	Mara	homemaker	mason	2	0	2	standard 7
Mama Bene	48	Mwanza	fish sales	office clerk	14	0		standard 4
Aziza	18	Mara	homemaker	office clerk	1	0	4	standard 7
Anna	19	Kigoma	homemaker	bus conductor	1	0	5	standard 5
Mama Paul	24	Kagera	homemaker	clothes presser	1	0		
Shida	18	Mwanza	homemaker	truck driver	0	0	18	standard 3
Mama Musa	34		homemaker	carpenter	6	1 housegirl		
Single women								
Bibi Unguja	63		chapati sales		7	0		standard 7
Adelina	23	Rwanda	counselor		0	0	1	form 3
Bibi Mika	53	Kagera	beer sales			0	21	none
Bibi Frola	54	Mwanza	beer sales			0	20	none
Fanny	48	Tabora	biashara ndogo ndogo		5	0	16	none
Mama Fatima	36	Mwanza	cooked food sales		4	0	36	form 4
Mama Bahati	39		housekeeper		2	0	22	
Mama Mariamu	35		maandazi sales		4	0		
Mama John	44	Shinyanga	teacher		5	0	10	form 4

Married Couples

In low-income households run by married couples the situation was much different. Herein people usually relied on only one source of income, though this was not always out of choice. People's access to informal work was restricted by lack of start-up money. "My husband is a bus conductor and I am a housewife" said Anna, 19. "We have lived in Mwanza for five months and our income is very small. I would like to raise chickens but there is not enough money leftover to use as capital."

Single Women

Most of the low-income single-female households survived on one source of income as well. This income usually came from more informal activities. Elderly Bibi Frola brewed and sold beer to support herself and her young AIDS-orphaned granddaughter. Two women depended on dual income sources. Mama John, 44, fed herself and her children on her teacher's wages and her proceeds from selling homemade frozen juice bars. Thirty-six-year-old Mama Fatima relied primarily on her pay as a food-stand cook to support her four children, but occasionally the father of her children contributed money for their upkeep (see figure 4.4).

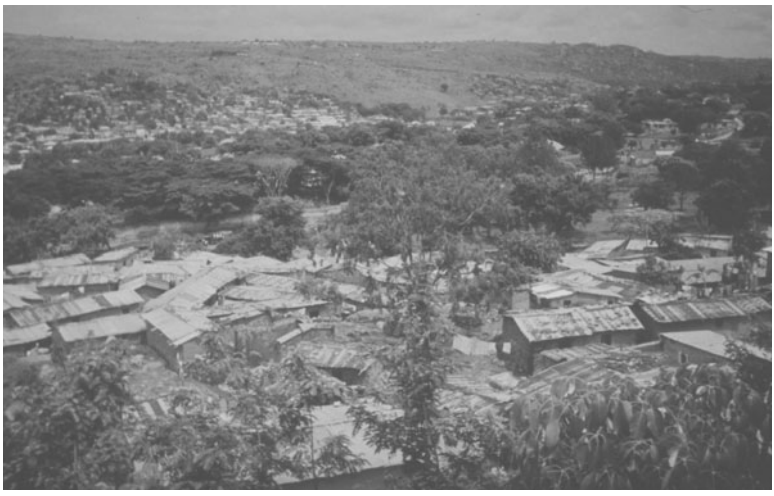

Figure 4.4 Low-income and squatter housing on the hills just above Mwanza's city center. Many of these homes are constructed with mud bricks that disintegrate easily in heavy rains and makeshift corrugated iron roofs weighed down with bricks and rocks. Pieces of corrugated iron posed an occasional but lethal threat during wind storms in Mwanza when they blew off these types of houses.

Middle-Income African Households

Married Couples

The majority of the women surveyed were married and belonged to middle-income households (see table 4.4). Among the few who were formally employed were a midwife, a dental assistant, a nurse, and several teachers—common low-wage and little-prospect-for-advancement positions. The majority of the middle-income married women who were not formally employed were self-described *mama wa nyumbani* (literally, mothers of the house or homemakers) who ran their households and worked at informal income-generating activities. These women's economic activities are undervalued and underestimated in census data and society at large despite their crucial importance to the maintenance of their families in regard to their income-generating informal-sector activities, childcare, cooking, and the other housework activities they do for the entire household (Mbilinyi 1991). Concilia, whose husband worked for the electrical company, was one such homemaker who managed her home and supplemented the family income through her own front-door trade in mangoes, kerosene, salt, cooking oil, rice, and maize flour.

Meanwhile almost all of these women's husbands held relatively high-paying skilled positions as accountants, engineers, pharmacists, or self-employed "businessmen" who owned bars or shops. Although at least one partner was formally employed in many of these households, numerous couples found it necessary to supplement their income with their own side businesses. Forty-eight-year-old Lemmy's story was typical. "My husband and I teach at Lake Secondary School," she said, "but our wages are small so we also raise chickens and pigs. We sell the eggs and pork from our home."

In these cases the majority of the household income came from the men's wages; however, women were quick to emphasize the significance of their contributions to the food budget. "My husband is an engineer in the Ministry of Works," explained 38-year-old Mama Esther, "but our income comes from all of the work we do, including the eggs and milk that I sell. Almost all of our income goes toward buying food, and both of us work hard for the money."

Single Women

Of the two middle-income households run by single woman, one contained a woman who worked as a clerk for the nongovernmental organization African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF)

Table 4.4 Middle-income African households

Name	Age	Birthplace (region or country)	Occupation	Partner's occupation	Children	Domestic employees	Years in town	Education
Married women								
Mama China	38	Shirati	homemaker	grain mill owner	6	1 housegirl	25	standard 4
Lemmy	48	Kilimanjaro	teacher	teacher	6	1 housegirl	4	standard 8
Paulina	42	Mbeya	dentist	pharmacist	5	1 housegirl	18	form 4
Mama Eleanor	40	Dodoma	fabric-stall owner	scale repair		0	25	form 4
Sikuwema	42	Kagera	kiosk clerk	kiosks owner	5	1 housegirl	23	form 4
Kesi	30	Kagera	social worker	politician	6	0	6	form 4
Bibi Aziza	44	Kagera	teacher	teacher	5	1 housegirl	21	university
Aisha	42	Kilimanjaro	tire sales	taxi driver	4	1 housegirl	25	standard 4
Bibi Koku	35	Kagera	midwife	farmer/herder	4	1 housegirl	15	standard 7
Penda	47	Kagera	nurse	tailor	14	1 housegirl	28	nursing sch.
Kissa	20	Burundi	homemaker	truck driver	2	0		standard 6
Concilia	34	Kagera	biashara ndogo ndogo	electric co. clerk	4	0		
Nadi	28	Shinyanga	policewoman	truck co. clerk	0	1 housegirl		form 4
Mama Esther	38	Mara	homemaker	engineer	8	1 housegirl	10	form 4
Pelagia	40	Kilimanjaro	homemaker	electrician	3	0	15	form 4
Jina	26	Ruvuma	homemaker	gov. accountant	1	0	5	
Mama Shukuru	36	Morogoro	fish sales	mailroom clerk	5	0	18	form 4
Hasina	29		homemaker		3	0		
Mama Lem	45		school administrator	businessman		0	28	
Hadija	33	Mara	cooked food sales	truck driver	5	1 housegirl		standard 7
Single women								
Bibi Dionizi	45	Kagera	counselor/mitumba sales		8	1 housegirl	20	form 4
Denza	23	Tabora	office worker		1	0	8	form 4

and the other included a social welfare counselor who as a sideline sold *mitumba* (second-hand clothes originating in the United States and Europe).

High-Income African Households

Unmarried Couples

At the highest income levels only the one unmarried couple engaged in both formal and informal work (see table 4.5). Sylvia and her live-in husband-to-be relied on a number of resources to support their family. According to her,

> Gilbert has his own business as an accountant and the income is very good. I teach nursing at Bugando [the regional hospital] but make much less than he does. So I also raise turkeys and pigs for slaughter, and sell the meat to friends and restaurants. That business comes to me by word of mouth. I also opened a kiosk two weeks ago down near the lake here on Capri Point (one of Mwanza's wealthiest neighborhoods). My younger brother runs it. I sell soda, tea, soap, biscuits, tomato paste, Bics [pens], etc . . . .

Married Couples

None of the wealthy married couples reportedly relied on income from any informal activities. The married men were lawyers, upscale bar owners, high-level government employees, and successful retailers. Two of the women were homemakers, one had her own large *mitumba* store at Soko Kuu and another was employed by the electric company (see figure 4.5).

Middle- and High-Income Asian Households

Married and Single Women

There were fewer variations among Asian households' income levels and their members' income-generating activities, but there were interesting differences between the Asian and African households nonetheless. For example Asian women's income-generating opportunities were more restricted than the African women's in that unmarried females usually were the only ones permitted to work outside of their homes or the environs of a family or Asian-controlled business (see table 4.6). Exceptions commonly were made only if money was in particularly short supply. The unmarried females who did work away

Table 4.5 High-income African households

Name	Age	Birthplace (region or country)	Occupation	Partner's occupation	Children	Domestic employees	Years in town	Education
Unmarried women								
Sylvia	33	Singida	nursing teacher	private accountant	4	2 housegirls 1 houseboy	5	university
Married women								
Margaret	31		homemaker	businessman	4	0		form 4
Mama Annette	41	Kagera	mitumba sales	lawyer	5	0	17	form 6
Christiani	42	Kigoma	homemaker	bar owner	9	1 houseboy	32	form 4
Eleanor	42		secretary	high-rank gov. official	4	1 houseboy		form 4

Figure 4.5 House in high-income neighborhood with an ornamental garden. Note plumbing- and telephone-repair access hatches in the ground (lower left).

from home were commonly employed as secretaries and clerks in other Asians' enterprises. The women who were married, divorced or widowed all engaged in informal sales from their own homes or worked for family-controlled businesses, such as in garment, cloth, tailor or shoe shops, or in businesses where their family members held senior positions.

One woman sold new clothes and several others sold simple foods such as "chips" (fried potatoes) or *pappadam* (crisp flat bread). These women differed from their African counterparts in that they did business in their houses or apartments—not on the streets. The sale of prepared foods out of their homes also was particular to the Asian women in my sample. Twenty-nine-year-old Veena and her husband worked at Lake Soap factory to support their five children. He was a supervisor and she prepared meals out of her home for the factory workers (all of whom were Asian except for the African security guards).

Yet the fact that married Asian women did not engage in formal work far from hearth and home did not appear to hinder their income-generating prowess. Deepak's wife, Mama Kami, 28, started her own catering business shortly after helping her sick sister-in-law

Table 4.6 Middle- and high-income Asian households

Name	Age	Birthplace (region or country)	Occupation	Partner's occupation	Children	Domestic employees	Years in town	Education
High-income married women								
Mama Kami	28	India	caterer	shop clerk	1	2 housegirls	10	
Mama Rinku	29	Kilimanjaro	caterer	factory supervisor	3	1 housegirl	12	
Bina		India	homemaker	factory owner	0	1 housegirl	19	
Mama Vasna	33	India	homemaker	factory worker	3	1 housegirl	16	
Kailash	34	Uganda	homemaker	shop owner	2	0	16	
Dipti	39	India	homemaker	shop owner	3	1 housegirl	18	
Zakya	24	India	homemaker	factory worker	0	1 housegirl	5	
Ganessa	25	India	homemaker		1	0	6	
Lakshmi	19	Mwanza	homemaker	shop owner	0	0	19	form 3
Karma	36	Mwanza	homemaker	shop owner	2	1 housegirl	36	
Middle-income married women								
Matrika	40	Pakistan	homemaker	fish factory worker	3	1 housegirl		
Klesa	21		bread sales	electrician	1	0		
Panna	27	India	homemaker	fish factory worker	4	1 housegirl		
Mina	29	Kenya	homemaker	fish factory worker	0	0	5	
Middle-income single women								
Gauri	85	Mwanza	homemaker		9	1 housegirl	31	
Sangita	24	Mwanza	caterer		3	1 housegirl	26	
Nitara		Mwanza	office clerk		0	2 housegirls		
Mama Mahmedi	53	Coast	homemaker		7	2 housegirls	25	
Lila	25		homemaker		3	1 housegirl		form 4
Nepa	21	Mwanza	secretary		0	0	21	form 4

with her catering business. According to Deepak,

> My wife made 1,600 shillings for the day and realized this was a great way to make money. So, she wanted to go into business. I did not force her. In July 1992 she started. Now she cooks meals for over thirty people a week. Many come to collect the food every day. She cooks for old couples. She cooks for marriages and parties, the Lions Club and Rotary Club. Every Wednesday she cooks eight meals for the Mwanza Sports Club. On Thursdays there's a group of gamblers and on the weekends there's a large group from Nyamanoro.

Anecdotal evidence suggested that many other Asian women in Mwanza ran catering businesses from their homes and that some of these, too, were quite lucrative. Not only did these women have a more restricted business locale, but a more restricted clientele as well. Whether they sold clothing, food, or other items they usually did so only to other Asians. A story recounted by Deepak, an Asian man in his mid-thirties, illustrates how in the past his wife's customers included Africans, but now a customers' ethnicity was a major issue in whether or not they were served.

> We don't take African customers at all. We did recently, but not anymore. There was a prominent African who decided he didn't like eating meat every day, so he started buying my wife's vegetables every Thursday. On the fourth Thursday that man came here, he brought a friend. One waited for the food while the other stole my tape recorder worth 100,000 shillings. (US $200)

Deepak's story is just one example of how the actions of particular individuals can come to gloss the reputation, and contribute to the stereotyping of entire ethnic groups. Ethnic relations in Mwanza were not a primary focus of my research, but these types of stories in which Africans in general were depicted in a negative light by Asians, and Asians by Africans, were common in people's daily conversations and readily contributed to ongoing tensions between both groups in Mwanza.

The preceding pages have outlined household differentiation as it appeared among the 71 African and Asian women in this study. Income level, gender relations, and ethnicity were three factors that distinguished households from one another, and in turn influenced the ways in which African and Asian women acquired money and food.

The many food entitlement questions that arise from this data will be discussed in the chapters to follow. What can we learn about Mwanza's contemporary household provisioning processes from

changes in household composition over the past 50 years? How have ongoing transformations in household boundaries affected intra- and extra-household exchanges of food and food-related resources? What is the role played in provisioning processes by home- and farm-grown foods produced by urban agriculturalists? And how do those who live in atypical household groups, such as destitute adults and children living on the streets, feed themselves?

5

Historical Transformations in Household Composition

Household composition in contemporary Mwanza varied according to a number of biological and social influences, but some of the more common ones involved relatively short-term daily, weekly, or seasonal factors. A few of the more predictable daily variations occurred in accordance with school and work schedules, but unforeseen changes resulted when malaria- or HIV/AIDS-afflicted mothers who were too sick to cook sent their children to neighbors or nearby relatives for their meals. Weekly increases in household size arose when friends or relatives came to visit on Saturdays or Sundays, though out-of-town guests often were held at bay entirely during the seasonal rains when most roads were impassable. June and December were particularly busy months for many of Mwanza's households because boarding-school students studying in Bukoba, Arusha, Ukerewe Island, and Dar es Salaam returned home for vacation. Other short-term changes in household composition resulted when rural-based family and friends came through town to await the next available outgoing train, bus, boat, or airplane.

Mwanza's households also have experienced long-term variations in composition over the last 50 years through escalating urban migration and the growing incidence of the employment of domestic workers. This chapter examines these transformations and their influence on contemporary provisioning processes.

Strangers in Town: The Changing Faces of Mwanza's Immigrants

Mwanza's population growth in recent decades is in large part because people have immigrated from elsewhere in Mwanza region and other parts of Tanzania, East Africa, and India. Rapid population growth

has come only recently to Mwanza, and first- or second-generation migrants comprised the majority of those living in town in 1993–94. During the colonial era that formerly began in 1891 with the imposition of German control, which changed over to the control of the British after World War I and ended with Independence in 1961, young male migrant laborers comprised many of Mwanza's residents. Young men were forced to seek monetary income in towns or with large businesses operating in the countryside to acquire cash to pay household taxes and acquire commodities made available by the penetration of the cash economy. According to Bryceson men took on two or three years of contract labor. "In this way," she argues, "the vigor and strength of thousands was expended in mines and plantations, yet their wages did not cover the living costs of their wives and children, nor did they guarantee income or well-being in old age, or in the event of occupational diseases" (1985b: 133). Many men returned home periodically and as late as 1951 colonial officers were still reporting a shortage of unskilled laborers in Mwanza, especially at the Public Works Department and ferry port. Official records noted that labor shortages in town peaked during the cotton, sisal, and food-crop harvests in the countryside between May and July. Settling permanently in Mwanza was unrealistic for most people not only because of the high cost of living, but also because periodic demands for farm labor and high prices offered by cash-crop producers, drew people back into the rural areas. As a result many of Mwanza's early migrants engaged in the circular pattern of migration seen elsewhere in Africa. As noted in a 1950 report to the Provincial Council,

> The causes of the [labor] shortages are well known and may be summarised as being due to food crops, good prices for cash crops and cotton, and above all the sisal industry. Whilst the price of sisal remains as high as it is, there can be little likelihood of any considerable easing of the labor situation for some time, unless a major disaster such as a widespread drought and famine occurs, when men will work for the sake of the food supplied rather than the wages paid. (Coppock 1951: 1)[1]

Movement to town of larger numbers of people corresponded in part to the adoption of money as the general medium of exchange in Sukumaland. Though money had been available on a limited basis for many years by way of migrant laborers, cash came to prominence in the regional economy with the spread of cotton production. By the 1960s money had become widely recognized as necessary for acquiring radios, bicycles, and an education. Many young Sukuma especially those who had completed primary school began to move to Mwanza to work for wages. Population pressures, the increasing scarcity of

fertile farmland, a growing reluctance to join traditional organizations and submit to customary duties as well as a widespread fear of witchcraft all created strong incentives for the young to look elsewhere for their livelihoods (Heijnen 1968). Yet income differentials between town and countryside were perhaps the most important impetus. According to a 1969 report on primary education in Sukumaland, "While the average total net income of a rural household could be estimated at a little more than 1,000 shillings—in cases of cattle-owning households rising to 2,000 shillings—the median wage rate of African males in Mwanza region in 1965 was already 2,232 per year" (Centre for the Study of Education in Changing Societies 1969: 9).

Yet even by the late 1960s Mwanza did not offer most migrants the means to make a living. The town was primarily an administrative, transport, and commerce center of approximately 30,000 inhabitants. Industry was very limited due to the high cost of electricity and petroleum and employment opportunities had dropped after Independence due to new labor laws and minimum-wage requirements. Job opportunities were scarce and many of the young Sukuma who made their way to town eventually returned to their natal homesteads or moved to more fertile areas in Geita district, which was known as the "granary of Sukumaland" (Mashalla 1975: 9; Centre for the Study of Education in Changing Societies 1969). Circular migration practices continued, supported by the widespread practice of employers paying "daily wages" (Heijnen 1968: 53). While workers in the 1960s who were paid by the day cost more than those paid the official monthly minimum wage, the flexibility that the daily wage system offered large employers was appealing. Companies such as Mwanza Fishnet found that the ability to drop workers when sales were lagging without the bureaucratic involvement of the Labour Office and National Union of Tanganyika Workers was well worth the additional wage costs (Heijnen 1968).

Though immigration rates in Mwanza have fluctuated over the last 50 years, according to the views of government statisticians,[2] four related demographic trends have been on the rise. One is the growing ratio of Africans to Asians, Europeans, and others. Since 1948 British colonial administrators have emigrated, Asian immigration has decreased, and Africans have moved from the countryside to town in search of schooling and jobs.

A second trend is the leveling of the once lopsided proportion of men to women living in town. In 1947 there were 139 males for every 100 females and in 1957 the ratio was similar at 140 to 100 females. By 1967 the gender ratio had dropped to 119:100, by 1978 it was 117:100 and by 1988 it was 104:100 (Heijnen 1968; Mbilinyi 1991;

Bryceson 1993). An October 1965 survey found a larger number of women (105) than men (77) who had lived in Mwanza for less than six months. While at first glance it appeared that more women than men were moving to Mwanza, this was not necessarily the case. In fact these findings were shaped by a combination of the different motives men and women had for moving to town and the contrasting receptions they received from their relatives or other hosts on arrival. In general males usually moved to Mwanza for economic reasons. They hoped to find a job that would offer them a higher income than farming. If they failed to find a job they usually left within a month (Heijnen 1968). Conversely females saw town as a place of refuge where they could escape family control, especially after they were divorced or their parents died (Bryceson and Mbilinyi 1980). So they were more reluctant to return home. While often seeking greater freedom in town, female migrants can hardly be characterized as rebels desiring to embark on a new life, because they often were highly dependent on extended family to help smooth their transition (Bryceson 1985b). Given females' predominant role in the gender-based division of domestic labor, the arrival of female visitors who could take part in a household's daily chores was seen as less burdensome than that of males. Females also could extend their stay in town by acquiring money, clothing, or food via casual sex work or by living with a boyfriend. Yet there were fewer job opportunities for women and many female immigrants eventually returned to their natal homes after six months or so. Another explanation for the high number of female newcomers in the late 1960s and early 1970s was that many of these women were married to men who now lived more permanently in town and earned enough to support their families. So women had come to join their husbands after harvesting the crops at home (Heijnen 1968; Bryceson 1985b).

Discussions with the 71 women included in this study confirmed that many of them had moved to Mwanza over the last 40 years. Out of the 60 women who mentioned their place of birth, only eight (13 percent) were born in town (two Africans, six Asians). The rest had come from greater Mwanza region and other, parts of Tanzania. Some originated in urban or rural areas in Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, India, or Pakistan. Rural-to-urban migration of Tanzanian women increased notably after Independence in 1961. Up until then colonial authorities had sought to restrict the movement of women from the countryside. Because women were the primary food producers officials feared that their mass migration would result in food shortages. At Independence, restrictions on women's movements were lifted and men's wages were increased,

Table 5.1 Changes in household size

Year	1 person (%)	2–5 persons (%)	6+ persons (%)
1967	28	53	18
1978	20	50	30
1988	4	36	60

thereby providing males with the resources necessary to support wives, lovers, and families in towns. The number of unaccompanied women moving to the urban areas also grew as single and divorced women began to leave areas where they had little access to land, few opportunities for employment, or lost custody of their children to their former husbands (Barnum and Sabot 1976; Sabot 1979; Tripp 1990a, b).

The third trend is the increasing incidence of larger households in Mwanza. One reason households appear to be expanding is that the more recent data on them is based on the government's newer definition of "households," which has changed from one drawn along residential lines to one that now takes into account both common residence and/or shared income.[3] According to government statistics between 1967 and 1988 one-person households and households with two to five persons declined. Concurrently households containing six or more persons increased (Mwanza Master Plan (1992–2012) 1992) (see table 5.1).

Despite the definitional changes underlying the government's perspective, other smaller and more informal surveys in Mwanza largely support the government's contention that households were growing in size, especially among Africans. Bryceson (1993) found during her 1988 survey that over 79 percent of the African households had five or more members. According to the women in my study only 2 percent of the African households had one member, whereas 49 percent of them had two to five members and the remaining 49 percent had six or more.

One explanation for this increase in household size is rural-to-urban migration, with inflation and rising costs of living having played a key role therein. The distribution of household members between town and countryside often is largely dependent on local economies and in the 1970s dwindling rural incomes contributed to the financial strain felt by many urban dwellers who, notes Bryceson (1987),

> received innumerable obligatory requests, if not dictates, from . . . upcountry extended family, which could entail heavy social

> costs if ignored. Very often these demands entailed the urban household's absorption of upcountry relatives who had either come as dependents in need of urban social services, namely schoolchildren and ill or infirm relations, or they had come in search of urban job opportunities and thus required a refuge until they could gain their own economic independence. (171)

When taking into account the Asians in my study the trend appears to shift back toward a greater incidence of midsized households. On the whole the Asian households were much smaller than the African households. None of the Asian households had one person, 93 percent had two to five members, and 7 percent had six or more. When the sizes of African and Asian households are viewed in combination only 2 percent had one member, 60 percent had two to five members, and 38 percent had six or more; however, these percentages are deceiving because the proportion of Asians to Africans in this study (approximately 1:2) was much greater than it was in the overall population. Though recent population censuses do not differentiate Tanzanians along African and Asian lines, political economists Yash Tandon and Arnold Raphael (1982) estimate that out of a total 1984 population of 19 million, only 30,000 were Asians (a ratio of approximately 630:1).

The fourth trend concerns changes in Mwanza's immigrants' place of origin. In 1967 the towns of Mwanza and Arusha were unique in that they attracted more people from outside their respective regions than did the other towns in the country. This can be explained in part by the attractiveness of these regional centers as industrial and commercial hubs and in the case of Mwanza, specifically, its ferry port servicing Kenya and Uganda. In addition the relatively small number of Sukuma living in Mwanza during the 1960s, which comprised only a quarter of the town's population, underscores the inclination among the nation's most populous ethnic group to remain in their villages (Heijnen 1968). This trend is expected to reverse in the near future (if it has not already) with more immigrants originating from Mwanza region's densely populated areas, where they are being forced out of their natal areas by land pressures (Mwanza Master Plan (1992–2012) 1992).

Most of the Asian and African men and women in this study were long-term immigrant residents whose life histories supported the government's view that many of them came from distant birthplaces. Yet migration patterns varied according to gender and ethnicity. Eighty-three percent of the African women were born outside Mwanza region, as were 85 percent of these women's husbands or partners.

Sixty percent of the Asian women said they were born outside Mwanza region. Unlike the Africans, however, 50 percent of the Asian women were born outside Tanzania altogether: six originated in India and one each was born in Kenya, Uganda, and Pakistan. Interestingly all of the Asian men were born in Mwanza.

Some of the women in this study moved to Mwanza with their husbands, whose jobs had been transferred there from elsewhere. Some moved to get away from difficult circumstances at home. Others moved there to marry. "In the past my husband and I lived in Bukoba [Kagera District]," said Concilia, 34 years old and a middle-income mother of four. "We moved to Mwanza in 1978 because my husband was transferred here for work by TANESCO [the state-owned electric company]." Adelina, a 23-year-old low-income woman who worked as a street children's counselor, migrated to Mwanza from Rwanda eight months prior to the outbreak of the 1994 genocide.

> I came to Mwanza from Rwanda to find work. Some of my family had already moved away and I was afraid to stay at home. But I am not sure how long I will stay. I miss my family and Rwanda.

In 1993–94 the length of people's stay in Mwanza varied as it had in the past. On the one hand Concilia acknowledged that she and her family could move elsewhere if TANESCO were to transfer her husband's job again. Adelina who came from Rwanda viewed her stay in Mwanza as temporary and was hoping to move on if her family or job opportunities surfaced elsewhere. On the other hand Sangita, a middle-income Asian mother of three who was 24 years old, believed she moved to Mwanza to live out the rest of her life.

> I was born in India, but my husband was born here in Mwanza. We were married in India when I was 17 and he was 20. Afterward he returned to Mwanza for two years by himself, and then he came to collect me. He brought me to Mwanza five years ago.

Some contemporary life histories underscored how important potential employment opportunities remained in attracting people to Mwanza. Whether people originated in the countryside or a small town, for some of them Mwanza represented profitable work. Sometimes this ideal was matched by reality. Other times it was not. Isack, a 41-year-old maize, cassava, and potato wholesaler, moved to Mwanza from Mara region 19 years earlier. His mother had recently died and he felt there

was little for him at home. "I wanted to work, not stab at the dirt like the peasants," he explained.

> I borrowed money from my uncle and took a bus to Mwanza. Life in Mwanza was very hard. I finished primary school, but I did not have any experience or business knowledge. There were no jobs. I washed clothes for the Asians. Then one of the Asian men told me about a job at Mwatex [a local textile factory]. I worked there for 12 years. In 1987 many people lost their jobs. I had no job. If you have a little capital you can start a business, so I was given 100 shillings from a friend as a service. I bought a kilo of maize flour at the mill and sold it to some Asians in their home. Now I have a good business at Mwaloni. There is one important man who brings me my maize [by boat] and I have many customers. I usually sell 10 sacks [100 kilos each] every day . . . . My family in Mara is very poor and sometimes I send them money. I am glad I left. Anyone can sell grain here. Life in Mwaloni is much better than on the farm.

Mama Gina, a 35-year-old African woman, had come to Mwanza more recently. She moved to Mwanza to escape small-town life and look for better employment opportunities. While she had a successful business, it was very small and at the mercy of seasonal fluctuations. At the time that I spoke with her she was a banana and flour vendor at Soko Kuu.

> I know bananas because I come from Bukoba. They are the most important food there. Before starting my business here I was married and had two children: a girl born in 1976 a boy born in 1979. I was divorced several years later. I had a job as a judicial clerk for 10 years. There is so much corruption in the judiciary. I brought a case against a superior, and I won it. But I went into the food business to escape the corruption. I sold vegetables in Bukoba for six months and then took the ferry to Mwanza, where the marketplaces are bigger. Bukoba is a small town. Mwanza is hard, but my business keeps us alive. My assistant [a young man, 28 years old] goes to the port and buys bananas for me every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. I buy the other things from wholesalers outside the marketplace every day. Only a little at a time since the price may go down and I would take a loss. More women are becoming traders all the time here at Soko Kuu. It is a good job for women without husbands, but some months are very hard. If the farmers are paid for their cotton, June through December are easy times for me. In January and February business slows down and it becomes worse through May.

While African men were more apt to migrate than African or Asian women, Asian males appeared much less apt to do so. The Asian males

born in Mwanza were more prone to remain there for at least part if not all of their adulthood. Yet this is not to say that Asian men did not periodically leave town. Some such as Deepak, an Asian man in his mid-thirties, ventured long distances through East Africa, Europe, and India to find a suitable spouse as well as on business and holiday. "I was born here and grew up in this town," recounted Deepak.

> My father moved to London, but I wanted to stay here and work for my older brother. But I was not interested in marrying any of the girls living here. So I went to Bombay, where I stayed with my uncle. There I saw 10 girls, but they were too modern and would no doubt leave me after three months. Next I went up to Gujuarat state and visited three or four big towns. I stayed about three months and saw about 25 girls. It is known that Gujuarati women can run a household! There I met my wife. After I realized that I liked her, we were able to question each other. Then our parents questioned each other. Then, through an old woman, a matchmaker, I told her I was interested in marriage. This was after a three-day interval. During that time my family and I were able to investigate my [future] wife's reputation and that of her family. Then we celebrated the engagement and I gave her a gold ring. My sister took [my fiancee] to another nearby town and gave her money to buy whatever she wanted. I asked the local Hindu priest which day was best for the wedding. We were married two and a half weeks later. I brought her to Mwanza after staying two weeks with her parents, one week in Bombay, and one in Dar es Salaam.

On their return to Mwanza, the couple lived with Deepak's mother. His extended family had five fabric shops and one liquor store in town. Deepak worked for his brother in one of the fabric shops for a year, then his father sent him enough money to buy his own shop and a small house. "This was very good," said Deepak, "because my mother and wife fought."

Fourteen months after their marriage Deepak's wife gave birth to their son. A second was born a year later but died at the age of four months. She then lost a subsequent pregnancy.

> Deepak remembered: [Mama Kami] was weak and had lost a lot of blood. I sold the shop so that she could go home to her family for six months and regain her strength. I sent money to India when I could. Then I decided to sell the house and everything and go to India. We lived with her parents. Her father told me to take my time, look around and decide what I wanted to do. I waited five months before starting my trucking business. My father-in-law helped me with his suggestions and connections, but I bought my truck with my own money. I bought a 16-ton truck and hired two drivers to share in the long hours.

> I would pack 20 tons of cement from the local factory into the truck and drive 22 hours—going and coming home—and deliver it where the factory wanted. After delivery I would find another load to bring back near my home. I made 6,000 rupees (U.S. $400) each trip. I did this for three and a half years. I built a flat. Then I took a big loss.
>
> One day my sister, her husband, and children came from London to visit so I sent my drivers on the trip alone. They stopped along the way and drank [until they were drunk]. The truck overturned and they killed four people, three cows, and 15 to 20 goats. Before a court case could be brought, I asked the families if I could pay them instead. I paid the police, too. I sold my truck and my flat to pay. My father-in-law told me not to lose hope. He offered me a loan. He is very rich. But I refused and we came back to Mwanza in 1992. I worked as a clerk in a friend's shop for a few months. Now I am manager at another shop.

Deepak's life history highlights the relatively greater financial resources, support networks, and international contacts many Asian men and women enjoy in comparison to the majority of Mwanza's African men and women. All of these financial, social, and international contacts were vital to helping him and his family through challenging times.

A number of factors drove an ethnically diverse population to migrate to Mwanza over the past 50 years: government policies, gender-based divisions of labor, the attractions of a port town, rural economic pressures, and urban job opportunities. Cultural preferences, as illustrated by the tendency for Asian males to seek spouses abroad, also were key in shaping racial and gender-based differences among Mwanza's immigrant population. All of these factors in combination have modified household composition by leveling differences in the gender ratio and by increasing the size of household membership, especially among Africans.

These changes in the composition of Mwanza's population have affected urban provisioning processes in several ways. With African husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, and other closely related men and women no longer split between town and countryside, there is a greater dependence on purchased foods. While many women are no longer working long hours in their rural fields cultivating food crops, a great deal of their time and energy goes into shopping, transporting, preparing, cooking, and preserving food in town. Not only have the nature of women's provisioning responsibilities changed, but as urban households have grown in size so, too, has the extent of women's provisioning burdens. Many African and Asian women have met the challenges posed by the expansion of their households, female unemployment, males' falling wages and inflationary food prices by taking on informal sector work.

Strangers at Home: The Changing Faces of Mwanza's Household Workers

A particularly obsequious type of food-related informal sector work is paid domestic labor. Because a great deal of time and effort went into feeding a household in Mwanza, not to mention caring for any children, cleaning house, and laundering clothes, many households included domestic laborers. An understanding of the allocation of domestic labor is key to understanding household food-provisioning processes in Mwanza. In 1993–94 domestic labor was widely associated with females, but this has not always been the case. "Throughout Africa," observes Karen Hansen, "women have historically defined themselves as individuals whose self-validation was associated in important ways with their sex, as wives, mothers, and nurturers of children. But," she continues,

> in African social life the construction of gender rarely turned domesticity into a notion that singly defined women's identity. In many parts of the continent, women were also key workers in agricultural production while their children, or others' children, at times did even more domestic work than the biological mother of the household. . . . (Hansen 1992a: 6; Varkevisser 1973)

Adult African males also have taken and continue to take part in domestic work as paid laborers. Because employment in high-income urban households was one of the earliest wage-labor opportunities open to Africans, males were the first paid domestics in many parts of the continent, including Mwanza (Hansen 1989, 1992b; Iliffe 1987; Bryceson 1987). In both colonial and early independent Tanzania, the majority of formally employed workers among wealthy Asian, Arab, and European households were men (Leslie 1963; Heijnen 1968).

In some cases domestic service was a springboard to better work opportunities as African houseboys working for Asian families advanced to positions in their shops and businesses (Heijnen 1968). Yet by the mid-1960s domestic service was not eagerly taken up by most males. It ranked at the top of Heijnen's survey of worst jobs and was described by respondents as "hard, slave labour," "dirty," and "for women only" (Heijnen 1968: 102). Some young boys were unwillingly placed into situations that led to domestic service by school-related fostering arrangements between rural and urban kin. Public health researcher Corlien Varkevisser observed in Mwanza during the 1960s that rural Sukuma boys who lived with urban relatives in order to attend school were "virtual houseboys" (1973: 275).

Throughout contemporary urban Tanzania domestic workers can be found not only in high-income households, but also in middle- and low-income households of Asians and Africans alike.[4] Such was the case in Mwanza where 70 percent of the Asians and 33 percent of the Africans employed household help. Yet the majority of these workers are no longer male. Instead when approaching a house or climbing the stairs of an apartment building the first person a visitor frequently encounters is a girl or young woman washing clothes, knocking dirt from a dusting rag, picking stones out of rice, or corralling small children. In fact female domestics are so common that when town residents use the gender-neutral term "*mfanyakazi*" (worker) in the context of the household they almost always are referring to a house*girl*.

Throughout Africa families commonly send girls from one household to another to help during times of labor shortages (Busia 1950; Southall and Gutkind 1957; Bledsoe 1980; E. Goody 1982; Potash 1995). In the past family structures were key in shaping domestic employee/employer relations because fosterage was used as a means to strengthen kinship ties and to train related youth (E. Goody 1982). Such practices reveal the error in assuming that family relationships exclude exploitation. More recently, developing class differences appear to play a growing part in domestic-labor recruitment. Kin and nonkin females are hired away from low-income families who cannot afford to send their daughters to school, the labor of young girls is offered in repayment for debts or destitute girls are hired off the streets (Stichter 1985; Iliffe 1987; Potash 1995). In spite of these practices when African women were asked to describe the members of their households, they almost always included their domestic workers in their descriptions. Conversely none of the Asian women included their domestic workers in their descriptions. This ideological difference between African and Asian employers does not appear to reflect the fact that more households, especially African ones, are hiring nonkin workers.

Most housegirls in Tanzania were recruited to perform time-consuming, house-based work. They cooked, cleaned, carried water long distances, and cared for their employers' children. The pay housegirls received was extremely low. They were given room and board, and if they were lucky they were paid a very small monthly wage of 200–500 shillings (US $0.40–1.00)—not nearly enough to survive on one's own in any of Tanzania's towns (Sheikh-Hashim 1990). In two of the households included in this study these wages were sent directly to their respective parents in Dar es Salaam and Bariadi.[5] These housegirls never saw the wages they earned. In this way they were exploited as much by their parents as they were by their employers.

Housegirls in contemporary Mwanza were sometimes poorer female relatives who worked in return for room, board, and clothing. Some women, such as Sylvia, expressed a preference for employing kin over nonkin.

> I asked my youngest sister to come from Singida and help with Sarah when she was five months old. She has lived with us now for six years. She is much more reliable than any other girls I could have hired. Many of these girls steal and run away after just a few days.

However it appeared that most people employed an unrelated female such as a young neighbor, former village-mate's daughter or a recent immigrant who took the job to survive while looking for better work. Not only have females largely replaced males in paid domestic work, but long-term child-fostering practices once common among both rural and urban kin are being replaced by short-term wage employment.[6] In historian John Illife's words, "Fostering [has] merged with pawning and apprenticeship and like both it [is] open to abuse" (1987: 186).

In spite of the fact that female domestic workers far out number males, Janet Bujra argues that men remain "the *preferred* workforce" among Tanzania's high-income household employers (Bujra 1992: 244, italics per original). In my study males were found as domestic workers in four high-income households: two African and two Asian. In addition to doing laundry and housecleaning tasks, all of these males were involved in helping to get food at the marketplace and local shops, as well as in cleaning it. Yet unlike the housegirls employed by Africans, none of these men took part in the actual cooking of meals, though this was not unheard of especially among the international diplomatic community in Dar es Salaam.[7] Males were frequently viewed performing gardening and security duties in Mwanza, though none of them appeared to be uniformed employees of contracted firms as also seen working for Dar es Salaam's diplomatic households. While there were some wealthy employers who preferred males, some favored females instead. "Many Asians have houseboys," acknowledged Deepak.

> Our friends think they are more dependable than the girls who may only stay for a day or two. Sometimes their houseboys leave, but unlike girls houseboys often come back when they need the money. But I do not like hiring boys. The pay is low [compared to that which they might get elsewhere] and they are more likely to steal.

The growing employment of paid domestic workers by people at all income levels and the increasing feminization of paid household work

have been, and continue to be, inextricably linked to processes outside the food-provisioning realm of a given household. In the past colonial tax policies and wage-employment opportunities drew men away from their provisioning responsibilities in their rural homesteads and lured them into domestic labor in European and Asian households in town. At the same time rural women's movements were restricted in an attempt to keep them in the countryside producing the nation's food crops. Colonial policies shaping ethnic- and gender-specific opportunities laid the foundation for the stratification of domestic-work relations between European and Asian employers and their African workers. These policies also led to sharp disparities in income and employment opportunities between urban and rural inhabitants, as well as between African men and women (Mbilinyi 1988).

Today the employment of girls and women as domestic workers is intricately tied to economic hardship and the types of employment opportunities open to women as opposed to men. On the one hand men have greater opportunities to take advantage of higher paying jobs in more diverse occupations, so domestic work no longer provides the benefits it did in the past. On the other hand women who must contribute to the household income by working outside the home have fewer employment opportunities. They commonly take formal jobs in government and/or private firms, where the likelihood of promotion is low and the pay scale is adjusted downward because they are female. Others work in more informal activities from their homes, on the streets, or near the marketplaces where opportunities for advancement are nil and money harder to come by. In turn women try to fill the void in their household created by their absence with laborers willing to work for even lower wages: poorer unemployed females (Onyango 1983). These circumstances have spurred redefinitions of men and women's roles in the home and at work so that both female domestic workers and their female employers "are oppressed by the low valuation which society gives to 'domestic work'" (TGNP 1993: 69; Mbilinyi 1988; Bujra 1992; Hansen 1992b).

Some Western feminist theorists draw a correlation between advances in domestic labor-saving technology and the subsequent devaluation of women's domestic work. Yet this correlation does not apply to the Tanzanian case because the mechanization of cooking and housework have been very slow in coming. Not only is there a ready supply of inexpensive labor in urban Tanzania, but also wide spread poverty has restricted people's access to costly labor-saving devices. The gender-specific values assigned to male and female domestic workers seems to have less to do with available household

technologies than contradictory ideas about gender shaped by class differences and wage employment (Bujra 1992; Hansen 1992b). Bujra learned that these contradictions were readily apparent among those directly involved in domestic employment. Male domestic workers often believe that household tasks done for pay are particularly "manly," but "unmanly" if performed unpaid in the worker's own home; whereas employers often consider male workers to be the "best and most suitable" for domestic work despite that in most employers' homes women are primarily responsible for the chores (1992: 242).

This same type of ideological contradiction was apparent in the early 1970s among rural families whose sons lodged with urban relatives in Mwanza to attend school. According to Varkevisser these boys were "obliged to perform women's tasks which at home they would never have dreamed of doing." When a male secondary-school student complained to his father about his domestic responsibilities at his foster home the elder consoled the boy by explaining that he, too, "had endured [the same] hardship when attending school" (Varkevisser 1973: 275).

It seems clear that just as changes in immigration practices have transformed Mwanza's households during the past century so, too, has the commercialization, feminization, and devaluation of food-related domestic labor. As women in Mwanza attempt to feed themselves and their families, they have been forced to take on additional income-generating activities outside the home. While the employment of domestic help no longer holds the prestige it did when most workers were male, and women's employment opportunities were generally low-status and poor-paying, domestic work serves the important purpose of giving some women the choice to focus their energies where they might better be able to provision their households. Jack Goody (1997) observes that in Britain between 1851 and 1961, the employment of domestic workers declined in relation to the growth in commercial catering businesses, the availability of processed foods and more convenient marketing outlets. It is possible that comparable changes will come to Mwanza someday. Just how successfully women in Mwanza are overcoming the challenges posed by contemporary provisioning pressures will be discussed in greater detail in the next two chapters.

6

Pooling, Straddling, Juggling, and Balancing on One Foot

Because nearly every household in contemporary Mwanza, whether low-, middle-, or high-income, tends to include ever changing combinations of women, men, children, and paid laborers, an individual's access to food may be complicated by the need to negotiate a complex network of relations and food-related roles and responsibilities. Females and males of all ages regularly contributed in some way to feeding their households, and the present chapter examines the gender relations involved in this intrahousehold income distribution, decisionmaking, and labor allocation.[1] Extrahousehold support networks also are addressed since people's food-related activities and responsibilities often extended beyond the boundaries of their households.

Income Pools and Streams

Though women produce much and process nearly all of the food consumed at the household level, both women and men often contributed to feeding their households by "pooling," "redistributing," or "sharing" goods and services (Sahlins 1972; Richards 1939; Marshall 1961; Firth 1959; Gluckman 1943; Polanyi 1944, 1957, 1959; Malinowski 1922). Sixty of the 71 women in this study were involved in household provisioning activities with males: 48 African and Asian married women; six African and Asian unmarried women who lived with male partners; and six single Asian women with male children. Given the primacy of purchased foods in people's lives it is important to understand not only who contributed to the purse but also who controlled the purse strings; it is inaccurate to assume that women and men jointly pooled their incomes or that income contributions toward food purchases were made on an equal basis. Instead it was more instructive to view Mwanza's households as situated along a continuum

ranging from those in which females contributed solely to the food budget to those in which only males did so with households in which both females and males contributed to the food budget positioned in between. Of course this continuum is representative of only a synchronic snapshot in time. The location of individual households along it could shift as members' income-generating opportunities changed, their income-distribution strategies shifted or other factors limited or enhanced one's participatory role.

Males as Sole Contributors to the Food Budget

Husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons were the sole contributors to the food budget in 23 (38 percent) households. Almost all of the women who were dependent on these males for cash income were self-described homemakers. Four of these women, all Africans, also described themselves as "employed outside the home." Yet these women still were dependent on their husbands' cash contributions because they themselves did not collect cash income. One woman brewed beer for her husband's bar and three others sold merchandise in their husbands' retail outlets. "I sell cigarettes, soap, and soda in my husband's kiosk," described Sikuwema, "but he holds all of the money."

Nearly twice as many Asian women (14 out of 20 or 70 percent) as opposed to the African women (15 out of 40 or 38 percent) were dependent for their survival solely on the income contributions of males. Many of these Asian women were capable of supporting themselves at the very minimum through *biashara ndogo ndogo* but they either chose to put their energies elsewhere or they were restricted in their income-generating pursuits by cultural convention. Middle-income Gauri, 85, lived with her son. She described how her dependencies had shifted throughout the years, and how life had been particularly difficult right after her husband died.

> After my ninth child was born, my husband died. He was 35. He had his own shop. I had to close it after he died because I didn't go to school and I knew nothing about money. I suffered so much to feed my children. All I could do was cook and feed the children and look after them. I washed other people's clothes, but spent all that I made on the children. Now the children are grown, and I live with my son who is married. Life is easier.

One African man named Philbert, 37, was unique among those in this study in that he was not only the sole income earner but also the

sole food purchaser. Philbert was a grain vendor at Soko Kuu and lived in a middle-income household with 35-year-old Lucy and his three children from a previous marriage. According to Lucy, she went to the marketplace only to pick up food after the purchases were made. "I do not go around and buy it," she explained. "I do not even know the prices. [Philbert] buys the food himself and I rely completely on him."

It was more common in these households for income streams to flow from male earners to their wives, partners, sisters, or mothers. "I decide what foods we are going to buy," said Mama Paul, a 24-year-old low-income African homemaker, "but the money is given to me by my husband."

Male and Female Contributors to the Food Budget

Midway on the continuum were those households in which food-related income was pooled for purchases by both women and men. Inclusive of all income levels, nine (45 percent) of the Asian households pooled food money between female and male earners. High-income Mama Vasna, 33, described how she and her husband both contributed to the food budget.

> My husband works at Ukerewe Fishnet Limited. He gets his money from his work there. I am a housewife, but I also get money by selling clothes out of my home. In this way I get money, too. He gives me some money and I put it with mine. This way it is easier for me to buy what we need at the marketplace.

Asian women also pooled income with their children. Middle-income Sangita, a widow, combined her income from selling meals out of her home with additional support from her daughter and two sons. According to her, "It is easy to get food because everyone is working and contributing money: my daughter, sons, and even one [grandson] in Dar es Salaam. And even I am taking orders in my kitchen to cook for others." This type of pooling arrangement was much more common among African households (23 out of 41 or 56 percent), where a greater percentage of women were employed. Penda, a 47-year-old nurse, and her husband, an office worker, supported a large middle-income household. "We are 17," said Penda, "Me, my husband, our six children, my six step-children, my two nieces and the housegirl. We buy food with some of my husband's money and my nursing wages and my pay for washing linens at a neighboring guest house."

The implication here was that female and male income streams were kept separate from each other and that cash transfers to purchase food, usually made from males to females, took place solely as needed.

Females as Sole Contributors to the Food Budget

At the other end of the continuum were the few households with at least one income-generating male in which females were the sole contributors to the food budget. In four African (three low-income and one middle-income) and two Asian (both high-income) households women claimed that they paid for all of the food. These "divided" households, wherein earning streams were kept separate because they are earmarked for specific uses, have been documented in many parts of the world. African women are frequently responsible for paying for food and clothing with their income while men pay taxes, rent, and school fees with their wages (Dwyer and Bruce 1988).

There appear to be few references in the literature to income pools and streams among Asians households in Africa. Because cultural restrictions limited married women to working in their homes or in family-owned businesses, most of the money contributed by females was provided by unmarried daughters, sisters, and sisters-in-law. Among the Asian households included in this study the largest percentage of pooled contributions was made by husbands, sons, and brothers who either worked in town or sent remittances from Dar es Salaam or London.

Yet some of the Asian households I was familiar with in Mwanza were particularly interesting in regard to the maintenance of separate or semi-separate income streams because some married Asian women controlled the disposition of significant amounts of self-earned wealth. Their income-generating innovations, most notably their in-home catering businesses, were reminiscent of secluded Muslim Hausa women in urban West Africa who controlled large sums of money acquired through their cooked-food sales (Cohen 1969; Schildkrout 1983). Yet unlike the Hausa women cultural and religious standards among Mwanza's Asians allowed them to more easily move around town and interact with men outside their homes. Mama Rinku, 29, cooked breakfasts and lunches in her home and then delivered them to the workers at Lake Soap factory. Through her catering income she controlled large sums of money and solely maintained her household food budget. She explained,

> All of my money goes toward food for our family and the factory workers. The workers pay out of their monthly wage, plus the factory pays some, too. The company pays 450 shillings per plate and each worker

> pays 200 from their salary. I spend 110,000 shillings per month. Each week I buy 20 kilos of onions, 20 kilos of potatoes, 5 kilos of dried foods [rice and flour] and then I pay the *mkokoteni* [wheelbarrow] driver [who transports the goods from the marketplace] 200 shillings.

Historical studies demonstrate that many urban African women and children were once largely dependent on men's wages for food and cash. Any cash women acquired was spent on household needs in conjunction with some of the men's, yet women had little knowledge of or control over their husbands' income (Mbilinyi 1991; Little 1973; Sabot 1979; Rogers 1982). However as men's real incomes began to fall in the 1970s, African women and children became central figures in the generation and control of significant proportions of the household income. African women's growing formal employment opportunities as teachers, nurses, government clerks, and small-scale traders has been a positive process. Unfortunately these types of positions are few and far between and many more African, and now some Asian women, are relegated to informal-sector participation where thy engage in petty commodity production and sales (Mbilinyi 1991). While this process has negatively affected the overall position of women and further burdened them with more work in general, it also has had an especially important effect on the flow of money in the household. Political scientist Aili Mari Tripp refers to women's greater economic leverage in the household as one creating "reverse dependencies" in which men may be dependent on women (1990a: 18).

Women's greater economic autonomy also was gained without a great deal of confrontation because women's more informal/unregulated income went untaxed and could be kept hidden (Tripp 1990a). This appeared to be the case in Mwanza where many men did not acknowledge openly the importance of their wives'/partners' contribution to household maintenance because these women's income originated from *biashara ndogo ndogo*.

Deepak and Mama Kami provided an excellent example of this type of dependency reversal. Ever since they returned to Mwanza virtually bankrupt from India, her income had exceeded his. Yet unlike many other husbands loquacious Deepak very proudly acknowledged his wife's business success. "She makes more than 120,000 shillings [US $240] a month," he described. "I make 70–80,000 shillings [US $140–160] but I must pay tax on it. She pays for all of the food and our son's school fees. I pay the rent, electricity, water, city services and the housegirls."

In other cases the maintenance of separate income streams did not always benefit the household as a whole. An individual's own financial

needs and desires affected whether or not he or she was willing or able to contribute in any way to the food budget. Low-income Euphrasia, 40, reported that all of her food costs were covered by her earnings from her midwifery work and home-brewed beer sales. In her words, "My [live-in] boyfriend earns a good wage as a fisherman, but I pay for all of the food and other household expenses. All of his money is spent at the bar. He is a drunk."

People's cash was commonly kept in leather pouches or locked drawers at home, plunged into men's pant pockets or rolled in women's brassieres, blouses, or *kangas*.[2] Some people also kept their money in bank accounts. Few women in general mentioned having either their own account or a joint account with their spouse/partner. Surprisingly those who did mention having joint accounts included Africans from low- as well as high-income groups. Bank accounts were viewed by some as a means to "get ahead" in the future—that is by saving for children's school fees, business start-up capital, or a plot of land. Yet among low-income earners bank accounts were seen as sources of insurance to help maintain one's status quo or as a hedge against hunger. *Maandazi*-seller Mama Chaina, 30, said that she and her husband (who recycled discarded boards into crates and sold them at Mitimirefu marketplace) had a joint account where they saved whatever they could from their meager incomes. "Getting food is not usually a problem," she explained, "because when food prices climb—meaning we are short of cash—we get money from our savings account at the bank. It helps us to buy food. It is not always easy to get enough to eat because our incomes are small, but we try to save what we can to use next month or next year."

Food-Related Decisionmaking and Allocation of Labor

In contrast to the variability found in the extent to which people separately maintained their earnings or pooled their cash, there was much less variability among households in regard to gender-related control over food-purchasing decisions. In Mwanza there were clear gender-based distinctions in food-related decisionmaking that transcended race, income level, and people's marital status or living arrangements. The vast majority (72 percent) of the African and Asian women across all income levels reported that they decided what types of food to buy.

The allocation of food-related labor also was guided by gender considerations, especially among the Asian households where females alone were responsible for buying, storing, processing, and cooking food.

African housegirls/boys who worked for Asians were occasionally trusted with their employers' money to buy food at the marketplace or neighborhood shops, and they often were responsible for washing and cutting fruit and vegetables, cleaning beans, and grinding grain. However there were no reported cases in which housegirls/boys cooked for their Asian employers. Asian wives, mothers, mothers-in-law, sisters, and daughters were the cooks.

Among the African households there were two other men, such as Philbert, who were involved in making food purchases. Thirty-three-year-old middle-income Hadija's husband was a long-distance truck driver. He took advantage of his mobility to buy less-expensive maize and rice outside Mwanza town. The other, Eleanor's husband, frequented less-expensive marketplaces outside of Mwanza town and transported his purchases by way of his pickup truck. Generally women noted that if they were ill their husbands/partners did the food shopping; yet nearly three-quarters of the African women were solely responsible for going to the marketplace or food shops on a regular basis.

Cooking was considered females' work among both the Africans and Asians. The only difference was that in Africans households cooking responsibilities often fell on the housegirls. In Asian households cooking, at least final meal preparations, did not. A few African males cleaned foods or cooked meals once in a while. Nineteen-year-old Peter acknowledged that he enjoyed cooking for his family but only "on special occasions." Mama Annette proudly noted that "everyone cooks food here at home, even the boys!" In both cases these males belonged to high-income, highly educated households where the successful preparation of special meals was viewed more as an acquired skill than as drudgery.

Extrahousehold Alliances

Straddling

Intrahousehold processes such as income distribution, decisionmaking and labor allocation covered only part of the domestic-provisioning picture in Mwanza. There also were important extrahousehold relationships demarcated by the regional, national, and international movement of people or goods between two or more households. Throughout this century the survival of Tanzania's urban migrants has often depended on their ability to keep one foot in their rural homesteads and the other in town. This practice of "multi-spatial" households and the "straddling" of urban and rural locales is commonly referred to in the literature on Africa urbanization (Tacoli 1999: 8;

Gugler 1969; Kuper 1965; Caldwell 1969; Cohen 1969; Graves and Graves 1974; Amin 1974; Parkin 1975; Obbo 1980; Bryceson 1987; Cohen and Odhiambo 1989; Fleuret 1989; Drakakis-Smith 1991; Jamal 1995). It also appears to be an outgrowth of the circular type of rural-to-urban-to-rural movements characteristic of African migrants as opposed to migrants in North and South America, where rural-to-urban movements more commonly have been one-way (Ross and Weisner 1977).

In East Africa many rural Tanzanians, Kenyans, and Ugandans have for years depended on the periodic labor, remittances, gifts of foods and consumer items from urban relatives. Many town migrants also have depended on nutritional support from their rural kin. During the 1930s a government official on the coast noted how important food sources brought by visiting upcountry relatives were to the predominantly male population living on "bachelor" wages. In his words, "The wages earned by the natives of Dar es Salaam are still largely spent on luxuries . . . . The basic food stuffs are still produced on his *shamba* (farm)" (McCleery cited by Bryceson 1987: 165). Town migrants also regularly returned to their rural homes to maintain or create new social connections (with extended family, friends, and potential spouses), to take part in cultural events (weddings, funerals), to collect or oversee the maintenance of material resources (houses, land, food, and cash crops), and to retire.

In Mwanza some of the more visible evidence of urban–rural interconnections can be seen on the region's somewhat dilapidated but colorfully painted buses. The types of goods I saw strapped to the top of buses often were indicative of its destination. Buses loaded with baskets of fruits, vegetables, live chickens, and sacks of maize and rice were usually headed to town. Buses stacked with plastic basins, canned goods, bicycles, tires, or agricultural tools were frequently destined for the villages (see figure 6.1). Passengers' health also offered clues about extrahousehold alliances in the greater lake region. While infirm elders and ailing children were often brought to town to take advantage of health care services at Bugando, the regional hospital, terminally ill town residents were regularly taken to their own or their parents' natal home in rural villages to die. A heartbreaking sign of these devastating times, this practice was routine among Mwanza's young and middle-aged residents who suffered from AIDS-related illnesses. For instance it was disturbingly common to witness youth accompanying desperately ill, rail-thin older brothers and sisters, cousins and others as they slowly climbed onto buses headed out of town. The dying made these hours- or days-long final journeys over the region's hot

Figure 6.1 Central bus station. Travelers at Mwanza's central bus stand. Buses were a primary means of long-distance transport.

and torturously bumpy dirt roads on Spartan buses and through villages that offered few amenities. The dying often desired to be buried "at home" among their rural kin, but it also was widely acknowledged by Mwanza's residents that it was far easier and less costly to transport someone who was still barely alive than to move a corpse.

While urban–rural connections were still evident in these and other ways, food-related straddling in Mwanza was practiced by only a handful of the households in this study. The two Asian households that regularly exchanged food-related goods and/or money with others elsewhere did so with people in distant cities such as Dar es Salaam and London. One of the three African households engaged in urban–rural straddling was that of low-income Mama Bahati, 39, who lived apart from her estranged husband and supported their two children by working as a housekeeper at a guest house. In addition to buying food at the local marketplaces she relied heavily on what her mother grew in her home village of Buhongwa, "I go there all of the time to get maize," she said. "At other times I send what money I can to help my mother and she brings food to me here in Mwanza."

When asked whether they exchanged money or food with others living elsewhere most of the African women said they did not. When pressed further these women argued that the poverty in the villages

kept them from doing so. Low-income Bibi Rose, 42, lived with her unemployed husband and ten children, whom she fed with her meager income from *biashara ndogo ndogo*. "We do not get food from our families living in Sengerema because they are very poor there in the villages. They have trouble getting enough food for themselves."

More specifically women from all income levels cited high bus, train, and ferry costs as the primary obstacle to maintaining urban–rural exchanges. Mama Kato used to get food on a regular basis from her family's rice, maize, and potato farm in Sumbawanga, a two-and-one-half-day bus ride (under favorable conditions) in distant Rukwa region. Now she does so much less. "Sometimes we get food from them," she noted, "but only from time to time, maybe once or twice in three months time, because of the high price of transporting the food." High bus fares also limited the frequency with which friends and family visited Mwanza. "Nine months ago we had many guests from our village in Kigoma, [a two-day bus ride] and they brought us cassava, beans, and cooking bananas," reported 20-year-old, low-income Kazi.

> It is customary for guests coming from outside regions to bring food in order to reduce the [hosts'] cost of buying food to feed them. Now things have changed. Guests come only one or two at a time because people do not have enough money to pay the bus fare. Plus they are coming less often or not at all.

In Kali's opinion visitors bring food nowadays in small and basically symbolic amounts. These gifts are meant as a sign of affection or symbolic repayment of a debt rather than a way of supplementing town dwellers' food budgets.

Straddling also appeared to have changed in regard to the physical distance between allied households. Shared dependencies, loans, and gifts have shifted closer to home and take place more regularly between neighbors and town-based friends and relatives. The increasing importance of neighbors to urban inhabitants has been observed elsewhere. As one Ugandan townswoman told anthropologist Christine Obbo, "Your neighbors are your relatives" (1980: 115).

Not only did the physical distance between allied households appear to be shrinking in Mwanza, but also the intervals between extrahousehold food exchanges seemed to be lengthening. Other than when surplus perishables and cooked leftovers were shared among neighbors, food exchanges were becoming more restricted to times of need. Several women's descriptions mirrored that of low-income Euphrasia, 40, who struggled with her male partner to make ends meet.

> We never get food from our families in [Mara or Kagera regions]. They live too far away. A few times we have received gifts from friends, but we do not get it from our neighbors. If we are unable to get food we go to our neighbor and borrow some maize or millet flour to make *uji*. When we have money after a day or two we take them some flour in return.

Unforeseen household food shortages spurred these kinds of exchanges and such shortages could be caused by unexpected guests—the bane of many people's existences in both Mwanza and elsewhere. Surprise visitors usually included schoolchildren fostered out by their parents, job seekers or the sick. These visitors' basic needs often put an additional financial strain on many people's already precariously balancing household budgets (Parkin 1969; Obbo 1980; Caldwell 1969; Cohen and Odhiambo 1989; Bryceson 1985).

"Some of the visitors we get let us know that they are coming ahead of time," noted 25-year-old Hassan with some frustration. "Others just invade unexpectedly. If I get these types of guests then I do my best to borrow money from my neighbors." While meals were a common gesture used throughout East Africa to welcome household visitors who have come from afar, these offerings were restricted during times of scarcity when some of Mwanza's residents were unable to generously provide for their guests. One young man named Charles, a 26-year-old fish vendor at Kirumba marketplace, described how he barely supported his wife and child, let alone any visitors. "Many times," he noted, "[guests] arrive without any prior notice. Usually all that we have in the house is a thermos of tea. So even if they stay for days all that we offer them is tea."

Juggling

The personal accounts of the women included in this study suggest that instances of household straddling between urban and rural households have declined, at least temporarily. Nonetheless a recent study found that more than 36 percent of Tanzania's rural households continue to benefit from remittances and gifts originating from the nation's town (Sarris and van den Brink 1993). This suggests that while urban households may not have had the opportunity to benefit from rural-to-urban food transfers, there was still a degree of urban-to-rural financial assistance and gift distribution going on.

In Mwanza not only were certain people responsible for specific aspects of the feeding of their household but they also were responsible for supporting other households in town, in the surrounding region, country, or abroad. In these circumstances it was necessary for

individuals to juggle their financial or food-related resources and responsibilities between two or more domestic groups.

In contrast to household straddling, which was based on more-or-less reciprocal exchanges between household groups, juggling entailed exchanges that resembled gift giving or charity by those who had the means to support others in need. As I mentioned in chapter 1, Sen (1981) asserts that charity is not an entitlement exchange, but rather a non-entitlement transfer. Yet I believe the entitlement approach should be expanded to include charity for several other reasons discussed in later chapters, but for now I argue that along the continuum of interhousehold exchanges through which people acquired food I could not discern a clear boundary at which more reciprocal "straddling" exchanges became less reciprocal juggling ones. This is one reason I believe charitable exchanges cannot be ignored as sources of food entitlement.

I use the term "juggling" to describe this type of distribution because depending on their roles people were forced to control the distribution of financial and material resources in a number of different directions. Many African wives, partners, and mothers were the primary provisioners of their households but food-related juggling responsibilities also developed out of their roles as daughters, sisters, sisters-in-law, and aunts. Because northwestern Tanzania, already had been particularly hard hit by the AIDS epidemic by the time of my research in 1993–94, Bibi Dionizi's story was not unique. As a 45-year-old divorced mother of eight she juggled her income from her office job and *mitumba* sales between her immediate household and that of her sister-in-law. "The other people I support include the wife and many children of my late brother. He died from AIDS. I support them with money. About 18,000 shillings (US $36) goes to them [monthly] for food and other needs because they are poor and live in a village."

Some men had to juggle multiple responsibilities. Sylvia's fiance Gilbert had two children from a previous marriage who sometimes lived with him and whom he supported financially when they lived with their mother. Though juggling connections appeared to be determined in large part by the proximity of those in need rather than specific kin relationships, many patrilineal African households supported the eldest male's extended families. Most often these people included elderly parents and the widows and orphans of deceased brothers. Beyond food purchases, remittances also covered necessities such as school fees, taxes, clothing, and farm tools in the case of rural relatives. Those with enough expendable income sent highly desirable consumer items such as transistor radios.

The meanings people assigned to their juggling activities were intriguing. They usually framed their descriptions of juggling in two ways: either they underscored the strain it put on their household budget or they exhibited pride in their wealth and altruism. Those who did the latter would mention the number of people they supported, give the total amount of cash they provided or describe the specific items they furnished. A number of motives appeared to exist behind these gifts, ranging from the desire to acquire prestige to hopes of winning religious redemption. Unfortunately in most instances the verity of a person's juggling claim was difficult to authenticate. Yet is was possible to check the story of one middle-aged African man, a successful hotel manager, who asserted that he regularly gave his town-based divorced sister food and money. When I asked her whether she received any kind of support from him she balked. "All that my brother offers freely are words," argued Mama Sarah, 34, and a mother of three. "He enjoys bragging about his business and his kindness to others. But I see him very seldomly and he has not offered us money for three years." Although I was unable to confirm it there was anecdotal evidence that this type of "empty" philanthropy occurred among Mwanza's Asian community as well.

Balancing on One Foot

Based on the personal accounts of the women who took part in this research it appeared that many of Mwanza's households received very little from family and friends living either in the countryside or in town. Middle- and low-income women in particular were neither jugglers nor regular recipients of gifts from jugglers. Nor were they straddlers of two or more households. Without the benefit of maintaining one foot in a resource base in the countryside, these city dwellers appeared to be virtually balancing on one foot.

"I usually get all of our food from the marketplace, not from a friend, neighbor, or brother," said 24-year-old Mama Paul, a low-income homemaker. She and her husband, who ironed *mitumba* in a marketplace shop, often struggled to feed themselves and their child. Yet there were times when they could not make ends meet. "If I am unable to get food, I beg for help from our neighbors," she continued, "and if I am unsuccessful getting food from them we go to sleep hungry." Bibi Koku, 35, was a middle-income midwife whose husband farmed and raised livestock on the outskirts of town. She succinctly summed up the contemporary food situation experienced by many when she said, "We do not get food from our family, friends, or neighbors because economic conditions are difficult for everyone."

In 1993–94 times may have been difficult for many households but it appeared that those with the fewest income earners suffered the most. Mama Mariamu, 35 years old and a low-income mother of four, sold *maandazi* and *vitumbua* at a tiny stall in a marketplace. "It is very hard to get food," she explained.

> I cook the children's [daily meal] after I close the stall at 8:00 p.m. Usually I cook *ugali* with fish relish or sometimes we just eat boiled yams. Sometimes I don't sell anything, so we can only drink black tea. I have a boyfriend, who sometimes helps, but he is just a friend and most of the time there is nothing from him . . . . My older daughter helps me with my business and the baby, and my sons sometimes sell cigarettes on the streets. They do not go to school . . . . It is a very hard life.

Despite the fact that many households were forced to survive independently of others there was one in particular in which family members openly rejected outside help. This Asian household included Mama Mahmedi, her seven children, and three former street children. According to her son Tamim, 25, the family regularly took in street boys, converted them to Islam and sent them to school. They were a lower middle-income family and Tamim admitted that "acquiring food is sometimes easy, sometimes hard. It really depends on the price. Money is the big problem." Even when faced with hardship he and his family refused outside financial support from the local street children's center and alms from others in the community. Explained Tamim,

> We have taken in the boys in accordance with Muslim laws that state it is important for the wealthy to give to those who are not. One must be devoted to God to do this. We have not taken in the boys for their work or money, but to help our family prosper in the eyes of God. Others have come to give donations to help support the boys, but we always refuse. We do not want people to get rich [through God's favor] because they have done good to our family.

Changing Alliances

Successful household provisioning in Mwanza depended on a wide variety of factors involving intra- and extrahousehold processes. While only a handful of these processes have been addressed, some generalized conclusions can be drawn even though these conclusions themselves are intricately related, double-edged and sometimes contradictory.

Whether household members pooled their incomes or maintained separate income streams, the data presented herein suggests that partnerships between women and men had positive effects on household wealth and food budgets. This is supported by the fact that the only high-income households in this study included either married or unmarried couples, and that all of the single-female households were either low or middle income. As Guyer (1988) found in a comparison of married and single Beti women in Cameroon, the presence of a male income earner in the household often increased its overall level of wealth because men were more likely to work in occupations with higher wages and greater opportunity for advancement.

While at one time a predominantly male population dominated Mwanza's landscape, female immigration and the growing employment of female domestic workers has drastically altered household membership. Urban households have benefited significantly from both female immigration and the feminization of paid household labor as women have increasingly taken an active role in the generation of household income. Despite the fact that the presence of a male income earner frequently contributed to overall household welfare, much of the responsibility of maintaining the nutritional well-being of domestic groups fell on women. Both African and Asian wives, partners, sisters, daughters, and nieces were integral to sustaining Mwanza's population. Their increased participation in income generation in turn has in many cases affected in positive ways their control over the flow of food-related money, decisionmaking, and the allocation of domestic labor.

Alliances between households also were changing. Straddling relationships between urban and rural households appeared to be shifting as economic hardships and high transport costs forced people to depend more on food-related loans and gifts between neighbors and town-based friends and relatives. Two-way food-related straddling continued, yet in an apparently more limited and amended form. In addition the participation of women in income-generating activities has allowed them to amass significant amounts of wealth and assume key roles in extrahousehold support networks that were once monopolized by men. Many former straddling relationships also have weakened into irregular juggling ones. But what I found as most significant was that many people who once were firmly straddling two or more households had lost their footing in those other households and, at least for the time being, were struggling to balance on one foot. As anthropologists Audrey Richards (1939) and Raymond Firth (1959) observed among the Bemba in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and the

Tikopia of the Western Pacific, respectively, in regard to food sharing greater household individualization was evident in Mwanza.

Finally even though the availability of inexpensive domestic labor has allowed more women the freedom to support their families via participation in the informal sector, only those in middle- and high-income groups had access to the necessary capital to pursue larger and more costly endeavors that would in turn provide the opportunity to take higher profits. Like women working in more formal economic endeavors, women engaging in the informal sector were more apt to participate in activities that had the lowest financial returns or potentials for advancement or growth. Poorer women relied on less capital-intensive activities such as the preparation and sale of inexpensive foodstuffs and drinks. Concurrently women's activities in informal food economies permitted them to adjust more easily to the price fluctuations and inflation inherent in the recently liberalized food economy. As Guyer recognized in many African cities,

> For a certain, perhaps large, section of the urban population, real incomes were conditioned at both the income/employment and consumer price points by the opportunities and constraints of the market in basic provisions. People were living *from* incomes generated in the food system, and living *with* the food prices which resulted. (1987: 37, emphasis hers)

Household-based food domains in Mwanza were not solely organized by gender. Income-generation capabilities, paid domestic labor, ethnicity, and culture also affected the organization of provisioning processes. Different household members had different food-related options, strategies, connections, capabilities, values, preferences, and needs, and all of these factors were framed in different ways by the forces of time and distance. An understanding of the multiple realities inherent in urban food entitlement is dependent on an awareness of the interrelationships of these factors and their ever-changing influences.

7

Farming the City

While food purchases are vital to the survival of many of Mwanza's residents, others gain entitlement to food by growing it in and around the city as well as on outlying farms. There were sweet potatoes, cassava, spinach, tomatoes, chile peppers, and onions growing not only in private yards and alongside public pathways and buildings, but also in the low-lying glens that drained into the lake. Crops also could be found growing in the lizard-inhabited no man's land between the towering clusters of eroded granite boulders that rose indiscriminately throughout town. Often enough, open land that was not being used as a walking path or garbage dump was planted with fruits or vegetables or was the home of free-roaming chickens, penned in goats or pigs, or a tethered cow or two.

Images such as these of "rural" life in Africa's towns and cities evoke dismay in some observers because they seem incongruous with what is widely believed to distinguish urban from rural settlements. For many agriculture is to the countryside what industry is to city and town, and a " 'city of farmers' is the last thing that African planners and policymakers would like to encourage" (Macharia 1992: 688). Yet others challenge both the ideological and the tangible segregation of agriculture and urbanization. They not only recognize urban-based agricultural activities as an integral part of many towns and cities worldwide, but also applaud those who engage in these activities for their valuable contribution to urban incomes and food supplies.[1]

Urban Agriculture in Contemporary Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Ghana

Only recently has urban agriculture become a topic of discussion in the scholarly literature on Africa. Many have made passing reference to urban farming over the years when discussing Africa's urban areas,[2] but today a growing number of works examine who farms in urban

Africa and why. Some of these works are helpful in delineating key food-entitlement themes to explore among Mwanza's urban farmers. These include influential studies by P. A. Memon and D. Lee-Smith (1993) and D. Freeman (1991) in Kenya, C. Rakodi (1988) in Zambia, B. Mbiba (1995) in Zimbabwe, and K. Obosu-Mensah (1999) in Ghana.

Memon and Lee-Smith (1993) based their analysis of urban agriculture in Kenya on data acquired in a broad-ranging study of the food and fuel supplies of 1,576 households carried-out by the Mazingira Institute[3] in Nairobi and five other cities.[4] Memon and Lee-Smith explain that Kenya's urban cultivators included males and females from all income groups, but poor women comprised the majority (62 percent in Nairobi; 56 percent overall) (32). The authors argue that urban cultivators farmed to fulfill basic subsistence needs and that urban agriculture was a vital economic activity too often overlooked by policymakers, administrators, and urbanization theorists. Commercial interests appeared to be much less of a motivating factor, because only a very small proportion of the harvest was sold (34).

Freeman's (1991) more extensive analysis of urban agriculture in Kenya also was based on the Mazingira Institute data in addition to a more topically focused study of 618 cultivators in Nairobi.[5] Freeman, too, found that urban agriculture in Kenya was practiced primarily by the working poor, the unemployed and informal sector workers who cultivated vacant land within the city. Two-thirds of the cultivators were female, many of them household heads, forced to cultivate "out of sheer necessity, the alternative being the threat of hunger, malnutrition, and even starvation" (Freeman 1991: 110). Food production was key to filling bellies as well as to freeing up scarce cash that allowed farmers to purchase other foods and consumer goods or pay housing, school, and medical fees.

Freeman attributes the determinants behind people's involvement in urban agriculture to labor-surplus and dependency theories. He argues that in a labor-surplus economy such as Nairobi's it was not surprising that unschooled females dominated this low-return sector because they often lacked opportunities to acquire the better paying formal sector jobs filled by educated males. Dependency theory, which emphasizes the negative effects of the globalization of Third World economies, helps to explain why even those with formal-sector jobs (approximately 26 percent of all cultivators) grew and sold urban crops. According to Freeman Kenyans at all income levels were "marginalized and rendered landless by the penetration of transnational

and national private and state capital," and these pressures motivated people to grow crops (118).

Rakodi's (1988) understanding of urban farming in Zambia was based on unpublished survey data collected during the 1970s on an unspecified number of households in Lusaka. From these surveys she found that urban agriculture in Zambia was undertaken predominantly by women of all income groups, but their propensity to cultivate was "determined by the size of household, income *per capita*, stability of urban residence and the availability of land for cultivation around the house and/or within reasonable walking distance" (514). Despite fewer opportunities to access land in and around Lusaka in the 1970s, the number of urban gardens increased. Echoing the constricting socioeconomic forces explained by dependency theory, Rakodi (1988) interprets the primary motivation behind people's involvement in urban agriculture as the failure of large families' monthly *per capita* incomes to keep pace with rising prices.

Memon and Lee-Smith, Freeman and Rakodi all highlight the extent to which urban agriculture during the past three decades has been practiced by a variety of Kenyans and Zambian of all incomes levels. But these researchers emphasize that the majority of urban farmers in those countries were either poor women or those feeling the pressure of declining real wages. For most of these practitioners, urban agriculture was a means of survival.

On the one hand Mbiba's (1995) findings—from several small studies in Zimbabwe, such as of off-plot urban cultivation in Harare (97 participants) and livestock production in Chitungwiza (112 participants)—parallel those of Memon and Lee-Smith, Freeman, and Rakodi. The Zimbabwe data show that 60 percent of urban food production was carried-out by women, that the majority of the harvest was consumed by household members and that the incidence of urban agriculture had increased since 1987 as Zimbabwe's formal economy has weakened (1995: 42–43). Yet on the other hand Mbiba's findings differ from those in Kenya and Zambia in that the majority of the cultivators in his studies were better off than the poorest of the poor. Extreme land shortages in Harare, in particular, have favored long term, more economically secure residents who acquired plots in the 1980s. Unfortunately he does not provide more detailed data on the motivations of wealthier urban residents who grew crops as commercial ventures. Yet in agreement with Memon, Lee-Smith, Freeman, and Rakodi, he concludes that "decaying national and urban economies seem to be the umbrella factor while droughts and food

availability or access to food seem to have acted as trigger factors in the rise of informal urban agriculture in Zimbabwe" (207).

Obosu-Mensah (1999) studied 200 urban farmers in Accra, Ghana, in 1996. His findings differ from the aforementioned researchers' by virtue of the fact that 69.5 percent of the urban farmers in his survey were male (95). According to Obosu-Mensah, female cultivators were in the minority because women could not compete with men for land and because Ghanaian women had a long history of favoring marketing goods over urban farming (118). His data also differed from the Kenya and Zambia findings because a large segment of urban agriculturalists (43 Percent), both male and female, were formally employed (104).[6] In addition Obosu-Mensah found that the 150 cultivators of open-spaces (along roads, gutters, or open drainage systems) were characteristically male elementary-school educated, low-income earners, and the 50 farmers of enclosed-space (within the walled confines of their own property) were primarily female secondary-school and university educated, middle- and high-income earners. Interestingly 73 percent of the former and virtually none of the latter sold their crops (138, 145). Obosu-Mensah attributes this to historical agricultural practices in rural Ghana in which men controlled cash crops and women controlled food crops (146–47).

Obosu-Mensah concurs that labor-surplus and dependency theories account for the reasons why some people adopt informal-sector activities. Yet he argues that these models fall short of explaining why people chose urban agriculture in particular. Obosu-Mensah attempts to correct this shortcoming by offering what he calls the "cultural lag" model (19). Briefly stated he suggests that some urban residents took up agriculture because most of them had migrated from the rural areas where they were either farmers themselves or closely associated with farming. According to Obosu-Mensah for Accra's urban cultivators farming was a familiar skill or cultural practice used as a survival strategy or as a form of investment.

Given these findings from Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Ghana, several questions follow concerning urban agriculture in Mwanza. What percentage of the population grew crops in Mwanza? Who were they? And to what extent did outright poverty, falling incomes, commercial investment opportunities, cultural lag and/or some other factors compel people to cultivate?

Urban Agriculture in Mwanza

In Tanzania urban development has not always progressed in a controlled and organized manner. Even though urban settlements in what

was then Tanganyika began to emerge around the mid to late 1800s, the first attempts at urban planning were not made until decades later. The colonial government's Department of Surveys and Town Planning (now the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban development) was established in 1948 to prepare master plans for some of the nation's developing towns and trading centers. Since that time rapid urbanization, poor coordination between planning and implementing agencies, and shortages of funds, equipment and skilled labor have overwhelmed Tanzania's urban planners, and lands zoned for public use or as open spaces were often, to the consternation of local authorities, informally taken over by private, commercial, or industrial interests (Mosha 1989).

Most of the historical information available on urban agriculture in Tanzania pertains either to Dar es Salaam or all of Tanzania's urban areas taken as a whole. In addition much of this early data describes neither the gender ratio found in various urban settlements nor the extent to which men or women were the cultivators. The earliest accounts of urban farming describe rice, coconut, maize, and cassava cultivation by Dar es Salaam's immigrant population dating from the 1860s, when the city was founded. Archival sources from 1939 provide evidence that it was urban cultivation, "primarily of a subsistence nature," that sustained the town's burgeoning immigrant population. According to a colonial land use study, peri-urban cultivation at that time was crucial to maintaining civil order in the deficit-plagued city. It was noted that given the "grave" food situation "only the Native's intense communism has saved [the government] from riots so far" (Bryceson 1993: 43; McCleery quoted in Bryceson 1993: 43).

During World War II a combination of food shortages, expensive parallel-market prices and government restrictions on the transportation of food spurred more of Dar es Salaam's residents to grow crops in the city, the surrounding environs and more distant rural areas (Bryceson 1987). By 1950, 14 percent of the African laborers questioned in a local Dar es Salaam survey reported having a farm on the town's periphery (Bryceson 1993).

Later evidence is somewhat contradictory. Some observers believe that between the early 1960s and the mid-1980s the food economy, particularly illegal parallel markets, developed to such an extent that few of Dar es Salaam's wage earners invested much of their time and energy in agriculture (Sporrek 1985; Tripp 1990a,b; Bryceson 1993). Yet the 1967 population census shows that 19 percent of Dar es Salaam's households farmed, while the incidence in Tanzania's smaller towns ranged from 10 percent in Mwanza to 58 percent elsewhere

(1967 Population Census cited by Bryceson 1993: 173). In J. D. Heijnen's education-level survey of Mwanza's residents between 1965 and 1967, 35 percent of the married, and 25 percent of the unmarried survey participants claimed that they engaged in urban agriculture (Heijnen 1968: 65).

Bryceson suggests that the differences in the extent to which urban agriculture was practiced in various towns may reflect changes in the gender ratio of the population over time, and that as the ratio of women to men increased so did the incidence of urban farming. "It is impossible to say whether women were the main producers," observes Bryceson, "but it is likely that they were and, if so, it indicates that their traditional identification with food cropping was being transferred to the urban context" (Bryceson 1993: 155).

In the 1980s Dar es Salaam's residents responded again to economic downturns by growing more food near their homes and on the city's periphery. Tripp learned through her own surveys that the number of urban farmers declined again between 1978 and 1982, then rose again quickly between 1983 and 1987 in response to widespread drought and food shortages. For Mwanza district in particular the 1988 population census reveals that 15 percent of the urban population 10 years and older reported "urban cultivation" or "mixed farming" (including subsistence and cash-crop production) as their primary economic activity (Tanzania Population Census (1988) 1992: 188). In the 1991–92 nationwide household budget survey, 12 percent of both male and female "head of household" reported urban farming as their primary economic activity (Household Budget Survey (1991–92) 1992: 29). Despite the fluctuations in the number of people who engaged in more extensive urban and peri-urban agriculture over the years, what probably remained fairly constant was the practice of growing a papaya tree or several spinach plants near one's home (Tripp 1990b: 66).

While the foregoing data suggests that throughout recent history a broad cross-section of Tanzania's urban residents have responded creatively to their food needs by growing their own provisions, some recent studies emphasize that the majority of these urban farmers were the poor, especially in Dar es Salaam (Tripp 1990a, b; Mganza and Bantje cited by Bryceson 1987). In Mwanza Heijnen found in the mid-1960s that the majority of the urban agriculturalists also belonged to low-income groups, including the unemployed, the elderly, small-scale traders, and unskilled laborers.

Yet Bryceson's 1988 study of staple-food consumption among 188 Tanzanian households, 64 of which were in Dar es Salaam and 29 in

Mwanza, again suggests changes in the percentages, income-levels and motivations of urban households engaged in urban farming. Her findings demonstrated that 20 percent of the households in Dar es Salaam and 41 percent of the households in Mwanza cultivated some of their food (1993: 160, 162). In the capital it was typical for one household member, usually a male, to engage in farming. Besides one-third of the total cultivators were formally employed (160). Both of these findings suggest a strong commercial aspect to urban farming. "The influence of the market pervades Dar es Salaam household cultivation with respect to land as well as labour," argues Bryceson. "Almost one-fifth of the farming households have holdings of over 10 acres, . . . which suggests that these farms not only supply household needs but are run for commercial purposes" (160). In Mwanza despite the fact that holdings were considerably smaller and that more family members were involved in cultivation, Bryceson also found that formally employed workers were still "prominent" (163).

In spite of the strong commercial element running throughout her findings, which seems to suggest a preponderance of upper-income households with capital for land and inputs, her income-level interpretations appear somewhat contradictory. On the one hand she claims that her Mwanza sample is too small to support any solid conclusions and that "[t]here was no clear association between the incidence of household farming and income" (163). Yet on the other hand she concludes later that "[i]n Dar es Salaam, Mwanza and [the large town of] Arusha, higher income households were more likely to be farming a portion of their own food" (1993: 180).

When walking through Mwanza's town center and residential neighborhoods it appeared to me that those involved in cultivating food and raising livestock were predominantly the poor. While cattle, ducks, turkeys, and kitchen gardens were found in upper-class neighborhoods such as Capri Point and Isamilo, much of the land there also was devoted to ornamental flower, shrub, and tree gardens or left as wooded spaces. In poorer sections of town, such as the squatter settlements on the hills above Kenyatta road or in some of the lower-class neighborhoods off Makongoro road, roosters scratched for insects, cassava leaves fanned out from spindly branches, and spinach plants sprouted in many available spaces. It seemed to make sense that in a large city where people were highly dependent on purchased foods that the poor would cultivate more than the wealthy.

While urban farming was apparently practiced in much of Mwanza town, government officials were concerned by its prevalence. The opposing goals of urban planners and local residents were at the heart

of the contemporary regional government's frustration with the municipality's rapidly growing informal sector. Officials claimed that makeshift construction and informal income-generating activities contributed to urban sprawl and environmental degradation.[7] "People are raising kiosks [makeshift retail structures] every few meters all over town," noted Alfred Luanda, Mwanza's regional town planner.[8]

> They are building squatter houses on the steep hillsides, which is very dangerous, especially during the rains. People come to areas that have been planned years before, yet they have no regard for the plans. But the kiosks are important in easing the problem of unemployment, and many people cannot afford to buy municipal housing plots—so how do we deal with these conflicting interests?[9]

These same types of contradictory ambitions existed between policymakers and residents specifically in regard to urban agriculture. In officials' eyes the cultivation of crops increased food supplies and promoted better air quality through plants' oxygenating processes. Other observers share this supportive view. Based on her observations in Casamance, Senegal, anthropologist Olga Linares (1996) argues that urban agriculture "protect[ed] and enrich[ed] the city environment" and helped "to maintain biological complexity" (104). More green spaces, increased ground cover to prevent erosion and recycling of organic waste are noted by Linares as some of the positive results of urban farming (118). Yet Mwanza's policymakers also recognized that urban agriculture contributed a great deal to land degradation as indigenous vegetation was cleared and locally problematic soil erosion ensued. It also added to the pollution of Lake Victoria as insecticides, fertilizers, and animal waste were washed into the lake during heavy rains. Also while urban-grown crops were especially fresh and inexpensive to buy, concern has developed recently both in Mwanza and elsewhere regarding their safety. Alphonce Kyessi, a researcher with the Ardhi Institute, noted that in Dar es Salaam large spinach gardens, which are financially backed by wealthy investors and cultivated by hired male labor, were springing up along the major thoroughfares. Not only do such gardens use sizeable and toxic amounts of DDT to prevent crop loss from infestation, but also toxins from vehicle exhaust and oily roadside runoff pose dangerous health hazards to those who eat the tainted produce (Alphonce Kyessi, personal communication).[10]

In 1966 Mwanza's town council prohibited the cultivation of crops throughout the township. Yet this measure was opposed considerably by town dwellers, who continued to grow crops anyway, and the rule

was not widely enforced (Heijnen 1968: 65). In 1982 urban bylaws passed under section 80 of the Local Government (Urban Authorities) Act No. 8 authorized town and municipal authorities to destroy crops over one meter high and to permit livestock only if they were "not a nuisance or injurious to health" (Mlozi et al. 1992; Kironde 1992: 1283). While urban agriculture today is forbidden officially the cultivation of "low" crops is widely condoned. According to J. M. Molai, Economics Officer and Acting Trade Officer of the municipal government, plants such as beans, peppers, tomatoes, and onions do not attract mosquitoes, offer cover to thieves, or disrupt the town's "appearance" in the way that mature maize plants do[11] (J. M. Molai, personal communication).[12] In addition urban agriculture is regularly engaged in by government officials themselves, and in the early 1990s Mwanza's urban planners called for the legalization of urban cultivation for economic reasons.

> For the urban dwellers to supplement their incomes, it is proposed that they be allowed to practice urban farming within the Municipality. Manageable vegetable/food crop farms [should] be encouraged in Luchelele area. Keeping of livestock, i.e. dairy cattle, under conditions of zero-grazing could be encouraged in the villages within Mwanza Municipality. (Mwanza Master Plan (1992–2012) 1992: 94)

Shifting policies and failed implementation practices concerning urban agriculture were not unique to Mwanza. In 1974–75 the national government instituted the *Kilimo cha Kufa na Kupona* (Agriculture for Life or Death) campaign. Propagandized as a means to augment food supplies by promoting agricultural production in both urban and rural areas, some government offices, factories, and other commercial centers were presented with government land, on the outskirts of Dar es Salaam and other towns, on which their employees were to grow crops. Even though implementation problems plagued the campaign, it did succeed in creating greater awareness of urban food shortages (Bryceson 1982). In Mwanza grandmother Bibi Mika, 53 years old, remembered that "there was a severe famine in 1974 when they instituted *Kilimo cha Kufa na Kupona*, and that is when I first started a small garden here in Mwanza and grew sweet potatoes, spinach and tomatoes."

The official message since then has continued to be mixed. In 1980 the prime minister called on town councils to allocate farmland to residents. At the same time there were repeated governmental decrees to rein in urban cultivation for the usual health and aesthetics reasons

(*Daily News* cited by Bryceson 1987: 190). Today local drives against the cultivation of crops in some of Tanzania's towns, such as Arusha and Moshi, counter national directives promoting urban agriculture and citizens' self-reliance (Molai, personal communication; Kyessi and Mtani 1993).

Urban agriculture in Tanzania has received scant and erratic attention during the past 30 years, and historical statistics and census data on urban farmers are largely unavailable or very difficult to come by. With a few exceptions these types of data are virtually nonexistent for Mwanza (see Bryceson 1993). Of the 71 low-, middle-, and high-income African and Asian women included in this study, 19 belonged to households engaged in urban farming (see table 7.1). Because my specific interest in urban farmers was an offshoot of my larger research project, the sample size of 19 is admittedly small and the numerical data I present cannot be statistically proven as representative of the city. Despite these drawbacks I believe this data is significant because it highlights interesting tendencies and suggests possible trends, which are consistent with those in other recent studies of Mwanza and other parts of the country. This data provides insight as well into urban farming in and around a large provincial city rather than a capital; capitals tend to dominate the literature on modern Africa's urban agriculture.

Generally the urban farmers in my Mwanza sample tended three different kinds of plots. Many had what I refer to as "kitchen gardens" or gardens adjacent to their dwellings (see figure 7.1). Some people had "gardens," whether owned outright or squatter ones, located at a distance from their dwellings. Others cultivated "farms" or larger plots situated in another part of the municipality or in a village. In addition there was a clear cultural component to urban agricultural practices because all of those who farmed were of African as opposed to Asian descent. This was not surprising because Asians generally do not own arable land or cultivate crops in East Africa (Vincent 1971). Given this situation the number of Asian households included in a survey exploring urban agriculture can be statistically significant. In determining the prevalence of urban farming in my sample based on both African and Asian households, 19 of 71 households, or 27 percent, engaged in urban farming. When figuring the prevalence of urban cultivation based on a sample including only African households, 19 of 51, or 37 percent, practiced urban agriculture. It is unclear whether Bryceson's 1988 survey sample included any Asian households, and this is problematic. Many of the Asians living in Mwanza consider themselves "Africans." But because clear cultural and historical

Table 7.1 Urban agriculturalists

Name	Age	Occupation	Partner	Partner's occupation	Children	Years in town	Plot type*	Produce/ livestock	Labor source
Low-income households									
Mama Kato	23	shop clerk	yes	policeman	2	13	kitchen garden	spinach	unpaid female
Mama Bene	48	fish sales	yes	office clerk	14	—	kitchen garden	cattle	unpaid female
Euphrasia	40	midwife/beer	yes	fisherman	2	8	garden	vegetables/poultry	unpaid female
Bibi Mika	53	beer sales	no		1	21	squatter garden	maize	unpaid female
Mama John	44	teacher	no		5	10	squatter garden	vegetables	unpaid female
Middle-income households									
Mama Shukuru	36	fish sales	yes	mail clerk	5	18	kitchen garden	vegetables	unpaid female
Penda	47	nurse	yes	tailor	14	28	kitchen garden	vegetables	unpaid female
Paulina	42	dentist	yes	pharmacist	5	18	garden	vegetables	unpaid female
Bibi Aziza	44	teacher	yes	teacher	5	21	garden	vegetables	unpaid female
Aisha	42	tire sales	yes	taxi driver	4	25	garden	vegetables	unpaid female
Bibi Koku	35	midwife	yes	farmer	4	15	garden	vegetables	unpaid female
Mama Esther	38	homemaker	yes	truck driver	2	—	garden	poultry/cattle/ vegetables/grain	unpaid female
Lemmy	48	teacher	yes	teacher	5	4	garden/farm	poultry/livestock/ vegetable/grain	unpaid female/ paid male
Pelagia	40	homemaker	yes	engineer	8	10	farm	fruit/rice/ vegetables	paid male
Mama Eleanor	40	fabric-stall owner	yes	scale repair	—	25	farm	vegetables	paid male

(Continued)

Table 7.1 Continued

Name	Age	Occupation	Partner	Partner's occupation	Children	Years in town	Plot type*	Produce/ livestock	Labor source
High-income households									
Christiani	42	homemaker	yes	bar owner	9	32	garden	vegetables	unpaid female
Mama Annette	41	clothing sales	yes	attorney	5	17	garden/farm	vegetables vegetables	unpaid female/ paid male
Sylvia	33	nursing instructor	yes	accountant	4	5	kitchen garden/ farm	pigs/poultry/fruit/ vegetables/maize	unpaid female/ paid male
Eleanor	42	secretary	yes	gov. official	4	—	kitchen garden/ farm	fruit/maize/ vegetables	unpaid female/ paid male

Notes:
— = data unavailable.
*Plot types: A kitchen garden is a small garden adjacent to one's dwelling; A garden, including one owned outright or a squatter one, is a plot located at some distance from one's dwelling; A farm is a larger plot located in another part of the municipality or in another village.

Figure 7.1 A fruit and vegetable garden in one of Mwanza's high-income neighborhoods.

differences arise between the largely agrarian Africans and the non-agrarian Asians, this type of distinction is helpful when discussing urban agriculture.

The degree to which the African farmers in Mwanza can be said to vary along ethnic lines is much more difficult to determine from my small sample, which included people of Sukuma, Haya, Ha, Nyamwezi, Luguru, and Chagga affiliation. A larger survey sample may demarcate significant ethnic variations among Mwanza's urban farmers in line with the types of ethnic variations found in Dar es Salaam (Bryceson 1987; Briggs 1990).

Comparable to Freeman's and Mbiba's findings urban agriculture in Mwanza appeared to be practiced more frequently by long-term residents than by more recent migrants from the countryside. On the average urban cultivators in my sample had lived in Mwanza for over 16 years. Heijnen, too, learned that in Mwanza, "with the exception of new arrivals that stayed in town for less than a year, the greatest frequency [of urban agriculture] is encountered among the long-term residents who have been born in town or have lived there for at least 15 years" (Heijnen 1968: 64).

Given appearances in contemporary Mwanza, one of the most surprising findings was that only five of the 25 low-income households in my general survey engaged in urban agriculture. All five households had either a kitchen garden or garden where they grew subsistence crops such as spinach to eat as a relish with *ugali* or rice. One household

grew grains to use as ingredients in home-brewed beer or liquor, much of which was sold. These kitchen gardens and gardens were tended by women and their children. Two women took advantage of vacant neighborhood plots that were either unsuitable for houses or awaiting future development. "My children and I usually grow a few crops," said 44-year-old Mama John, a teacher and single mother of five young children. "The land was unoccupied when we began to cultivate, and the neighbors and I divided it among ourselves and our friends." Mama John acknowledged that these "squatter"[13] gardens were appealing because they were inexpensive to acquire and, in line with customary law throughout Africa, her neighbors respected her right to the land because she invested her own time and labor in cultivating it. Yet concurrently squatter gardens were risky investments. Crop loss was common owing to the interference of stray animals, passers-by, thieves, bicycles/motorbikes, and new owners who had gained title to the land.

Because of the risk of loss associated with squatter gardens, people preferred to buy their own plots but were restricted by the costs involved. Only one of the poorer households, which included a 40-year-old midwife, her male partner, and her two children, managed to do this. "We grow our own food crops but in small amounts," described Euphrasia. "We grow cassava, maize, sweet potatoes, spinach, eggplant and also raise ducks here near our house. My *rafiki* [literally friend, but also common slang for lover] bought the space from our neighbor." While only one of the five low-income farming households had purchased its own garden plot, and two others cultivated squatter gardens, 11 of the 14 middle- and high-income households farmed land that they had either purchased, inherited, or were given official access to by the government. In contrast to the poorest households, all of these held official title to their cultivated land thereby underscoring the importance of money and wealth-in-people to food entitlement, particularly if the people within one's sphere of influence are those with access to governmental influence.

Of the 21 middle-income households in my general study, 10 were involved in urban agriculture. This finding parallels Bryceson's conclusion that a larger proportion of Mwanza's upper-income as opposed to lower-income residents were involved in urban agriculture. Two middle-income households cultivated small kitchen gardens in their own yards, while the eight others oversaw nearby gardens or distant farms. As was the case among the low-income households, all of the kitchen gardens and gardens were tended by unpaid women and children. But the three households that cultivated farms in more distant

parts of the municipality, where they had purchased land from other private citizens or the municipal government, depended on paid male labor. In addition some of these people had storage buildings, which allowed them to preserve their harvested crops for later consumption or sale, thereby taking advantage of higher prices during months when certain foods were in short supply. For example 40-year-old fabric-stall owner Mama Eleanor and her scale-repairman husband bought land and erected storage sheds in nearby Igoma village. They paid a wage and a percentage of the harvest to the young local man who oversaw it. "We get our food from the marketplace if we have not prepared our crops," noted Mama Eleanor,

> but we try to get most of our food from our rice farm in Igoma. It was purchased in 1980 from an old man there. We shared the farm with this man until he died. We have a small vegetable garden here at the house, too, which helps us with our meals. Truthfully, acquiring enough food for the family is not a big problem because the storehouses we have in Igoma protect our harvested rice. In the past we relied primarily on purchasing food from the marketplace, but now we do not because we have our big rice farm.

Lemmy and her husband, who were both school teachers, sold eggs, milk, chickens, and pork they produced themselves in town. Lemmy's husband also had inherited his parents' farm and purchased another on neighboring Ukerewe Island. Their farms were cared for by two young male employees, and Lemmy's husband frequently took the three-hour ferry ride to the island to collect the harvest and oversee the holdings.

All five of the high-income households in my original study had either gardens or a farm. Mama Annette, 41, sold second-hand clothes, and her husband, an attorney, lived in the town center but had purchased a Capri Point garden in town and a farm in Nyakato several kilometers away. She, her housegirl, and her children tended the garden; a young man was paid to work the farm. The produce from both holdings fed the family and any surplus was sold from their house. When I spoke to her in 1994 33-year-old Sylvia and her fiancé Gilbert, who lived on Capri Point and raised ducks, turkeys, and pigs at their home, had recently purchased a farm in Nyegezi (a half-hour drive from town). "We take our truck to the farm," she recounted.

> It is four acres. We grow cassava, bananas, mangoes, maize and spinach there. A local boy tends it. We just started to harvest the maize and spinach and will use some here at home and maybe sell the rest.

Another wealthy married couple, Eleanor, 42, and her husband and four children, had a very large kitchen garden where they grew papayas, bananas, tomatoes, oranges, mangoes, guava, and flowers. Eleanor worked as a secretary for the government housing corporation and her home garden was both an evening and weekend hobby she enjoyed as well as a source of extra food for her family. Her husband held a mid-level position in the national government and had acquired a 12-acre maize farm outside Mwanza municipality that was overseen by hired laborers. He and his sons periodically drove their truck there to check on the farm. At harvest time the maize was distributed between family and friends in Mwanza, and her husband's extended family in Tabora town 200 kilometers to the south.

Where once urban agriculture was primarily the domain of Mwanza's poorer households, my 1993–94 data and that acquired in 1988 by Bryceson suggest that now it may be that of middle- and upper-income groups. As 18-year-old David, a Mwanza secondary-school graduate and member of a high-income household, succinctly explained,

> Most of the people who have money or are government officials have farms inside and outside Mwanza town, and they always get food from their farms. But poor people do not have farms and they only get food from the marketplaces at whatever price the traders ask.

While my interpretations of urban farming in Mwanza are based on a very small sample, they parallel evidence from other Tanzanian towns. Mwanza's poor continue to cultivate food to help meet their dietary needs; however, Mwanza's wealthier residents, like many in Dar es Salaam, Arusha and other Tanzanian cities and towns, grow crops and/or raise livestock as a hobby, for food, for profit, and as a form of insurance in case they lose their jobs or businesses (Mlozi et al. 1992; Holm 1992; Bryceson 1993; Alphonce Kyessi, personal communication).[14] "The idea of urban agriculture as a survival strategy," observes Sawio,

> is most readily accepted when couched in terms of poor and landless people eking out a living on the margins. [Yet] urban agriculture has become an integral part of livelihood strategies of many better off urban residents, including middle class and professional households. For many, urban agriculture, whether seen as a small scale or large scale production, has provided a flexible opportunity to supplement food supply and incomes. (1993: 11)

Gender and the Effects and Determinants of People's Involvement in Urban Agriculture in Mwanza

Bryceson and others have suggested that Tanzanians have chosen to engage in urban agriculture, especially over the past 30 years, because of the stresses caused by diminishing food subsidies, high food prices, declining living standards, meager incomes, and widespread unemployment (Bryceson 1987; Sawio 1993). Women from all income groups in this study mentioned these reasons, yet some of the wealthier women offered other related ones. For instance Mama John saw it as a way to help maintain gift-based alliances with others. While recognizing that it was not easy to get a lot of food in general, Mama John noted that if she and her family regularly tended to the crops in their garden they usually had "enough even to distribute to our friends and neighbors." Sylvia grew crops and livestock to feed her family and to sell, but she said that she also gave part of her harvest away to others in need. However on the whole people said they were concerned with provisioning their own households and augmenting their incomes. Such being the case, why is it, in this era of rising food costs and escalating inflation, that a greater percentage of Mwanza's low-income households were not practicing urban agriculture?

Space, household-labor availability, gender roles, and other influences shaped crop cultivation in Mwanza. Two basic spatial elements directly affected the success of the city's urban gardens: suitable soil and access to water. Soil quality in town was directly influenced by the local topography, with a distinct sequence of soil types found from the top to the bottom of Mwanza's hills. Soil assessments made earlier in the century found that downslope from the granite outcrops that form the backbone of these hills there often is a gradation from red skeletal soils to grayish sand. Fertility decreased downslope with the exception of a few marshy areas near the lake where the soil was very rich. On the whole each of Mwanza's soils was once deemed suitable for a limited number of crops, and historically the fragmentation of farmers' plots was the ideal. However multiple plots were difficult to obtain because of the recent explosion in Mwanza's population and the highly competitive land market. In addition with the thousands of squatter houses clinging to the hillsides, soil erosion had become a significant problem. Once-fertile soils were traveling downhill, leaving rocky hardpan behind (Heijnen 1968; Mwanza Master Plan (1992–2012) 1992). The poor who inhabited the eroding slopes were at a greater disadvantage than wealthier households situated on

Capri Point, in Isamilo or other areas that were more level or where erosion has been minimized. Additionally the combination of unreliable and highly localized rains, the archaic municipal water-pumping system, and dependence on hand-collected lake water complicated the gardening activities of those who did not have private plumbing, live near a public standpipe or possess the cash to have water delivered.

Most of the limited body of literature on Tanzanian urban agriculture emphasizes household-income differentials, because money affected people's ability to buy food as well as land, seeds, fertilizer, labor, transport, and storage facilities. Yet income levels were not the only difference between Mwanza's urban cultivators. Households that shared the same level of income were rarely similar in other ways. For example one factor that prevented Mwanza's low-income households from growing their own crops was household size and members' available labor power. The average membership of the low-, middle-, and high-income households was four, ten, and nine people, respectively (including domestic employees such as housegirls). Poorer households did not have as many hands as wealthier ones to plant, water, weed, fertilize, guard against harm and theft, and harvest.

Labor power in turn was affected not only by the number of workers available but also by time, age, and health. For instance a given household member may have several different roles in provisioning processes besides that of gardener. Sylvia taught at the hospital's nursing school during the week and oversaw the slaughter of her pigs at the weekends. Young children in several households attended school during the day and weeded their family's backyard garden or watered livestock in the early mornings or late afternoons. Even the largest low-income households were short of labor power because the majority of their members included very young children who could not fully take part in cultivating activities. Bibi Mika's poor household included only the infirm woman and her young orphaned granddaughter, neither of whom could do more than tend a very small grain garden to supplement their beer-brewing business.

Moving beyond household structure in general, it is even more instructive to examine people's participation in urban agriculture with regard to their specific gender roles. Female labor, especially at low-income and lower middle-income levels, was absolutely key to the success of many kitchen gardens and gardens. Yet given the largely patriarchal and patrilineal nature of Tanzanian society as a whole, men controlled most of the monetary, material, and social wealth and had greater access to land, credit, agricultural inputs, markets, and education. So when it comes to women's relation to land, women at all income

levels often have only use rights. In this vein it was not surprising that the two households who cultivated squatter gardens were headed by single females, or that all of the low-, middle-, and high-income households that owned their own gardens and farms had a senior male member who had gained access to land through purchase, inheritance, or government employment (Mbilinyi 1992).

Urban agricultural labor in Mwanza was founded on a gender-based division of labor reminiscent of that found throughout the countryside, wherein women controlled the production of food crops and males controlled the production of cash crops. In my sample I found very few husbands or male partners who worked in the kitchen gardens or gardens or cared for milk cows, pigs, chickens, or ducks. Males referred to by classificatory kinship terms such as *mjomba* (literally, maternal uncle; but also slang for an older male friend) were noted to help in some gardens, but this was very rare. In the majority of the cases women reported that they and their children alone were responsible for working their gardens or overseeing their animals. Women's participation in these activities, however, was fostered in part by the assistance they received from their female extended-family members, such as Mama Esther's mother-in-law who occasionally helped with weeding and harvesting. Housegirls regularly contributed to urban farming in people's kitchen gardens and gardens, whether by freeing their employers from other domestic responsibilities or by taking part in weeding, feeding, watering, and harvesting. I include housegirls' labor contributions to urban farming in Mwanza under the heading of "unpaid female" labor in table 7.1 because none of the housegirls received wages specific to their farming work. This stood out in stark contrast to the males who were paid either in money, produce, or a combination of both.

While the unpaid labor of women and children was key to urban agriculture in Mwanza (and Dar es Salaam), paid urban agricultural labor was very much the realm of men. The 1988 census reported that nearly seven times more men than women took part in waged agricultural work in and around the nation's urban areas (Tanzania Population Census (1988) 1992). Males also had much greater access to government influence and/or resources, which were key in augmenting urban agriculturalists' success. Through their jobs as government bureaucrats and officials some males, such as Mama Esther's husband, gained access to subsidized housing and land. "We grow sweet potatoes, maize and rice in small amounts because we don't have a large garden," she said. "We also raise chickens for their eggs and have a milk cow. The plot is near our house and is owned by the government. My husband was

given the land because of his position as a government engineer." In addition some high-ranking government bureaucrats in Dar es Salaam, the majority of whom were male, used their urban gardens and peri-urban farms as fronts to explain away excess income acquired from bribes (Alphonce Kyessi, personal communication).

The extent to which different people controlled the harvest varied by household-income level, the type of labor (paid male/unpaid female) used to grow crops and households' crop storage capabilities. All of the women from the low-income households who, along with their children and other females tended their gardens, maintained control over the distribution of their crops. Most was consumed by household members or occasionally sold. Sometimes these women gave non-storable surpluses to their friends and neighbors. But with middle- and high-income households, especially those that relied on paid-male labor to tend large farms, both men and women oversaw the distribution of the harvest. In addition to women using what they could to feed their households, especially if they had large storage capabilities, they either informally sold it themselves or oversaw others who sold it for them outside the women's homes or at stands and kiosks along busy thoroughfares. Both upper-income men and women oversaw the distribution of surpluses to family and friends. None of the urban farmers in my sample reported selling their crops through more formal channels in Mwanza's municipal marketplaces.

Patterns of Wealth, Political Influence, and Survival

By 1993–94 rural Tanzanian food production for urban consumers had risen from its low points in the 1970s and 1980s. Rural farmers were motivated by economic deregulation that drove improvements in producer prices and the availability of consumer goods in the countryside. Yet just as renewed rural production promoted the kind of countryside-to-town food connections that the historical export-driven models had discouraged, and just as more private entrepreneurs entered the food distribution system, urban agriculture was playing a key role in advancing more sustainable self-reliant improvements in urban provisioning processes.

Contemporary urban agriculturalists in Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Ghana are comprised of men, women, and children of all income and educational levels, and the labor-surplus model, dependency theory and cultural lag are helpful in explaining why urban residents farm. Yet despite the social, cultural, and economic variability of urban

agriculturalists and their activities, certain patterns tend to emerge in terms of the income level, motivations, and gender of urban farmers in different regions and countries. Below I explore several of the most distinct differences between urban farmers in these four countries and those in Mwanza and elsewhere in Tanzania, what these differences suggest about the broader socioeconomic context in Tanzania and how they relate to food entitlement in Mwanza.

The data from contemporary Mwanza suggests what appears to be the growing incidence of middle- and upper-income farmers and investors in urban agriculture. This pattern is found elsewhere in urban Tanzania, but Mwanza is more comparable to Dar es Salaam and the comparably large city of Arusha than smaller urban areas where even larger percentages of the population engage in urban farming (Mosha 1989; Sawio 1993; Kyessi and Mtani 1993; Materu 1993; Bryceson 1993). While similar to urban farmers in Zimbabwe and Ghana, the high incidence of middle- and upper-income farmers contrasts sharply with the high incidence of low-income urban agriculturalists in Kenya and Zambia. These dissimilarities may explain something about the growing class differentiation occurring in Tanzania, and the extent to which it has increased during the recent period of economic and political liberalization. For example these differences may suggest that the divide between rich and poor in urban Kenya and Zambia is more extensive than in urban Tanzania. In Kenya and Zambia food acquisition for low-income urban residents is fraught with enough difficulties that they are compelled to plant their own crops; Kenyans and Zambians who are better-off appear to have enough job/income security so that they need not plant gardens even to sustain them in lean times. In addition wealthier residents of Kenya and Zambia appear to have access to more profitable investment opportunities outside the narrow margins of the food market, so they may not feel compelled to compete with these countries' urban agriculturalists.

In Tanzania not only do the poor continue to endure food-related challenges, but also many of those who enjoy higher incomes still experience enough employment- and income-related insecurity to remain involved in the production of food. Additionally middle- and upper-income earners increasingly are farming for profit and are taking advantage of the price-margin opportunities created by the high transport costs added on to food imported from the countryside (also see Briggs (1990)). Of course these upper-income urban farmers may invest in other economic opportunities, too. Given the relatively recent liberalization of the economy, many people may be investing in a wide range of activities of which urban agriculture is only one. These

commercially motivated cultivators may intentionally spread the degree of risk associated with their numerous investments, and/or they may lack the know-how and confidence to invest in higher-yield activities, and/or—as the culture-lag model suggests—they may have previous experience with farming.

A key difference between urban agriculture in Tanzania and that in Kenya and Zambia appears to be that outright poverty, formal unemployment, falling and/or insecure incomes, and previously acquired farming skills, compel urban residents in all three countries to grow crops, but that Tanzania's poorest residents do not have the same *capabilities* as those in Kenya and Zambia. Instead many of Tanzania's relatively financially insecure middle- and upper-income groups, who are interested in contending for available urban lands and food-production investment opportunities, enjoy a competitive edge. This allows them greater access to scarcely available fertile land, as well as to water, paid male labor, government influence and resources than their lower-income counterparts. On the one hand many of these same capabilities also favor higher-income urban farmers in Zimbabwe and Ghana. On the other hand the majority of these wealthier urban farmers in Zimbabwe and Ghana tend to feed themselves and their dependants from their harvest rather than entering the low-margin food market.

In spite of the Tanzanian government's historically inconsistent approach toward urban agriculturalists, the fact that many of them belong to relatively wealthy groups suggests that they are here to stay. As C. J. Sawio observes:

> the more educated the players in the enterprise, the more likely they will be interested in protecting their investments by influencing policies and regulations in their favour and hopefully towards finding solutions to the potential impediments to the practice of urban agriculture. (Sawio cited in Kyessi and Mtani 1993: 12)

Projections by Obosu-Mensah of the future of urban agriculture in Ghana mirror this assessment (1999: 207). However urban farmers are by no means solely divided by income level and this is where considerations of gender come to the forefront. The "players" to whom Sawio refers are, more precisely, Tanzanian men. Like their Ghanaian counterparts, Tanzanian men have more access to education. They often have much greater knowledge of how and through exactly whom they can gain the most governmental as well as personal influence in acquiring fertile land, clean water, and other agricultural inputs. Men control the most wealth, are paid the most to work in

urban-resident controlled plots and invest more of their wealth in urban agriculture than do Tanzanian women.

It is evident that people in Mwanza and elsewhere in Tanzania are fed through a system of interrelated processes framed by the inequities inherent in male-controlled wealth and political influence, and unpaid female labor, of which urban agriculture is only a part. Mwanza's minority female and lower-income farmers continue to strive to respond creatively to the inequalities caused by much larger cultural, economic, and political forces. Yet comparable to urban African women elsewhere, they are entrepreneurs, mothers, wives, employers, divorcees, sisters, workers, daughters, friends, and neighbors whose primary day-to-day concern is not necessarily to correct political inequalities inherent in Tanzanian society, but to ensure their own and their children's[15] survival.

8

Food, Gender, and Survival among Street Adults

Despite the growing number of poor women and men living in Africa's towns and cities, there are few localized studies on the destitute and how they feed themselves. The literature on sub-Saharan Africa's urban poverty makes little more than passing references to destitute adults'[1] personal experiences with hunger, the specific foods they eat, and the particular ways they acquire it. This chapter examines the food entitlement challenges faced by 18 of Mwanza's street people, 15 women and three men.

"Street people" are identified herein as women and men 18 years of age and older who spend much of their time living on the streets.[2] This ascription admits many ambiguities, because the legal age of majority in Tanzania is subject to different interpretations based on inconsistencies in the law (Lugalla and Kibassa 2003). In addition some "street people" slept on the streets (more precisely, at the bus station, under bridges, or in shop entrances) while others slept at "home" (at rehabilitation camp shelters or in squatter housing). Some were disfigured by polio or leprosy. Almost all were undernourished and likely suffered from protein, iron, iodine, and vitamin A deficiencies (Kavishe 1990). Many battled recurring bouts of malaria, intestinal parasites, and respiratory infections or endured the ravages of multiple infections related to sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS. As defined here, the "very poor" spent some of their time begging on Mwanza's streets but differed from the street people in that they were slightly better off since they had access to simple dwellings.

Life Before Coming to Town

None of the 18 impoverished men and women interviewed had been born destitute or on the streets. In addition 17 of the 18 people

included in this study were rural-to-urban migrants. Only 46-year-old Iddi had been born in Kirumba, one of Mwanza's large working-class neighborhoods. The rest described their natal homes in the countryside of northwestern Tanzania. Unlike poor adults in Tanzania's other towns, Mwanza's destitute were unique in that the majority had originated from the surrounding region and not from elsewhere in the nation (Ishumi 1984). Their ethnic homogeneity reflected this common place of origin. All three of the men and 11 of the women interviewed were Wasukuma. The other four women included a Mnyamwezi, a Mhaya, a Mkuria, and a Mjita who were affiliated with ethnic groups that originated, at least in recent history, from neighboring regions.

While people had migrated to Mwanza both temporarily or permanently for many reasons from the mid-1900s on, recently population densities and corresponding land pressures, especially in Mwanza region, appeared to contribute in large part to the number of people moving to the city (Mwanza Master Plan (1992–2012) 1992). But the women and men in this study came to town primarily for other reasons, though dwindling land holdings and/or growing rural poverty may have played some part. Eleven of these men and women were abandoned by their blood relatives because they had leprosy or epilepsy. Some of these people lived in or at least frequented Mwanza because they relied on the medicine, food, and shelter provided by the rehabilitation camps at Bukumbi and Kilombelo. Bukumbi, located about 15 miles south of Mwanza, and Kilombelo, located in a neighboring district, were centers established to support the disabled and operated by the Department of Social Welfare. Four other women ran away from home to escape abusive relationships or the stigma of being pregnant and unwed. Two of the women in this sample were divorced and living on their own. Another woman lived with her widowed mother in a neighboring village. She was forced to beg for *zawadi* (gifts of food, money, and clothing) on Mwanza's streets because she and her mother could not grow enough food to feed themselves on their own and they had no other family on whom they could depend.

Those who originated in the countryside came from areas where food and cash-crop cultivation, livestock production, and fishing were key to people's survival. Females usually were responsible for child care, housework, and weeding and cultivating crops such as maize, cassava, plantains, and beans to feed their families. Much like their urban counterparts they also oversaw the preparation, cooking, distribution, and storage of meals and surplus food. Males worked as migrant laborers in the region's towns and gold mines and/or were involved with the production and sale of fish, maize, cotton, coffee, and livestock. Males often were responsible for paying for their families'

clothing, medical, educational, and tax expenses. While males may have contributed cash to pay for the grain, cooking oil, tea, sugar, or salt occasionally purchased by the household, on the whole males were much less involved in day-to-day food procurement, processing, cooking, distribution, and storage than were females. While generalizations such as these may overemphasize gender-based divisions of labor, especially in regard to the distribution of specific farming responsibilities, the factors influencing food provisioning involved an array of gender-based roles combining female labor and male wealth (Bryceson 1993; TGNP 1993).

Two of the destitute women in this study, Esther and Chaina, had left overwhelming food-provisioning roles among their former families. Twenty-five-year-old Esther described how after the death of her mother she lived with her father and stepmother in Sengerema town, in neighboring Geita district. According to her, she spent long days on the farm weeding and cultivating. At the end of the day she regularly returned to the house to begin her chores. "Without thinking that I might be tired," she recounted, "I was immediately bombarded with requests for food." She eventually ran away at the age of 15.

Most of the destitute and very poor included in this study underwent two transitions, one geographic, one economic. First, they made a change in residence from the countryside where they once depended in large part on foods grown by their families or themselves, to town where they relied primarily on purchased foods. Second, as a result of this geographic transition, income generation as opposed to cultivation became the central focus of these adults' food-acquisition activities. Whether separation from kin was voluntary or involuntary, with the loss of familial connections and rural livelihoods came the loss of access to land, labor, and cash on which these people had depended to gain entitlement to food. By and large as a result of these migratory and estrangement processes, all of these men and women eventually entered a state of extreme poverty.

Women on the Streets

The street women interviewed acquired food or the money to purchase it in several ways, but as a group they can be divided into those who exchanged casual sex for food and those who did not. "I was married when I began to lose my eyesight," said Tabu, a virtually blind 30-year-old,

> and then my husband divorced and abandoned me. I went home to my parents. Life was very hard at their home, so I came to town and went onto the streets to beg money. Now it has been four years that

> I have been doing this. Good luck would have it that the Kisesa town government gave me a plot of land. I built a hut and live there with my [three] children. I get food by way of my garden. My children cultivate the food. With the money I get from begging, I buy food. I also have male friends who like me, have sex with me, then give me money or gifts we agree upon. I also brew *gongo* [an illicit liquor], sell it and get money to buy food. This is how I help myself to get food with ease.

Poor women such as Tabu living in Africa's towns have commonly survived by begging, brewing, and selling liquor or beer, and exchanging sex for food or the money to buy it (Southall and Gutkind 1957; Little 1973; Clark 1989; Tripp 1990a; White 1990; and Robertson 1995). Depending on their individual circumstances, they may be involved in one or more of these activities at a given time.

In this and the following chapter, I explore how sex-for-food exchanges or "survival sex" was a vital means through which some street women and girls gained entitlement to food (Glasser 1994: 76).[3] I also argue that the practice of survival sex delineates heterogeneity among street women and girls in terms of food entitlement, specifically, and power, generally. Included herein are first-hand descriptions of some of these females' sexual practices. For reasons of privacy other researchers studying destitute females have chosen not to publish this type of first-hand ethnographic data. Instead they have chosen to rely on information provided by vaguely identified people "in a position of full familiarity with such activities" (Kilbride et al. 2000).

While Western anthropologists, such as Bronislaw Malinowski in his book *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-West Melanesia* (1929), and other observers and entrepreneurs[4] dating at least as far back as the early nineteenth century during the exploitation of Sara Baartman—a.k.a. the Hottentot Venus—have erred on the side of sensationalizing and overly associating Africans and other so-called primitive people with sex and in turn framing their sexuality solely in terms of Western considerations emphasizing bodily sensation and pleasure, to intentionally omit this information is problematic (Foucault 1978; Liljestrom et al. 1998). As is evident from their own descriptions provided below and in chapter 9, many of these destitute females' experiences with sex are anything but "private." While all women are vulnerable, impoverished women run the risk of rape and other sexual violence. Municipal authorities may view poor single women on the streets as prostitutes and threaten them with repatriation and/or demand bribes to allow them to remain in town. While these women subscribed to the wealth-in-people ideal common throughout Africa, wherein large

numbers of children are desired for their future roles in supporting their mothers in old age, these women suffered from recurring insufficiently spaced pregnancies. Some of the greatest dangers to these women's health were sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS. For these reasons I believe any discussion of life on the streets must include ethnographic information on sex, if voluntarily provided by consenting anonymous participants. This conceptual distinction between those women who tried to increase their food entitlement through sex and those who used other means is made purely for analytical reasons and is not meant to suggest that these categories were mutually exclusive or that women did not move between them over time.

Sex work[5] has a long history in Africa and the number of forms it has taken both over time and contemporaneously have been widely documented (Leith-Ross 1939; Ardener 1962; Leslie 1963; Cohen 1969; Little 1973; La Fontaine 1974; Bujra 1975; Nelson 1979; Bryceson 1980a; Iliffe 1987; White 1990; Lugalla 1995; Ferguson 1999). Yet most authors have overlooked or ignored the exchange of sexual services for food among destitute women.[6]

Six of the fifteen women in this study (and none of the men) regularly used casual sex to acquire food (see table 8.1). These women described two forms of sexual relationships. Some like Tabu recounted their comfortable pasts when they lived on their earnings from particular males. "Friends" or "lovers" were men with whom these women either had monogamous sexual associations over time, or with whom they had simultaneous relationships. In either case these encounters regularly occurred in rented rooms at guest houses. While these periodic encounters may have taken place at the same locale for years, sex workers and their lovers were neither formally married nor did they live together. Fifty-five-year-old Nyanya recalled having carried out these types of relationships in her past.

> I married my first husband, who gave me one child, and then we divorced. Later, my child died. I then married my second husband, who was an old man, and we divorced also. Then I came to Mwanza and rented a room. I was still young and I had many men who loved me. Money for my expenses was not a problem. I was given every kind of comfort by these men.

Many women depended on these informal relationships to varying degrees for their livelihood, and they were compensated with food, drink, clothing, or expense money. Payments by lovers often were made over a period of time and not immediately following each sexual

Table 8.1 Street women who exchanged casual sex for food

Name	Age	Ethnic affiliation	Physical conditions	Marital status	Children	Kin	Reason on streets	Years in town	Shelter/plot	FSG*
Tabu	30	Sukuma	vision loss	divorced	3	none	divorced	4	yes	no
Nyanya	55	Kuria	sick	divorced	0	none	divorced	many	no	no
Mariam	30	Sukuma	HIV/bad leg	single	2	none	pregnancy	5	no	no
Esther	25	Sukuma	HIV/bad leg	single	1	none	workload	5	no	no
Chaina	30	Sukuma	none	single	2	none	abuse	15	no	no
Rahema	40	Sukuma	leprosy	single	5	none	ostracism	10	no	no

* = food support group.

encounter. Descriptions such as Nyanya's portrayed women who resembled those commonly referred to as *malaya* (formal Swahili for prostitute) or "prostitutes stationed at guest houses." (White 1990; Lugalla 1995). These same types of arrangements between low-income women and their lovers were found in the Mathare Valley of Nairobi, Kenya. Nici Nelson learned that while "women recognize and value the aspects of sexual attraction, affection, and companionship in these relationships . . . most of them would assess the relative merits of their men on the basis of the latter's generosity with money" (Nelson 1979: 289).

The other form of sexual exchanges described by the street women differed from that depicted above in that its practice was compelled by dire poverty and hunger. Many of the poorest women, too, had sex with their "lovers," but these more informal encounters did not generate enough income to cover a woman's rent expenses, clothing or beer. Services were quick, inexpensive and performed at ever-changing locales such as in dark corners at the bus stand, in deserted alleys, or among rocky outcrops near the lake. Women in these circumstances did not have the benefit of working for men who were necessarily wealthier, nor did they have the bargaining power to pick and choose their clients. Sex was performed solely to meet these women's most basic food needs.

Some observers argue that while not all interactions between husbands and wives are based on self-interest, exchanges of money or gifts are commonly an integral part of marriage and sexual relationships in Africa (Bledsoe 1980; Clark 1994). "Exchange of food between [Kpelle] men and women," Bledsoe notes, "often means that they are having sexual relations" (1980: 159). These gifts-for-sex transactions contribute to the instability of marriage, because some women attempt to take numerous lovers to benefit from these exchanges.[7] East African *malaya*, too, were very wife-like in status and in their food-provisioning roles (Nelson 1979; Lugalla 1995). But the experiences of Mwanza's most destitute sex workers seemed to be a painful aberration from this cultural norm. Not only did these women derive little economic advantage from these exchanges, but they also did not fulfill their culturally sanctioned role as provisioners of food. Instead their male partners provided these women with barely enough food or money to get through another day.

A woman named Mariam engaged in both of these types of sexual relations. After running away single and pregnant from her home in a neighboring village, Mariam met a man who took her in and supported her. They had two more children over three years. While she was

pregnant with the last child the man died, and soon after birth the child died, too. Without her partner's financial support, she was forced from her rented room. She went to live at the central bus stand, where many of Mwanza's street people sleep. At the same time she was diagnosed with HIV. "It is not easy to get food," Mariam said. "Sometimes I get food by begging. Usually I have sex to get money to buy food or I get food as gifts from my lovers."

Women such as Mariam resembled those called *watembezi* (Kiswahili for streetwalkers) or "street-loitering prostitutes," though the street women were unlikely to be as well dressed, as organized into working groups and as aggressive in marketing themselves as most *watembezi* (White 1990; Lugalla 1995). Instead "scroungers," which denotes the scavenging nature of these women's sexual encounters, better characterized them (White 1990: 48; Vaughan 1992: 78).

While Mwanza's street women described both types of sex-for-food relationships, at the time they were interviewed they were practicing only scrounging. Their stories revealed that it was their failure to succeed at the *malaya* form that precipitated a switch to the scrounging form. Nyanya made the transition to scrounging after she began to drink beer. She said the long-term effects of her drinking made her "sick," though her illness remained unspecified. "When I became weak the men ran away. There was not enough money to pay the rent or to buy food. Therefore, I went to live at the bus stand . . . . [Now] I get food by begging or from sleeping with men."

Esther, the woman who ran away from her father's farm when she was 15, disclosed how she had to stop sex work altogether. "I began to go around to the bars and restaurants in the evening in search of men," she explained. "I had sex with the men and they would give me money. In the beginning I had many lovers and lots of money. Now I am sick and my child is sick and there is no one who cares . . . . It is not easy to get food every day because I do not have the strength to work. I live by having sex with men and begging from passersby."

Several factors appeared to determine which type of sex-for-food relationships these women had. Women with long-term access to relatively wealthy lovers were more likely to succeed in having *malaya* forms of relationships. Once one's clientele was established, *malaya* could choose to live independently and comfortably outside the boundaries of formal marriage or other means of immediate control by male kin. Though a *malaya*'s "independence" was tempered by the fact that men still controlled most of the wealth and power in Mwanza, those who practiced scrounging did not enjoy access to this wealthy clientele, and their sex-for-food relationships often were driven by necessity, rather than choice (Iliffe 1987; TGNP 1993).

Women who are known to have had several very short-lived relationships are less appealing as long-term lovers. So once a women resorts to scrounging she usually loses her capacity to live as a *malaya* again (Mustafa Kudrati, personal communication, February 20, 1995).[8] Researcher Elizabeth Mandeville suggests that age also may be an important factor in determining the type of sex-for-food relationships in which a woman engages (Mandeville cited by Little 1973: 40). Evidence from Mwanza, however, demonstrated that health was a stronger determinant. For instance once Nyanya's beer drinking made her "sick" she lost her wealthy clientele. Ever since then she has relied on scrounging to feed herself. The most influential factor affecting these women's health today is the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. HIV infection forced Mariam and very likely Esther to give up *malaya*-type relationships in their twenties. Other sexually transmitted diseases were common historically; none were as lethal as HIV/AIDS. Tanzania has one of the highest HIV infection rates in Africa. While more women were learning about, and openly discussing, the dangers of acquiring HIV/AIDS, many of the poorest did not have reliable sources of information (TGNP 1993). Impoverished women also lacked the ability to protect themselves against transmission during sexual encounters. Not only were condoms expensive but women did not have the bargaining power to force their partners to wear them. For these reasons the increasing incidence of HIV infection in the general population probably resulted in more street women becoming infected and losing their abilities to perform sex work after a relatively short time (White 1990; TGNP 1993).[9]

The six street women who engaged in sex-for-food exchanges had several characteristics in common. The most significant was that all of these women were entirely independent. While all except for Nyanya had children living with them, none of these women had any adult kin or others on whom they could regularly depend for nutritional or financial support. Five of these women were Wasukuma and one was Mkuria. As Mwanza is located in Sukuma territory and that the Wakuria are a neighboring group, it was not likely that geographical distance between these women and their families was the reason for their complete independence. As noted earlier Esther and Chaina ran away from exploitative relationships. Mariam left home when she discovered she was pregnant and Rahema had been estranged from her family since she began showing signs of leprosy.

Tabu and Nyanya were divorced. The Wasukuma and Wakuria trace descent and transfer property patrilineally. Historically divorced women had few rights over any of their property acquired during marriage, and fathers had the right of first refusal over child custody

(Cory 1953). Most rural women are still largely governed by Sukuma and Kuria customary law even though as of the last few years national laws, in theory, have begun to protect many of the rights of wives and mothers. In practice, however, the village and town courts can still choose to hear a case according to customary law and often do so when the magistrate has been poorly trained and court officials have been bribed. Women commonly are at the mercy of their wealthier, better educated and more politically influential husbands, who can manipulate the national laws to their benefit (Booth, Lugangira, Masanja et al. 1993). Many divorcees are left not only without land and other property but also without their children, who are greatly depended on by their mothers for their future labor, financial support, and general care. For these reasons divorced women are more vulnerable to poverty than males, especially if the women are separated from their natal kin. Luckily Tabu gained sole custody of her three children when her husband divorced her. She depended on her youngest child to act as her guide when she was in town and relied on all three children to cultivate vegetables in their small garden. Exchanging sex for food was one of the few viable options for these women. Such exchanges required no training, no input of capital, and no labor or financial support from their kin.

When these women acquired money instead of food in exchange for sex, some purchased raw foods at the marketplace that they then cooked themselves. Tabu prepared meals for herself and her children. She bought grain or flour for *uji* or *ugali*. Sugar is often used to sweeten *uji*, but none of Mwanza's destitute could afford to do this. The poor commonly ate *ugali* with an inexpensive side dish that consisted of boiled cassava leaves, cow-pea greens, or spinach.

In addition to flour Tabu bought cassava leaves and beans, and supplemented these with tomatoes and spinach from her home garden. Mariam also tried to prepare most of her meals. "If I get enough money," said Mariam, "I send my children to the marketplace to buy food. Then I cook it myself because I have the tools such as a charcoal stove, aluminum cooking pots, plates, etc. . . ." The four other women bought or begged for food at the small *magenge* (food stands) throughout town. *Magenge* ranged from very small ventures that included one woman who prepared a simple dish over a fire near a makeshift wooden bench for customers to sit on, to more extensive establishments that employed several women who cooked meals on charcoal stoves under a plastic tarp used to protect a few tables and benches from the equatorial sun or occasional rain. Two favorite stand locations frequented by the destitute were Soko Kuu (the central

marketplace next to the main bus station) and Kamanga (a lakeside spot named after the ferry that docks nearby), where the women tried to take advantage of any bus and ferry passengers who were interested in quick sex. They also relied on the women running the stands who gave them unsalable food, such as the charred remnants of rice and porridge from the bottom of their cooking pots.

When they purchased food the street people and very poor usually bought *uji*. Some women, such as Esther, lived almost entirely on *uji*. If they could afford a little more, they bought *ugali*. The sex workers also ate snack foods such as doughy *vitumbua* (deep-fried rice balls) or *maandazi* (plain donuts), which were widely available at the stands, in small cafes, and restaurants, and from women who fried them on the streets. The primary sources of protein for these women were *maharage* (kidney beans) in combination with rice or *ugali*. Only occasionally did these women eat fish and they never mentioned eating goat or beef, two of the town's more expensive foods.

For most of these impoverished women, a day's success was measured by the number of meals they ate. Mariam's descriptions mirrored those of the others. "It is not easy to get food for each meal every day. When my children and I don't get food we go around hungry and go to sleep hungry," she said. "I have no other way to get food because I am sick and I don't have the strength to work." Just as these women acquired food on their own, they rarely shared or consumed it with others besides their own children.

It is apparent from the foregoing narratives that among these women hunger and exchange entitlement were intricately linked. Chances for these women to increase their food entitlement through means other than sex work and begging often were absent or too difficult to grasp. Chaina, a mother of two, would sometimes buy two dozen eggs if she and her children had collected enough money by begging. She would then boil and sell the eggs on the streets in hope of making a profit. But if she and her children were hungry enough they would eat the eggs, and with them all of their business capital. "When I don't have the ability to get food I sleep or go hungry," explained Chaina. "I must depend upon begging and what I am given. There is no other way I can think of to get food with ease except to continue to have many male friends and to have sex with them."

Like the former group, the majority of those who did not engage in "scrounging" were Wasukuma (see table 8.2). Six of the women who relied on other means to acquire food were single or abandoned by their husbands and/or families, though two were married and the youngest, 19-year-old Rose, lived in a nearby village with her mother

Table 8.2 Street women who did not exchange casual sex for food

Name	Age	Ethnic affiliation	Physical conditions	Marital status	Children	Kin	Reason on streets	Years in town	Shelter/plot	FSG*
Loyce	42	Sukuma	leprosy	abandoned	2 of 6 with her	none	ostracism	8	camp	no
Ana	35	Jita	leprosy	married	3	husband	ostracism	20	no	yes
Swauma	40	Sukuma	leprosy	married	1 of 7 with her	husband	ostracism	4	camp	yes
Kata	30	Sukuma	albino	single	3	none	abuse	10	camp	no
Edwina	38	Nyamwezi	leprosy	abandoned	3 of 5 with her	none	ostracism	15	camp	no
Lucy	35	Sukuma	leprosy	single	0	none	ostracism	7	camp	no
Josie	28	Haya	epileptic	single	0	none	ostracism	3	camp	no
Sarah	25	Sukuma	epileptic	single	0	none	ostracism		camp	no
Rose	19	Sukuma	none	single	0	mother	poverty	19	yes	no

* = food support group.

and regularly came to town to beg. Most of the latter group also had no formal education. Only Josie, 28, had completed primary school.

Eight of the nine women who did not exchange quick sex for food were either albino or had leprosy or epilepsy. These three conditions carry a strong stigma in Tanzania, and albinos, lepers, and epileptics often face familial rejection and community harassment (Iliffe 1987; Turshen 1995). First impressions suggested that these women faced even greater food challenges than the others. Yet all of these women had established relationships with people and organizations on whom they could depend for food. Six women relied on a combination of begging for food in town and meals served at government-run rehabilitation camps. One woman pooled her daily begging proceeds and ate meals with a group of other destitute adults, while another woman did so only periodically when she and her husband came to town from nearby Misasi to beg. Rose took her begging proceeds home and shared meals with her widowed mother, with whom she lived on a small plot provided by the Kisesa village government.

Rose was unemployed, had no formal education, and no children or family other than her mother on whom she could depend for support. She and her mother cultivated maize, cassava, sweet potatoes, and peanuts in a small garden. Their only monetary income came from Rose's begging in town. When she was in Mwanza, Rose frequented the food stands and bought inexpensive meals such as *ugali* and greens. When at home in Kisesa, she tried to buy fish and harvest food from her garden. Yet much of the time there was not enough to eat. "If I am unable to find food," she said, "I beg from our neighbors and friends or we go to sleep hungry."

Six other women (one albino, two with epilepsy, and three with leprosy) depended in part on the meager rations available at the rehabilitation camps. These women described the camps at Bukumbi and Kilombelo as their primary residence, though they routinely moved back and forth between the camps and town where they begged. An epileptic named Sarah, 25, said that she had just moved from Bukumbi to Mwanza's central bus stand because she was afraid of the men who lived at the camps and often became violent after drinking home-brewed beer and occasionally beat her. Yet Mwanza was no safer. She said that the night before her interview she had been chased and raped by some street boys.

Some of these women found their way to the camps under their own initiative to avoid ostracism at home. Others left home reluctantly after being chased away by their parents, husbands, siblings, or stepmothers, while others were brought to the camps against their will

after being rounded up by town police. The camps provided some food and medicine, but all of the women described life there as *magumu* (hard or difficult). While the camps could experience seasonal shortages of certain foods, unconfirmed reports blamed shortages on camp employees who sold the camps' food, medicine, and soap rations for personal profit. Loyce, 42, and a mother of six, said that at Bukumbi she did not get enough food, clothes, or money for entertainment. "I also like to buy snuff, cigarettes, beer, etc. . . . So, I go to town to beg for money for my necessities."

Food shortages were not unique to the camps in Mwanza region. Many of the nation's camps were "disasters" and the poor living conditions they offered forced many people onto the streets (Lugalla 1995). The national press has confirmed many of these claims. According to one article,

> The Chairman of the Economic and Planning Committee at Nunge [a rehabilitation camp located near Dar es Salaam], Ndugu Rasho Kirapa, complained . . . that life in the camp was "deplorable" and that the disabled residents had to run to the streets to beg. "Life here is unfit for human habitation," said Ndugu Kirapa.

The article goes on to describe how food rations had been cut to the point where people drink plain *uji* for breakfast and eat *ugali* and sardines every day for lunch. Other essentials were lacking at the camp as well.

> More than one third of the disabled at the camp had no beds and bedding. Some of them had big wounds which they claimed were caused by sleeping on the floor. Some were almost walking naked, and some complained that they were being forced to put on whatever came by, even women's clothes for men. The disabled people at Nunge are being paid 210 shillings [@ US $1] every three months to buy for themselves small things like cigarettes. The amount, [the camp inhabitants] said, was very small. (*Daily News*, January 4, 1989, as quoted by Lugalla 1995: 143)

For many of the destitute life on the streets was better than that at the camps, but only slightly. The diets of the women who did not exchange quick sex for food were comparable to those who did. When they were successful at begging they bought *maandazi* and bananas on the streets or *uji* and *ugali* with spinach or beans at the food stands. Sometimes they ate Nile perch. When they were unsuccessful these women and their children went to sleep hungry. On the whole

their meals were as small, low-protein and lacking in variety and regularity as the women who practiced scrounging sex.

Two women with leprosy gained entitlement to food through membership in what I call "food-support groups." I view these food-centered mutual-support groups as atypical households, but households just the same. The groups involved many comparable gender-based divisions of labor, income streams, resource pooling, and redistribution practices as found in Mwanza's more typical households. They also included similar age, sex, ethnic, and kin/non-kin variability as well as a parallel emphasis on a moral economy of equitable food access. According to those in this study, their food-support groups had anywhere from five to 17 members, most of whom were male, though usually one or two women were included. In addition these groups were primarily controlled by men. The primary function of these groups was to provide their members with at least one daily meal. Every day both male and female members contributed from 70 to 100 shillings (US $0.14–0.20), and then a couple of designates (in these cases they were always males) took the money to buy food at the central marketplace. If individual members had kept their money they could have bought a small cup of gruel, but once they combined their funds with others they could afford to buy flour to make *uji* or *ugali*, leafy green vegetables, fruit and, if they had enough money, fish or goat meat. The female members of the group then prepared the meal. Food was divided evenly among the group, even if a member was unable to contribute his or her full share on a given day, but in accordance with practices in the rural areas the men and women ate their meals separately (Varkevisser 1973).

"We organized a group of 17, including 14 men and three women," explained 35-year-old Anna.

> I am the cook since the other two women are old and have lost their fingers. Usually we combine our money, each person contributes 70 shillings (US $0.14). Then we choose a man to go to the marketplace to buy food. I cook the food and usually serve it in two places: one for the men and another for the women.

Anna was one of the few street women to say that it was easy to get food because her group was large, well organized and sufficiently financed to provide its members with three meals a day.

Not all food-support groups were as successful. Forty-year-old Swauma was an occasional member of a smaller group. She lived outside of town on a small plot with her husband and six children.

Both she and her husband had leprosy, and they came to Mwanza periodically to beg for money. While in Mwanza they slept at the central bus station and ate with the two or three others in their food-support group. "[On a daily basis] each person contributes 100 shillings (US $0.20)," Swauma said. "We usually buy flour, beans and spinach and then we cook them for our evening meal."

Anna and Swauma were the only women interviewed who belonged to a food-support group. They described themselves as being "married" to male members, though the legality of these claims was not investigated. This suggested that for women marriage might have been a prerequisite for inclusion. While a sexual relationship was implicit in their married status, their relationships were apparently monogamous and long term, unlike the women who engaged in scrounging. Anna had been married 15 years and had three children. It was unclear how long Swauma had been married, but she and her husband had seven children. Both women's partners also were lepers.

Through their membership in these groups, Anna and Swauma enjoyed a more varied and high-protein diet than most of the other destitute women. For breakfast Anna's group in particular drank tea with milk and ate fried rice balls. Lunch and dinner often included maize-flour *ugali* or rice with spinach, beans, Nile perch, chicken, or goat meat. When eating with their groups, Anna and Swauma had more control than the other women in avoiding illnesses spread through the uncooked, spoiled or contaminated food that was often distributed as alms, scavenged in garbage heaps or purchased at the food stands. According to Anna, "It is not easy to have a problem getting food—we get a lot of money by begging."

Men on the Streets

While my research was initially focused on women, three men expressed an interest in recounting their stories. Three is a small sample, but the personal accounts of these men offer an important means of comparison with those of the street women and provide a foundation for future research.

Like many of the women, Hamisi, Iddi, and Shukrani were Wasukuma (see table 8.3). The men also had little or no formal education. All three of these men came to live on the streets for one reason. "I have lived in Mwanza for 10 years since I showed signs of becoming sick with leprosy and people ostracized my family," recounted Hamisi. "I was married but my wife died. I have two children. Now I live at the bridge."[10] When Shukrani first came to Mwanza he

Table 8.3 Street men

Name	Age	Ethnic affiliation	Physical conditions	Marital status	Children	Kin	Reason on streets	Years in town	Shelter/	FSG* plot
Hamisi	35	Sukuma	leprosy	widower	2	?	ostracism	10	none	yes
Iddi	46	Sukuma	leprosy	married	4 living w/mother	wife and children	ostracism	46	none	yes
Shukrani	47	Sukuma	leprosy	single	2	single	ostracism	23	none	yes

* = food support group.

stayed at the Kilombelo camp. "At that time," he said, I was showing signs of leprosy.

> I decided to go to the camp before the people of my village found out. When I arrived there, I was told about the medical treatments. So, I began to be treated . . . . I felt very sick until my fingers and nose fell off. Now I live at the bridge.

Hamisi, Shukrani, and Iddi acquired food via their membership in food-support groups. These groups included seven to 10 people. Shukrani explained that as "treasurer" of his group he was responsible for collecting members' daily dues. According to him, "The group arranges to buy certain foods, then two of the men go to the marketplace, buy the food and then entrust it to a woman who cooks it."

These men ate a greater variety of high-protein foods than most of the street women who acquired food on their own. The men described eating *ugali*, fish, and rice with beans on a regular basis. Rice was more expensive than maize and millet, but added welcomed variety to their diets. "Every day I eat different kinds of food," remarked Shukrani. These men usually ate at least two meals a day.

These men also described how alliances with the members of their food-support groups extended beyond their food connection. There was a sense of trust, cooperation, reciprocity, and caring among group members. Hamisi, the youngest of the men, noted that if he was unable to get money to contribute to the pool on a given day, the others gave him some of their food. Some of his group's members accompanied him to the hospital when he required treatment. In return he usually helped the elder lepers in his group by fetching water.[11]

Shukrani had alliances with family members who did not live on the streets. He contributed to the upkeep of his wife and their four children.[12] He met her while she, too, was begging on Mwanza's streets. After the birth of their second child, she moved back to her parents' home in neighboring Kwimba district. Shukrani said that whenever he was successful at begging, he took a bus and delivered the extra money to his wife. Iddi also had connections to immediate family. He was married, had four children, and his wife cooked for his food group.

Unlike many of the women, all three men agreed that it was easy to get food, since they had lived in Mwanza for a long time and had many helpful friends. They were indeed familiar faces to both town residents and periodic visitors, and this familiarity appeared to contribute greatly to their begging income.

Self-Reliance

In addition to the material challenges faced by Mwanza's most impoverished women and men in their attempts to acquire enough food to survive, these people confronted immaterial tests, such as the ideological commitments held by some of Mwanza's other inhabitants. Specifically once the destitute were estranged from whatever food support that was once provided via the moral economy of their families and their rural livelihoods, their entitlement to food was directly influenced by the general public's perceptions of what it meant to be poor and in need of assistance.

In Mwanza some people felt that the very poor were entitled to charity while others held the attitude that street people were not their responsibility. This view was especially common among Africans, as opposed to the relatively wealthier Asians. People's unwillingness to give charity most often was framed in terms of their limited financial resources. Mabula, a 33-year-old grain vendor at the central marketplace, explained that he and his wife could barely feed their five children let alone Mwanza's destitute. "My family is large and my income is small," he revealed. "If I have extra money or food I try to take it to my parents in Shinyanga region [to the south]. But the bus fare is so high I can only go there maybe once in four months. How can I give to the street people when I cannot support my own family?"

In conjunction with the feeling that they were already stretched beyond their capabilities to be generous, many in Mwanza held the ideological conviction that people should work hard to be self-sufficient in everyday life. This belief had been shaped by the convergence of two social processes. One was the government's call in 1967 for economic development to proceed on a precept of self-reliance. *Kila Mtu Afanye Kazi* (Everyone Must Do Work) served as a slogan promoting the socialist plan outlined in the Arusha Declaration (Nyerere 1968; Kerner 1988). The improvement of the nation's vast rural areas through food and cash-crop production was at the heart of the government's vision. Advancement was to result from citizens' dedication to the moral economy of mutual support among family and friends found in "peasant" societies, as well as through their commitment to socialist doctrines (Bryceson 1990; Legume and Mmari 1995). The other process was the escalation of rural-to-urban migration, which resulted in changes in who was producing food in the countryside, unchecked urban growth, and widespread urban unemployment. In spite of the stark contradictions between the government's

ambitious plan for rural development and the social reality of increasing rural poverty and rampant urbanization, many Tanzanians living in both rural and urban areas openly valued the ideals of self-sufficiency and hard work. It was commonly believed that every member of the community, except for the very young, the old, and the sick, had an obligation to work. Since Independence in 1961, the Penal Code (Chapter 16, section 176) has outlawed the "idler and the loiterer," which in general terms criminalized prostitutes, beggars, and wanderers (Mohiddin 1972: 166). The Human Resources Deployment Act of 1983 amended the penal code to outlaw "any able-bodied person who is not engaged in any productive work and has no visible means of subsistence," as well as "any person lawfully employed who is, without any lawful excuse, found engaging in personal entertainment at a time when he is suppose to be at work" (Lugalla and Kibassa 2003: 115).

This ethic of self-reliance was especially strong in regard to food acquisition. Female and male farmers in the countryside grew their own food to feed themselves and their families, and town-based women and men worked for wages to buy food for themselves and their kin (Bryceson 1990).

At a very basic level the street women and men were judged by the public according to their appearance. Even though many of the women who exchanged sex for food as well as the women and men who begged for alms shared common ethnic backgrounds, weathered similar experiences with divorce, abandonment, or abuse, and had little or no formal education, they were strikingly different in the way they looked. While five of the six sex workers were challenged by generalized weakness, preliminary signs of leprosy, vision loss, or HIV, none of these conditions were readily apparent to the casual observer. Conversely 11 of the 12 men and women who did not perform sex work were either albino (one), had advanced signs of leprosy (eight), or suffered from epileptic seizures (two).

The female and male beggars who exhibited greater disfigurement or ill health were more likely to receive alms because they appeared to be unable to cultivate food or work for wages to buy it. The pervasive ideology of self-reliance severely limited the sex workers' exchange entitlements. At the highest level of government, President Julius K. Nyerere (who held office from 1961 until 1985) promoted food entitlement for all citizens under the premise that freedom included a lack of want from "hunger, disease and poverty" (Read 1995: 128). Yet at the local level, many of Mwanza almsgivers had a different take on entitlement. Instead of viewing universal food entitlement as a moral

right, entitlement was seen as directly linked to one's ability to work. Because the sex workers usually did not exhibit signs that their capabilities to provide for themselves were in any way impaired, many almsgivers in Mwanza assumed these women could work for their food. "I give leftover *ugali* and spinach to the poor who come here," said Juma who worked in a roadside cafe. "But I chase away the people who are not lepers or are not sick. These people can pay for their meals. If they do not pay they are thieves."

Street women suffered additional biases. Apparently healthy women were less likely to be offered alms because of their roles as the primary producers of food throughout the nation. In essence these women were viewed as lazy but potentially able food providers and not as those for whom others should provide food (Raikes 1988). Independent women on Tanzania's streets also were commonly stigmatized as prostitutes and not worthy of support (Lugalla 1995). Lacking the ability to command alms forced these women to seek food or money in other ways, which usually involved quick sex.

Broadening the entitlement approach to include private charity highlights important interrelationships between gender, ideology, and gradients of power—even among Mwanza's seemingly powerless destitute. For instance on Fridays the population of beggars in town increased noticeably. It was widely known throughout Mwanza's surrounding countryside that on this day African, Asian, and Arab almsgivers regularly offered charity in accordance with their resources and religious beliefs. African and Asian Muslims offered *sadaka* (alms) in the form of food, money, or clothing from their residences and businesses. Asian Hindus and Sikhs were committed to the idea of an open kitchen and provided meals to the poor. African Christians, too, considered Friday a day of giving money or food. While large numbers of the destitute appealed to passersby on the streets every day, Friday was considered by almsgivers to be the one day of the week that the poor could "legitimately" beg (Rakesh Rajani, personal communication, April 4, 1995).[13]

The women and men who relied on begging to acquire food actually had powerful exchange entitlements over alms-giving opportunities, which indeed were entitlement-related transfers. The women and men who were successful at begging and who, as a consequence, were members of food-support groups had greater opportunities to spread their individual risk of entitlement failure among the group and in this way were less likely to go hungry. Unfortunately, the sex workers were left in a relatively powerless position because their challenges to self-reliance were not as obvious to almsgivers as the difficulties faced by those who were albino or had leprosy and epilepsy. This situation

highlighted how the pervasive moral economies of food production and self-reliance acted to legitimize people's condemnation of the poor who struggled to survive in a society with both a high premium on work and on women's roles in food provisioning. This state of affairs also is a stark example of how forcefully moral censure can directly influence the nature of exchange entitlements, the design of survival strategies, and the creation of power differentials among the destitute.

9

Lessons on Food, Childhood, and Work from Street Girls and Boys

> Here everything is raw. Reality. Food. Eyes.
> Nothing has to be elaborated. Everything is thrown in their faces.
> Aggressive nicknames, ruthless laughter, plunder, sneering, ridicule,
> the scar that never heals, the manhandling, the crudeness.
> Broken bones heal by themselves.
>
> *Journalist/novelist Elena Poniatowska on street children in Mexico City (1999: 20)*

In 1993–94, at the time of my first extended stay in Mwanza, several hundred extremely poor, largely independent girls and boys survived on the city's streets. Living in cities worldwide ranging from Rio de Janeiro to Bangkok to Khartoum, children like these are the subject of an extensive literature that initially treated them as a uniform category but that now recognizes the heterogeneity among them (Glauser 1990; Reddy 1992; Wright et al. 1993; Passaro 1996). Some homeless children originate from urban slums and others from rural villages. Some destitute girls are forced into organized prostitution rings and others independently exchange quick sex for food. Some destitute boys are removed from streets by police, placed in shelters and public schools while others spend months in crowded, filthy jail cells with abusive men. Many people associate street life with violence, and violent it often is. Yet one major difference between street children in Mwanza and those in Rio de Janeiro, for example, was that even though they were exploited for their labor, abused, feared, and sometimes died on the streets, Mwanza's homeless girls and boys were not the targets of systematic state-sponsored death squads as they have been in Brazil (Huggins and de Castro 1996; Hecht 1998).

Today the increasing awareness of "street children" and the complexity of their lives leaves them ill-defined, for girls and boys who rely on the streets to survive do so through wide-ranging activities, in differing locations, according to varying schedules and ever-changing degrees of marginalization.[1] There have been many attempts to define street children in terms of being "on" or "of" the streets, or as "Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances," or as "Children in Need of Special Protection Measures" (Tacon 1985; UNICEF 1999). Yet these labels often lose their efficacy in their reference to such wide-ranging conditions. The marker "street children" often emerges at the conceptual level in ways comparable to "refugees"—as representative of "almost generic, ideal typical figures" (Malkki 1995: 8).

By shifting the focus from categories of children to the lived realities of these girls' and boys' experiences, researchers have contributed to this definitional debate by demonstrating that "children out on the street" are, borrowing anthropologist Mary Douglas's phrase, "matter out of place" and therefore they should be examined "as they are socially conceived in the urban environment" (Connolly and Ennew 1996: 139). Given the territorial aspects of many cultural identities, it logically follows that "uprooted" girls and boys are perceived as dislocated, disconnected and "torn loose from their culture" (Marrus 1985: 8). While complicated by the facts that as social categories "refugees" and "street children" are not mutually exclusive, and that refugees differ from street children in their political rights,[2] I believe that contemporary research on refugees can inform street-children studies via its focus on the intersections of culture, place, meaning, and anxiety among mobile groups (Malkki 1995; Sommers 2001; Lyimo 1993).

Anthropologist Liisa Malkki's research emphasizes a crucial difference between " 'matter out of place' in the classification of plants and animals and 'matter out of place' when people are in question"—the key point being that among people acts of classification are ongoing two-way processes (Malkki 1995: 8). Street girls and boys are identified, assigned meaning and categorized by others and, in turn, do so right back. I learned in Mwanza that processes of categorization and counter-categorization between street children and the wider community unequivocally accentuated differences between girls' and boys' entitlement to food.

Nine girls (see table 9.1) and nineteen boys (see table 9.2) took part in my study. I identified "street children" as those under 18 years of age who lived, slept and foraged for food unaccompanied by any adult kin.[3] Distinguishing the children in this way was problematic

Table 9.1 Street girls

Name	Age	Ethnic affiliation	Region of origin	Kin on streets	Reason on streets	Years in town
Adelina	11	Sukuma	Mwanza		abandoned	0.5
Dotti	13	Sukuma	Mwanza		orphaned	2
Jane	13	Haya	Kagera		orphaned	
Josie	15	Haya	Kagera		ran away	0.5
Leah	16	Sukuma	Mwanza		abusive stepmother	5
Lucy	14	Haya	Mwanza		abusive parents	1
Mariam	13	Sukuma	Mwanza	brother	abusive father	3
Pina	13	Haya	Kagera		abusive stepfather	0.5
Regina	15	Sukuma	Shinyanga		abused as housegirl	1

Table 9.2 Street boys

Name	Age	Ethnic affiliation	Region of origin	Kin on streets	Reason on streets	Years in town
Ciano	16	Sukuma	Mwanza		abused	1.5
Emma	10	Sukuma	Tabora		abusive stepfather	1
Ibrahim	11	Kerewe	Mwanza			
Iddi	10	Sukuma	Mwanza			3
John	12	Kuria	Mara		abusive father	1
Joseph	14	Sukuma	Kagera		came to town seeking work	
Juma	8	Sukuma	Mwanza	brother	orphaned	
Kato	6	Sukuma	Mwanza		abusive father	1
Kessy	5	Sukuma	Mwanza		orphaned	5
Lucas	14	Haya	Kagera		orphaned	1
Nuru	16	Swahili	Coast			1
Nyakato	14	Jita	Mara		ran away	2
Ramadhani	10	Sukuma	Mwanza		abandoned	
Robert	12	Rangi	Mwanza		orphaned	0.1
Salum	16	Sukuma	Mwanza			
Samson	14	Sukuma	Mwanza			1
Steven	12	Sukuma	Mwanza			
Sweddy	15	Sukuma	Mwanza			1
Theo	11	Nyamwezi	Tabora		abusive stepmother	0.5

because most of these children did not know their actual age, a few had periodic contact with some of their relatives and at least one girl reported that she was "married" to a street man. In addition some children slept on the "streets" (at the bus station, in shop entrances, or under marketplace tables), while others slept at "shelters" (on kitchen

floors in the restaurants where they worked, in protected alleys near homes in which they washed floors or on the cement veranda at the local street children's center). All of these children were young, destitute, and largely responsible for their own survival. They should not be confused with those children who either sold cigarettes, candy or snacks on the streets to help support their families or those who spent their days playing in the town's congested alleys, open sewers, and garbage heaps because their families could not afford to send them to school or to provide them with alternative recreation.[4]

All of the children included in my sample lived in Mwanza, at least from time to time.[5] These children were willing research participants and some of them were my friends. As I discuss throughout this chapter, all of these children suffered a lot. They lived with fear of the unknown, anxiety about their next meal and exploitation at the hands of one another and the general public. But the children in this study were not particularly angry. The angry ones would have little to do with me. In addition despite the identifiers posed by scholars, advocates, and most of Mwanza's other residents, the children did not view themselves as "street children." Instead they viewed themselves as children enduring a particular *event* in their lives and many had future plans surrounding work, school, and reunification with their families or other caregivers.

In addition all of these children were of African as opposed to Asian or Arab descent. Mwanza's street children in general were an ethnically diverse group and some had made their way to the city from Kenya and Burundi.[6] Of the 28 girls and boys in my study, 17 claimed affiliation (through either one or both parents) to the regionally predominant Sukuma. The others associated themselves with Haya, Jita, Rangi, Kuria, Nyamwezi, or Kerewe groups. While all of these children originated in areas outside of the city, more recently very poor children from Mwanza itself have begun moving onto the streets (Sabas Masawe, personal communication, July 25, 2000).[7]

The children were on their own for a variety of reasons. In short most of them had been involuntarily forced out of their homes.[8] Typically they were singled out from among their siblings and chased away because they were disliked or they ran away because dire poverty had stretched their parents or other "caregivers" beyond their capabilities to nurture them. Nine of the 28 children made statements suggesting they were the victims of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. A few had barely escaped with their lives after brutal machete attacks or beatings by drunken fathers, abusive stepparents, parents' spiteful lovers, or angry village mates. Six of the children were orphaned by

AIDS, two explained that they were abandoned by relatives, and another two had left home because they felt overworked or unappreciated.

Mwanza's street children had much in common with those elsewhere in Tanzania and neighboring Kenya (Lugalla and Kibasa 2002, 2003; Kilbride et al. 2000). They were migrants who had made the transition from primarily rural areas to the city, and with that transition came a change from eating home-grown and purchased foods to a dependence on purchased, scavenged, stolen or gift foods in the form of charity. All of them suffered from chronic hunger. They managed to eat enough to stay alive but their meals were rarely filling, frequent, or nutritious enough to promote healthy physical, mental, and emotional development. Virtually all of the street children were thin and appeared physically stunted. Fourteen-year-old boys looked like they were 10; 12-year-old girls looked like they were eight. Some children's hair was patchy and rust colored and most suffered from iron, iodine, and vitamin A deficiencies in their diets (Kavishe 1990). The youngest had bellies bloated by protein-deficient edema and/or intestinal worms. All battled recurring bouts of malaria, diarrhea, respiratory infections, schistosomiasis, skin and eye diseases, lice, bruises, cuts, and festering wounds. Some endured the ravages of multiple infections related to sexually transmitted diseases such as chlamydia and HIV/AIDS. Many of the children smoked *bangi* (marijuana) to dull their fear and anxieties and others sniffed glue or gasoline to numb their hunger and pain.

These children were subject to the same government harassment as Mwanza's street adults, though the police and *sungusungu* sometimes treated them much more harshly. Especially during the early phase of my fieldwork, the children were regularly harangued, beaten, and jailed. They were powerless to report any crimes done against them to any government authorities because the Human Resources Deployment Act of 1983 identified the "unemployed" and therefore the children themselves, like Mwanza's street adults, as criminals. Government officials sanctioned periodic police roundups and called for town clean-up campaigns that sought to repatriate the children to the rural areas along with other "idle and disorderly persons." But the justification for these forced removals was not always framed in terms of increasing rural agricultural production, as government officials so often claimed. Instead some of Mwanza's residents saw the removal of independent youth as a means of maintaining civil order and reducing the risk of any youth-driven uprisings. Removal of street children also was viewed, as one of Mwanza's Social Welfare officers explained, as "rehabilitation exercises" in which "these children of lepers were

Figure 9.1 Street children's center. At the former site of the *kuleana* Center for Children's Rights: co-founder and co-director Mustafa Kudrati (center), staff members Charles Obwage (for right), and several street boys.

being sent back to their village homes where they would get good care" (Rajani and Kudrati 1994: 1).

Their size and speed often permitted them to evade capture, but sometimes the police sweeps were done at night and sleeping children were awakened brutally with blows from rifle butts and blinding car headlights. Yet the children were not helpless quarry; they remained on the streets in spite of these actions. Once the children were dropped off in the countryside they openly hitched rides or secretly stowed away on cars, truck, buses, boats, and trains heading back to town. Group membership was key to their survival as was the knowledge they exchanged therein about sources of food and drinking water, safe sleeping spots, and prime begging locales. They moved around in twos or more to watch out for one another, comfort one another, and point out to newcomers the other street children, sungusungu, police, and locals they could and could not trust.

With the establishment in early 1993 of the *kuleana* Center for Children's Rights,[9] the severity of these conditions began to ease for some of the street children. At that time *kuleana* was a NGO supported by domestic and international donors that offered daily drop-in services to street children. In its first year the center opened its gates during

daylight hours to 120 street children to provide areas to shower, store personal belongings, play, and rest. The center's staff offered a snack once a day to all of the children and a daily meal for the youngest, sickest, and the few boys who attended local schools because these students had little time to work or beg for a meal elsewhere. The center paid the school fees for these boys and offered informal center-based education and entertainment opportunities to all of the children. On site medical attention and legal counseling were made available. The center staff also worked directly with the police and regional government to suspend these relocation campaigns and by the end of my stay in 1994 the repatriation campaigns and most undue police and *sungusungu* harassment had stopped (see figure 9.1).

The Growing Incidence of Tanzanian Children Living on the Streets

In the late precolonial period widespread child poverty in Africa was rare except during famine. Since then, Iliffe argues, the increase of child poverty has corresponded with urban growth. Urbanization trends in Ethiopia and Kenya support his contention. The appearance of child beggars in Ethiopia coincided with the founding of Addis Ababa in 1886 and the city's population of destitute youth grew as children flocked there over the years in search of schooling (Iliffe 1987: 20, 191). In the mid-1970s Nairobi, Kenya, had several hundred homeless children living on its streets (Hake 1977). Today the metropolis is home to an estimated 60,000 street children (Lugalla and Kibassa 2002: 13; Mutuku and Mutiso 1994; *Sunday News*, November 11, 1993).

References to the existence of street children in Tanzania earlier in this century are scarce. Heijnen's population surveys in the mid-1960s highlight how children in general were some of the last migrants to come to Mwanza.

> A married migrant will come to town alone. As soon as he has secured employment on a permanent basis, he will rent a room and send for his wife and children. Only in case the income is considered insufficient, one or more children will be left with the grandparents or other relatives. (Heijnen 1968: 55–56)

Since the 1960s Tanzania's urban population has swelled. Between 1967 and 1978 urbanization rates reached 10.8 percent per year and the numbers of children living with their families in the nation's towns

increased accordingly (Lugalla 1995). The appearance of large numbers of independent children on Tanzania's streets, however, is a much more recent phenomenon. The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) estimates that the number of street children doubled from 5,000 to 10,000 in only four years between 1989 and 1993 (Rajani 1993). The majority of these children live in Dar es Salaam, but I saw new children's faces on the streets of Mwanza almost everyday during my stay. By 2000 their numbers seemed to have leveled off, at least for a time (Sabas Masawe,[10] personal communication, July 25, 2000).

While the number of street children living unaccompanied on Mwanza's streets may have been related to the town's schooling and job opportunities, the street children's personal stories highlighted other reasons. The aforementioned emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse were common themes in 11 (40 percent) of the children's stories. Recounted 13-year-old Jane,

> I came to Mwanza long ago to live with my aunt. I helped her sell beer on the hill at Bugando. My aunt was a drunk and when she returned from drinking beer she would hit me again and again. Then I ran to the bus stand, where I met some of the other street girls.

Closely related to the violence from which these children suffered were the detrimental effects of changing familial obligations in Tanzanian society. Parental responsibilities were shifting as people engaged in sexual relations with more partners over time and consequently had more children with different mates. Personal choice, poverty, and/or migration in search of employment led some men and women to view their sexual relationships as temporary (Potash 1995; Karanja 1994; Nelson 1978–79). The shortened duration of sexual and parental partnerships has caused child-rearing responsibilities that were once shared by men and women, to varying degrees, to become largely the obligation of women (Abrahams 1981). The inferior status forced on most women throughout Tanzanian society results in them having less schooling, poorer health, and little wealth and power. As children's primary caregivers and spokespeople both at home and in the community, many women lack the resources to provide nutritious meals, clothing, schooling, and medical care or to otherwise ensure the healthy development of their children (TGNP 1993; Kilbride and Kilbride 1990; White 1990; Lovett 1989).

Another reason children were on the streets was because one or both of their parents had died. Deaths from AIDS-related illnesses were on the rise in northwestern Tanzania, notably in nearby Kagera

region, from which many of Mwanza's street children originated. Kagera's Regional Commissioner reported in 1994 that AIDS alone had produced over 72,000 orphans in his region (*The Daily News*, March 26, 1994).

"My parents have died," 11-year-old Adelina revealed. "Father died in 1992 and mother died in 1993." Adelina's description of her parents' demise coincided with the stories of the other five orphans in my sample. The cause of their parents' deaths was not named as such by four of these five children but, given the nature of HIV transmission, infection, and death, AIDS-related complications were likely a primary cause of parental loss (Barnett and Blaikie 1992; Hunter 2003).

AIDS began to take its toll on children even prior to the death of a parent. Children suffered as attention, food, and other scant resources were diverted from them to those who were ill. Extended family members were pressured into juggling[11] relationships to help contribute to the protracted care of a sick individual long before the same relatives were left to raise the victim's children (Hunter 2003). Once a child was orphaned, surviving aunts, uncles, and other kin sometimes found it difficult to cope with the additional childcare requirement and/or financial demands. Occasionally adoptive caregivers considered orphans less entitled to household food and other resources than the caregivers' own children. In neighboring Uganda the widespread ignorance of AIDS epidemiology led some people to believe that all AIDS orphans also were infected with the virus or at least otherwise "contaminated" (Whyte 1995: 233; Barnett and Blaikie 1992). This may have been the case in Tanzania as well and a possible reason some of the children were reluctant to identify the cause of their parents' death as AIDS (Whyte 1995: 233; Barnett and Blaikie 1992; Hunter 2003).

Any of these AIDS-related issues could have led to the type of abuse and abandonment suffered by Adelina. After the death of her parents, Adelina was sent to live with her mother's brother and his family in the town of Tabora, one day's train ride to the south of Mwanza.

> I arrived in Mwanza in January 1994. Before that I lived with my uncle. He tortured me a lot and kept me inside the house. I have two sisters and two brothers, but they were not with me. Now they live in different parts of the country. In Tabora I had cousins. One of them brought me here and left me alone at the bus station. I waited for him for a very long time. Then I was overcome by sleep. Then Meena [one of the other street girls] found me and told me about the children's center. Now Meena is my sister.

Within this general framework of violence, changing gender relations, and AIDS, hunger often was claimed by the children in this study as a specific reason they took to the streets. Some children explained that they went hungry because their single or divorced mothers had little money to buy food, especially that which was tasty, nutritious, or of a wide variety. Eight-year-old Juma explained that he preferred rice over *ugali* because "at home in Kisesa I ate *ugali* and *dagaa* (tiny lake sardines) every day until I was sick of it." Other children went hungry because their mothers were absent from home for long stretches at a time while they attempted to earn more money by cultivating numerous fields or by selling home-brewed beer, snacks, or fresh produce. In other cases the children's caregivers were too poor to provide them with food. Robert, 12 years old, recounted that "after my parents died I was taken to live with my aunt. She didn't have work and raised me only by luck. She would beg for food from her neighbors and friends, but it was never enough." In a larger study done by the street center's cofounders, Mustafa Kudrati and Rakesh Rajani, more than half of the 122 street children interviewed cited "hunger" as the reason they left home. Report Rajani and Kudrati, "While the amount of food available in the home varied, it was usually neither regular nor sufficiently nutritious" (1994: 3).

While some children, such as Robert, experienced a decline in food entitlement equal with their caregivers, some children were disproportionately deprived in situations that challenge Sen's emphasis on households as a unit of analysis.[12] Devereux (2001) argues that in these types of cases, even though Sen does explore female mortality risk and intrahousehold conflict (1990), he fails to carry his analysis of the varying power gradients structuring social intrahousehold relations to the point where some people, whether facing economic hardship or not, *choose* to sacrifice weaker household members. In Tanzania women and children suffered when they relied on men who found other ways to spend the household's food money, such as on beer (Howard and Millard 1997). Also the practice of allowing children to eat only after the household's adult males had their fill often left children with either very small servings or nothing, especially if any fish, goat, beef, or other highly desired foods had been served (Varkevisser 1973; Kilbride and Kilbride 1990). Other of these street children were refused food outright due to their place in hierarchies of favoritism within the household, their rank determined by their gender, appearance, placement in the birth order, status as a stepchild or illness (Howard and Millard 1997).

Divorce affected children's well-being as families reorganized and authority over food was vested in new members. In the 1960s Heijnen

found youthful migrants in Mwanza who, though unemployed, resisted returning to their rural homes because of stepparents who overworked, abused, or ignored them. Thirty years later stepparents were a continued source of grief. "I was an only child living with my mother before she died in 1993," explained 11-year-old Theo.

> My parents were divorced and my father lived in Dar es Salaam. After my mother died I went to live with my father, but I had to leave because my stepmother refused to feed me. I returned to Musoma and lived with some people with whom I am not related, but I left that house because they denied me food. Then I stayed with some other [nonkin], but they also denied me food. Then I left Musoma for Mwanza by bus. I got off in Igoma and there I met some street boys. They gave me money to buy food and taught me different ways to get money. Then I heard about the street children's center and came to Mwanza.

The instability inherent in Tanzania's legal system is often painfully reflected in the lives of children, especially those of divorced parents. Both statutory and customary laws "codify" simultaneously the process of divorce and requirements for child custody—and they often do so in contradictory ways. State law usually guarantees the granting of mothers with full child custody. However customary laws often take precedence at the local level. In Tanzania, Kenya and elsewhere in Africa these laws, especially among groups that trace descent and transfer property patrilineally, often grant child custody to the father either at the time of divorce or when the child/ren attain/s a certain age (Mirza and Strobel 1989; Coulson 1982; Abrahams 1981). Caroline Bledsoe found instances where Liberian stepmothers refused their stepchildren food. There Kpelle men and women acknowledge that even though patrilineal rules guarantee fathers custody, this can pose special risks for the children. "Since women control the granary and the cooking pot," explains Bledsoe, "after their parents divorce children are better off with their own mother than with their father and a stepmother who might slight them in favor of her own children" (1980: 113). Bledsoe also observes that the claim that stepmothers treated their stepchildren poorly was used strategically by remarried fathers to avoid the financial burden of supporting any children from a previous union who were too young to contribute their labor to his new household (1980).

As these stories show, Mwanza's children took to the streets for some of the same reasons as Mwanza's impoverished adults: isolation from supportive alliances due to abuse, abandonment and as a consequence of divorce. Yet unlike the adults these children were forced away from home because of extreme poverty and AIDS.

Local Meanings of Childhood, Work, and Gender

Just as street adults' food entitlements influenced and were influenced by local meanings associated with gender, self-reliance, and illness, the street children's food-acquisition activities shaped and were shaped by the meanings people associated with childhood, work, and gender. Anthropological studies of the lives of children are firmly based on the understanding that there is a "plurality of childhoods . . . stratified by class, age, gender, and ethnicity, by urban or rural locations and by disability and health" (Jenks 1996: 121–22; see also Seabrook (2001), Blanc (1994), Vreeman (1992), Reynolds (1991), Prout and James (1990), and Aries (1962)).

Very generally speaking many cross-cultural models of childhood differ from present-day, Western middle-class models in two important ways: children's greater separation from the home; and children's economic activity (Panter-Brick 2000; Reynolds 1991). Law scholar Bart Rwezaura (1998) contends that prior to the imposition of colonial rule the prevalent image of childhood in Africa was based in the context of communal production and the concept of wealth-in-people. Children were socialized in age- and gender-specific production techniques, encouraged to learn proper manners, and taught their socioeconomic roles, rights, and obligations within the family, lineage, and wider community. There were numerous, culturally appropriate avenues through which children acquired this practical training, including child fosterage. "Commonly, parents 'foster out' their children to urban areas," observes anthropologist Catherine Panter-Brick, "as a lever toward social and political advancement, while simultaneously 'fostering in' children from yet more rural areas, to help with household and other chores" (2000: 6). In short people can accumulate additional "kinship" connections through child fostering and permanent adoption (Panter-Brick 2000; Cardoso 1984).

This appears to have been the case in rural East Africa, where children ideally assumed important roles of responsibility by the age of four or five, when they may have spent as much as one-third of their day carrying out household chores. By the time they were 6 to 10 years old, much of their day may have been dedicated to looking after younger children, weeding, herding, collecting firewood, sweeping the house or compound, and preparing meals (Harkness and Super 1991). For instance among the Wasukuma it is commonly believed,

> A permissive parent who lets a four or five year old poke about at will runs the distinct risk that his offspring will ripen into a "lazy adult who

> roams idly about instead of setting up a homestead and cultivating his fields." Indeed, it is common for a six year old child to assume sole responsibility for watching the homestead and younger siblings in the absence of his parents, a responsibility for which too full a taste of freedom too soon may spoil him. (Varkevisser 1973: 168)

Though there was and continues to be a broad degree of interdependent and interrelated work between females and males, boys were primarily responsible for caring for livestock while girls helped with younger children, household upkeep, and food chores around the homestead (Varkevisser 1973).

In Mwanza during 1993–94 many people appeared to hold this same view of childhood. Children four or five years old were regularly seen caring for younger siblings near apartment flats and outside their houses. Young girls helped their mothers pick impurities out of rice and rinse clothes; boys corralled wayward chickens and tended to goats staked in their yards. Explained 42-year-old Rose, a mother of 10,

> Even before the children are old enough to go to school they learn their responsibilities. They help carry things home from the marketplace. They sweep the house and the yard. They help to wash the cooking pots. Even the boys collect water for me. Life is not easy. Even when their hands are little they can do many things.

Yet concurrently Rwezaura argues in many situations this image of child as laborer has been broadened so that in contemporary Africa there are "competing images" of childhood (1998: 253). Amid today's widespread economic deprivation, many poor caregivers cannot afford to send their children to school and instead are sending them to wealthier families as household, farm, and business laborers. Rwezaura emphasizes that "the decision to give away children as labour is not always self-evident or taken without a heavy heart. While some parents send their children to relatives believing this to be a traditional practice, others do so out of economic necessity" (1998: 258). According to 12-year-old John, one of Mwanza's street boys,

> Because we were poor and I did not go to school, I began to work for food money at the age of seven. I worked at the bus stand in Musoma calling out the destinations of the buses. At the beachfront marketplace, I helped unload fish and maize from the wooden sailboats. When I worked I made 200–500 Tanzanian shillings (US $0.40–1) a day. My parents were not happy with me working outside the home, although they ate the food I brought to them.

Contemporary child labor is complicated further because children are socialized to respect authority in ways that made voicing complaints both inappropriate and an invitation for corporal punishment, which is practiced widely in Tanzanian homes and schools. In addition Tanzanian parents, like others, may be powerless to voice grievances against their children's employers not only because of local customs concerning disciplinary relationships between child laborers and their employers, but because of the parental need for income (Rwezaura 1998; Bledsoe 1990; Thompson 1971; Blanchet 1996).

A strong association of children with work was prevalent in Mwanza and some of the city's residents viewed the street children as lazy escapees of rural village life. A middle-aged Asian pharmacist justified his disdain for the children by arguing that,

> The Sukuma [children] believe that life here [in town] is easy. They come here to escape their chores. For them, life in the villages is boring. Then they come to town and run as *wahuni* [hooligans]. To them, that is exciting . . . . But when they are hungry and sick they go home. There is no need for me to bother with them.

I learned that in the eyes of the general public, most of the street children were viewed as old enough and apparently healthy enough to work to support themselves—as opposed to requiring charity. Explained an approximately 50-year-old Asian woman, who managed a small dry-goods shop,

> I see so many of the children washing taxis. I know they can work. Very few are lepers. If they want to sweep the doorway [to the shop] I will give them a few shillings. But when they beg I just laugh . . . . If they want to work, there is work.

Given this situation work was vital to many of the street children's entitlement to food. But girls had very different experiences than the boys in regard to work opportunities, and this held important implications for their visibility in public. First impressions gleaned while walking through the town center, main marketplaces, and the central bus stand suggested that street boys drastically outnumbered girls. There were more boys on the streets than girls, but the ratio of nine boys to every girl was narrower than simple appearances implied. Instead the unaccompanied girls in town, like those in Dar es Salaam, were less visible than the boys because many of them worked as housegirls (Lugalla and Kibassa 2003).[13]

In the hierarchy of domestic workers discussed in chapter 5, with males held in higher regard than females and kin preferred over nonkin, destitute street girls ranked the lowest. Five of the nine girls in this study mentioned working as housegirls. They commonly were hired by low- and middle-income female employers and in turn paid very low wages, if any at all. So while all housegirls were vulnerable to exploitation, street girls were particularly susceptible to harsh treatment. Their situation was exacerbated by the fact that they had neither any supportive kin to return home to nor any other caring authority to which they could voice complaints.[14] Street girls employed as housegirls often suffered from chronic malaria (from sleeping without proper mosquito protection), upper respiratory infections (from sleeping on cold, bare floors), malnourishment (from eating only those foods that were left-over after a given meal), and burns and breathing problems (from long hours tending to smokey fires). Some girls reported being pressured to have sex with their male employer or his "friends," putting these girls at risk of suffering emotional and physical trauma, and acquiring STDs such as HIV/AIDS (Onyango 1983; Stichter 1985; Sheikh-Hashim 1990; Rajani and Kudrati 1994). While exploited for their labor and their bodies, these girls were not powerless victims. They took the initiative to quit their jobs after a short time and without prior notice or to manipulate sexual demands from household males to acquire money or other gifts or just to spite the "mother of the house" (TGNP 1993: 69).

Street Girls' Food Entitlement

While there were instances in this study in which boys and girls, particularly girls with younger male siblings, worked together to feed themselves, in most cases the street girls acquired food separately from the boys. Like the adult street women, the opportunities these girls had to increase their entitlement to food revolved around begging for alms, performing food-related labor, and engaging in a variety of sexual exchanges.

General passersby, taxi drivers, food-stand patrons, market-based and street-based food vendors, and the occasional tourist were those the girls commonly approached entreating "Nipe zawadi" (literally, "Give me a gift," but specifically meaning some food, money, or clothing). When not truly famished, exhausted, or ill, they were adept at a theatrics-of-hunger in which they used their facial expression and body language, along with verbal pleas, to beg for alms—only to occasionally melt into giggles or quickly skip away if benevolently called on their tricks by a familiar or otherwise knowing passer-by.

Yet the street girls were less successful in gaining access to charity than the boys. In the context of the local moral economy, street girls were often viewed like the seemingly healthy street women as idle but capable food provisioners and not those suitable for charity (Raikes 1988). Mama Gina, approximately 35 and a banana vendor in Soko Kuu, told me as three street girls passed by her table, "They [the girls] come here to have sex with the market laborers. Then they get sick. It is easy for girls to get started in the food trade. They can sell bananas, mangoes, tomatoes. I did. They just eat their capital." In addition there is a long history of independent females in urban areas being viewed as prostitutes and street girls were the object of this type of scorn no matter their age (White 1990; Robertson 1984).[15] "The little prostitutes there are problems," remarked legume and spice vendor in Soko Kuu while nodding in the direction of two street girls. "If they are not having sex with the [marketplace] laborers, then they come around here to steal from me. I am not rich. They should go beg from the shopkeepers."

Unable to rely solely on begging (and the meager snack provided by the *kuleana* center), some of the girls also worked at the town's food stands, which were just about the only place outside of domestic service that they could get jobs. "I get food from *Mama Nitilie*," said Adelina, employing the slang term used to refer to female food-stand operators.

> I wash cooking pots and utensils and fetch water. In return I am given *ugali* and dried fish for lunch. In the evening, I am given the crusty leftovers in the rice and fish pots. [Some of] the money I get from Mama Josie is for helping her carry the pots and utensils from her stand to her home on Bugando hill.

Girls more commonly relied on a combination of food-stand work and a complex variety of sexual relationships ranging from quick one-time encounters with strangers to long-term "boyfriends." "Usually I go with my [girl]friends Mwema and Cilia to work at the food stand," said Josie, describing her casual employment. "We work by doing things like collecting water. We are given *uji* [a watery gruel made by adding rice or millet to boiling water] or tea in the morning. In the afternoon we are given food and in the evening, too." Josie sought out charity, too. She recounted how, "sometimes I beg for money from the taxi drivers, or from my male friends [sg. *rafiki*, pl. *marafiki*]." In addition she relied on sexual exchanges to acquire food. "Other times I go directly to have sex with my boyfriend John," she continued, "and he gives me money to buy food, soda and juice."

Acquiring accurate information from the girls about their sexuality was difficult. Four of the nine street girls described exchanging sex for food or money, although it was very likely that all of them did. Some might have felt uncomfortable discussing it given the stigma prostitution carried, others might not have identified their sexual encounters as a direct means through which they acquired food, and a few might not have exchanged sex for food on a regular basis. The girls also may have lacked either the language or analytical skills to interpret what was happening to them in their sexual relationships. On the whole, however, sex was an integral and very dangerous part of their survival. They were vulnerable to the physical and emotional difficulties of unplanned pregnancies, botched or back-alley abortions, miscarriages, premature deliveries, and poorly spaced births. They suffered repeatedly from beatings and rape. Not only were the girls' physically immature bodies more susceptible to sex-related injuries, but also these injuries made them more vulnerable to HIV infection.[16] All unprotected sexual activities made them susceptible to sexually transmitted diseases and as many as 20 percent of the young people living in Mwanza were infected with HIV (Rajani and Kudrati 1994). These girls and their partners had little access to protective condoms, and when they did the girls lacked the negotiating power to encourage males to wear them.

Comparable to the street women, the girls found sex a viable option through which to acquire food or money because it required neither a formal education nor a high input of capital. Whereas destitute women who described acquiring food for sex through *malaya* or scrounging encounters, the street girls spoke solely of more scrounging-like relationships. Yet their sex-for-food or "survival sex" activities could take different forms thereby blurring the conceptual boundaries between quick commercial sex and other types of partnerships. Most of these girls had what they called *rafiki* (literally friends but also in this case boyfriends)[17] with whom they exchanged affection, protection, sex, and food. These partners usually were young (under 18 years of age) low-income males who were not themselves impoverished or homeless. Many of them worked in the marketplaces as low-paid laborers who shouldered the 100-kilo sacks of maize or pushed the large wooden wheelbarrows used to transport bulk goods through town. These young men were in no financial position to house, feed, and clothe the girls in *malaya* type of relationships. But just the same, their relationships appeared to be based on food- or money-for-sex transactions and their partnerships could be long term.

In other instances the girls' scrounging activities involved exchanging sex with adult males. Occasionally girls such as 13-year-old Jane

exchanged sex for food with street men who had leprosy. She described them as her "boyfriends" and she explained that they survived "by begging on the streets." Josie described a blind man who lived on the streets as her "husband." She often could be seen with him in late 1993 while guiding him around town. In addition, the relationships these girls had with these men sometimes sparked conflict. Once there was a violent confrontation near the street children's center between Josie and a group of other girls, who were jealous of a gift of clothing the man had made to Josie. A couple of the other girls claimed that they, too, "helped" the man and that the gift was meant to be shared among them.

The other adult men with whom these girls had sexual encounters were complete strangers who accosted and frightened the girls into having sex with them. Some of these men compensated the girls with a token gift of food or money. Given the girls' lack of bargaining power and the limited financial resources of their partners, one sexual encounter usually generated only enough food (a bowl of *ugali* and beans) or money (the 100–120 shillings needed to buy a bowl of *ugali* and kidney beans) to sustain one for the moment. For these reasons the girls' sex-for-food relationships involved an intricate mixture of dependency, support, affection, threats, and exploitation. In ways similar to some of the street women, the girls sex-for-food exchanges appeared to be a bitter twist on the exchanges of money or gifts that are integral to many adult marriage and sexual relationships in Africa. The girls shared the same fate as the street women, who neither gained economic advantage from these exchanges nor fulfilled their culturally sanctioned roles as provisioners of food. In addition the girls were forced into these exploitative relationships at a much younger age. On the one hand, the girls' relative power and assertiveness were apparent in their ability to command money or food in exchange for sex, whether from a "boyfriend" or one-time partner. On the other hand, their powerlessness and hopelessness were apparent in that they often went uncompensated for sex or were often forcibly raped by adults and youths, including the street boys (also see Bamurange 1998).

As with the street women who relied on providing quick sex to different partners to survive, these girls risked their lives to eat. Yet unlike the street women who exchanged quick sex for food, not all of the girls had to perform sex regularly to survive. There was more food-based cooperation among the girls than among the adult women who relied on quick sex to survive. Older girls in Mwanza, like some in Dar es Salaam, were likely to volunteer their services to protect younger, less-experienced girls if only one had to have sex to acquire enough

food or money to provision the group (Bamurange 1998). Josie and Leah, two of the oldest girls, would at times exchange sex with a staff member of a cafe or restaurant for enough food to feed all of the girls for the day. Yet this was as close as the girls came to developing food-support groups comparable to those of street adults, because the girls lacked the emotional maturity needed to sustain long-term group membership, as well as lacked access to the begging proceeds to purchase marketplace foods, cooking pots, and utensils.

Mwanza's street girls also engaged in theft.[18] While falling outside the analytical frame of Sen's entitlement theory because it is illegal, I mention this means of acquiring food because the girls were proficient thieves who stole food and clothing. Nonetheless the street children as a whole stole things to a much lesser extent than the widespread stereotype might imply. Older girls often asked the younger ones to steal for the group because their agility and speed contributed to their successes, especially under crowded maze-like marketplace and housing conditions. But the girls described theft as a safety net used only when they were extremely hungry because they knew that if they were caught they risked a brutal, even fatal, beating in the name of mob "justice."

For their efforts the girls usually acquired little by way of quantity, quality, or variety of food. If they scavenged raw pieces of dried cassava root or caught grasshoppers they roasted them over bits of charcoal found in waste heaps, but none of the girls regularly cooked food for themselves. Mostly the girls acquired cooked food from women operating food stands or from one of the small cafes or larger restaurants around town, wherever their boyfriends or other sex partners were willing to buy them a meal. The food-stand workers usually were successful in eating at least two meals a day, though the quantity and the quality of the food varied. "I get more food from the stand than I did at home in Sengerema," said Regina,

> even though we had a farm and grew rice, maize and peanuts. I eat lunch at the stand after I finish washing the rice pots. I usually eat rice with beans or meat. If there is not enough meat, I eat beans.

Thirteen-year-old Pina was not as lucky.

> I eat some *maandazi, uji*, and cooked plantains after I work for *Mama Nitilie* [at Kamanga landing]. If I cannot work for her, I go hungry or go to the taxi drivers and beg for money. I want to change my work, though, because when I eat food cooked by Mama Josie I vomit and have diarrhea.

Leah enjoyed the most nutritious and plentiful diet based on *ugali*, beans, rice, goat meat, and fish. She had diverse employment opportunities, had lived in town for a long time and had many community contacts. She acquired food and money through her sexual relationships with a number of regular partners and ate at the food stands in return for carrying water and washing pots. Leah also ate by begging for food at the houses of certain Asian families. "Getting food is easy because people have sympathy for me and offer food or money," she recounted. Leah's situation paralleled those of the street men who agreed it was *rahisi* (easy) or *siyo ngumu* (not difficult) to get food, because they were longtime residents of Mwanza. They were familiar faces among the community and had built up a supportive network among sympathetic residents. She had spent five years in town, which was longer than any of the other children included in this study.

In sum the girls depended on mutual cooperation for their survival. They regularly shared information, food, and money among themselves. For the most part, the girls were sociable with and supportive of one another, and they were often seen moving around town in groups for both companionship and protection. But the mutual support and cooperation on which the girls desperately depended were sometimes defeated by hunger, fatigue, sickness, loneliness, and social immaturity. Occasionally a group of girls gained employment at a food stand only to lose their jobs because one or more of them had been caught stealing from their employer. Tearful and violent confrontations were common, too. The catalyst could be group members' jealousy over a mutual "boyfriend's" gift to one of the girls, or it could be combination of miscommunication and rumors spread among the group. The result of such strife commonly was a severe beating from the other girls and/or temporary ostracism from the group.

Street Boys' Entitlement to Food

One of the most striking aspects of the children's lives was the degree to which the provisioning activities of the boys and girls differed. Casual employment in a wider variety of jobs was key to the boys' survival. In addition while none of the boys in this study acknowledged exchanging sex for food, some of the youngest street boys in Mwanza and Dar es Salaam were known to have done so. This is not to say that older boys never had sex or did not exchange sex for food or money. Boys both in Mwanza and Dar es Salaam had consensual sex with and raped the street girls, in addition to practicing *kunyenga* (slang for nonconsensual, anal-penetrative sex) among themselves as an initiation rite marking group

membership (Rajani and Kudrati 1996; Lugalla and Mbwambo 2002; Lockhart 2002; Lugalla and Kibassa 2003) But sex-for-food practices did not appear to be a regular occurrence among the self-provisioning practices of older boys in Mwanza or Dar es Salaam (Muhimbo Mdoe and Fred Nyiti,[19] personal communication; Lugalla 1995).

The 19 street boys in this study ranged in age from 5 to 16. Again age was an important determinant in the means through which these boys gained entitlement to food. In general the very youngest boys relied primarily on begging and handouts; the older boys worked. Five-year-old Kessy's background was particularly interesting, because he was apparently born on the street. According to *kuleana* staff, he reportedly was orphaned by a woman known to several female marketplace vendors as a street woman. According to those who remembered her, she used to frequent the marketplace to beg for alms while carrying baby Kessy and sleep at the bus stand. Kessy's mother eventually became very thin, weak, and reportedly showed signs of dementia until one day she disappeared, leaving Kessy, then a toddler, at the bus stand. The marketplace women, believing his mother had died of AIDS, shared in the fostering of Kessy. They took him home at night and cared for him during the day until he grew too mobile for them to watch in the marketplace. In 1993 they brought him to the newly established *kuleana* center. The staff there arranged for him to eat a meal of beans and rice every day at one of Kamanga ferry landing's *magenge* (small commercial food stands).

Kessy's fearless wanderings around town also contributed to his diet. He developed a small network of financial support, meager as the actual proceeds were. He could be seen each day following his route in which he stopped in at the gas station, ducked into a roadside cafe, and then paused at a familiar newspaper stand—all in hope of collecting from his adult friends a ten-shilling piece or two ($0.02 or 0.04). Kessy and his best friend and nearly constant companion, Kato,[20] approximately six years old, occasionally supplemented their diet with handouts of *maandazi, vitumbua*, and peanuts and penny candies that they bought with their begging proceeds.

The older boys, who ranged in age from 10 to 16, more typically worked at a variety of very low-paying jobs. Washing taxis and cars, sweeping storefronts, and scrubbing clothes and floors in local houses and apartments were how some boys spent their days. Others risked cuts and tetanus as they wandered barefoot through roadside trash heaps collecting recyclable valuables to sell, such as unburned pieces of charcoal and tobacco from discarded cigarette butts (see figure 9.2). The boys also labored in the food trade scouring cooking pots and hauling

Figure 9.2 Street boys scavenging for food and items to recycle for sale at a lakeside refuse dump. Photo by Mary Plummer. Conveying street children's daily challenges via photographs was difficult because they often liked to smile for the camera.

water for food-stand operators. Others scavenged to gather insects, small fish, and food waste to sell as bait to fishermen. Some boys fished from shore and then sold their catch to roadside vendors to fry and resell. Still others roamed the streets selling penny candy, gum, peanuts, and cigarettes or worked in roadside kiosks[21] selling soda and sundries.

The boys did what they could to survive, but their employment options were limited to casual, one-time endeavors in which they could be closely supervised and did not have any responsibility over objects of any wealth because they commonly were distrusted at best and assumed to be thieves at worst.

Restrictions on the employment of street children were reinforced by the government as well. Labor shortages in Mwanza during the early 1950s resulted in the hiring of children to work industrial jobs and certain accidents and abuses occurred.[22] Laws originating in the colonial era, such as the Women and Young Persons Ordinance, restricted the employment of children in order to protect them from harm and abuse. At the same time, however, officials were concerned with the number of children coming to town in search of employment. As one colonial officer wrote of these children,

> They obtain employment for mere pittances of wages as houseboys. Their absence from home influences and parental and tribal discipline is

> most undesirable. They meet with the "wahuni" [hooligans] of the town and learn to live on their wits. From such children will the criminal classes of the future arise. It is proposed to enforce the Women and Young Persons Ordinance under which no child may be employed unless he is able to return to the home of his parents or guardians at night. (Coppock 1951: 3)

This legislation was meant not only to discourage children from coming to town but also to emphasize the unemployability of independent urban-based children (Lugalla 1995).

Like the street girls, some of the boys engaged in theft to survive. They stole food from market vendors and grabbed car parts off of or valuables from within vehicles belonging to unsuspecting, helpless or careless drivers. Some boys would pickpocket other street boys while they were sleeping, or brazenly beat and rob one another in broad daylight. They stole fruit and vegetables in the marketplaces, clothing displayed in shop doorways, radios and other valuables from cars, and candy and cigarettes offered by roving vendors on the streets.[23]

Many boys also requested alms from people they met on the streets and once in a while alms were offered in the form of foster care. While fostering unrelated children was very uncommon in Mwanza town, some adults did so in the name of acquiring domestic help. Others were interested in converting children to certain religions and gaining favor with God. More commonly the street boys begged for handouts from the town's visiting expatriate community. This included the weekly handful of tourists who passed through Mwanza's ferry ports, the occasional biologist, geologist, or anthropologist, as well as donor-agency staff overseeing medical and educational projects in Mwanza region or working at the Rwandan refugee camps. Some of the boys were very accomplished at pulling at the heartstrings of visiting Westerners, who had very likely grown up seeing aid-agency advertisements portraying wide-eyed, hungry and dirty "Third World" children. For these potential alms-givers, the boys used a special repertoire of sad expressions and body language conveying hunger to attract contributions. One to two hours of begging outside the New Mwanza Hotel, the town's largest Western-style hotel, or Salma Cone, the popular ice cream shop, could earn a boy anywhere from 100 to 1,000 shillings (US $0.20–22). It could take all day to earn that by selling candy on the streets. "Some boys don't like to work hard," explained 11-year-old Ibrahim, "so they beg instead."

The street girls were less likely to take part in begging at the central expatriate hangouts in town because these areas were readily "owned"

and controlled by the street boys. If the girls attempted to beg in these locales they were chased away. Generally the girls feared pursuing income-generating activities engaged in by the boys, such as washing cars and selling peanuts, candy, and cigarettes, because they believed that the boys would harass them and "sabotage" their efforts (Plummer 1994: 86). The territorial challenges that erupted between the boys and girls over lucrative begging locales, while on a smaller scale, were reminiscent of those found elsewhere in Africa where the combination of statutory law, nonstandardized customary land rights, and the recognition of group ownership through labor investments caused comparable disputes over land access.

While some of the boys were able to find repeat work scrubbing floors, washing clothes, and cleaning taxis from friendly and sympathetic patrons, the majority of the boys' jobs changed from day to day. "To get food myself is very difficult because I do not have important work," Theo explained. "Some days I remain unemployed the entire day and just drink water and sleep."

Just as the girls relied heavily on one another for their comfort and survival, so did the boys. As 15-year-old Sweddy revealed, "Truthfully, we [the children] muster among ourselves unity and strength." The boys learned of employment and food-acquisition opportunities from each other. Yet in spite of their dependence on mutual cooperation, the boys were no less immune than the girls to intergroup conflict. Fistfights, arguments, and tears were common. Sex and rape among the boys established position of dominance,[24] as did the physical tests younger boys faced from older ones. Theft and peer pressure often split groups of boys apart and divided one boy from another.

On a daily basis, many of the boys ate their primary meal in the afternoon or night. The timing of these meals was regulated by the boys' daily employment. If they worked during the day then they usually bought a meal that night. As a group, the boys ate a slightly better diet than the girls because they could afford a little more animal protein such as fish, chicken, and goat meat. Almost all of the boys depended on the food-stand operators and roadside-snack vendors for their meals. The most popular locations frequented by the boys were the same as those of the street adults and the girls: Soko Kuu marketplace and Kamanga ferry. Emmanuel, 10 years old, liked to go to the cafe in Soko Kuu for his meals, since the large marketplace offered the possibilities of finding extra food on the ground and acquiring additional income from impromptu begging from the marketplace shoppers. Yet some boys favored the stands at Mitimirefu marketplace because there was less competition from other destitute people, and

because some of the boys had made special friends among the food vendors there.

In addition to the snack they acquired at the center, six of the boys attended school (through the support of the children's center) and ate school lunches. Because their schooling left them little time to work for money with which to buy food they were given simple evening meals cooked at the center.

Several boys ate at the houses or apartments in which they worked washing clothes and scrubbing floors. Two ate meals and snacks offered as alms on Fridays in some of Mwanza's private kitchens. Those who were fed by charitable households were commonly offered pilau (spiced rice), chicken, and beef at Arab or African houses and bean-based dishes with rice, flat breads, and yogurt at Asian houses. One boy mentioned that the Asian woman who regularly fed him a midday meal cooked his portions separately from those of the rest of the household so that she could use less spice to suit his taste. This type of setup, however, was unique, and the majority of the boys, like the girls, survived by eating *uji* and *ugali* or rice with beans.

In spite of their limited diets, the street boys were very opinionated about the gratification they gained from certain foods. Ibrahim preferred *ugali* because it was very filling and prevented him from becoming hungry again soon after a meal. Conversely, Nuru despised *ugali*. He originated from the Indian Ocean coastal region and like many people there he was accustomed to eating rice and beans. Juma preferred rice. "I like rice a lot," he explained. "At home in Kisesa I ate only *ugali* made from cassava and I am very tired of it."

As a group, the boys ate a slightly better diet than the girls because once in a while they could afford a little more animal protein such as fish, chicken, and goat meat. Almost all of the boys depended on the food-stand operators and roadside-snack vendors for their meals.

An entitlement approach to the chronic hunger of Mwanza's street children calls attention to the fact that these girls and boys cannot be viewed as representatives of an essentialized status because their food entitlement experiences varied significantly according to age and gender. Balancing an awareness of this plurality with the necessity of framing analytical categories of "street children" to facilitate these children in reaching their life goals remains an ongoing challenge for theorists and policymakers alike (James et al. 1998; Stephens 1995). The girls' and boys' food-acquisition activities not only differed and were carried out separately, but gender relations were combative, fueled by the reality that the children were socially immature youth. Life for the children was hard, just as it had been prior to their arrival

on the streets, and many of these children lacked any other behavioral frame of reference beyond the abusive relationships they had known in the past. In turn the children could be vicious to one another, resulting in a great deal of name-calling, theft, and physical abuse among themselves. The girls did their share of teasing but in many more cases harassment originated with the boys. The boys outnumbered the girls and the older, better-fed boys could physically outpower them. Yet even more telling of the girls' suffering and lowly status was that the boys were encouraged by the public in their harassment of the girls. For these reasons the boys and girls survived largely in isolation from their opposite-sex peers.

Once these girls and boys were identified by locals as "different," three forces worked against their entitlement to food. As "children" in Tanzania they were viewed as able-bodied workers suitable to toil within the gendered division of labor. Yet people were vicious to them because these children lived on the streets and were viewed as unsocialized, disruptive, and outside the realm of adult control (Stephens 1995). For these reasons the children were not trusted and had access only to casual jobs providing meager incomes on which no one could be expected to survive. Because they could not make a living wage and the children's self-worth was measured against the actions of a detached and abusive public, they largely were forced into begging and stealing. The moral economy that associated females with food production marked the girls as unsuitable to receive alms so in turn they were compelled to exchange sex for food or money. These actions completed the circle comprised of the contradictory socializing pressures imposed by (1) the public's perceptions of childhood, gender, and work; (2) the actual employment opportunities open to the children; and (3) the children's survival strategies. Within this social context the children's food acquisition activities unmistakably shaped and were shaped by their food entitlement.

The children were well aware that one of the most common attitudes among Mwanza's residents reflected their choice to have nothing to do with the children at all.[25] Yet Mwanza's street children were dependent on the city's adult residents for their survival and worked hard at accumulating relevant knowledge from their peers about the ways of the streets and the identities of potential supporters.[26] So while the children understood that the general public categorized them as atypical, the children worked hard at categorizing back. For example they knew they had to fit any potential employer's or alms-giver's view of a suitable laborer or alms-recipient, and when possible the children manipulated this situation to their advantage.

They attempted to fulfill their culturally appropriate roles in domestic and food-related spheres. In addition they might work hard to project an image that set them apart from their peers, especially among particular food vendors. "The rice and beans I eat every day I buy from an elder [vendor] named Mr. Juma at Mitimirefu market," said Steven, who was 12. "Every day he offers me a [free] cup of sweetened tea with milk. I am the only child he gives tea to because I do not swear or hurl insults." These boys and girls were pushed repeatedly to the margins of Mwanza's society, but they did not remain there passively. Instead the boys actively and creatively attempted to survive in the openings left amid intersecting adult social and cultural domains, and the girls struggled to make a life in the openings left in turn by the boys.

10

Food Entitlement, Charity, and "The City"

This study of the cultural economy of food provisioning in an African city has attempted to reveal how people's beliefs, wealth, and power, shaped and were shaped by the ways in which they gained entitlement to food. The foregoing chapters draw attention to the city's social and cultural complexity by emphasizing the range of and linkage between food-related divisions of labor, the distribution of knowledge and alliances, and exchanges within and between marketplace vendors, household members, and street adults' and children's mutual-support groups. This work also highlighted the historical, demographic, and geographical influences fueling some of the creolization processes (i.e. the adoption, adaptation, and mixing of different cultural practices) shaping contemporary food preferences and the structure of domestic labor.

My findings demonstrate that the ways in which people acquired food differed little across the rural–urban divide; most city and rural residents alike fed themselves via a combination of food production, purchase, and in-kind distribution. The information provided makes evident that the types of food people ate varied little, though it fluctuated in quality and quantity. The personal accounts of the diverse people included in this study reveal that the circumstances under which they fed themselves often were extraordinary. The existence of a rapidly growing population that was highly dependent on staples grown by rain-fed agriculture in and of itself posed formidable challenges. In addition Mwanza's inhabitants endured the widespread unavailability of refrigeration, a convoluted history of governmental food-policy reversals, and contemporary inflation, more widely enforced taxation, and ineffective public services. In spite of these trials Mwanza's residents reaffirmed that many of their food entitlement strategies were genuinely creative, flexible, and durable enough to sustain them—at least for a while.

While the evidence on which this study was based represents only a snapshot in Mwanza's modern history, three coexisting social realities suggested a trend moving toward greater class differentiation among city residents. First and most important, obtaining food in Mwanza was much easier for some people than for others. Food acquisition was an incidental part of the day for the wealthy; for the destitute, worrying about and searching for food filled most waking hours. Second, the dire circumstances of the city's street adults and children disclosed how ethnicity and religion, so often used as fundamental organizing principles throughout African societies, had been subsumed under local considerations of age, gender, and work. Labor skills and income-generating opportunities were more vital than ever before to gaining food entitlement in the city and one's prospects for acquiring these skills and opportunities were sharply delineated by people's views of age- and gender-appropriate divisions of labor.

Third, it was obvious that social alliances were vital to people's food entitlement, whether they were framed in terms of the more typical, more durable, and largely kin-centered households of low-, middle- and high-income groups or the less typical, less durable, and commonly nonkin-based mutual-support groups of street adults and children. However these alliances were undergoing significant changes. Viewed together, people's food alliances exhibited a tendency to form, alter, and break down depending on a delicate balance between the instabilities posed by the town's sociocultural setting and individual self-interest. There were levels of economic accumulation, social acceptance, and political control at which point the mutual dependencies fostered by fears of deprivation, at one extreme, began to fall away and alliances with others outside one's most immediate circle were viewed, at the other extreme, as parasitic drains on one's resources. In other words during times of relative prosperity people banked in social relations by providing support to others like them in hope of winning their assistance in the future. For a few people this meant maintaining exchange-based straddling and juggling relationships with distant kin in the surrounding hinterland, elsewhere in Tanzania, or in other countries. For many others these banking activities involved extending support more closely to home to town-based neighbors, friends, and family. At the same time, many people complained of hardships and intense pressures that worked against the stability of these alliances. Some people's straddling and juggling relationships narrowed socially and spatially so quickly and completely that they were forced to survive independently by precariously "balancing on one foot." Conversely the city's street adults and

children, who had experienced such drastic breaks in their former alliances that they had been marginalized to the point of extreme deprivation, were attempting actively and creatively to build new alliances among themselves and with potential employers and almsgivers.

Because the central focus of this study has been the place of food in people's lives, it may appear tautological to conclude that food uncertainty was a driving force shaping people's principles and the social organization of their divisions of labor (Bryceson 1990). Yet this was clearly the case even among those with the fewest entitlement concerns—Mwanza's upper-income residents. It was they who most readily wielded their financial strength, political connections, and resultant knowledge to facilitate their production of food crops. For Mwanza's elite urban agriculture offered many things: an additional income source; an inexpensive substitute for decreased access to rural family farms; something to fall back on in case of job loss; and a realm for entrepreneurial and technological innovation. Most significantly, urban agriculture was seen as a "source of a new form of confidence" (Mlozi 1994: 105).

I have suggested that some of the food-provisioning processes found in Mwanza may be reflective of urban survival elsewhere. Yet as the analytical boundaries demarcating "the city" have shifted beyond spatial considerations to include concerns with social action and the distributions of knowledge, it has become apparent that urban industrial societies do not automatically take one specific form. Instead the variety of choices and options available to people living in urban areas contribute to the emergence of multiple forms (Ferguson 1999; Leeds 1984; Hannerz 1992, 1987, 1980). It is very unlikely, then, that one analytical framework or model of urban food provisioning will work on an absolute basis. Beyond the issues of increasing population densities and their resulting environmental strains, and other than the fact that changing ties between urban- and rural-based residents often precipitate changes in ties between urban residents themselves, there were few food-provisioning processes in Mwanza that differed markedly from those in the countryside.

One food-provisioning process I encountered in Mwanza may be unique to city life: the three-part transition that certain rural-to-urban migrants made from a greater dependence on homegrown foods to purchased foods and then to charitable handouts.[1] Before I can verify this assertion, however, more research is required into the contemporary incidence of rural inhabitants who largely rely on private handouts.[2] Given the combination of Tanzania's rural poverty, the widely held belief in self-reliance and the social isolation prompted by illness,

abuse, divorce, and abandonment, this type of transition may be unique to Tanzanian cities alone. But as historian Paul Gailiunas recognizes, "It was the isolation of the patient, and not necessarily the disease itself, which was instrumental in shaping an African fear of leprosy" (1992: 41), and I suggest it is the same fear of separation no matter what the reason that drives other women, men, girls, and boys away from their rural homes in Tanzania and other parts of the world in search of the anonymity of the city, of others who share their same fate, and of opportunities to survive.

A fuller consideration of one of these opportunities for survival—private charitable exchanges—suggests that the policymaking utility of Sen's entitlement approach could be further augmented. Sen writes in *Poverty and Famines* that once people experience entitlement failure, the inevitability of starving is especially certain if they cannot acquire food from "non-entitlement transfers (e.g., charity)" (1981: 3). Yet what exactly Sen means by a "non-entitlement transfer" is unclear. Later in the monograph Sen does mention other "non-entitlement transfers (e.g., looting)" (164) and refers to looting as "illegal transfers" (45), but he does not offer any more in the way of explanation. In addition "charity" is not mentioned again in *Poverty and Famines* except in passing and with no fuller elaboration than when Sen summarizes that "[a] person's ability to command food . . . depends on . . . what he owns, what exchange possibilities are offered to him, what is given to him free, and what is taken away from him" (Sen 1981: 154–55).

Importantly Sen does describe charity in the form of state-sponsored welfare benefits, which he recognizes as legal entitlements. In this vein Sen notes that,

> Given a social security system, an unemployed person may get "relief," an old person a pension, and the poor some specified "benefits." These affect the commodity bundles over which a person can have command. They are parts of a person's exchange entitlements, and are conditional on the absence of other exchanges that a person might undertake. For example, a person is not entitled to unemployment benefit if he exchanges his labour power for a wage, i.e. becomes employed. (1981: 6)

Yet why does Sen consider non-state-sponsored charity as non-entitlement transfers? Two reasons come to mind: (1) perhaps Sen views non-state-sponsored charity as involving only a one-way transfer as opposed to a two-way exchange; and/or (2) given the entitlement approach's necessary emphasis on "ownership" as defined by "certain rules of legitimacy," perhaps Sen does not view charity as "illegal" but

simply "non-legal" and therefore still outside the realm of analytically appropriate exchange entitlements.

But is charity only a one-way transfer, as Sen seems to imply? What I found interesting among Mwanza's street adults' and children's experiences with charity concerned the meanings alms-givers assigned their activities. Charity in the eyes of Mwanza's alms-givers appeared to serve at least two purposes: (1) to earn them prestige and possibly build more wealth-in-people among the community; and (2) to establish their personal religious favor with God[3] in this or the afterlife (Iliffe 1987; Shipton 1990). While it was often impossible to authenticate alms-givers' goals in extending charity to others, the former motivation was touched on in chapter 6 in regard to Mama Sarah's experience with her brother. She asserted that he had not offered her support in years despite his "bragging" to others about his gifts of food and money to her. The latter motivation was found among Mama Mahmedi and her family who sought to make Muslims out of street boys so that the family would "prosper in the eyes of God." Explained her adult son Tamim,

> We met these three [boys] on the streets. They told us that the center refused them food and a place to sleep. Once we got permission from our mother, we brought them home. We have done this many times over the years. Three years ago we had as many as 13 children living here. We converted them to the Muslim religion and sent them to school, but now those boys are gone. These three boys were not circumcised. Two have been done and a man is coming in June to do the third. Then the boys will go to Taqwa school.

These examples of the meanings Mwanza's alms-givers assigned their activities suggest that there were actually *two-way exchanges* taking place between alms-givers and alms-takers. Alms-givers offered primarily tangible commodities (food, money, clothing, shelter, and/or education) and alms-takers provided largely intangible ones (opportunities to acquire social prestige or religious favor or salvation, and perhaps a link to inexpensive labor). If Sen views charity as a non-entitlement transfer because it appears to be only a one-way transfer that is provided voluntarily and spontaneously by those who are genuinely concerned, the experiences of Mwanza's street children demonstrate otherwise. Their experiences with charity support what French sociologist Marcel Mauss reminds us of in his classic text *The Gift:* "Prestations which are in theory voluntary, disinterested and spontaneous are in fact obligatory and interested" (1967: 1).

Concerning the other reason that Sen may avoid including charity as an exchange entitlement, that is, charity's supposed status in regard to "rules of legitimacy," development economist Siddiq Osmani (1995) argues that,

> It is worth noting that the transfer component [of exchange entitlements] includes only those transfers to which a person is legally entitled—for example, social security provisions of the state. This leaves out not only illegal transfers (such as stealing and looting), but also non-entitlement transfers, such as charity. Although there is nothing illegal about receiving charity, it is not counted as part of entitlement mapping for the simple reason that one is not legally entitled to charity, whatever may be one's view about the poor's moral entitlement to it. The general point is that entitlement analysis is concerned with legal as distinct from moral entitlement. (1995: 255)

Sen and Jean Dreze elaborate on this idea of lawfulness in their monograph, *Hunger and Public Action* (1989). "The point is not so much that there is no law against dying of hunger," they explain.

> That is, of course, true and obvious. It is more that the legally guaranteed rights of ownership, exchange and transaction delineate economic systems that can go hand in hand with some people failing to acquire enough food for survival. In a private ownership economy, command over food can be established by either growing food oneself and having property rights over what is grown, or selling other commodities and buying food with the proceeds. There is no guarantee that either process would yield enough for the survival of any particular person or a family in a particular social and economic situation. The third alternative, other than relying on private charity, is to receive free food or supplementary income from the state. These transfers rarely have the status of legal rights, and furthermore they are also, as things stand now, rather rare and limited. (Dreze and Sen 1989: 20)

Yet while Osmani as well as Dreze and Sen make evident their assessment of a legal entitlement, what remains vague are their concurrent assumptions about the characteristics of private charity that make it irrelevant to the entitlement approach. Notwithstanding this ambiguity it appears that these theorists inadvertently elide vital considerations of time and social process in their characterization of charitable goods and exchanges. In other words harking back to Appadurai's (1986) view of the "social life of things," it is the "phase" of an item's "career" that defines its exchangeability, so to remove a charitable item from its given social and historical context can cause

problems in determining its real value. Removing charitable exchanges from their historical "career" trajectories also can awkwardly conceal the close relationship between private charity and legal entitlements.

To elaborate further on the necessary temporal and situational aspects of charity and to highlight the immediate correlation between private charity and public entitlement, Fogel's work on egalitarianism in the United States is very useful (1999, 2000). Vital to my position that charitable exchanges should be considered exchange entitlements are several of Fogel's points about the link between historical reform movements that endorsed greater social equality and the legal reforms that followed political realignments. To begin Fogel argues that economists have placed too much emphasis on cross-sectional data sets in their analyses, which provides synchronic, snapshot-in-time views rather than diachronic, change-over-time perspectives of human behavior. While cross-sectional analyses have an important place in many types of comparative studies, Fogel recognizes "they are often highly misleading guides to trends on such critical economic issues . . . as the prevalence rates of chronic disabilities, expenditures on health care, . . . pension costs" and—I would add—governmental responses to chronic hunger (1999: 8).

In addition to recognizing the significance of viewing human actions over the long term, we learn from Fogel that a concern about people's varying access to food, specifically famine-relief policy itself, was the "seedbed" of the modern democratic state. "The institutions that were put into place some four hundred years ago [in England] to cope with famines," observes Fogel, "provided the model for the egalitarian state of the Twentieth Century" (2000: 86). Why? Because famines among poor British workers in the sixteenth century not only resulted in sickness and death but also incited food riots that threatened the stability of the ruling class. Price fixing, restrictions on grain usage (notably in alcohol production), road blocks to restrict interregional transport, and export ceilings that characterized the British government's famine responses over the centuries (all of which are familiar to many Tanzanians) climaxed in the 1790s in "allowances in aid of wages" (Fogel 2000: 89). Today in the United States this principle continues to underlie the concept of the poverty line and the various welfare programs meant to assist families with dependent children (Poppendieck 1998; Fogel 2000).

While it is vital to our understanding of human social action to view it through a historical perspective, and interesting to learn that legal entitlements first developed out of officials' concerns for government stability via equitable food access, Fogel's following point on how

legal entitlements develop out of charity is the most telling. While exploring the historical development of the American egalitarian creed, he observed that distinct shifts toward greater equality grew out of evangelical religious protests and the resulting political realignments that curtailed them. Though Fogel views these as cyclical in nature, he does not suggest that these cycles have been a dominant feature in United States history. Instead he views technological changes as the primary cause of such protests because of these changes' tendencies "to outpace the development both of ethical guidelines for their utilization and of human institutions to control them." Fogel makes the point that it

> is the lag between technological transformation and the human capacity to cope with change that has repeatedly provoked the crises that usher in profound reconsiderations of ethical values, that produce new agendas for ethical and social reform, and that give rise to political movements to implement these agendas. (2000: 40)

Commonly known as "nativistic," "revitalization," and "millenarian" movements in the anthropological literature, such religious-based protest movements are by no means restricted to the United States (see Wallace 1956; Cohn 1961; Fabian 1971; Arjomand 2002). But Fogel sees these types of crises underlying the major political realignments of the American Revolution, the Civil War, the creation of the welfare state at the close of the nineteenth century, and the contemporary era of spiritual reform that began with the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. Key to my assertion that charitable exchanges should be viewed as entitlement exchanges is not Fogel's interpretation of historical events in United States history, but his developmental perspective that draws a clearly indisputable link between private charity and legal entitlements—and this link is *time*. Simply put, legal entitlements very often are born out of widespread, nonlegal, private charitable exchanges engaged in and promoted by religious or ethically/morally motivated organizations protesting and advocating for political change. Most crucial to our assessment of food entitlement is the line of reasoning that in the moment that a certain nonlegal form of charity becomes legal hundreds if not thousands of people may already depend on it for food and their survival.

Recognizing charity as an entitlement exchange immediately broadens the explanatory scope of the entitlement approach by contributing to more realistic measures of food consumption in a given community that, in turn, can positively impact hunger-related policymaking.

In addition a greater awareness of charity's role in people's entitlement to food would very likely force governments, researchers, and advocates to work toward better comprehension of the complexities of the survival strategies of the poorest of the poor who rely on charity elsewhere in the world, as well as explain more precisely why they may experience chronic hunger or starve. We also need to investigate the full range of meanings that people in Mwanza and elsewhere assign to their alms-giving activities so that policymakers worldwide can more effectively open avenues to destitute persons' fulfillment of their basic needs through access to private charitable exchanges. Having said this, I do find it very troubling that we need to develop opportunities for the hungry to gain entitlement through private charity rather than through state-guaranteed entitlement programs. This emphasis on gifts rather than rights is the problem (Poppendieck 1998). But given the trend toward a widening gap between the haves and have-nots in Mwanza, coupled with ongoing reductions in public-service offerings, the reality of the situation suggests that more rather than fewer people will be seeking charity to survive, at least in the near future.

Many other questions about private charity remain. However I believe that charity is a far too socially enmeshed, multifaceted and powerful means of food acquisition to be overlooked by the entitlement approach. Finally I believe that the most disregarded segments of African society, such as the children and adults surviving on the streets, are those who can teach us not only about charity but about ways to characterize the "urban" as well. Demonstrating how in our contemporary global system one-to-one relationships between culture and locale are often attenuated, destitute women, men, girls, and boys may find themselves more closely linked by their food-provisioning strategies to those in other cities than to those nearby.

Notes

1 Introduction

1. Purchasing power parity reflects how many local goods the local country currency will buy at a given time.
2. An international dollar is a unit of measurement utilized to reflect in local country terms the same purchasing power over local goods as a U.S. dollar has in the United States.
3. Bryceson (1993) found consumers held similar views of the deregulation process, food prices, and traders in Mwanza as well as Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Mbeya, and Songea.
4. In Swahili the concords "m" (singular) and "wa" (plural) are attached to noun modifiers, such as the names of ethnic groups like "Sukuma," to designate either a person (Msukuma) or persons (Wasukuma) of the Sukuma group.
5. See Jones (1972), Pearson et al. (1981), Bates (1981, 1983), and Timmer et al. (1983).
6. Throughout his work Sen consistently defines "things" as commodities (Gore 1993).
7. Thomas R. Malthus (1766–1835) was an English clergyman whose theories continue to hold widespread influence even today, especially among some contemporary policymakers. He argued in his 1798 *Essay on Population* (see Malthus (1914)) that populations tend to increase faster than their means of subsistence and that poverty and deprivation are inevitable unless group numbers are checked by reproductive restraint or war, famine, or disease.
8. Stini's line of argumentation was later taken up by economist David Seckler (1980, 1982) who proposed the "small-but-healthy" hypothesis. Seckler argues that worldwide malnutrition is not as big a problem as it seems because most people in the world are "small but healthy" and only those showing clinical signs of malnutrition are at risk. Seckler's work sparked lively debate, but his viewpoint essentially was put to rest by biological anthropologist Reynaldo Martorell, who distinguishes between wasting and stunting in children's growth failures as well as discusses the direct effects of poverty on growth (1989).
9. For an extended discussion of anthropological perspectives on famine and hunger see Shipton (1990), Messer and Shipton (2002), and Scheper-Hughes (1992).

10. As Messer and Shipton (2002) observe hunger also is a subjective sensation that is not always problematic but voluntarily sought out and welcomed whether to demarcate one's religious commitments, as in the case of some Muslims' month-long daytime fast marking Rhamadan or among those conserving precious resources during lean times. Hunger also has been voluntarily used as a form of political protest in Ireland (e.g., see Sweeney (1993)) or to assert command over one's body and control one's destiny among anorexics in the United States (Bordo 1997).
11. For an excellent economic history of Tanzania's staple-grain trade see Bryceson (1993).
12. See Odegaard (1985), Bevan et al. (1989), Maliyamkono and Bagachwa (1990), Bagachwa (1993).
13. These were the top regional officials who were representatives of the Prime Minister and political appointees of the ruling Chama Cha Mapunduzi political party.

2 Researching Food in Mwanza

1. Women may have fished in and around Mwanza to meet their private needs, but I never observed, heard of or met any women who did so commercially.
2. While in Mwanza and in much of urban Tanzania as a whole, communities are undergoing a process of greater class differentiation, it is very difficult to offer quantifiable distinctions between groups. See chapter 4 for my discussion of how I distinguished between low-, middle-, and high-income households.
3. See Mwaikusa (1995) for extended discussion of the role of *sungusungu* in Tanzania.

3 Changing Patterns of Consumption: Effects and Determinants

1. The chronic hunger experienced by many of Mwanza's most destitute adults and street children is discussed in chapters 8 and 9.
2. For discussions of rural food provisioning in Tanzania and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa see Bryceson (1980b, 1990), Hay and Stichter (1984), Swantz (1985), Hansen and McMillan (1986), Moore (1986), Huss-Ashmore and Katz (1989), Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and UNICEF (1990), and Howard and Millard (1997).
3. Interhousehold food exchanges are discussed in greater detail in chapter 6, homegrown foods and urban agriculture are discussed in chapter 7, and food-based charity is explored in chapters 8 and 9.
4. As far as I know, credit cards were accepted at very few businesses in town and only then at ones that catered to Mwanza's wealthiest residents or tourists, such as the largest travel agencies, hotels, and safari outfitters.

5. I interviewed J. M. Molai in his office at the municipal government building on November 18, 1993.
6. I spoke with Julius Mairi, Mwaloni market master, on several occasions at the markets in late November and early December 1993.
7. I provide a more detailed description of vendors marketing strategies in the second-half of this chapter.
9. The most recent to date
10. The influence of government policy in shaping food preferences has been witnessed elsewhere in the world (see J. Goody (1982, 1997), Mintz (1985, 1997), and Harris (1985)).
11. This multistage program was initiated by the government with the hope of moving the nations' peasants from widely dispersed homesteads to concentrated village settlements. The villagization policy aimed at facilitating social service delivery to more people. The government also hoped that over time greater economies of scale would promote greater agricultural production and eventually collectivized peasant production (Bryceson 1993).
12. H. A. Mbamba, head of Crops Division, Nyegezi Agricultural College, was interviewed in his office May 5, 1994.
13. I interviewed Kyamba Japhgi, assistant planning officer for Mwanza region, in his office at Mwanza's Regional Block on April 12, 1994.
14. Mr. Mtambo was the acting manager of the National Milling Corporation, Mwanza region. I interviewed him in his office May 12, 1994.
15. Some cotton also is purchased by private ginneries.
16. Because Mwanza was the closest city to the Rwandan camps at Kasulu and Ngara, many aid agencies contracted with transporters there who could acquire goods both in town and from the surrounding agricultural supply areas and deliver them to the camps. These contracts proved highly lucrative for a couple of reasons. Not only did local businesspeople make a considerable profit for supplying the camps, but because the trucks' fuel and drivers' wages were covered by donor payments, the trucks usually were loaded again with maize on their return home. This subsidized maize could then be sold at prices that undercut the competition. After April 1994, the price of maize in Mwanza dropped considerably due to this practice.

4 Mwanza's African and Asian Households

1. Alfred Luanda, Mwanza's Regional Town Planner, was interviewed in his office on April 12, 1994.

5 Historical Transformations in Household Composition

1. Employers' rations usually included *ugali*, beans, and salt (Coppock 1951: 3).

2. As presented in the Mwanza Master Plan (1992–2012), the Population Census of 1988 and the 1976/77 and 1991/92 Household Budget Surveys.
3. Some of the complexities surrounding this term are introduced in chapter 4.
4. Opportunities to perform paid domestic work also are increasing in the countryside. The emigration of children, grandchildren, and others who used to help in rural homesteads has created rural domestic-labor shortages. Some rural inhabitants employ domestic help themselves, while some town residents pay domestic workers to care for their elderly parents and other family members who live in the countryside (TGNP 1993).
5. Bariadi is located in eastern Shinyanga region.
6. Child fostering and labor are discussed in greater detail in chapter 9.
7. Neither did many Asian employers' housegirls, because Asians prepared different foods and recognized different food-related customs than those to which many Africans were accustomed.

6 POOLING, STRADDLING, JUGGLING, AND BALANCING ON ONE FOOT

1. The various ways in which people of different ages influenced household food-provisioning processes are not explored explicitly in this chapter, but examples of age-based allocation of food-related labor are explored in chapter 5 in regard to housegirls and houseboys as well as in chapter 7 in the case of children's roles in urban farming. Age-based disparities over the control of household food supplies are discussed in chapter 9 in the accounts of street children who were forced from home because adult members of their households withheld meals from them.
2. *Kangas* are pieces of colorfully printed cotton worn as wraps by many African girls and women.

7 FARMING THE CITY

First published as "Urban Agriculture in Mwanza, Tanzania (see Flynn 2001) in *AFRICA*, journal of the International African Institute and reprinted by kind permission of the International African Institute, London.

1. See Linares (1996), Sanyal (1984, 1986), Jaeger and Huckabay (1986), Stren and White (1989), Rakodi (1985, 1988), Spear (1989), Briggs (1990), Satterthwaite (1990), Tripp (1990a, 1990b), Drakakis-Smith (1991), Freeman (1991, 1993), Baker and Pedersen (1992), Kironde (1992), Memon and Lee-Smith (1993), Rogerson (1993), Maxwell (1995), Mbiba (1995), Obosu-Mensah (1999).
2. For example see Hake (1977), Schlyter and Schlyter (1979), O'Connor (1983), Stren and White (1989), Coquery-Vidrovitch (1991).
3. See Lee-Smith et al. (1987).
4. These were Isiolo, Kakamega, Kisumu, Kitui, and Mombasa.

5. Overseen by Freeman under the auspices of York University (Toronto) and Kenyatta University.
6. The rest of urban farmers in his sample were unemployed, pension-earners, students, or self-employed (Obosu-Mensah 1999: 104).
7. From the appearance of the littered business district, exhaust-belching buses, and oil-saturated sewers running from auto repair shops, it could easily be argued that formal sector activities, too, contribute a great deal to environmental degradation in Mwanza.
8. I interviewed Mr. Luanda in his office on April 12, 1994.
9. The process of allocating housing/building plots in Mwanza is much like it is in Dar es Salaam, where applicants are hampered not only by the cost of the plot itself but the additional cost of bribes demanded by land officers. The length of time taken by municipal officials to process plot applications also does not serve the best interests of applicants and encourages squatting on vacant and marginal land (Lugalla 1995).
10. I interviewed Mr. Kyessi in his office at the Ardhi Institute in Dar es Salaam on June 20, 1994.
11. While it is commonly argued by African policymakers that the water that collects in maize axils provides a breeding ground for mosquitoes, this has been disproven in Zambia (see Watts and Bransby-Williams 1978).
12. I interviewed Mr. Molai in his office on November 18, 1993.
13. The term "squatter gardens" is used here as Freeman does in describing certain gardens in Nairobi. "For those whose plots were wholly on public property, the term 'squatters' has some validity, although it must be remembered that their use of this land for crop-growing is seasonal and ephemeral, not always continuous or permanent. For most of these, there was no question of obtaining formal permission to use the land, and no payment of an official rent. They simply decided to occupy and use vacant land in the city" (Freeman 1991: 72).
14. I interviewed Mr. Kyessi in his office at The Ardhi Institute in Dar es Salaam on June 20, 1994.
15. While parents and other caregivers may distribute food to individual children in varying quality and quantity for any wide number of reasons (such as individual preference, age, physical, and mental condition, etc. . . .), it appears that some Tanzanian mothers draw a stark distinction between their biological children, fostered children, and stepchildren. See chapter 9 for a discussion of the ramifications of this distinction on some fostered and stepchildren's systematic lack of food entitlement within the household (also see Rizvi 1981, cited by Messer 1984a).

8 FOOD, GENDER, AND SURVIVAL AMONG STREET ADULTS

1. There is a large literature on street children in Africa and this is discussed in chapter 9.

2. The label *watu wa mitaani*, or street people, is a degrading one commonly assigned to the destitute by the Tanzanian government, media, and general public alike. I use it hesitantly and for lack of a better analytical description.
3. It is highly probable that survival sex also is practiced by street men and boys, but none of the male participants in my study described doing so.
4. For extended discussions on some of these various observers and entrepreneurs see Lindfors (1999).
5. Following Nici Nelson (1993), I use the term "sex work" to describe the exchange of sex for food or money instead of the more culturally specific, morally burdened term "prostitution."
6. Mandeville as cited by Little 1973.
7. Gracia Clark (1994) found that some Ghanaian women use the gifts from lovers as capital to promote their market or food-vending businesses.
8. Mustafa Kudrati is a cofounder and former director of the *kuleana* Center for Children's Rights in Mwanza.
9. Women in Mwanza bore the brunt of illness and disease as caretakers, and HIV/AIDS infection impacted street women and others in many food-related ways. Women usually were "on-call" to find or prepare food for the ill anytime, day or night, thereby disrupting one's daily routine and nightly rest. Also, because infection is not only transmitted via sexual contact, but also in blood exchanges such as those between mother and fetus, infected women often found themselves as caretakers of infected children. Beyond the basic demand for food, other food-related pressures resulted from attempts by women to sustain the strength of their ill children through the provisioning of more nutritional meals consisting of more expensive foods.
10. Many of Mwanza's homeless slept beneath a particular culvert bridge near Uhuru Street.
11. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that support networks among the destitute also took responsibility for their members when they died. Group members often pooled their funds to purchase a burial cloth, and if possible, to pay for burial. However, if a body was not properly disposed of within three days the municipality usually collected it with a garbage truck and buried it in the municipal cemetery.
12. This appeared to be a somewhat common practice for many of Mwanza's street men who also were fathers (Mustafa Kudrati, personal communication, February 20, 1995).
13. Rakesh Rajani is a cofounder of and former director of the *kuleana* Center for Children's Rights in Mwanza.

9 LESSONS ON FOOD, CHILDHOOD, AND WORK FROM STREET GIRLS AND BOYS

1. See e.g., Dallape (1987); Iliffe (1987); Hardoy and Satterwhite (1989); Swart (1990); Reynolds (1991); United Nations (1991); Gunther (1992); Williams (1993); Blunt (1994); Rajani and Kudrati (1994, 1996);

Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman (1994); Ennew (1994a, 1994b); Campos, Raffaelli, Ude et al. (1994); Lugalla (1995); Mulders (1995); Save The Children Fund (UK) (1997); Hecht (1998); Marquez (1999); Lugalla and Kibassa (2002, 2003).

2. As set out in the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees
3. As noted in chapter 8, laws defining the age of majority in Tanzania are inconsistent. I chose this age based on the outreach practices of the *kuleana* Center for Children's Rights.
4. The ways in which the provisioning activities of the street children in my study differ from these other poor children is an important topic for future study.
5. As a whole the street children I met and/or observed were very mobile, especially the boys. They hitched rides in private and commercial cars, trucks and boats, snuck on to buses and ferries and stowed away on trains. These journeys allowed them to escape problems with other street children, the police and neighborhood-defense groups called the *sungusungu* and to seek out other friends, better income opportunities or simply a better day tomorrow in another place. I knew a group of seven boys who traveled regularly between Mwanza and Dar es Salaam and back again on a two- or three-week basis. The trip was often long (three days minimum if the train ran on schedule), hot and uncomfortable in the crowded third-class cars in which the boys rode, but as long as they were not caught or accosted by an unsympathetic conductor or fellow passenger the journey provided a relatively safe place to sleep and talk with friends.
6. One young man named Peter was a refugee from Burundi, which he left with his brother after the bloody coup in October 1993. According to staff members at the *kuleana* Center for Children's Rights, the terrified boy managed to make it to Dar es Salaam by sleeping during the day and walking at night, even though Peter had broken his leg (that healed several inches shorter than the other) along the way. The brothers split up in Dar and Peter took the train to Mwanza in early 1994. His story is particularly amazing because he survived the bloodshed in Burundi and the dangerous and painful trek to the coast, only to have his forearm broken by a police officer's bullet shortly after he arrived in Mwanza. The wayward bullet, meant for a fleeing banana thief down near the port at Mwanza South, hit Peter while he was fishing along the lakeshore. The bullet hit him in his arm just as he brought it past his head to cast his line.
7. I interviewed Sabas Masawe, Director of the Street Children's Program at the *kuleana* Center for Children's Rights, in his office on July 25, 2000.
8. One young boy described leaving his home out of choice. A teenager named Nyakato came to Mwanza for unspecified reasons but, unlike most of his peers, he said he was not forced out of his home by poverty or violence. He said that, "I ran away because I did not like living at home in Musoma. I have a brother and four sisters. My mother works in a small cafe and my father supervises a butchery. My father is rich. They do not know I am in Mwanza. I have lived here for two years and want to go to school, but I do not want to go back to Musoma.

9. The *kuleana* center was housed in a partially renovated but still largely dilapidated Hindu library rented from the town's Asian community leaders. This site was centrally located in Mwanza's business district amid hardware and office supply shops, pharmacies, and general offices. It was adjacent to the town's largest hotel/restaurant/disco that attracted a wealthy Tanzanian and expatriate clientele. The center's placement fueled an early adversarial relationship between the NGO and local government officials and some residents alike, who referred to the center as a magnet drawing "dirty and troublesome" children to an "eyesore" in the town center.

   Each night after a security guard locked the building's doors and the walled property's front gates, children slept outside on the concrete floor of the building's verandah, sharing thin blankets to ward of the nightly chill, any rain, and the incessant onslaught of malaria-bearing mosquitoes. As uncomfortable as this was, many children preferred it to sleeping elsewhere in town. Days at the center were long, busy, and often chaotic. Much of the staff was trained on the job, as it were, and staff turnover and burnout were common. In addition to attempting to alleviate the suffering of Mwanza's street children, the center's over-burdened staff worked to promote greater awareness of children's rights in Mwanza through public education campaigns and workshops and at the national level by way of petitioning government officials.
10. Sabas Masawe was the director of the street children's center at the *kuleana* Center for Children's Rights.
11. See chapter 6.
12. See chapter 1.
13. The street girls were not the only ones who took on more "invisible" types of employment to survive. Sixteen-year-old Salum worked in a roadside kiosk owned by another young man. At first Salum was very proud of his new job. It had potential to be long-term and the fact that an employer trusted him with an inventory of goods and a small cash box elevated his self-esteem and gave him some prestige among the other street boys. But Salum was forced to keep the kiosk open 18 hours a day and the strain eventually became too great. "I sleep locked up in the kiosk on the dirt floor at night," said Salum.

    I am not permitted to leave most of the time. There is no rest. [My employer] gets angry if I close the kiosk even to go the bathroom. Now he refuses to pay me my monthly wage because he says there was a theft, but nothing is missing. . . .

    Eventually Salum quit and supported himself by washing clothes and performing other types of casual labor around town.
14. Employing girls under the age of 12 is illegal under the Tanzanian Employment Ordinance (TGNP 1993; Shaidi 1991). Yet there is a very fine line separating paid employment from the regular domestic responsibilities of girls. This situation makes it difficult for labor officers to

prove that an arrangement is illegal, especially if both the housegirl and the employing family can verify even distant kinship connections between them (Sheikh-Hashim 1990). Anecdotal evidence suggests that some of the authorities appointed to enforce these child-labor laws reportedly employ housegirls illegally themselves.

15. The national media promoted the view of young unaccompanied girls as sex objects. While making serious charges about instances of "sexual harassment" [read "rape"] at Lake Tanganyika Stadium in Kigoma, where nearly 5,000 Burundian refugees were housed in late 1993, a newspaper reporter described in detail the appearance of an "elegant" Tutsi refugee girl who was in the company of a local man at a bar. The writer was compelled to detail the sexual attractions of the girl by noting that she had "a pointed nose" and the shapely legs of a "Primus beer bottle" (*Daily News*, November 16, 1993).
16. The girls' plight was made most evident midway through my stay in Mwanza when a 13-year-old girl died a slow and agonizing death. Doctors at the government hospital officially attributed her demise to tuberculosis. Those closest to her believed her weight loss and respiratory illnesses were AIDS related and acquired while trying to survive on the streets. She made her way to her natal home outside Mwanza town near the end of her life, but was shunned by her family, who accused her of being a prostitute. After selling some clothes she had stolen from her mother, she returned to town by bus. She died shortly thereafter at Bugando Hospital and was buried anonymously in the hospital cemetery.
17. In Mwanza the plural form of *rafiki* was commonly pronounced without the prefix "ma" that distinguished the plural form *marafiki* (friends, boy/girlfriends) from the singular form of the word *rafiki* (friend, boy/girlfriend) among other Swahili speakers in Tanzania.
18. At the same time what constituted "theft" was hardly clear-cut among Mwanza's residents. Street children could be seen scavenging spilled or discarded foods at marketplace peripheries. At Mwaloni street girls competed with the poor elderly women employed to collect *dagaa*, maize, and bits of dried cassava that fell to the ground from their deteriorating burlap sacks during the rearranging of inventory. The women angrily branded the scavenging girls as "thieves" because the children "stole" the goods the women collected for pay. Yet the girls were tolerated by some vendors because the foragers cleaned the area at no cost. The girls often gave their uncooked booty to sympathetic *Mama Nitilies*, who either cooked it for the girls or gave them some other food in return. Some people explained that out of sympathy they ignored thefts-in-progress, especially by the very youngest street children, or else took the opportunity to educate the children on the proper way to beg.
19. Muhimbo Mdoe and Fred Nyiti were senior educators with Street Kids International in Dar es Salaam.
20. Kato had run away from home after a violent beating from his father.

22. In one incident an approximately 11-year-old child lost a thumb and several fingers. In two other cases, children were discovered working the night shift in cotton ginneries (Coppock 1951: 3).
23. Street boys were regularly used by adult criminals to commit crimes. If caught by the police, the children suffered because the court and prison systems were poorly equipped to deal with the children in an appropriate and timely manner. In 1993 there was a months-long backlog in Mwanza's courts of the hearing of children's cases. This left children languishing in the filthy, overcrowded municipal Butimba jail. Once their cases made it to court, youths were often poorly represented in court hearings and given adult sentences involving corporal punishment. Long-term confinement in the same jail cells as adults was common and resulted in children suffering unbearable trauma from physical and sexual abuse at the hands of their adult cell mates (Shaidi 1991).
24. For more detailed discussion about the varieties of sexual experience among Mwanza's street boys see Rajani and Kudrati (1996).
25. This was especially apparent in the treatment the street children received by health care providers, police, and government officials. Almost all of the street children, like many of the street adults, were plagued by recurring, untreated illnesses and unhealthful conditions: malaria, diarrhea, upper respiratory infections, worms, schistosomiasis, skin and eye infections, lice, bruises, cuts, and festering wounds. Yet unlike the adults, the children reported being ignored, chastised or given substandard care when they sought help at government hospitals or the rehabilitation camps at Bukumbi and Kilombelo.
26. For an extended discussion on children's agency in shaping their kin and non-kin support networks see Reynolds (1991).

10 FOOD ENTITLEMENT, CHARITY, AND "THE CITY"

1. This interesting line of reasoning was first suggested to me by Parker Shipton.
2. Richards argued that the Bemba of Northern Zambia during the 1930s performed *unkupula* in which they received food for work. She viewed this as a demeaning form of begging (1939). Yet subsequent study by anthropologist Henrietta Moore and historian Megan Vaughan shows that performing *unkupula* was something many women of various rank or wealth did during the busy planting and harvest seasons and is more closely related to redistributing both labor and food resources as well as women's quest for hard-to-acquire cash than to poor people begging for charity (Moore and Vaughan 1994).
3. Be it a Christian, Muslim, or animist being.

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