Food, Culture and Livelihood in Malinzanga village, Tanzania

Ingrid Lunde Ohna
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E-mail: ingrid.ohna@student.umb.no

Noragric
Department of International Environment and Development Studies
Norwegian University of Life Science (UMB)
P.O. Box 5003
N-1432 Ås
Norway
Tel.: +47 64 96 52 00
Fax: +47 64 96 52 01
Internett: http://www.umb.no/noragric
DECLARATION

I, Ingrid Lunde Ohna, hereby declare that this is my original work. The thesis has not previously been published at any academic institution for a degree. Information used from other sources is duly acknowledged.

Ingrid Lunde Ohna

Oslo, 28 May 2007
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ABSTRACT

Food is not just what we eat, but what we eat and how we prepare the food communicates who we are. Malinzanga is a small village in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania where food plays an important role in everyday life. There are four different ethnic groups in Malinzanga, two pastoralist groups the Masai and the Mangati and two agriculturalist groups the Hehe and the Bena. This thesis is a result of a two and a half months fieldwork in Malinzanga from mid October to the end of December 2006, studying food habits and culture among the different ethnic groups.

This study is a part of the PANTIL nutrition project, which is a collaboration project between the Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania and the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. The main objective of this study was to look at the socio-cultural dynamics of food in Malinzanga village. I wanted to do this by investigating the importance of ethnicity and culture in relation to people’s preferences on production, diet, the composition of meals and cultural classification of food.

One of the findings is that the different ethnic groups have different modes of production, which affects livelihood and diet. The pastoralist groups lives in the ‘forest’ and have manly livestock, while the agriculturalists living in the ‘village’ are mostly farmers. The changing seasons, with one dry season and one wet season, affects production and labour tasks for all the groups.

The diet of the people in Malinzanga is a result of choices on production, but there are also some food items like tomatoes, onions and spices that can be bought at the trading centres in Malinzanga. The meals in Malinzanga include breakfast, which is tea, with or without a side dish like chapatti or buns, lunch and dinner. Lunch and dinner are hot meals that normally consist of ugali and an mboga. Ugali has a dough like consistency and are made from staples, most common is maize, but sorghum, cassava and millets among others are also used. Mboga is the side dish or relish that can contain various things like vegetables, meat or beans. There is a variation in the meal composition between the different groups and this is related to ethnicity and cultural variation.
Food and culture are always related and says something about how different people value, prefer and classify food. In this study, the term ‘cuisine’ has been used to describe the cultural transformation of food that is expressed through use, preferences and classification. The different ethnic groups in Malinzanga classify food differently. Social value and stigmas related to poverty are attached to different foodstuffs, and are among the agriculturalists used as a sign of wealth. While the pastoralists that have different traditions related to food habits values their food differently and do not have the stigmas attached to food.

If one wants to introduce new foods or make interventions regarding nutrition in Malinzanga, it is important to be aware of the cultural variation concerning food in the area. The way people classify food and relate it to social value and wealth are important to take into consideration before interventions are implemented.
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1 Introduction

Malinzanga is a small village in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania. In Malinzanga, more than in many parts of ‘developed countries’, food is a part of every aspect in life. Food is what people work for, what they eat, what they use to show status and what they share on social occasions. In Malinzanga, “karibu chacula” meaning ‘welcome to food’ is almost more common than a normal greeting. Food says something about lifestyle, status, livelihood, ethnicity and culture. Food can be a symbol, that gives meaning to people and that is used to differentiate people from each other. Food communicates, and is a language that speaks of culture preferences and socio-economic differences. Different food habits and taste is as different as people. In Malinzanga life circles around food, the hours spent in the shamba\textsuperscript{1} with the hand hoe, weeding and tilling the land. The hot hours during the day are spent in the shadow, talking with friends, while rinsing maize colbs, mboga mboga.

I spent two months in Malinzanga where I conducted my fieldwork. One of the households I visited, were about to plant groundnuts, but in order to do this we had to take the shell off the peanuts that were going to be used as seeds. Two whole days we sat, rinsing groundnuts, people coming, sitting down, helping, talking etc. The family, my assistant and I would sit cleansing peanuts the whole time while people came and went. This was by far the household where I got the most stories.

Food and ecology are naturally connected and so are food habits and ecology. Hunters and gatherers, pastoralists and subsistence farmers have to depend on the natural resources available, therefore the access to the natural base has been important for food studies. In the last decades, this has changed in the industrial world, where one can choose from food from all parts of the world in huge commercial stores. At the same time studies on food habits have become more and more focused on the consumption aspect. But in Malinzanga it is still important to focus both on consumption and production to understand food habits.

\textsuperscript{1} Swahili word for agricultural land.
This thesis is a result of my fieldwork conducted in Malinzanga, during the months of late October to late December. The thesis is about food, and the life of the people in Malinzanga, which I was so lucky to be a part of. They welcomed me, as if I was one of them, eager to show and teach me everything about life in Malinzanga. My curiosity and bunch of questions were always welcomed and answered with great enthusiasm.

My university, the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB), has for many years been in close collaboration with Sokoine Agricultural University (SUA) in Tanzania. In 2005 a Program for Agricultural and Natural Resources Transformation for Improved Livelihoods were launched as a follow up from a previous collaboration programme, called TARP II. The PANTIL programme comprises two components. The first being research and farmer empowerment and the second is institutional transformation and capacity building (PANTIL 2006). The programme is launched at SUA and implemented in collaboration with Agriculture Sector Lead Ministries, Norwegian University of Life Science, target beneficiaries, NGOs and the private sector in Tanzania. The Governments of Tanzania and Norway fund the programme. The overall aim of the program is to improve livelihoods of rural communities in Tanzania. One of PANTIL goals is that outputs will have a direct impact on the Tanzanian NSGRP\textsuperscript{2}. The NSGRP states it will promote research and development tools to advance agriculture and other sectors to reduce rural poverty. There are eleven projects implemented through the PANTIL program. Topics for the different projects are ranging from crop production, livestock production, nutrition and health, water conflict resolution and graduate entrepreneurship (ibid).

One of the projects is a nutrition project called Developing nutrition interventions for improved health and productivity. This project has as an overall objective to “improve nutritional status of rural communities through implementation of appropriate nutrition interventions for better health, productivity and reduced poverty” (PANTIL nutrition project 2006). The incentive for the project is to deal with the high prevalence of mal- and under-nutrition in Tanzania. It is also stressed that it is important for people to see and understand the link between nutrition and production. In Tanzania human labour provides much of the power needed for economic productivity. The focus

\textsuperscript{2} NSGPR is the acronym for National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction. This will be presented in chapter 2.
on good nutritional status and health is therefore important for improved livelihoods through improved productivity. The nutrition project have listed several specific objectives and these are (ibid):

- To identify types and causes of malnutrition and develop appropriate interventions (dietary modification, nutrient supplementation and nutrition education)
- To determine the link between nutrition, health, cognitive development and productivity
- To improve quality of labour force (work capacity) through prevention of malnutrition and diseases
- To determine the socio-economic benefits/impact of the interventions
- To examine social-cultural factors that influence attitudes and perceptions on nutrition and poverty alleviation

The project undertook a baseline survey in the two project villages Magubike and Malinzanga during March/April 2006. They measured the nutrition status of the members in the selected households. They measured weight, height, haemoglobin, and worm infestation, determination of iodine content in urine, schistosoma analysis in urine and blood smear for malaria parasitemia were part of the clinical assessment. A number of activities are to be conducted in the villages during the four years of the project. The project are expecting several outputs such as:

- Enhanced understanding of the causes and effects of malnutrition among community members.
- Enhanced understanding of the link between nutrition, health and productivity.
- Improved nutritional status of participating communities.
- Increased work capacity and labour productivity of population.
- Improved skills and knowledge and nutrition.

The nutrition project has also identified several expected impacts. These impacts are that nutrition issues are incorporated into day-to-day activities of the communities. That there will be reduced levels of malnutrition, and increased participation in production and development activities, which will lead to reduced income poverty (PANTIL nutrition project 2006).
My contribution to the project would be to investigate access, production and consumption in relation to how people perceive, value and classify food. Much of the new literature on food and food habits, is only concerned with consumption. In Malinzanga, available food is a result of environmental factors and choices on production, and one can therefore not only focus on consumption, but also production. I wanted to understand why the people do and act they way they do in relation to food, and food activities.

1.1 Research objectives

My contribution to the nutrition project is to look at the socio-cultural dynamics of food in Malinzanga village. To be able to identify proper interventions for increased nutrition one has to know the dynamics concerning food habits in the area. Food and culture has been the opening for my study that can contribute to the nutrition project. The interpretation of my study will therefore help to identify appropriate interventions for nutrition in Malinzanga.

My research objective is to look at the connection between food and culture in Malinzanga. I wanted to do this by investigating the importance of ethnicity and culture in relation to people’s preferences on production, diet, the composition of meals and cultural classification of food. To be able to understand this it is necessary to investigate the different aspects of access to food through livelihood and production, and how they are related to choices and actions concerning diet and meals. How the environment and changing seasons affect food, activities in the households, labour and food security is also important to understand in this context.

To understand food dynamics one has to investigate the content and availability of the main components of diet and the meal structure, with its different combination and ways of preparation. This will be done through a mapping of the diet, and identification of meal structures and how food are prepared and cooked. The aim of this study is therefore to investigate food available and how food is valued according to taste and preferences, how people classify food according to ethnicity and culture, and the impact cultural classification and food culture referred to as ‘cuisine’ have on nutrition and food security.
Since Malinzanga is a village consisting mainly of subsistence farmers and pastoralists, the food production will be connected to food for household consumption. In Malinzanga there are four ethnic groups, the Hehe, Bena, Masai and the Mangati and by looking at the similarities and differences concerning food and production both within and between the different groups one can more easily see the importance of culture for food and nutrition studies.

1.2 Organization of the text

The thesis is organized in six into six chapters, the first being this introduction. The second chapter gives some background information about Tanzania and gives a presentation of the different ethnic groups that live in Malinzanga. The third chapter is about methods and fieldwork, here the sampling and data collection is presented, and this chapter also present a definition and definition of the household concept, before a short presentation of the ten households that makes the foundation for my analysis. Chapter five contains the presentation and analysis of my findings. The last chapter, chapter six, is the concluding discussion.
2 Background and context

In this chapter I will first present some brief background information about Tanzania in general, before I describe historical and political moments of particular importance. I will thereafter present the four different ethnic groups in Malinzanga, before I finally will present the village of Malinzanga where I conducted my fieldwork.

2.1 United Republic of Tanzania

Located on the East coast of Africa, Tanzania is the largest country in East Africa with its 945 000 km2 and 37 million inhabitants (TNW n.d.). Even though the country is a politically stable country and has been without the serious internal conflicts that so many other African countries have suffered in the last decades, it still is one of the poorest countries in the world. Per capita income in 2005 was approximately 330$ pr. year (World Bank 2007). Tanzania has a very varied landscape that contains large savannas in the northeast, the coastline with coral reefs and mangrove forests, and the mountains in the Southern Highlands and of course Kilimanjaro, which is the highest mountain in Africa, in the north. The climate in Tanzania is tropical. In the highlands the temperature varies from 10 to 20cº and in the rest of the country it never goes below 20cº. There are two rainfall regimes in Tanzania. One type is the unimodal rainfall, from December to April, which is in the southern, southwest, central and western part of the country. And one bimodal type, from October-November and March-May, this is the north and along the northern coast (TNW n.d.).

![Figure 1. Map over Tanzania (MTCP 2007)](image-url)
2.1.1 Livelihood and economy

Tanzania is ranked as country nr 162 of 177 in UNDP human development index ranking (UNDP 2006). Even though Tanzania is one of the world poorest countries, it has the last years seen a steady growth in the economy from 5.1% in 2000 to 7% in 2005 (World Bank 2007). Agriculture is the biggest sector in Tanzania’s economy, and engages approximately 80% of the active labour force and makes up for 44.5% of the GDP, while industry represent 17.8% and services etc for 37.6% (World Bank 2007).

The agriculture in Tanzania is mainly subsistence agriculture and 70% of the cropland is cultivated with hand hoe. The main staples grow is maize, sorghum, millet, rice, wheat, beans, cassava, potatoes, bananas and plantains. Tanzania has a long history with trade and today they export a number of agricultural products like coffee, cotton, cashew nuts, tobacco, sisal, pyrethrum, tea, clovers, horticultural crops, oil seeds, spices and flowers (TNW n.d.).

2.1.2 Poverty, education and health

According to FAO (2006), 44% of the population in Tanzania are malnourished, and 35% are living below the poverty line, 38.7% of these people live in the rural areas and 29.5% in urban areas. Life expectancy for the inhabitants in Tanzania is 46.2 years, the infant mortality rate is 78.4 pr. 1000 birth and the mortality rate among children under 5 years old is 126 pr. 1000 (FAO 2006). Tanzania has since independence when Julius Nyerere and his party came to power, been a country that has seen education as one of the most important pillars to development, but the literacy rate in the country is not satisfactory. The literacy rate in Tanzania was in 2004 69.4% (FAO 2006). Tanzania has developed several strategies and programs to deal with poverty and food security in Tanzania. The most important one is may be the MKUKUTA.

MKUKUTA is the Swahili acronym for what in English translates to National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP). Is a national strategy and developmental framework for the period 2005 – 2010 and is the follow up from the PRSP in Tanzania that lasted from 2000 – 2004. The MKUKUTA forms a part of the Vision 2025 that was engaged by the government of Tanzania to guide economic and social development efforts up to the year 2025 (TNW n.d.).
The MKUKUTA is formed and organized around three clusters;

1. Growth and reduction of income poverty
2. Improved quality of life and social well being
3. Governance and accountability

These three clusters are linked to 200 cluster strategies. The programmed outcomes of these will be achieved through cross-sector coordination and will also involve stakeholders.

Mal- and under nutrition is a severe problem in Tanzania due to poor food security. The government in Tanzania is promoting a strategy of producing more food to enhance food security and alleviate poverty. They have an aim of becoming self-sufficient with regard to basic food requirements.

2.1.3 History and politics

There is not much known about the history in Tanganyika before the nineteenth century. Most of the first documentation from Tanganyika comes from the coast areas because of the trading with people coming from the Indian Ocean. Much of the literature before the 1800 is therefore from the coast. Little work has been done on collecting oral information from Tanganyika. Little is known about Tanganyika’s inland before the colonization, but researchers know that it consisted of many ethnic groups and different political units. Some was more democratic while others were more authoritarian chiefdoms (Suttun 1969). Suttun argues that one cannot see the present Tanzania as a result of the colonial period, the nationalism or the struggle for independence. What is today called the United Republic of Tanzania is a result of many thousands years and has involved political, economic and social development and the mixing of people who have settled in Tanzania. “… in Africa a knowledge of the pre-colonial past is basic for an understanding of our self and our present problems” (Sutton 1969:2).

Alpers (1969) argues that one of the most important historical events that made the foundation for the forming of the United Republic of Tanzania was the caravan trade that spread in mainland

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3 The Tanzania government policies on food security will be presented and discussed more closely in chapter 4.
4 Tanganyika is former name of what now is mainland Tanzania. The area was called Tanganyika until the forming of the United Republic of Tanzania in 1964, which also included Zanzibar.
Tanganyika during the first decades on the 19th century. Zanzibar and the coast had been trade centres for many centuries already (Alpers 1969:51). These were trade routes that connected Zanzibar with the main land and caravan trade that connected the coast with the interior, in the start it was mostly ivory and slave trade, but as the cities along the coast grew bigger the need for agricultural products grew and became important for the peasants who carried by foot their outputs to the trading centres on the roads where the caravans passed (Alpers 2005:33) Alpers concludes his discussion on the caravan trade and its importance in Tanganyika’s history by saying that:

… the most important effect which the development of caravan trade had for the subsequent history of Tanzania was the germ of unity which it planted in the middle of those who were involved in it. It is from this embryonic sense of unity that the United Republic of Tanzania is historically derived (Alpers 1969:56).

As a result of the caravan trade and more external influence in the 19th century important changes took place and what happened in this period are better documented. The most important change was the shift from religious to military power as basis for political power (Roberts 1969:58). The traditional chiefs could now because of external interaction more easily obtain men and weapons to enforce their authority. They became involved with the outer world mainly through the spread of the ivory and slave trade. The switch from religious and kinship ties to economic and military strength were by some of the leaders seen as necessary to enforce innovation and change. For most of the people in Tanzania social organization was rooted in kinship. The leadership position was hereditary. This means that a man succeeded to a position because his father or his brother or his uncle had held the post before him. There were several problems with this. There were often conflicts related to the succession to power, because there were seldom any clear rules on which of the family members who had the right to claim the position. This could result in that the group was divided because some members tried to overtake the person in charge (Roberts 1969).

During the late 19th century the Germans came to Tanzania. The people did not give the Germans a warm welcome, and the greatest challenge was the Hehe under their leader Mkwawa (Gwassa 1969). One of the most important caravan routes, which connected the east with the west, went through Mkwawa’s land. Mkwaka closed this route to make it difficult for the Germans. The Germans decided to attack and the devastating loss on the German side, showed how little they knew about African warfare and political organization. The Hehe stood the battle for many years,
but finally in 1898 after 7 years of struggle Mkwawa realised he was no longer able to resist and shot himself. His head was sent to Germany and was not returned until 1955 (ibid). Today there is a small museum where the scull of Mkwawa has been placed in the area were he lived, 30 km from the city of Iringa\textsuperscript{5}.

By the turn of the century Germany had control over Tanganyika after the victory over Mkwawa and the Hehe. But just a few years after the Germans had colonized the whole of Tanganyika, the Maij Maij rising started as a result of the control and administration of the new colony lordship. The Maij Maij rising, which was a series of wars trying to defeat the Germans took place between 1905 and 1907 (Gwassa 1969). The rising spread over considerable parts in southeast Tanganyika, and when it was finally put down in 1907, it led to a revision of the Germans policies in Tanganyika (TNW n.d.).

After the First World War the British took over all of Germany’s East-Africa, and Tanganyika got a new colony lord. At first the British stepped in the same footprints as the Germans, but they soon realized that they needed to decentralize the power to be able to keep it. The British imposed Indirect Rule, meaning that they gave power to what they believed to be local leaders and expected them to be the extended arm of the British government. What they thought they did was to take advantage of the social organization of the different tribes, who they thought to be in clans and chiefdoms with one leader that was recognized by the whole group. But this was not always the case and created instability. The Bena found it useful to cooperate with the British, while the Hehe did neither resist nor cooperate.

The politics in Tanganyika at the second half of the twentieth century was based on several factors concerning the intensified commercial integration from the mid-nineteen century, the country now had a common language in Kiswahili and the homogenizing administrative and governmental apparatus from the colonial time. The opposition against the colonial regime started by a successful nationalist movement led by Julius Nyerere and the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) (Wright 2005). Five years after the movement started, in 1961

\textsuperscript{5} The Honourable Commissioner of Iringa District told this to me on a car trip from Malinzanga to Iringa, when we passed the museum where the scull of Mkwawa lies.
Tanganyika became independent. And the 26th of April 1964 Zanzibar and Tanganyika together formed the United Republic of Tanzania.

Nyerere is by the Tanzanians called the ‘Father of the Nation’, Nyerere and his party the TANU promoted the family and community co-operation together with the local governments formed to ensure that commoners where included in democratic participation. Nyerere and his party the TANU introduced in 1967 the *Ujima a vijijini* policy, *Ujamaa* meaning “family-hood or blood relationship” and *vijijini* meaning “in the village” in Kiswahili. The thought behind being to give more power to the people living in the villages and raising agricultural production through agricultural co-operatives by building *ujamaa* villages where the ideology was socialist agricultural production and socialist way of living (Nyerere 1976).

Today Tanzania is a unitary republic based on a multiparty parliamentary democracy, and the president Mh. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete was elected in 2005. Tanzania consists of 26 regions and 130 administrative districts.

**2.2 The people**

There are many different ethnic groups in Tanzania. John Iliffe (1989) puts them into four different categories depending on the language groups they belong to. According to Iliffe there are four mayor families of languages present in Tanganyika. The first one is the language that comes from the Kohisan language groups. They are characteristic because of their “clicking” sounds. The people that speak the Kohisan languages were mostly herders and gatherers. The second group where those speaking Cushitic languages, languages similar to those spoken in Ethiopia, these herded and cultivated but did not initially use iron. They arrived from the north and spread as far as the Southern Highlands. This is known because one can still find traces of Cushitic words in the language to tribes like Burungi, Gorowa and Iraqw (Iliffe 1989:7). The third family of languages is those belonging to the Nilotic languages. The larges groups is the mostly pastoralist group Tatoga⁶, and the wholly pastoral group Masai who overtook dominance in the rift valley by the end of the 18th century. The fourth group and the largest group now are the groups belonging to the Bantu languages. These were iron-using cultivators who came from

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⁶ Tatoga is another name for the pastoralist group called Datoga and also Mangati, this will be explained later on.
the west during the centuries immediately before and after the birth of Christ. Over centuries they colonized most of Tanganyika, presumably absorbing earlier people until more than ninety percent of the population spoke Bantu languages (Iliffe 1989:7). There has always been a lot of migration from neighbouring countries to and within Tanganyika. But there is little evidence found of external migration from Tanganyika to other countries (Iliffe 1989). Because there has been so much intermixing of the people in Tanganyika Iliffe argues that it is difficult to use the term ‘tribe’ about the social organization in Tanganyika. Their belongingness relates to the place and the environment, and the ‘name giving’ of people of different groups where dependent on the person talking about them, giving them a name. Identification was totally relative to whom it was that spoke of them, ‘the northerners’ etc. When a person changed home and adjusted to a new environment s/he also changed identity. This explains the dynamics of the people in Tanganyika and that no groups are static.

2.2.1 In Malinzanga

The farmers in Malinzanga are mostly subsistence farmers, meaning they produce for own consumption. They choose to grow what is possible and according to what they want to eat. But there is also some who have cash crops on the side. One Bena household I visited had almost exclusively started to grow cash crops like groundnuts and rice. This is not very common, but they had the capacity to transport and sell, and they managed to buy food from others, and still have a profit.

There are two pastoralist groups in Malinzanga, the Masai and the Mangati. These are two different ethnic groups, but they are very similar when it comes to food habits and livelihood. The two agricultural groups, the Bena and the Hehe are even more similar than the two pastoralist groups. When I asked about this in the village, they said that Hehe and Bena were more like sisters and the Mangati and Masai more like cousins.

The pastoralist households that I visited during my fieldwork in Malinzanga all lived in the forest. They lived more scattered than the agriculturalists in the village. The Mangati and Masai live in family units with several houses close to each other depending on the size of the homestead. It is very common among the pastoralists that all the wives of a man live as
neighbours in a family unit. In the households I visited it was most common that one man lived with his wife/wives and children, and maybe the family of the children.

One day while walking to the marked with my assistant, which is Bena, a Bena friend of her, one Masai boy and me, I heard the comment: “One Mzungu, one Masai and two people”. The comment came from a Bena man, and it shows how people talk about themselves and talk about people that are seen as different than themselves. According to this man, the people like him are people while the Masai guy and me were something else!

2.2.2 The Hehe

The Wahehe\(^7\) is a Bantu speaking people from the central highlands of Tanzania. In 1957 they were determined to be the eight largest ethnic group in Tanzania, most of them living in Iringa and Mufindi districts (Roberts, Chavez and Redman 1974). The Hehe are primarily agricultural people, but some also have livestock. There are records of the Hehe being raided for cattle by the Masai in the 1880’s. The Hehe managed to halt the southward expansion of the Masai that had been going on for almost a century (Roberts 1969:71). Early on the Hehe mostly produced millets, sorghum and banana staples, but in the 19th century the maize was introduced in Tanganyika with the caravan routes. Maize gave high yields for relatively little labour and by 1880’s it was also widespread in the Southern Highlands and every homestead in Uhehe was surrounded with large maize fields (Iliffe 1989:69). The Hehe are patrilineal meaning decent and inheritance rights are transferred through the male line (Eriksen 1995). Cross-cousin\(^8\) marriage is the favoured marriage pattern, but is no longer a norm (Roberts, Chaves and Redman 1974). Giblin (2005) also discusses if they ever have been patrilineal or if it is a classification that was put on them by the British.

\(^7\) In Swahili Wa- in front of the name of the group refers to the people, the M- refers to one person and U- the area they live. I will in this thesis use the name.

\(^8\) Sisters and daughters marry men in other families, the men marry women from the same family the sister or daughter has been married into (Holy 1996). Meaning men marry mother-brothers-daughters, while the women marry mother-brother-sons. “This exchange of women links families together and creates solidarity between them (…)” (Holy 1996:131).
2.2.3 The Bena

The Bena people are an agricultural people like their neighbours the Hehe. There is some literature about the migration that took place in the late 1800’s, but not much else has been written about the Bena people. In an article Monson (2000) states “(…) the better sources for the history of the Rivers Bena deal initially with the Hehe, (…) because the two groups are so closely related culturally and racially”. (Monson 2000:356).

This is the way Monson starts his story about the migration the Bena people undertook in the end of the 1800’s. His explanation is that the Bena people were pushed out of their territory after the Battle of Mgodamtitu in 1874. The neighbouring tribe the Hehe attacked Bena settlements and forced them out of the highlands into the valley. After this migration the Bena population was divided into two groups, those who stayed are called the Bena and those who migrated are now called the “Bena of the Rivers” or Lowland Bena (Iliffe 1969). Kibena and Kihehe are two languages, which are linguistically very similar. Since the Bena and Hehe people most likely emerged from the same place and have the same ancestors, they are very similar in social organisation and culture.

2.2.4 The Mangati

This pastoralist group is being referred to with different names. The most common is Datoga, and this is the name used in most literature. I will refer to them as Mangati because that is what they were called in Malinzanga. Mangati is, however the Masai word for “enemies” (Ethnologue 2007). The Masai and Mangati are two pastoralist groups, that when living near each other have to compete for the same resources. This often leads to conflicts between the two groups.

In comparison with the Masai, little is known about the ethnic or historical origins of the Mangati (Mulder 1992). With relation to the language the Mangati have been closely linked to the Southern Nilotic languages. Researchers believe that the tribe dominated northern Tanzania and southern Kenya at some period between 1000-1800 AD, but were displaced by the nineteenth century expansion of the Masai in this area (ibid). Grazing land, with the exception of small areas around the homestead and agricultural land, is by the Mangati viewed as common property. The Mangati are patrilineal and marriage patterns are characterized by endogamy.
2.2.5 The Masai

The Masai is a well-known ethnic group because of their presence in many of the national parks in East-Africa with their beautiful clothing, jewellery and attitude. What few people know is that the Masai is one of the latest tribes to arrive in East-Africa, and that their adaptation to a purely pastoralist lifestyle is even newer (Spear and Waller 1993). While Kimangati have been traced to the Southern Nilotic languages, Kimasai (also referred to as Maa) have been traced to belong to the Eastern Nilotic languages. The people who speak the modern Kimasai today have their ancestors from southern Sudan, and many migrated in the first millennium AD (ibid). The Masai did primarily grow sorghum and millet on the side of having some livestock, before they adapted to a more and more pastoral lifestyle as they adapted to new environments (ibid). Age groups characterize the social organisation of the Masai and marriage mostly happens inside the group, meaning they are practising endogamy.

2.3 Village presentation

My fieldwork was conducted in the region of Iringa approximately 60 km west of Iringa town. Iringa city is the administrative capital of Iringa region, and is an eight-hour drive from Dar es Salaam. The population of Iringa is 106,668 (TNBS 2002). Iringa is a charming colonial town, founded by the Germans in the late 19th century. Iringa is located 1600m above sea level, and is therefore chilled during the cold months. The location of the village is on a cliff overlooking the valley of the Little Ruaha River. The Germans built this village as a bastion against the local Hehe people that was rebelling against the Germans. Iringa is also the gateway to get to Ruaha National Park, which is Tanzania’s second biggest, and is therefore a very tourist friendly town. Tourists often stay a night in Iringa before moving on to the national park.
As we can see from the map, Malinzanga borders with the national park. The part of Malinzanga that border to the park is only forest, and it is impossible to access the park from Malinzanga. Sixty km to the east from Malinzanga is the main entrance to Ruaha national park. Neighbouring the national park is a game controlled area. Visitors to the game area, have to drive through Malinzanga. The game area has a base camp belonging to the Wildlife Conservation Society, which is called Lunda. Many of the people in Malinzanga told me that they with regularity had access to wild meat from the game area. They didn’t hunt themselves but often people bought from others. People would drive through Malinzanga to get to the game reserve to hunt. Some hunters did not want the meat and sold it to people living in the area. If we were to place Iringa city on the map it would be in the Southeast corner of the map, approximately 60 km from the eastern border of Malinzanga.

Malinzanga is one of the two villages that were chosen for the PANTIL nutrition project. Malinzanga was chosen because it had shown interest to collaborate with SUA during the TARP II project⁹ (PANTIL nutrition project 2006). Malinzanga, as presented on the map, is a village.

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⁹ TARP II was also a collaboration project between UMB and SUA.
with eight hamlets. According to Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics there are 4,288 people, 2,093 men and 2,195 females living in Malinzanga village (TNBS 2002).

The main centre of Malinzanga is the hamlet called Mlowa, and it is here the bus stops. There is a bus that goes once a day to Iringa, and back again in the afternoon. The bus takes three to four hours one way. In a Land Rover it takes less than an hour. This is the form of transport that connects Malinzanga with other villages. It is also with the bus groceries and vegetables from neighbouring villages come to Malinzanga.

The village has a hamlet leader, traditional (tribal based) conflict resolution committees and different religious conflict resolution committees that function as legislation and informal facilities for decision-making. There is according to the baseline study two primary schools, one dispensary, one church and one mosque. During fieldwork I identified one roman-catholic, one presbyterian and one protestant church only in Mlowa, so there are probably many more churches. I also found a chapel in the forest where the pastoralists live. The village main trading centre, Mlowa had three milling machines, and each hamlet had approximately one milling machine. There were five small shops and one tailor that had his own tailoring place and one shopkeeper had a sewing machine outside the shop. There was one man in the village that had a photo camera and he made a small business of taking peoples picture, send them to Iringa and develop them.

The baseline study results indicate that the use of mobile phones, use of generators for electricity, changes in consumption patterns due to availability of soft drinks, bottled beer and water and the construction of modern houses are signs of modernisation in the village.

The houses in Malinzanga are either made of mud or home made bricks. There are also some houses made of cement and even one house with a brick roof. But most of the houses are either mud houses, homemade brick houses with either straw or iron sheet roofs. The houses have from one to three rooms. It was very common that each homestead consisted of more than one house. There were often a separate house for the kitchen, storage and washing place. Some houses had a small plot of land by the houses, but most of the land was quite far away from the houses.
My view of the village is that it was separated into two parts rather than eight hamlets. But the area of the village is quite big and my ability to travel around a lot was limited because of time and lack of transportation. The two parts that I identified was the ‘village’ and the ‘forest’. The pastoralists live mainly in the forest and the agriculturalist manly in the village. There was two Mangati that had one wife living in the border between the village and the forest, while other wives lived with the cattle in the forest.
3 Methodology and fieldwork

In this chapter I will show how I chose to do and how I conducted my fieldwork. I will start with presenting some basic concepts concerning participant observation and fieldwork. Then I will discuss the theoretical perspectives positivism and symbolic interactionism. This is important because it says something about the different types of theoretical background there can be for a study.

PANTIL nutrition project wanted to select people in the village for their baseline survey in such a way that after analysing the data, the findings could be generalized to all the people in the village. I wanted on the other hand to focus on variation in the village, and study the differences between the ethnic groups. The implications, advantages and disadvantages of this will be discussed under sampling. Then I will show how I collected my data and how language and working with assistants affected the data collection. Then I will present and discuss the term household, and define how my use of the concept will be used in this thesis. Finally, I will present briefly the ten households I visited during my fieldwork.

3.1 Participant observation and fieldwork

“Culture consists in what the fieldworker himself observes” (Leach 1957:120 cited in Ellen 1988:218).

Fieldwork is according to Eriksen (1995) what distinguishes anthropology from many other social sciences. Fieldwork extending from some months to several years has been the foundation for most of the theory created in modern anthropology. Bronislaw Malinowski is seen as the first scientist to use anthropological fieldwork with participant observation as a method. Malinowski is called the founder of the social anthropological method after having conducted a two years long fieldwork on the Trobiander Islands in Papa New Guinea (Ellen 1988).

Both ethnography and participant observation have been used to describe the researchers method in the field. Directly translated ethnography means ‘to write about people’ (Fangen 2004), and is mostly used on the final work, the story of the people (Eriksen 1998). Here participant observation will refer to the method and ethnography to the final work. According to Eriksen:
Participant observation is the normal terminology for the informal field method that has dominated angloamerican and skandinavian anthropology. The goal of the method is to be both inside (one participates) and outside (one observes) the investigated society at the same time. (Eriksen 1998:33).

The word participant observation implies that the researcher in the field both participates and observes what goes on in the society studied. Ellen argues that

The very process of observation implies the sensory perception of things that can be seen, heard and felt. And there is only one kind of phenomena in the whole realm of social life, which are observable in this sense: specific actions of individuals (be the physical acts or speech acts), (Ellen 1988:25).

Fangen (2004) argues that it is impossible to be neutral while doing fieldwork, because when you participate you will naturally be involved both physically and psychologically, and be put in situations where you have to choose what to say, how to act etc. It is therefore almost impossible to remain neutral because one is personally involved. For an anthropologist in the field, meaning will be interpreted by the researcher through observation and participation, Ellen quotes Strathern saying “it is only by entering a realm of meaning that we can make it properly meaningful for ourselves” (Ellen 1988:220).

Participant observation is holistic in its ambition, when observing and taking part in the social life of others, you will naturally see all the different things influencing daily life. And the advantages of participant observation are according to Fangen (2004) that one gets knowledge through firsthand experience. Another thing is that personal feelings and impressions is a part of the data material. She also argues that one will through participant observation get access to information you would never get through an interview. It might be things people have difficulties talking about, but when you observe, you can easier ask questions in connection to actions you have seen. It will be easier to answer because you have seen the action. Through participant observation you will also get a much more complex picture of the society (Fangen 2004).
3.1.1 Positivism and symbolic interactionism

To be able to justify the choices of methodology and methods\textsuperscript{10} taken in a research we need to put it in context to some theoretical perspectives. This is important because the choice and justification of how we choose to do it says something about the credibility and validity of the research. Positivism and symbolic interactionism are two such theoretical perspectives that are discussed in relation to social science. According to Bryman positivism is an epistemological position (Bryman 2004). Epistemology is “the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in methodology” It is in that sense a “way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know” (Crotty 1998:3).

Positivism is a objective epistemological view that believe that “things exists as meaningful entities independently of consciousness and experience, that they have truth and meaning residing in them as objects” (Crotty 1998:5). Bryman explains that positivism “advocates the application of the methods of the natural science to the study of social reality and beyond” (Bryman 2004:542). This means that the value of things and actions are always there, it is just a matter of seeing and discovering them.

The critique of positivism in a social science like anthropology was mainly that “there are no such things as ‘pure experience’, no such thing as ‘facts’ that are recorded directly ‘from nature’” (Ellen 1988:27). Many have turned to what the sociologists refer to as symbolic interactionism, also called interpretive social science. The social scientist cannot only observe things. S/he will always interpret meaning from what is observed. And this is subjective and formed by the theoretical knowledge of the researcher. The researcher will always have one or more objectives for the study, and will interpret and observe things in the light of this. According to Bryman interpretivism is “an epistemological position that requires the social researcher to grasp the subjective meaning of social action” (Bryman 2004:540). Doing fieldwork on the basis of symbolic interactionism would imply to find out how the people studied looks at the world and the roles they take and how they interact (Fangen 2004). While positivism relation to theory is

\textsuperscript{10} Crotty defines methods as the “techniques and strategies used to gather and analyse data related to some research questions or hypothesis” (Crotty 1998:3). While Methodology is “the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes” (ibid).
that theory should grow out of the empiric data, social interactionism recognizes that theoretical presuppositions will always be involved and that the theory of social facts are constructed on the basis of this. It is theory looked upon in a new way (Ellen 1988:27).

3.2 Sampling

In the introduction chapter I explained my role in the PANTIL nutrition project. I will now present and discuss the different ways the PANTIL nutrition project and I have chosen to make a sample of people in Malinzanga and the consequences this have had for the studies. The most important thing to mention is that the PANTIL nutrition baseline study is a quantitative study. Quantitative research “usually emphasizes quantification in the collection and analysis of data” (Bryman 2004:524). While my study is qualitative in nature meaning it emphasises more on words than on numbers. This has of course an implication for which people we want to include in our study and makes therefore the criteria for our sampling. According to Bryman a sample is “the segment of the population that is selected for research. It is a subset of the population” (Bryman 2004:543). The PANTIL nutrition project wanted to be able to say something about the whole population of Malinzanga, without interviewing the whole village. That meant they had to make a sample according to size that could be representative for the whole village. The PANTIL nutrition study did this by using systematic random sampling (PANTIL nutrition project 2006).

The PANTIL nutrition project undertook a two stage stratified sampling procedure to obtain the sample population. Stage one was the selection of districts, divisions that led to the sampling of the two villages Magubike and Malinzanga. Stratified random sampling was used. This is “a sample in which units are randomly sampled from a population that has been divided into categories (strata)” (Bryman 2001:544). The hamlets were identified as representing the different stratas in the PANTIL nutrition project¹¹. The positive thing about stratified random sampling is according to Bryman that “it ensures that the resulting sample will be distributed in the same way as the population in terms of the stratifying criterion” (Bryman 2004:93).

¹¹ The two villages Malinzanga and Magubike had been selected in collaboration with regional agriculture officers in both villages, Malinzanga because of interest to collaborate during TARP II, Magubike because of its low socio-economic profile (PANTIL nutrition 2006).
The next stage was the selection of households in each village. This was done using systematic sampling on the basis of the probability proportional to size\textsuperscript{12}. A systematic sample is “a probability sampling method in which units are selected from a sampling frame according to fixed intervals” (Bryman 2004:544). The households were selected from a list at the village registry. Each hamlet in each village contributed households to the project proportional to the number of households in the hamlet. Hamlet leaders were also recruited to participate (PANTIL nutrition project 2006).

Both stratified random sampling and systematic sampling, are types of probability sampling. Probability sampling means that the “sample has been selected using random selection so that each unit in the population has a known chance of being selected” (Bryman 2004:87). This makes the sample representative of the population you are investigating and you can therefore generalize findings from your sample to the whole population from which it was selected (Bryman 2004). If we look at the sampling the PANTIL nutrition project did, they can use their data from the 56 households in Malinzanga to say something about all the people in Malinzanga in general.

My part in the project was to look into food habits, choices, classification, ethnicity and culture in Malinzanga. This could not be done using quantitative methods based on probability sampling. The PANTIL nutrition project’s sample does not take into account the different ethnic groups, but mixes them to generate a mean that can say something about the village as a whole. I wanted to see how the people are different according to food habits and document the variation, not the similarities, in Malinzanga.

As a point of departure, I used the list of households selected to participate in the PANTIL nutrition project. My sampling was done in collaboration with the chairman. He helped me determine the ethnicity of the different people on the list of the people participating in the PANTIL nutrition project. I saw that I would need to select more pastoralists because there were only two pastoralist households on the PANTIL nutrition project’s list. I also wanted to select some agriculturalists that were not participating in the project, as I increasingly became aware

\textsuperscript{12} This was obtained using the formula \(n = t^2 \times p (100 - p)/d^2\). A 15\% increase was made to the calculated sample size to make allowance for dropouts and refusal to be interviewed” (PANTIL 2006:4).
that there were rumours and speculations among the non-participating household about what the PANTIL nutrition project really was about and what was special about the participating households. During one of my visits to households in the first week, I visited a PANTIL nutrition project participating household. When I asked if he would be interested in me staying there for some days, he explained to me that he wouldn’t mind, but he was worried about what the neighbours would say. He said that people not selected to participate in the nutrition project believed the people participating had HIV, because blood samples had been selected. And the husband in this household was concerned that the rumours would only get worse if the households would get more attention from my visit. So I chose to sample household that were not in the project. There are two things I would like to mention in relation to the sampling that was done by the PANTIL nutrition project. The first thing is that it did not consider ethnic variation. The other one was lack of information to the people not selected to participate. If this had been done there wouldn’t have been any conflict between the ones selected, and the ones that were not. My sample ended up with six participating households, while four of the households in my sample were not selected to participate in the PANTIL nutrition project baseline study. My final sample consisted of three Hehe, two Bena, four Masai and one Mangati13 households. This means I selected five agriculturalist and five pastoralist households.

My sampling was done purposively in a way that would suit my research questions. Since I am concerned with variation in food habits and classification between different ethnic groups, I had to select households in different groups in order to see this variation. Bryman argues that ethnographic research sampling is not just about the people it is also about the time and context. One can therefore not do a random sampling, because one has to take into account the variation and motivation of the household that are going to participate in the study (Bryman 2004).

3.3 Data collection

Since I came to Malinzanga as a part of the PANTIL nutrition project the households involved in the project were very inviting and helpful since they knew the intentions of the project. After the sampling was finished the chairman was very helpful communicating to the households that I was

13 It first was three Masai and two Mangati, but this changed to one partly because of lack of collaboration, and communication and for the sake of my study I found it more reasonable to go deeper with the Masai. But I had many talks with Mangati people.
coming. This saved me time, and made it easier to be accepted in the household because the
chairman was a well-respected man, and when he had approved of my visit it was ok. With the
Masai this was a bit different. I visited four Masai households, the first one was the household
that was selected in the project, and luckily this was also the household with one of the most
respected old Masai men. He was a wealthy and wise Masai, and when I visited the other Masai
households that did not have any connection to the project, they were nice and hospitable because
they said they had seen what I did at the first Masai household and it was an honour to have me
there.

The first four days in the village I made a brief visit to a large number of people, in total I visited
thirty households. These were just small visits to present myself and ask some questions about
their livelihood, what they were growing and differences between the wet and the dry season. In
the thirty it was fifteen agriculturalists and fifteen pastoralists. It gave me a good overview of the
village, the people, differences in houses and wealth, but also in social organization within the
household, concerning polygamy etc.

The first day I was going to visit the Masai, there was a circumcision ceremony for six young
Masai boys. I was invited and got to meet many Masai from almost the whole district. I
introduced my self and small talked with different people. I talked mostly to the old Masai men
and women, which I found out afterwards was a smart move, because it is important to be
accepted by the elders first, then the younger know they can talk with me without getting in
trouble or anyone getting suspicious.

I had decided to visit ten households, five pastoralists and five agriculturalists. Based on an
assumption and the data from Malinzanga, I decided to distinguish between two categories of
ethnic groups, the pastoralists and the agriculturalists. I was to stay for three or four days in each
household. Since I lived in the village I found out that it was enough with three days in each,
because there were small variations in daily routines in the households. But it is important to note
that my data are not only observation in the households but also what I observed living in the
village, talking to people, looking at what they did. The time I wasn’t in the homesteads I spent
sitting outside one of the shops and outside the house I was staying in writing or just watching
and talking to people. Here I could confirm with people if something was puzzling me or I could ask if I had any questions.

During the three days I visited each household I made sure to be there at least one day from the start of the day and one day at the end, so that I would cover the whole day during the three days. The rest of the days I was there at every meal, but went often home after lunch, when most people were resting. When I was with the pastoralists I stayed the whole day, because of the distance from the forest to the village. During my stay, I helped as much as I could and participated in the activities they were doing. If they were going to the field, I went to the field etc. One of the translators explained that they should almost look at me as a new child in the family, I were to be treated equally, learn and do the same things as they did. I found that this explanation worked. One woman proudly presented me for some neighbours as the daughter from Dar es Salaam!

I used two diaries during my fieldwork. One that I had with me at all times, where I wrote down things that I needed to remember while I was in the field. The other one was the one I wrote in every day after I got back to my room. Here I wrote both details, general observations and tried to put it into a context.

3.3.1 Language

The people in Malinzanga speak Swahili and their ethnic language. In Swahili Ki in front of the name of the ethnic group indicates the name of the language. So the Bena people speak Kibena, the Hehe speak Kihehe etc. Kihehe and Kibena are very similar and are not very different from Kiswahili. The tone of voice is a bit different and they have some different words. It did not make it easier for me who was struggling to learn Kiswahili to have to understand these differences. My two translators, who were both Bena, did not have any problems understanding or talking Kihehe or “pure” Kiswahili. Kimasai and Kimangati were not so similar as Kihehe and Kibena, but not more similar to each other than to Kiswahili. My translators only knew a few words of the two languages like greetings etc. so when we visited pastoralist households and they talked among themselves each other we had no chance of understanding. We did not meet any pastoralists that spoke English. One time we were supposed to visit a Mangati household, the
father in the house was not at home, the oldest kids in school and the wife and children who were there did not speak *Kiswahili*. We had to return, because we could not communicate. All the Masai I met spoke *Kiswahili*, but not all the Mangati. I experienced the Mangati as a more closed group than the others.

### 3.3.2 The assistants

The PANTIL nutrition project had engaged six people from the village that had some secondary education to be ‘representatives’ for the project in Malinzanga. They went to Morogoro, to Sokoine University of Agriculture, to have a course in nutrition and are going to be used in different stages of the project, as nutrition advisors and to help the project crew when they are in the village etc. They all had some secondary education, but only two of them spoke enough and felt confident enough in English to be my translators. This was a boy and a girl, the boy was 20 and the girl 21 years old. Both of them had stopped going to school because of financial problems. The secondary school is far away so the cost of transportation is high, and together with school fees makes it difficult to be able to go to school. I had only learned some greetings and a few phrases of Swahili before I came, so I had to work with translators. The fact that they were from the village was mostly an advantage because they knew the village, how it functioned and could answer when I asked them about things that puzzled me. Many things that they took for granted were new and strange things for me, and they almost always explain, but there were some times the answer was “it is just they way it is…” Both of them had been away from the village for some years while going to school and knew most of the people, but not as good as they had if they had lived there. I thought it was a good thing that they knew the place, but didn’t know the family members in every household that good.

In the beginning I was afraid that working with a boy would limit the conversation and activities in the kitchen. The kitchen is not a place where a young boy normally visits and spends time. I was also afraid that the women in the households and the boy would not be comfortable with the situation. It turned out that they thought it was a bit exciting. The women got to show what they were doing, and my translator took his job very seriously and showed genuine interest in what happened. He was as curious as me, and noticed things that I hadn’t seen. The girl who helped me knew everything there was to know about what the women and men do. She was also the person
that helped me with all the practical things in the village. She taught me everything I needed to know, and even helped me with my Kiswahili.

3.4 Household, definition and discussion

There is a vast literature on household and household definitions. I will now give a theoretical frame to the term household before I present the definition I find useful for my study. It is important to say that one can look at household as unit in society, but in this thesis the household is also the unit of investigation. It is my analytical focus, meaning I will define a household to capture the situation in Malinzanga and how it can be used usefully in my thesis. This is important to have in mind when I now will discuss the concept of household.

Eriksen has found that the most common definition of a household is that “a household includes those persons who regularly eat their main meal together” (Eriksen 1995:65). When describing the household system with the Fulani-people in West Africa, Eriksen refers to a distinction between the nuclear family, containing mother, father and children and the compound family, which includes the man, several wives and their children. The two terms family and household may be overlapping and have the same meaning. Holy (1996), stresses that kinship ties does not necessarily imply co-residence, and that the connection between family and household comes from the Western notion of home, and our conception of the family that lives in the household (Holy 1996:53). Eriksen notes that in many societies there are a latent conflict between family and household. Both the husband and the wife have commitment to people outside the household and according to Eriksen this “loyalty to people outside the household is often a treat to the household” (Eriksen 2001:82). The households I visited in Malinzanga were either nuclear or compound families.

In the Dictionary of Anthropology you will when looking up household be referred to ‘domestic group’. Here they explain that many writers have chosen the term ‘domestic group’ rather then family and household to refer to the basic unit of society. Even though this term will encounter the same problems when “delimiting the structural and functional features which would

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14 The PANTIL nutrition project has defined household with reference to the household head and family living in the same house. It is unclear whether the baseline survey has included more than one wife in polygamous households.

15 Holy sees co-residence as one condition for a household.
distinguish a domestic unit” (Seymour-Smith 1986:81). The core functions in a definition of the domestic domain should be “those relating to the acquisition, preparation and consumption of food and those relating to the procreation, rearing and socialization of children” (Seymour-Smith 1986:81).

To define a household as the people that regularly eat their meals together is not unproblematic. Leach (1967) argues that it is important to see the household as a part of complex. The household should be seen as a number of internal relationships that are linked to external networks and institutions. Every person in a household has a complex of roles, the wife is not just a wife but also a mother, friend, worker etc. Leach also stresses the importance to describe and take into account the cultural practices like marriage patterns, land rights, inheritance etc. in the area studied, before making a definition of the household. According to Fredrik Barth (1994) the household cannot be seen as a primary economical unit, but one has to take into account the dynamics of the individuals in a household. Even though a marriage consists of duties and support it does not mean they belong to the same economic unit. Holy (1996) finds it useful to make a distinction between family, co-residence and domestic function as equally important when defining a household. One example might be that living together in a house does not necessarily mean that members of the household share the same domestic functions.

Henrietta Moore (1992), argues that the important things to highlight when discussing households is to look at competing rights, interests and claims between the individuals in the household. She also states like many other anthropologists that the household is not a closed unit, it is rather a network of social relations and resource flows, rather than individual units or sets of overlapping units. The anthropological definition of the household rests according to Moore (1988), “on what the people themselves regard as the significant unit of their society” (Moore 1988:55). Even though most families have been founded on the basis of kinship ties, it is not necessarily the same thing as a family.

Weismantel who wrote a monograph on food habits in Ecuadorian Andes, makes her definition of a household on the basis of the practices that happens in the kitchen. She explains that,

…the social organisation of the family and household is brought to light by looking at cooking practices (…) as they share in the activities of production and consumption. Their
relative subordination to one another can be seen in the labour invested in cooking, serving and cleaning up (Weismantel 1988:24).

The discussion above shows us that normally a definition of a household would include one or more of the elements of food consumption or production, reproduction, rights and resources. As we have seen many stress the importance of recognizing the different units and functions of the household and as Moore puts it, the household should be seen as a connecting point in a network with social relations and resource flows (Moore 1992).

The household is a livelihood unit in the society, but in relation to this study the household is an analytical category, and the focus unit of my analysis. This does not mean I see the household as a closed unit, but as a frame for my research. I have chosen to define a household as including the people that normally eat together. In the polygamists households I visited, this means that the other wives are not in this context a part of the same household as the wife I visited. This is because the wives have different houses and in the domestic work are not connected to each other. I will call polygamous units ‘household compounds’ since they are economically attached to each other, and reproductive connected through the husband, and because there is a strong social relation between the wives. Further I will call the physical house for a homestead. So if there are several wives, there will be several homesteads. But it is in the homestead all of the cooking and daily chores take place. Marianne Groven (2005) did her fieldwork among the matrilineal Yao in Lungwena, Malawi. She made the distinction between household and homestead, because she found that the husband was often absent and that the definition of household was too vague, because it did not take into consideration polygamy, and composition of the household. So she made homestead a smaller unit of the household that was more right for her analysis (Groven 2005).

In Malinzanga there were many different types of households, and one narrow definition would be extremely difficult to use because it would be very inappropriate for some of the households I observed. One Hehe homestead I visited consisted only of a widow living with her children, while another Hehe household consisted of one husband and three wives with children living in separate household compounds. The wives lived in separate houses, but in the distribution of
resources and division of labour the wives depended on the relationship between the household compounds.

3.4.1 Household presentation

Above I have defined and discussed the two terms households and homestead. I will now give a brief presentation of the ten households I stayed with in Malinzanga, to get a brief overview of the composition and occupation. The first five households are agriculturalists, while household six to ten are pastoralist households. I have made some few changes so it will be harder to identify them. I have also chosen not to refer to the households in the presentation and analysis of my findings in chapter 5. This is done to prevent stories or actions to be traced back to identify households.

Household 1

The first household I visited was a Hehe household where a single widow lived with her three children. The oldest daughter was pregnant without being married. They all lived in a mud house with straw ceiling they also had one house that was divided into two, one part a kitchen, the other a storage room. They had a nice patio outside the house where they did most of their activities. They had several small plots of land, some near and some several kilometres away. They were growing maize, beans, millet, sweet potatoes (both matembele (the leaves)) they were also growing some vegetables (green leaves) like spinach etc. They also had some chickens. All the
food they produced was for subsistence. The mother in the house often made *pombe*, which she sold to the ‘bars’ in Mlowa.

*Household 2*

The second agricultural household I visited was an old monogamous Bena couple. They had cattle and an enclosure beside the houses. They had one brick house and three mud houses. The brick house had iron ceiling and was used as storage rooms and “living room”, the place where they received guests. One house was used as kitchen, one as storage and sleeping and the last was partly storage and partly a room to wash in. They had more land than most others, and still had maize left in December, even enough to give away to others. They also had sweet potatoes in the soil in December, which is very uncommon because of the drought. They grew maize, rice, sweet potato and several vegetables. They foremost produced for subsistence but if they had a large harvest they would sell some or give some to neighbours and friends.

*Household 3*

The third household was a Hehe household, also an older monogamous couple, living with their daughter and her two daughters. The daughter was divorced from two marriages. Her two daughters had different fathers and she had also given birth to two sons, but they were living with their fathers. Some in the village said that she was divorced because she couldn’t cook (which was partly true, she cooked the vegetables for hours), but they also said that she was lazy. Their homestead was two houses, one brick house with iron ceiling, where the parents lived and one mud house with straw ceiling where the daughter and grand daughters lived. They had land where they grew maize, beans, sweet potato, cassava, onion, tomato and sorghum. They also had a fruit garden where they grew mangoes and bananas. The mangoes and bananas were grown mainly for sale, while the rest of the crops were for subsistence.

*Household 4*

The fourth household was a Hehe household. The man had three wives. I stayed with the first one who had five children. They had one brick house and one mud house both with iron ceiling and a small mud house with straw ceiling. The second wife also lived in the village, while the third wife lived on the border to the forest in another hamlet, because she was taking care of the cattle.
They had 150 cows\textsuperscript{16}, 200 goats, some chickens and 5 hectares of land. They grew maize, rice, chickpeas (\textit{kunde}), beans and vegetables. Two of the wives were good friends, but the two did not like the second wife. The first and third wives were afraid that she would give them all HIV because they said was sleeping around with men in the village.

\textit{Household 5}

The last agricultural household was a Bena household with a monogamous couple with three children and expecting a fourth. This household was a bit different than the others they were focusing more on cash crops like rice and groundnuts than on maize and vegetables. They had two brick houses and were building a kitchen. They had “fenced” in the houses and patio, and it looked very nice. They also had some chicken. This was the only household that bought most of their food. The first day I visited this household the husband took me into the house and explained that I should ask the important questions inside the house. This was because if there were many people outside they might lie in front of the neighbours and not answer what they really wanted to say.

\textit{Household 6}

The first pastoralist household I visited was a Masai household. The husband in the house was polygamous and his two other wives were living in neighbouring houses. I stayed with the first wife, she had two children still living at home, one son was married and lived in a house nearby, and another daughter was at the time I was there visiting her parents with her new born child. She was living in Morogoro with her husband and his family. The Masai are patrilineal, which means the girl, moves to the husband’s family when they marry. This household had three houses in an encampment. All the houses were made of cow dung and sticks, with straw ceiling. One house was for the parents, with the living room and sleeping room. One house was the kitchen and another bedroom. The last house was a visiting room and storage. They also had an “out door” kitchen, which had been a storage room, but now they had eaten up all the maize so they used it as an extra kitchen.

\textsuperscript{16} I went with the first wife to the third wife one day to milk the cows. I observed approximately 20 cows, so if the number I was told by the husband was right they must have the rest of the cows somewhere else.
**Household 7**
In this household a widow lived with her son that was a teenager. The place consisted of three houses, one with kitchen and bedroom, one house with a storage room and one house with another living room. The location of the household was near the rest of the Masai households so people stopped by all the time. She explained that she was one of the poorest Masai households because they didn’t have any cattle and didn’t have enough energy to do a lot of agriculture. She was also one of the people that were on the chairman’s list to get maize from the government. This lady loved to share stories, and we spent a great deal of time telling stories to each other.

**Household 8**
This was the only Mangati household I visited. The husband had several wives, one of them living very close to the village. We spent the time with the wife in the forest where the cattle was. The husband meant that I had to see how the Mangati really lived. The houses were built with cow dung and sticks, but looked older and were full of holes and the houses were smaller than what I had seen with the Masai. There was one room, in a corner three stones that worked as the kitchen, and a bed, made of sticks and cow skin. The daily routines that I observed in the Mangati household were very much the same as what I saw with the Masai.

**Household 9**
In this Masai household I stayed with the first of three wives of one of the elder Masai men. There were several houses in the compound, and the wife had “control” over two houses, one storage house and one house with a kitchen and bedroom. The houses were clean and looked great. They were made of sticks and cow dung. They had several children, the smallest only three years old the oldest daughter was 15 years old. She had beautiful jewellery that showed she was ready to marry.

**Household 10**
This Masai household was the last one I visited. Here the husband had two wives, and I stayed with the first one. She had five small children, the youngest only a few months old. This homestead consisted of one house it was relatively big with three rooms. The room in the middle with the entrance functioned as a kitchen and a place to greet friends if the weather was bad.
They had cows but they also grew some maize, sorghum and vegetables on a small plot of land outside the house.

3.5 Limitations and ethics

While doing a fieldwork there will always be things that turn out in another way than you expect, or things you never get to do because of time limitations etc. Eriksen explains that the most common limitation of doing a qualitative fieldwork is “limited knowledge of the field language, gender bias, or the fact that one’s chief informants fail to be representative of the society as a whole” (Eriksen 1995:16). I have already mentioned how it was working with assistants and a new language. I had tried to learn some before I went there, but I soon realised the great gap between some and sufficient!

Time is always a restrain on a fieldwork, and it takes time to be immersed in a society. So that the people understand what you are doing there, and it takes more than two months to get to know a whole community, the structures and dynamics. My fieldwork in Malinzanga lasted for approximately two and a half months. And it is impossible to learn what there is about a society with this timeframe. I had to make decisions on what to prioritize, and if I had stayed longer it is always a possibility that the answer to my questions would have been somewhat different.

There have been a lot of discussions about problematic uses of anthropological writings and studies. Take for example the anthropologist hired by the colonial powers. Now much of the discussion about ethics in fieldwork is concerned with that the fieldworker should bring something positive to the community studied, and the importance to recognize the rights of people being studied (Ellen 1988).

According to Bryman (2004) there are four ethical principles one should follow while conducting social research. The first one concerns whether your study and data collection poses any harm to the participants, this includes stress, loss of self-esteem or harm to participants’ development among others (Bryman 2004:509). The second one is whether there is a lack of informed consent. This is mostly a problem when the researcher chooses a covert role as a researcher. This will be described below. The third and fourth ethical principles are according to Bryman whether an
invasion of privacy or if deception is involved in the study (Bryman 2004: 509). Bryman argues that if you choose a covert\textsuperscript{17} role as a researcher, it is more problematic since you cannot get consent from the informants, and the study might easily involve some deception. I choose to be an overt researcher, meaning everybody knew I was there as a researcher, and people could say no if they did not want to talk to me, because I was a researcher.

\textsuperscript{17} to have a covert role as a researcher means you don’t inform the informants that you are a researcher.
4 Theoretical framework and literature review

In this chapter I will present the concepts and perspectives that are central to the findings and analysis in this study. I will start to present Ellis’s understanding of livelihood, then I will explain different aspects of social organization by using the terms ethnicity and kinship. Next I will present aspects concerning choices on food and production before concepts of and the connexion between, food and culture.

After food and culture I will explain the two terms diet and cuisine. Diet refers to what foodstuffs are available, while cuisine refers to the cultural transformation of these foodstuffs into a meal. After diet and cuisine I will present and discuss taste and classification of food, before I end this chapter with a presentation of concepts concerning food taboos.

4.1 Livelihood

Livelihood has been a widely used term in development studies. By livelihood one refers to the ‘means of living’ in terms of what people do and how they do it. Ellis (2000) has in ‘Rural Livelihoods and Diversity in Developing Countries’ elaborated on the importance of understanding livelihoods. He discusses the holistic nature of the Rural Livelihood Framework as an important tool when dealing with development. He argues that most rural households cannot survive on only subsistence farming and stresses the importance of livelihood diversification. Ellis defines livelihood in the following way:

A livelihood comprises the assets (natural, physical, human, financial and social capital), the activities, and the access to these (mediated by institutions and social relations) that together determine the living gained by the individual or household (Ellis 2000:10).

In his definition Ellis recognizes five categories of capital that comprises the assets in a livelihood. Natural capital refers to natural resources like land, water, trees etc, physical capital refers to “assets brought into existence by economic production process” (Ellis 2000:8) like tools and machines. Human capital is the education level and health status of the individuals while financial capital refers to stocks of cash. Social capital is the “social network and associations in

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18 What Ellis calls rural livelihood framework is the same as what others have called the sustainable livelihood framework. Ellis has chosen not to use the word sustainable, because he thinks the term sustainable has become “over-used and degraded” (Ellis 2000:x).
which people participate, and from which they can derive support that contributes to their livelihoods” (Ellis 2000:8). In chapter 1, I presented the PANTIL programme and some of the different projects that are involved in the programme. All of the projects have as an intention to introduce interventions, either new seeds, better fertilizer etc. These projects focus mostly on interventions and improvements that will improve access and use of natural and physical capital. The PANTIL nutrition project is in this connection a bit different, because it deals with humans and has as objective to introduce interventions that will increase the human capital. The PANTIL nutrition project presupposes that an improvement in human capital will lead to improvements related to the other four capitals. My part in the nutrition project has been not only to look at human capital, but also social capital is central in this thesis. My point of departure has been to see how social capital influences and determines the use of the four other capitals. One thing that is important to mention is that the anthropological understanding of culture is much wider and differently understood in comparison to social capital in a livelihood context, and the livelihood term as a whole. My study is about food and food culture, and put in a livelihood analysis, it is linked to social capital. So I will below try to relate livelihood to food and culture in a larger cultural context.

To get a holistic picture of rural livelihood it is important to take into account all these types of capital, but also the activities that transform these capitals to different types of products or produce, that again can either be consumed or be transformed to different types of income. One thing that Ellis (2000) has included in his definition that others have left out is the degree of opportunity people have to perform these activities like production, sales, household chores etc. According to Ellis these activities are determined and strongly influenced by institutions and social relations. To take the example of Malinzanga, the choice of being a pastoralist is a result of the environment and people around, the customs and traditions. The surroundings of the Masai and Mangati are organized in a way that is conducive to have a pastoralist mode of production. To be a pastoralist is also an identity, regardless of what you do for a living, this I will get back to in chapter 5.

19 Chambers and Conway’s definition stresses capability, equity and entitlements. See Chambers and Conway (1992)
Ellis (2000) also has labour or income diversification as a major point in his rural livelihood framework. Ellis defines rural livelihood diversification as “the process by which rural households construct an increasingly diverse portfolio of activities and assets in order to survive and to improve their standard of living” (Ellis 2000:15). According to Ellis, a household rarely relies on only one type of income in rural societies today, but it is the “maintenance and continuous adaptation of a highly diverse portfolio of activities that is a distinguishing feature of rural survival strategies in contemporary poor countries” (Ellis 2000:4). As we will see in chapter 5 this is also the case in Malinzanga, both among the agriculturalists and the pastoralists.

4.2 Ethnicity, kinship and gender

Even though this thesis is about food habits it is important to reflect upon and take into account the social organization and institutions, which the people in Malinzanga are organized by. By understanding ethnicity, kinship and gender and the roles they play in the livelihoods of the people, one can understand better the relationship between livelihoods and food. Weismantel did a study on food habits in a village called Zumbagua in the Ecuadorian Andes. In this village there are two ethnic groups, which she calls the ‘white’ and the ‘Indian’. She looks at relations both within the group, referring to kinship, and between groups, referring to ethnicity, as influences on food habits. Weismantel stresses the importance food has as an expression of group dynamics. “If food play such an important part in the symbols and rituals that establish social relations within a group, it is not surprising that they are equally potent expressions of relations between groups”. Therefore food can be seen as “one of the strongest ethnic and cultural markers; consequently, it provides an endless source of metaphorical referents of ethnicity…” (Weismantel 1988:9).

Ethnicity is a cultural term that anthropologists and the social sciences have used in relation to group dynamics. Anthropologists have always been concerned with the discontinuity of cultural variation; that there are people sharing culture that makes them different from others (Barth 1969). Ethnicity has to do with the classification of people and group relations. According to Eriksen (2002) ethnicity has in social anthropology been referred to as “aspects of relationships between groups which consider themselves, and are regarded by others, as being culturally distinctive” (Eriksen 2002:4).
Before Barth published his famous book ‘Ethnic groups and boundaries’ in 1969, Michael Moreman published an article about group boundaries and how to determine them. After doing fieldwork in Northern Thailand among the Lue, Moreman realized he could not clearly answer the presumably simple question “whom did you study in the field?” (Moreman 1965:1215). He had trouble answering this question because the Lue were so similar to other groups in the area, in language, culture and political organization. In the article he wrote after realizing the difficulty of defining the Lue, he says that the only way you can distinguish the different ethnic groups and to see the “Lue-ness” is to look at the whole society in which they identify themselves and are identified by others. He comes to the conclusion that one of the most determining factors is the labelling of the people with the name. Moreman concludes by saying that “…someone is Lue by virtue of believing and calling himself Lue and of acting in ways that validate his Lueness” (Moreman 1965:1222).

According to Fredrik Barth (1969) ethnic groups are often characterized by that the people in the group also have the same way of communicating and interacting and shares fundamental cultural values. Barth argues that it is the constitution of ethnic groups and the boundaries between them that should be the locus of investigation (Barth 1969). So according to Barth, one important feature of ethnic groups is that they share fundamental cultural values, ethnicity is to Barth more an aspect of social organization than an aspect of culture (Barth 1994).

One cannot talk of ethnic groups by just looking at one group, one has to see the group in relation to other groups. Ethnic groups are a result of interaction with other ethnic groups, because it is in interaction with others, ‘differentness’ becomes important and visible. It is in the interaction with others the borders between different people are drawn. According to Eriksen ethnicity contains both the establishment of ‘Us-Them’ contrasts but also a shared field for interethnic discourse and interaction (Eriksen 2002:29).

‘Why is kinship important?’ asks Eriksen (1995). His answer is because ‘kinship is society’. Kinship is an organizational institution that creates social identity. In contrast to ethnicity, which refers to the groups and group dynamics.
In all societies, more in non-industrial perhaps, kinship is the most important institution. It is important because there is often a link between the kinship-system and other social organizations in a society. Kinship is about the different roles of people in a kinship group, and their dynamics within this group. Kinship has to do with whom we look upon as relatives, rights to inheritance and patterns of marriage. Kaarhus (in Holden, Kaarhus and Lunduka 2006) explain the two terms kinship and descent. She refers to Holy (1996) when she explains that kinship is the “networks that connects individuals as relatives”. This also includes marriage, since this is an institution where the biological reproduction of kinship takes place. Descent on the other hand has to do with the social rules in kinship groups, like rules of inheritance and succession\(^\text{20}\) (Holden, Kaarhus, Lunduka 2006). In one way we can say that kinship can be divided into a biological part and a juridical part. It is a network of relations and regulations, which makes the foundation for social organization.

\textit{Matrilineality} and \textit{patrilineality} are in many African societies important organizational factors in a group and have to do with the system of descent in \textit{lineages}. A lineage “consists of persons who can indicate, by stating they are intermediate links, common descent from a shared ancestor or ancestress” (Eriksen 1995:92). \textit{Matrilineal} descent means that one is related as kin through women, that the membership and inheritance goes through the women in the family. \textit{Patrilineal} descent means that one is related though the male line, from father to son (Holden, Kaarhus and Lunduka 2006). In many cases patrilineal descent is linked to \textit{virilokal}\(^\text{21}\) residence, while \textit{uxorilocal} residence is more common in matrilineal societies.

\textbf{4.3 Production and food security}

The World Food Summit in Rome in 1996 made the Rome Declaration on World Food Security. It states that food security “exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO 1996). If we see food security in relation to the five capitals listed by Ellis, we see it concerns all of them in one way or another. Malinzanga that is a

\(^{20}\) According to Eriksen, “inheritance concerns the transmission of property, while succession refers to (...) transmission of specified rights and duties as ascribed statuses” (Eriksen 1995:85)

\(^{21}\) Virilocality means that the woman moves to the husbands family and uxorilocal means that the husband moves in with the wife’s family (Eriksen 1995).
community with subsistence farmers and pastoralists, good access and availability to sufficient natural, physical, financial, human and social capital are conditions for food security.

According to WHO, food security is built on three pillars, food availability meaning that there is enough food available and in sufficient quantities. The second aspect is food access, referring to having enough resources to obtain appropriate food for a nutritious diet. The last aspect of food security is food use, meaning that people have enough knowledge about nutrition and care to be able to use the food right along with sufficient water and sanitation (WHO 2007). The three main aspects and conditions for food security are therefore enough resources, access and knowledge about food and nutrition. The PANTIL program has focused on food security in all 11 projects, while 10 of them focus on the access and resource part, the nutrition project has as an objective to improve and understand the knowledge on nutrition in the project villages. Both the definition provided by FAO and WHO stresses the importance of access and availability of food as the most important criteria for food security. While preferences that says something about diet and culture regarding food, are mentioned but not given as much weight like access and availability. In Malinzanga preferences and social value on food are important for acceptance of food.

Atkins and Bowler (2001) argue that rural development and poverty reduction is the most efficient way to go to increase food security. This might be done through “credit provisions, employment guarantee schemes of rural infrastructure works, land tilting and redistribution, improved marketing arrangements, and the empowerment of ordinary people in local decision-making about resource use” (Atkins and Bowler 2001:171). The PANTIL nutrition baseline study concluded that 45 % of the people in Malinzanga are food insecure and that the mean number of months of food insecurity is eight months. The food that was hardest affected with food shortage was maize, followed by rice and beans (PANTIL nutrition project 2006:31).

The government of Tanzania (TNW n.d.) has an aim to be self sufficient in food requirement in order to fight food insecurity in the country. The government has identified several strategies to increase food security:

- Improvement in agricultural production incentives and promotion of non-traditional export crops.
- Supporting research and extension services and promotion of private sector participation in production.
- Improving rural infrastructure.
- Promotion of cross-boarder trade with neighbouring countries.
- Improvement in post-harvest loss
- Periodic monitoring and assessment of rural food situation.
- Review legislation concerning private sector participation in the agricultural sector, farming and marketing.
- Removing restrictions on trade at national, regional and district level, and review the food movement across national, regional and district borders.
- Restructure the Strategic Grain Reserve to be able to operate efficiently and effectively.

The government of Tanzania recognizes the need of the private sector to participate more in purchasing food crops from farmers as well as importing food (TNW n.d)

Food security is linked to diet, which is the foodstuff available to people that people eat. But it is also linked to production. In the definition presented above, important to mention is that food security is also about preferences about food, and therefore also production. I will now present some terms and perspectives on choices on food and production and how different conditions like ecology influences these choices.

4.4 Choices on food and production

As mentioned earlier the people in Malinzanga are mainly subsistence farmers and pastoralists combined with some small local trade. Production will therefore mainly be for household consumption. Choices about what to produce will therefore have a direct influence on the diet. The choice of what to produce is influenced by many factors. Atkins and Bowler (2001) stress the importance of ecology on food production. Soil and climate are according to them the foundation for food production among subsistence farmers. Many social scientists have moved away from only looking at environmental factors to include other socio-economic and physiological factors in relation to food choices.
Table 1. Factors influencing food choices. The table is based on table in Atkins and Bowler (2001:256)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geo-environmental</th>
<th>Socio-economic</th>
<th>Physiological</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Agro-ecosystem</td>
<td>• Religion, taboo, social custom</td>
<td>• Heredity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time of day, season</td>
<td>• Ethnicity</td>
<td>• Allergy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regionality of food, culture</td>
<td>• Income, social class</td>
<td>• Therapeutic diets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Spatio-temporal and hierarchical diffusion of food-habits</td>
<td>• Household composition</td>
<td>• Taste, acceptability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge of nutrition</td>
<td>• Sex, body size</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Advertising, mass communication, travel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Retail system</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Moral values</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 is taken from Atkins and Bowler (2001) and shows a wide range of different factors influencing food choices. The elements highlighted with bold letters are the ones that I find relevant for this study. I have chosen to look at these elements because in the context of my study and Malinzanga these were the ones I identified as explaining food habits. Some of the elements are more important than others, but all are linked to each other in one way or another, so by looking at one element you have to understand and look at another element.

Marianne Lien studied food habits in Northern Norway. She describes food choice as a “result of negotiations between the members of the household and the social environment surrounding the household” (Lien 1989:14 my translation). She also explains how the choices about food22 are like food taboos, explicit (reflected upon) and inexplicit (taken as a given). Lien recognizes two factors beside the material that influence food choices, namely cultural and social factors. The cultural factors are the cognitive structures we use to classify and interpret the food’s meaning. Lien explains that food taboos, structural rules (cuisine), the grammar of food23 are such cultural factors. The social factors are the characteristics of the social context that are relevant for the food choice, like actors’ status, role, and social relations.

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22 For the case of Malinzanga this can also be choices about production
23 Term constructed by Barthes in the 50 and 60’s. (Barthes 1997).
4.5 Food and culture

Food touches everything. Food is the foundation of every economy. (...) It is a central pawn in political strategies of states and households. Food marks social differences, boundaries, bonds and contradictions (Counihan and Van Esterik 1997:1).

Food is the organic substances that we eat to give the body energy. But we don’t eat every thing that is edible for us, and we prepare the food differently. This has to do with culture. Culture is one of the words in the English language that has the most definitions. Taylor and Geertz have made similar definitions of culture, as ‘those abilities, notions and forms of behaviour persons have acquired as members of society’ (Eriksen 1995:9). However Geerz stresses more meaning while Taylor more behaviour. According to Eriksen culture refers to both basic similarities and to systematic differences between humans.

There have been many social scientists that have studied food and food habits. Structuralists such as Barthes, Levi-Strauss and Douglas are concerned with the semantic function of food, and that language and communication use food as a medium for expression. Barthes recognizes that food is one of the primary needs for humans, but as he says “this need has been highly structured” (Barthes 1997:22). He sees food as a system of signs, “…substances techniques of preparation, habits, all become part of a system of differences in signification; and as soon as this happens, we have communication by way of food” (Barthes 1997:21). According to Barthes food is a system. To analyse this you need to collect all kinds of data regarding food in a given society, like products, techniques and food habits. Then you have to “observe whether the passage from one fact to another produces a difference in signification” (Barthes 1997:22). After doing this you can, according to Barthes, separate the significant from the insignificant, and by doing this you have the ‘grammar of food’.

Claude Levi-Strauss (1997) also sees food habits as a mean of communication. He developed the Culinary Triangle through which argues there is a universal understanding of transformation from food to meal. By making a triangular semantic field with three points: the raw, the cooked and the rotted. The cooked he says is a cultural transformation of the raw while the rotted is a natural transformation (Levi-Strauss 1997). Different people will define what kind of raw, cooked or rotted food that can be eaten and how they make the fundaments for cooking structures. He
explains about difference between the roasted and the cooked. That the roasted is on the side of nature, while the boiled is on the side of culture, because boiling demands mediation by water of the relation between food and fire. In Malinzanga I found that it was mostly the pastoralists that used the whole spectrum of raw, cooked and the rotted. As we will see in chapter 5 the pastoralist eats food in each of the categories, while I did not see any agriculturalist eat anything rotted.

Weismantel (1988) says that when food takes on a role as a symbol it is because food is a “material thing that evokes a wealth of condensed, ambiguous meanings” (Weismantel 1988:143). She found that food in Zumbagua was not just food, it is symbols that communicate meaning to others. Victor Turner (1967) has written a lot about symbols and has in his book ‘The forest of symbols’ defined symbols as a “thing regarded by general consent as naturally typifying or representing or recalling something by possession of analogous qualities or by association in fact or thought” (Turner 1967:19). When food becomes symbols it is put into context with something else, an association. Who it is that makes the association, and who agrees or share the opinion depends on social organization. A foodstuff does probably not mean the same for me as it does for you, and this we can explain by talking about it as a symbol.

4.5.1 Diet and cuisine

Weismantel (1988) has in her study on food habits distinguished between diet and cuisine. According to her diet is “simply what people eat” (Weismantel 1988:87), while cuisine refers “to the cultural construction of meals, the structures that organize knowledge about food, and the pattern of their preparation and combination” (ibid). She acknowledges the importance of intra-household variation in the diet, and says that for example wealth affects diet, along with “relative dependence on subsistence agriculture and access to different ecological zones” (Weismantel 1988:88). With cuisine on the other hand, intra-household variation in a group is not important if people share cultural norms and values, because you cook and value food in the same way even though there are things you can’t afford or access. For Weismantel intra-household differences are important for cuisine, as well as diet. This has to do with questions of style. She explains that in Zumbagua this is a matter of ethnicity, because ’certain ingredients, techniques and combinations are “white”, others “Indian”. How you compose a meal makes cuisine, and differences in cuisine is in the case of Malinzanga expressed through ethnicity and culture. The
Masai, Mangati, Hehe and Bena all have different ingredients, techniques and combinations that make their cuisine different from each other. Diet on the other hand is related to access and availability along with choices on foodstuff and food production. Both diet and cuisine are elements of a meal, diet makes up the actual foodstuffs used, while cuisine is the combination of foodstuff chosen and the way it is prepared.

As mentioned earlier under food security, diet and food security are linked because diet is a result of access and availability that is a result of the level of food security in the area. Cuisine is a matter of culture and how people classify, perceive of and value the different elements in the diet, and is connected to the preparation and combination of the foodstuffs used in the meals.

According to Marianne Lien there are three factors that are important to regard when talking about how food is eaten. “The way one makes, serves and eats food can also vary in time, place and social occasion. The knowledge about what is appropriate to eat when, where and with whom, is a part of the food cultural pattern (Lien 1989:9 my translation). Delany (2004) also agrees that one should be attentive to notice the factors of space, time, language, social relations and the body when studying the “culturally constituted nature of food and meals” (Delany 2004:275).

4.5.2 Taste and classification of food

I mention above that when one sees food as a symbol we put the food in a system made of association, which gives the food meaning and a certain value. This value and meaning given to food is not shared among all people, at least not in Malinzanga. I will now discuss the concepts of taste and classification of food. I will show how some theorists show how and why taste is socially constructed. I will start with a quotation taken from Leach.

The physical environment of any human society contains a vast range of materials, which are both edible and nourishing, (...) only a small part of this edible environment will actually be classified as potential food. Such classification is a matter of language and culture, not of nature (Leach 1964:31).

Leach is concerned with the connection between language and food habits. He looks at the eating habits of people living in England and the relationship they have to animals. He states that the people in England do not eat animals that are not familiar or animals that are very close and
familiar like dogs and horses. The reason for this is that culture plays a very important role in determining taste. And the way we value the animals will affect if we see them as a potential food source or not. Atkins and Bowler (2001) argues that taste has both physical and social meaning and that “tastes are also derived from our culturally constructed inclinations for particular dishes and ingredients, and our socially-derived desire for our consumption habits to show us in the best possible light” (Atkins and Bowler 2001:272).

Bourdieu (1995) did a large study on distinctions and taste in France. He is concerned with how taste is different according to class and groups in the society. He sees taste as socially constructed and given meaning by seeing it in relation to people who have different taste and people that have similar taste. “To talk about habitus will say to also treat as an object that knowledge those actors that self are objects have of the object, and to take with that contribution that their knowledge gives to make the object to what it is” (Bourdieu 1995:218). One has to take into consideration the background and knowledge foundation the person has, to understand why he tastes the way he tastes. Bourdieu understands taste as an inherited disposition to be able to differentiate and appreciate. He explains that by liking and disliking, which is a sign of our taste, we establish and mark the differences between things. By this he means that taste, what we like and dislike, and how we in this manner classify, is a result of our place in society. Taste is a sense of one’s place he states with reference to a society of classes (Bourdieu 1995). Bourdieu also talks of classifications as an organizing principle of society. Because people classify and give things meaning both consciously and unconsciously makes a common and meaningful world. Bourdieu talks of taste among social classes in France, in Malinzanga the same difference in taste can be analysed in context to the different ethnic groups. In Malinzanga the differences in taste and the social structure is not as hierarchical as Bourdieu presents the social classes in Malinzanga. But they are an expression of differentness between the different ethnic groups.

All people have an opinion about what is good and bad, healthy and unhealthy, exclusive and not exclusive food. Some types of food are for special occasions while other foodstuffs are used every day. This is our way to classify food, and how we classify will have large variations

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24 Habitus “refers to continued, learned dispositions for action” (Eriksen 1998:109). It can be understood as culture that binds an individual to a larger group, like an ethnic group, and how actions and taste are formed and learned by being a part of a group.
throughout the world. And by making classifications we put things in order and in relation to each other. Durkheim and Mauss (1963) wrote a book on ‘Primitive Classification’. In this work they try to find the difference or similarities between what they call sophisticated and scientific classification and then primitive classification. They find that there are more similarities than differences and concludes by saying that ‘society is the source of the very categories of human thought’. They argue that classification is a premise for society as society is the fundament for classifications, and that the object of primitive classification is

…not to facilitate action, but to advance understanding, to make intelligible the relations which exists between things. Given certain concepts, which are considered to be fundamental, the mind feels the need to connect to them the ideas which it forms about other things (Durkheim and Mauss 1963:81).

4.5.3 Food taboo

Radcliffe-Brown defines a taboo\(^{25}\) as the customs considered as ‘ritual avoidances’ or ‘ritual prohibitions’, and connect to this with the terms ‘ritual status’ and ‘ritual value’ (Radcliffe-Brown 1939:134). With this he means that by doing an action that is a ritual avoidance or prohibition it will lead to a bad ritual status, that must be cleaned.

Many food taboos are connected to religion. Harris argues in his article *the Abdominal Pig*, that the taboo on eating pig amongst the Jews and Muslims are a result of ecological and economical conditions in the Middle East at the time the food taboo wash established. This shows a food taboo may be created because of ecological conditions. This has led to a classification of food as un-edible (Harris 1997). And Harris brings this up by looking at food taboos in a historical way, while others like Radcliffe-Brown (1939), Lien and Douglas sees food taboos in light of ethnicity and culture. Goody explains that:

Food habits identify certain values and norms in eating patterns that are symbolic of broader structures in society as a whole, and argue that what to outsiders may appear to be strange food customs may in fact have a function that helps bind society together (Goody 1982 in Atkins and Bowler 2001:5).

Mary Douglas (1966) has in her article ‘The Abominations of Leviticus’ described how the bible has made a foundation for food taboos and food preferences especially concerning clean and

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\(^{25}\) Webster’s definition of taboo “a restraint imposed by social usage or as a protective measure’ (Webster 1988:749). Radcliffe-Brown defines it in the context used in anthropology, because ‘forbidden’ has a to wide meaning too be used.
unclean animals. She explains these taboos in terms of hygiene, that there was a medical reason for banning these animals. Marianne Lien (1987) highlights that food taboos can be both explicit and implicit, meaning that there are edible foodstuffs we wouldn’t even think about eating, while there are others that we are more aware of, that we reflect on and choose not to eat. I believe that both perspectives are important when it comes to looking at food taboos in Malinzanga.

I have now presented and discussed the main terms and concepts that are useful for this study and will now continue with the presentation of my main findings and analysis.
5 Findings and Analysis

In this chapter I will present and analyse the information I collected during my fieldwork in Malinzanga. I have divided it into three subchapters. First I will start to present livelihood and production. I will here relate my findings to some aspects of the natural, physical, financial and human capitals presented by Ellis in chapter 4, and explain the activities that are related to the different types of capital. I will then proceed with diet and meals. Here I will present the diet of the people in Malinzanga, then the composition of the meal, and how they prepare and serve the meals in the context of time, space, actors and gender. The final part will be about food and culture, how food can be seen as an expression of culture, and how classification of food can be a communication of culture and ‘differentness’.

5.1 Livelihood and production

Natural capital is as mentioned in chapter 4 the natural resource base, while physical capital is the tools that helps you transform the natural resources into products. They are in this way connected because the physical capital helps extract the valuables from the natural capital. I will now look at the natural, physical, financial and human capitals available and used in the livelihood of the people in Malinzanga. I will do this through looking at seasonality in labour, land and production, division of labour and economical conditions in Malinzanga.

5.1.1 Seasonality of labour

Basic information about the environment in Malinzanga has already been presented in chapter 2 and 3. Since Malinzanga only has one dry and one wet season it means that there are times during the year people are extremely busy and other times they have nothing to do. In the end of November the agriculturalists start to prepare the fields for planting. This is hard work because the fields have been covered with weeds and bushes since the harvest in June, July and August. When the first rain comes in December-January they start to plant, and after planting it is extremely busy for two or three months with weeding etc. Some have even built small shelters near the fields that they can sleep in so that they can work all day. From late December to March-April is the time of year the stocks of staple food are getting emptied, and most people in

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26 My findings are the data information I collected during my fieldwork that I found interesting and relevant for my study.
Malinzanga experience food shortage. To be able to get through times of food shortage some families send their children away to other families that are better off. The family that welcomes these children feeds them in exchange for their labour. The household I lived in was probably the richest family in Malinzanga, and they had children working there all year around, but more in the wet season than in the rest of the year.

During the wet season from mid December to April-March the vegetables come regularly with an interval of a few weeks so there is enough to do. Then in June, July and August the harvesting takes all the time. In August people have finished their harvest, some have sold off some of their harvest to pay for school fees etc, and this is the time of year when people spend most money, eat the best food and drink a lot of alcohol. In September, October and partly November, there is not much to do and the men spend a lot of time drinking. Many households experience that all the money they gained selling some of their harvest gets lost to alcohol consumption among the men.

The seasonality of labour is very similar between the pastoralists and the agriculturalists in Malinzanga. But the pastoralists use more time on their livestock, while the agriculturalist use more time on farming. For the pastoralist the biggest difference between the seasons is that during the dry season the men have to take the animals further away to find good pastures. Sometimes they have to stay away several days because of the lack of grazes. In this time of the year, the cows get thinner, and don’t give so much milk. In the wet season the animals give more milk and blood, and the distance to the grazes is not so long and that gives more time to help in the *shamba*. The pastoralists also use considerable time in the *shamba*, it is the men and women that are not grazing livestock that work in the *shamba*.

5.1.2 Land and production

As we have seen in previous chapters Malinzanga is a village with mostly subsistence farmers and pastoralists. The people have different plots of land suitable for different crops. Plots down by the river are irrigated by the river and can be used for paddy rice growing. While other plots that are rain fed are used for maize, sorghum, cassava, millet, fruits and vegetable growing. What

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27 According to the PANTIL nutrition baseline study 45 % of the people in Malinzanga are food insecure and the mean duration of maize shortage was 8 months. (from Nov-Dec to June-July)

28 Swahili word for agricultural land
to grow depends therefore on what kind of land people have available. Many agriculturalists told me they felt it was too risky to grow rice on the irrigated fields. The seeds are more expensive, and the risk of getting a failed crop because of flood or too little water is much higher than with maize or any other crop. One day I went with a Hehe woman to see a place where the river had washed away big parts of her irrigated land. The river had really ‘eaten’ a huge part of the land leaving a pool in the river with useless land behind. Because of this she said she would stop to grow rice, because she felt it was too risky.

The PANTIL nutrition project (2006) found that 55.5%\(^{29}\) of the people in Malinzanga that have irrigated cropland\(^{30}\) had under 0.5 hectares, 40% had between 0.5 and 2 hectares, and the last 3.7% owned more than 2 hectares. For rain fed cropland 89.9% of people in Malinzanga had less than 2 hectares while 12.3% had over 2 hectares. Most of the farmers in Malinzanga are subsistence farmers. There are a few people in the village that have a lot of land and can intensify the production by renting a tractor to plough etc. The PANTIL nutrition project also found that the hand hoe was the most used agricultural implement used by farmers in the village. Some also had ox-ploughs (PANTIL nutrition project 2006). I was told that you could rent an ox with plough, for a certain amount of money depending on the size of land. Many agriculturalists with livestock made good business renting animal traction to others. But most people could not afford this and prepared the land for sowing with a hand hoe.

\(^{29}\) As mentioned in the methods the nutrition project interviewed and visited 56 household, but the sample is statistical generalizable to the whole village.

\(^{30}\) Land irrigated by the river, paddy land where they grow rice.
According to the PANTIL nutrition project (2006) the crops found in Malinzanga are maize, rice, sunflower, beans, cowpeas, groundnuts, sweet potato and cotton. My observation was that people also grow sorghum, millet and cassava. The most common crops are maize, rice, beans and cowpeas and sweet potato, along with spinach and pumpkin. The agriculturalists all had some sort of vegetable garden with different types of mboga mboga (green leaves), while not all the pastoralists had this. One thing I observed was that the pastoralists grew more sorghum than the agriculturalists. Sorghum is more drought-tolerant and fits well in ‘the forest’, and while the agriculturalists look at sorghum as the ‘poor mans food’ the pastoralists do not.

The pastoralists that live in ‘the forest’ have their plots of agricultural land in the forest. Since they are mainly pastoralists they don’t have large plots of land, but only enough to grow a little of maize, sorghum and vegetables for household consumption. They don’t have the same agricultural tradition as the agriculturalists, and use less time and energy on farming activities. As I understood and was told the pastoralists do not own any grazing land, but let their cattle where
the grazes are the best, mainly in the forest\textsuperscript{31}. Towards the end of the dry season the lack of grazes becomes critical for many pastoralists. Several times when I was staying with pastoralist households in this period, agriculturalists came and complained that livestock had ruined their cropland. Cases like this are sent to the chairman, and he decides on how to solve it. If the shortage of grazes continues it happens that the herders have to go so far to find grazes that they are away days in a row.

There have always been Masai’s that have been cultivating\textsuperscript{32} and one does not know when Hehe and Bena started to have livestock. When I asked agriculturalists in Malinzanga that had cattle none of them had parents that had owned cattle. This made me believe that there has been an increase of agriculturalists that have started with livestock. It is normal to ‘invest’ in livestock when the stock of cash increases in a household. On the other side more and more pastoralists see the benefits of starting with more cultivation, because of lack of grazes it is hard to keep many cattle. A Mangati man I talked to was at the time of our conversation, in the process of moving over 100 cattle to a new location, a place nearer Dar es Salaam, because of better pastures and more rain. There is according to this man not enough grazes for the big herds of livestock in Malinzanga anymore. Because of this many pastoralists have started to grow more crops, because they see it economically beneficial to shift to a more agricultural mode of production, but the ways of producing I quite different form the agriculturalists. This shows that the agriculturalists and pastoralists are adapting to more and more similar modes of production, but the techniques and traditions concerning the production are quite different. The agricultural households I visited that had cattle did not go out to graze them before around nine, while the pastoralists take them out before sunset around six. While the pastoralists do not normally plant in rows etc. and don’t use the agricultural knowledge in the same way as the agriculturalists, the agriculturalists do generally not have the affection the pastoralists have for their livestock.

To be a pastoralist is not only about having cattle, it is also about having a social identity and ethnic ‘belongingness’. I talked to one Mangati man that had one wife that lived in the forest with

\textsuperscript{31} According the nutrition baseline survey, there were two families that had allocated pastureland. I believe this means they did not own it, but they had used the same lands for several years and therefore was considered their area for grazing.

\textsuperscript{32} See Spear and Waller (1993)
the cattle and a second wife that was responsible for the agricultural work was living in the village. He had chosen to shift to a more agricultural mode of production because of economic benefits. He said that even though he was becoming more of a farmer than a pastoralist in mode of production, he would always be a Mangati and therefore also a pastoralist. He followed the rules, norms and believes like a Mangati, and still preferred to eat boiled blood and meat rather than vegetables. This shows that it is not only what you produce that tells who you are, but it is about social identity, food preferences and traditions.

5.1.3 Division of labour

The PANTIL nutrition project (2006) found that some activities were done by both women and men, like land tilling, planting, weeding, harvesting, pest scaring, transportation and threshing. Other activities like land clearing, livestock herding, mud-brick making are mostly done by men while milking, winnowing, food vending, petty business, firewood catching etc. are mostly done by women.

I observed that this was the general trend for the labour division in Malinzanga. In some of the households that I visited the husbands were totally absent, and others were widows. In these households the women did everything with the help of her children but they could also receive help from neighbours and friends. An example I observed was when a widow Hehe woman that lived with her children needed to fix the roof of her house. The house that she and her children lived in had a straw ceiling, that needs to be changed approximately every second year, and this has to be done before the rainy season comes. She did not have the opportunity to do this herself, so she made a lot of pombe\textsuperscript{33} and food and asked some neighbouring men for help. Herself and her children were the ones to fetch the straws that were used for the ceiling. After the work was finished she served them food and pombe and also a small amount of money as thanks for the help.

Another Hehe household that I visited were an elderly couple living with their grown up daughter and grand daughters. The division of labour in this household was that the daughter did the household chores, while the mother and the father divided the agricultural chores. During the end

\textsuperscript{33} Home made brew made by maize, sorghum or millet
of the dry season, the cattle had problems finding enough grazes. This is also the time when the mangoes are stating to come on the trees. Some herders therefore bring their cattle to the mango trees and let the cattle get some mangoes and leaves. The husband in this household had a lot of mango trees, and during two weeks he was sitting guarding his mangoes from early in the morning to six in the evening when the cattle are taken home, so that the mangoes would not be ruined. The mangos were an important cash crop for this household. This is also an example of the seasonality of labour.

There are many similarities among the pastoralists and the agriculturalists when it comes to the division of labour in the households. The men are the one in charge of most of the money. It is the men who take care of the selling of staple crops and big meat. If the family have cattle, the men own them, and it is the men who graze them. It is the woman’s job to take care of the milking, if they have cattle and the chickens, and it is the woman that has to take care of fetching food and preparing it. If she needs to buy anything she has to ask the husband for money to buy food. However, it is mostly the woman that takes care of the selling of milk, chickens and eggs, and it is also she who keeps the money from this. Since it is the woman’s job to milk the cows, she will also in most cases be the one that decides whether to sell the milk or not.

It is normal among the pastoralists that young men that are circumcised are the ones that herd the cattle and it is the young boys that herd the sheep and goats. The sheep and goats are brought back to the homestead at noon to feed the children, so they are not away the whole day like the cattle herders and do not have to walk as far.

There is a strong tradition both with the Masai and the Mangati that it is the men who slaughter animals. According to tradition they are also supposed to eat the meat in the forest separate from the women, and bring the remaining meat back to the women and children. I did not observe this while staying in the households, because they don’t eat much meat during the dry season, but they told me stories and said that was the normal thing to do.

Women and young girls are the ones that take care of the fetching of firewood and water. For the people in the village, water is not very far away, and is fetched from different pumps located
around in the village and this is not so labour demanding. While for the pastoralists living in the forest, they fetch water in the river. In the dry season the river dries up completely and they have to dig a waterhole in the river, which is far away and takes a lot of time and energy.

In most of the agriculturalist households that I visited, the man was almost totally absent, in many cases this was because the men were off drinking. They start to drink early in the morning and often do not return until late in the evening. In Malinzanga there is a special place where the men can sit and drink. Many women make *pombe*, which they sell there. It is only women who make beer. Women also drink beer in social settings, like weddings etc. But as I observed it is not socially accepted for women to drink beer openly outside the homesteads like the men do. One day I stopped by a Mangati homestead I saw a sleeping mat outside the house. I asked why he was there and the wife in the house answered that the husband was not allowed to sleep inside the house when he had been drinking all day.

5.1.4 Economic conditions

There is a market that circulates between the different villages in the district. It comes to Malinzanga once a month. Here clothing, tools and cattle are sold. There are also many that sell prepared food and alcohol to the people visiting. The market is a social gathering that the people in Malinzanga look forward to. Staples are not sold in big quantities at this market, because that can be sold and bought in Mlowa. At the market, livestock is sold and bought, and buyers and sellers come from outside the village. This makes the prices rise, making it profitable to sell cattle at the market. One Mangati man told me that they got a good price for the livestock at the market, but that he also sometimes had to sell livestock outside the market, to people in the village when he was in need of money, but then he got less money for the livestock.

The market seems to be divided into four areas; one clothing and tool section, one where you can buy food and beverages, one where clothing and jewellery for the Masai and Mangati are sold, and one section where livestock are sold and bought. They have built an enclosure where this trading of livestock happens. Some also sell medication for the livestock. If people are in need of

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34 Mlowa is one of the hamlets in Malinzanga, this is also the village trading centre, where the bus comes and most of the small stores are.
cash or have something to sell they can do this at the market, but mostly it is products from Iringa town that are sold at this marked, except for the livestock trade.

Most of the agricultural sales done by people in Malinzanga happen in Mlowa or through people with contacts. Mlowa is as mentioned the major trading centre in Malinzanga. Here there are houses with storage rooms where maize, rice and other staples are sold in relatively large quantities. When people are in need of cash (especially for school fees or medical services), they sell it here. There are also middlemen that will buy and travel to Iringa to sell it there. The prices vary throughout the year. When there are no more staples in the village, middlemen will buy in Iringa and bring it to Malinzanga, but as we will see, there are not many that can afford to buy staples from outside Malinzanga. Very little tomatoes, onions and piripiri are grown in Malinzanga. Most likely this is because there is a village approximately 30 km away that have irrigation the whole year because of a large river, and they grow a lot, that they ‘export’ to Malinzanga. Almost all the hamlets have someone who sells these items, but the biggest stand is in Mlowa. It is in Mlowa the bus stops. The bus brings the tomatoes, onions, piripiri and starches when needed.

For the agriculturalists the harvest, that is mainly staples, is their stock of cash or insurance. It is this they sell off when they are in need of money. While for the pastoralist it is the livestock. When you sell off grains you can sell as much or little you want, this is not the same for livestock. If you are in need of money you have to sell the whole cow and it is a much bigger step to sell a whole cow than a couple of kilograms of maize. Therefore more and more agriculturalists have started to buy cows when they have a lot of money. Livestock, maize and rice are the three largest stocks that can be converted into financial capital in Malinzanga. This is of course different in different households, but on an average these are the main crops that are can be transferred into cash. Food security is therefore related to the stock of grains for the agriculturalists and the livestock for the pastoralists. But it is also about access to staples either from own harvest or to buy, and the possibility to buy staples depends on access to cash. When the maize has run out people often start to sell off rice to buy maize, because maize is much cheaper than rice.
Even though people eat some rice in Malinzanga, it is mostly a cash crop. The demand for rice is big in Iringa town, and some middlemen both from Malinzanga and outside have made a good profit by buying in Malinzanga and selling it in Iringa. Especially young men that want to earn cash by petty business have stated to sell rice. I remember one incidence where a young man asked a Hehe woman if she didn’t want to sell any rice, she said she wanted to wait until the prices had raised some more.

Fruits like mangoes, bananas, and vegetables like pumpkin are mostly sold internally in Malinzanga, just after harvest. It is not many that grow these crops so there is a large enough demand in the village in relation to the production.

5.2 Diet and Meals

“Diet is for people in town, here we have ugali”, quotation from an old Hehe woman.

As presented in the introduction the biggest nutrition problem in Malinzanga is according to the nutrition project, micronutrient deficiency diseases, with anaemia as the most common micronutrient deficiency. The PANTIL nutrition project (2006) states that one of the main problems in Malinzanga is that there is a missing link in the understanding of the relationship between nutrition, health and production. And that knowledge about the importance of good nutrition and a balanced diet is one of the most important nutritional interventions that can be done in the village.

5.2.1 Diet in Malinzanga

To understand food habits, choices and cooking you have to know the diet of the area. Diet is discussed by Weismantel as a term that refers to what you eat, and is the food substances that form the basis of usages and practises concerning food (Weismantel 1989). It did not take me long to observe that the diet in Malinzanga (at least at the time of year when I was there) consists very much of starches, especially maize. But I was told that this had something to do with the season, and when the staples run out in the wet season and the vegetables comes things change. This will be described below.
In table 2, all the foodstuffs available in Malinzanga are presented\textsuperscript{35}. They are written first in Swahili and then in English. The different foodstuffs are presented in the categories used when people are talking about the different foodstuffs. The reason why tomatoes, onion and vegetable oil are listed under spices is because they are by the people in Malinzanga perceived of as spices, and under vegetables it is mostly leaves from different plants. This will be discussed under food classification below.

**Staples**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swahili</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mahindi</td>
<td>Maize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mponga</td>
<td>Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mtama</td>
<td>Sorghum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mihogo</td>
<td>Cassava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olesi</td>
<td>Millet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiazi ulaya</td>
<td>Irish potato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiazi kitamu</td>
<td>Sweet potato</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Vegetables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swahili</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kisamfo</td>
<td>Leaves of cassava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maboga</td>
<td>Pumpkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mboga Maboga</td>
<td>Pumpkin leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchicha</td>
<td>Spinach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mlenda</td>
<td>Green plant similar to okra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matembele</td>
<td>Leaves from sweet potato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mtanga/Mgini</td>
<td>Plants from the forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mboga maharagwe</td>
<td>Leaves from red kidney bean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mboga kunde</td>
<td>Leaves from cowpea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Meat/nyama**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swahili</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kuku</td>
<td>Chicken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ng’ombe</td>
<td>Cattle (beef)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mbuzi</td>
<td>Goat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kondoo</td>
<td>Sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguruwe</td>
<td>Pork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayai</td>
<td>Egg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{35} The content of the table is a result of my findings, and to the best of my knowledge the table should cover all the food stuff, except for wild animals and some wild plant, that also are eaten, but very seldom and more by the pastoralists than the agriculturalists.
**Legumes**

*Maharagwe*  
Red kidney bean  
*Kunde*  
Cowpea  
*Karaga*  
Groundnuts

**Spices**

*Sukari*  
Sugar  
*Chumvi*  
Salt  
*Nyanya*  
Tomato  
*Kitunguu*  
Onion  
*Pilipili hoho*  
Chilli (piripiri)  
*Mafuta*  
Vegetable oil, seasoning

Table 2. Diet in Malinzanga

This table says something about availability of foods and is only an indicator of what could be eaten. The things listed are available both for the pastoralist and the agriculturalists even though they choose to use them differently and some more than others. There are some other foodstuffs like wheat flour and yeast one can buy at some of the stores in Mlowa. I have not included these because they are very rarely used. Only some that make bread to sell use this and it is not a part of the ‘normal’ diet.

There is a difference in the diet between the agriculturalists and the pastoralists. The pastoralist do not grow as much vegetables as most agriculturalists, it is also harder to access tomatoes and onion for the pastoralists that live in the forest. The pastoralists often eat more wild plants than the agriculturalists, in the forest there are plenty growing wild, and often they are right outside the house.
Many of the pastoralists said they only ate meat in emergence, that could be when there is a lack of food or when someone is ill\textsuperscript{36} in ceremonies and when animals die from diseases. But when an animal is slaughtered there are traditions on how to prepare it. It is the men that slaughter the animal and often the kidney, liver and the lump of fat on the back of the cow are eaten raw right after slaughter, and they also drink fresh blood. It is a custom that the men cook and eat some of the meat in the forest where they have slaughtered the animal, and return to the wives with the remaining meat when they are finished.

The cows function as insurance for the pastoralist and many of them said they slaughtered an animal if there was no other food. But many pastoralists told me that they preferred to buy meat to eat, because it was more profitable to sell a whole animal and rather buy small pieces of meat for own consumption, rather than to slaughter it and eat it yourself.

5.2.2 Meals in Malinzanga

Most of the people in Malinzanga, both agriculturalists and pastoralists, have two big meals during the day, lunch and supper. In the morning they drink tea. This is the ‘normal’ but there are

\textsuperscript{36} Among the Masai, pregnant and circumcised children are also perceived of as sick and have to be on a special diet.
some exceptions that I will explain later. The two main meals consist normally of two components, *Ugali* and a relish.

When you enter a household in Malinzanga you will soon notice the three large stones used to support the *sufuria* (kettle) called the hearth, which is what they called the kitchen. The hearth’s location can be in the corner of a room or in a separate room. Since there are only three stones it is only possible to cook in one kettle at the time. The *mboga* is often made before the *ugali*. Mostly the *mboga* are made by first putting some oil to the *sufuria*, then onion and tomato along with salt is added, and finally the main ingredient like beans, meat, green leaves, cabbage etc. Vegetable oil can either be bought in a can or from a large container in the shop. Then you can buy as much or little as you want, but vegetable oil in the can is more expensive and better. Onion and tomatoes are used as spices to enhance the taste. Many people when serving food without oil, tomatoes or onions said the food would have been better if there had been oil, tomatoes and onion.

![Picture 5. Masai woman making *mboga* with okra and milk. The flour is *dona* flour that she is going to use to make *ugali*. The third bowl contains water from the water hole. The rain has started to come, so the water is brown. The picture also shows the three stones forming the hearth, the kitchen.](image-url)
*Ugali* made from maize is the most used staple and main component in a meal. It has the consistency of something like a thick porridge or dough. *Ugali* is the staple content of the meal and is normally made from maize flower and water. It can also be made of sorghum or a combination of maize and cassava when cassava is available after the harvest.

In Malinzanga maize flour processed in three different ways can be used to make *ugali*. The flour is called *dona* when the corn is parted from the colbe and grinded. This flour is yellow and rougher than the other two types. The flour is called *sembe* when the outer shell is removed from the corn and then it is milled. This flour is not so rough and not so yellow. *Kiwerege* flour is flour made after the outer shell is removed and then it is soaked in water for two or three days, then it is dried on a mat before it is sent to the milling machine again. *Kiwerege* is therefore white and very soft. Before the introduction of the milling machine in the village (in the 1980s) all this were done by hand. Today there are several milling machines in the village.

*Ugali* is made by heating water to the boiling point, before the flour is added. Every kitchen has a special carved ‘spoon’ made of wood that they use to mix the flour in the water. During a visit at a Bena household, the mother that was about to make *ugali*, made a comment that she was going to make *ugali* the ‘real Bena way’. This meant that they put almost all of the flour in the kettle with boiling water at the same time, let it boil for a while and then steered and added some more flour if needed. She said that most Hehe put only some flour in the boiling water first, and then make a thickening of some flour and water in a separate bowl before putting it in the kettle so it becomes a lump free porridge. Then this boils for a while before the rest of the flour is added until it has the right consistency. This is also the only difference I observed between the Hehe and Bena, and there are more differences between the Mangati and the Masai.

Both the pastoralists and the agriculturalists eat a lot of *ugali*. But the agriculturalists eat more *kiwerege* while the pastoralists eat more *dona* and they make their *dona ugali* much harder than the agriculturalists who prefers the *ugali* to be soft. For the agriculturalists this has something to do with classification and status as we will see below, while the pastoralists told me they
preferred *dona* because it tastes better with milk on the side. During my stay in Malinzanga I did not see anyone eat *sembe*. I was told it was not much used.

*Relish (Mboga)*\(^{37}\) is what you have on the side of the *ugali*. It can be a sauce or stew made with vegetables and/or meat, or it can be beans, cabbage boiled with oil, tomatoes and onion etc. The meal is served in two bowls for each seating\(^{38}\), one with *ugali* the other with the *mboga*, and the people eat by taking a piece of *ugali* in the hand, forming it to a ball and then dipping it in the relish. Many use their thumb to make the *ugali* in to a spoon so you can get more relish with the *ugali*.

The Pastoralists use much more milk in their *mboga* than the agriculturalists do. This is most likely because of better access, availability and tradition because the pastoralists are more used to using milk in their cuisine. They seldom use bought vegetable oil, because they make their own ‘butter’ from milk that they use in their cooking. They also use more wild *mboga mboga* and cook it with milk and homemade butter. They don’t use as much tomatoes, onions and *pilipili* as the agriculturalists. The pastoralists use a lot of okra as an *mboga*, it is cooked with milk, water and butter it turns in to a sticky green sauce, and it tastes excellent with *dona ugali*. The pastoralists use somewhat different ingredients in their *mboga* than the agriculturalists.

The agriculturalists eat more cabbage, sweet potato leaves, pumpkin leaves, beans and spinach in their *mboga*. It was also more often served meat in the agricultural households I visited than in the pastoralist households. In Mlowa there is a place where animals are slaughtered, and when a slaughter takes place people will see it and ask if there is a possibility to buy. So small pieces of meat are easier accessible in Mlowa because even though people were not planning on eating meat, they see that someone is slaughtering and decide to buy.

The structure and function of the use of *mboga* is the same among the pastoralists and the agriculturalists. But the ingredients they use are as we have seen different. The agriculturalists use more tomatoes, onion and vegetable oil, while the pastoralists use more milk and homemade

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\(^{37}\) I will in this text refer to *mboga* as what you have on the side of *ugali*.

\(^{38}\) There may be several settings when people are eating a meal together, the husband might be eating in side the house or the children. I will come back to this when I describe who eats with whom below.
butter. This is also connected to the different preferences of *ugali*. Milk is important for the pastoralists and as mentioned they use it a lot in their *mboga*, *dona ugali* goes better with this *mboga* because with *kiwerege ugali* it becomes too soft and tasteless. While for the agriculturalists that uses more vegetables that are more bitter, *kiwerege ugali* is for the agriculturalists perceived as better.

*Kandy* is a dish made of beans and corn and is often and mainly made by the Hehe and Bena. *Kandy* is served as one dish, so it is a substitute for both *ugali* and *mboga*. *Kandy* is made by boiling beans and whole maize corns together. Tomatoes, onions and vegetable oil can be added for more taste. Some choose to remove the outer shell of the maize corn, while some leave it on. *Kandy* is as shown in table 3 is mostly eaten when there is a lack of maize, because you don’t need as much maize as you do for *ugali*, since whole maize corn is used and not very much of it since it is mixed with beans.

*Kumbwe* is the Swahili name for snack and is normally eaten in between the meals, or on the side of the morning *chai*. This can be boiled sweet potatoes that are served to guests or bought at a stand in Mlowa, or it can be *chipsi*[^39], buns, bread or chapatti. Generally my observation was that agriculturalists in the village ate more commonly *kumbwe* than the pastoralists in the forest. But there were often men that came from the forest during midday just to hang out or do some earns and I often saw some Masai or Mangati men sitting eating a snack and drinking a soft drink.

As we have seen the meal structure is similar with the pastoralists and the agriculturalists. But their cuisine is different. By cuisine I mean the difference in how they prepare the meal with the different ingredients. This is a result of their preferences that are, as we will see below, a result of their cultural classification and values related food.

In chapter 4, I presented the culinary triangle made by Levi-Strauss. In Malinzanga, I hardly saw any agriculturalists that ate neither rotted nor raw food. The pastoralists have on the other hand a whole other tradition to eat rotted and raw food, especially when it comes to meat. When an

[^39]: When I asked men they considered *chipsi* as a snack, while some women I asked would say it was a meal. I will explain what *chipsi* consists of under ‘new foods’
animal is slaughtered there are as mentioned above several parts of the animal that are eaten raw straight after slaughter. The Masai also told me a tradition they have when they slaughter cows in connection to circumcision of young boys. The zebu cow have a fat lump on their back, after slaughter this fat lump is left for rotting before it is eaten by the father and grandfather of the circumcised boy. The Masai also told me they roast their meat more while the agriculturalists mostly boil it.

5.2.3 Time, Space and actors

The first meal in the day is chai in the morning. The chai is either plain or with milk, sugar or both. Sugar is more common than milk, but milk makes it more like a meal and they told me they felt more like consuming a meal when sugar or milk were added. When they have sugar they use a lot of it. The pastoralists usually use more milk than the agriculturalists. Some that had the opportunity ate chapatti, buns, bagia\(^{40}\), boiled sweet potato, or a piece of bread (made on fire) to the chai. These things are looked upon as snack or as a relish\(^{41}\) to the tea. These are also things that are more common to buy than to make in the houses. Some women in the village have made a petty business selling snacks. At nine o’clock there were seldom any chapattis left, showing that people bought this for breakfast.

Lunch is served between noon and three o’clock. This is a big hot meal. It normally consists of two elements, ugali and a mboga except from when for example kandy is served. These mbogas can either be meat, vegetables or a mix. Dinner is served after the sun has set between seven and nine, and is often the same as lunch. They make new ugali, and heat up the leftover mboga from the lunch.

There are some exceptions from what I have described as the normal eating habits in the village. In the Masai households the young men that are going to graze the livestock eat ugali in the early morning before they go with the cattle. Many pastoralists that eat ugali in the morning eat only ugali and drink fresh milk from the milk containers made of cabbage. The herders go the whole

\(^{40}\) Fried balls of dough made of cowpeas.
\(^{41}\) Here meant as on the side or extra.
day on this meal and normally don’t eat again before dinner in the evening when they have returned.

Some agricultural households that I visited did not have the opportunity to have more than one meal a day, which was lunch, some had some plain tea in the morning and then lunch in the early afternoon. There was one Hehe household that told me that they ate two meals, but when the evening came, they told me they weren’t going to make dinner because they were almost out of the stored maize, and no money. I asked if they usually only had one meal and they replied that towards the end of the dry season, before the vegetables came and the staples were running out they often had only one meal a day, and *chai* without milk or sugar in the morning.

There were also some households that chose to eat *ugali* in the morning if they were going to do very energy demanding work that day. If there are small children in the household, they will normally be served porridge made of a mix of sorghum, maize and millet and maybe milk in the morning. It depends on what is available.

Both the pastoralists and the agriculturalists make distinctions concerning who can eat with whom, and who gets served first with the best food. In all the households I observed it was the wife or the oldest daughter that cooked the food. They were also the ones that arranged the food into different bowls and served them. In most of the households the man (and if there were visiting men, they ate together with the man) was served inside the house, the oldest children, in another house or room, and the mother ate with the smallest children in the kitchen or patio. It was the mother or the wife in the house that made the decisions about who got the best food, and who was to eat where. Even though it is the woman who makes the food and serves it, she will often ask the father how and where he wants it served.

If you walk around in Malinzanga during the hours people normally eat you will hear people say ‘*karibu chakula*’ meaning ‘welcome to food’. The people are very hospital and a ‘no thank you’ is not easily approved. Guests that are strangers are the ones that are given the most status and therefore the best food, in the best place. Guests like friends of the wife or children eat with the person they are visiting that are regarded to have equal status. One day I was sitting in the kitchen...
in a Masai household boiling rice, the husband came home with some researchers. They were in the village, to take some tests of the livestock belonging to the household. They were as is the custom welcomed to eat food. They were seated in the best room, and were served rice and *mboga* made from milk, tomato, onion and green leaves. The food was served in nice porcelain bowls. They also got tea. I was seated in the kitchen with the oldest daughter and ate the same food, from the bowls they were made in. The mother had made *ugali* on the hart stones they had outside and ate there with her smallest children. This is an example of how the distribution of food and status is in the household. The husband and the guests, who were classified as ‘strangers’, ate inside the house and were served the best food from the nicest china. Guest that are ‘strangers’ are given the best service, while guests that know the people are given the same treatment as the people that are seen to be of the same status in the household.

While I was visiting a Bena household, three male friends came to visit the husband. The wife was serving chicken and *ugali* that day, and the men that were known to the household were served in the house with the father, they got the nicest pieces of meat. The oldest children were placed in a storage room and served their food there. The wife and the smallest children ate seated in the shadow of a tree at the patio. They ate what was left of the meat, meaning the bones, head and intestines.

### 5.2.4 Seasonality in the diet

There are a variety of different things the people in Malinzanga eat throughout the year according to what is available at different times. When there is plenty of food people eat grilled corn and people that normally can’t afford to eat *kiwerege* can so in the first months after the maize harvest. But different crops have different times of harvest, some crops are more resistant to drought, some need a lot of water etc. As mentioned, most of the harvesting happens in the months from May to July – August. This is also the time of year where there is a lot of food in the village.

During the wet season maize is getting more expensive and is not very available. In these months the people eat more vegetables, and other types of food. I was told that people could eat boiled pumpkin and milk for supper and/or lunch. In these months there is also a lot of milk, because the
cows get a lot of grazes. But this is also the time in the year when a lot of cattle die, because of the flourishing of diseases among the cattle. And cattle that die from diseases are an important source of meat and proteins in this season.

This means that there is a seasonal difference in the diet in Malinzanga. During the dry months people have a diet that consists of a lot of carbohydrates and low on proteins. While in the wet season they eat much more proteins and vitamins.

Table 3 is a presentation of the main food combinations the agriculturalists eat throughout the year. The table gives an indication of the availability of the different foodstuffs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Months</th>
<th>Ugali or equivalent</th>
<th>Mboga</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Ugali dona</td>
<td>Mboga mboga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Ugali</td>
<td>Mboga mboga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Ugali</td>
<td>Mboga mboga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Ugali</td>
<td>Mboga mboga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Kandy</td>
<td>Kandy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>Beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>Mboga mboga, Beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Ugali kiwerege</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Ugali</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Ugali</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Ugali</td>
<td>Beans (harder to get mboga mboga)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Ugali starting with dona</td>
<td>What is available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Food calendar in Malinzanga

From the table we can see that there is variation in the diet during the different seasons of the year. The table shows that in January to April the people eat mostly dona ugali. Kiwerege ugali is still the preferred ugali, but during these months it is more accepted that people eat dona ugali. This is explained as the time of hard work in the fields and they need more energy. In May staple food are not easily available, and May is the month kandy is eaten the most. I was told this is because many people have a lot of beans due to the ripening period, and one doesn’t need a lot of maize to make kandy. June and July are the months where people have more money than the rest of the year and there is plenty of food since it is the harvesting season. People were eager to explain how it was in Malinzanga in June to August. They said that people eat maize from the colbe, eat lots of meat and drink pombe. In this period rice is used more than in the other months.
Rice is looked upon as ‘nicer’ food than maize it is also more expensive so that is why it is eaten more in this season when people have more money. In August to October people eat mostly kiverege ugali with various types of mboga. There are many options for mboga because it is just after the harvesting season. So mboga can be legumes, cabbage mboga mboga, chicken etc. In November there are less vegetables because of the dry season, and beans become more used, since they are dried after harvest and stored.

The seasonal difference of what the agriculturalists and pastoralists eat is not so big. The largest difference between the agriculturalists and the pastoralists during the wet season regarding the main food is that the pastoralists eat milk and blood and meat from dead animals. They also drink and use a lot more milk in their diet and cuisine. In a pastoralist household however all the household members have their own milk container, which they can drink from at any time. Milk is also much more commonly used in mboga, either in the form of fermented milk or mixed with different mboga mboga. Maize and other staples are getting less and less available during the wet season, but they have a lot of vegetables in this season. Of all the households I visited, it was clear that the pastoralist households ate more sorghum than the agriculturalists. Sorghum is more drought-tolerant and can therefore be harvested later, and is therefore often eaten when there is no more maize. The pastoralists do not drink blood in the dry season because the animals are more vulnerable. The pastoralists also eat much more meat during the wet season since many animals die of diseases in this season. During the wet season blood is a common mboga for the Mangaties. They boil the blood and eat it with hard dona ugali. An old Mangati man told me this was the favoured dish among the Mangaties. The Masai told me they seldom ate boiled blood they rather drank fresh blood on the side of the food.

5.2.5 Knowledge about nutrition and energy

Under seasonality of diet I explained that people in Malinzanga have a perception of food as having much or little energy. This in many ways refers to what we would explain as the nutrition value of food. During the dry season when there is little work to do, they tend to eat more kiwerege because they see it as food with less energy. When the wet season comes and there is more work to do many start to eat dona because they see dona as food with more energy.
In one Hehe household I was visiting, the wife had given birth to a girl three weeks before I arrived. Women that have just given birth, have, according to custom among the Hehe, to follow a diet that consists almost exclusively of meat. The wife was neither to be in the kitchen the first month after giving birth so there was a neighbour girl that cooked for the family. While the rest of the family ate ugali with mboga made of vegetables the wife ate only meat. During the pregnancy there are different things she shouldn’t eat, because it will affect the baby. She should for example not eat beans because then the belly will be very big.

One Masai man told me that the Masai also have a special diet for the pregnant and the sick. If someone is sick it is among the Masai common to make a soup of the broth from cooking meat and to mix the broth with a local plant medicine called mfleti. This is given to the sick. If it is a woman that has just given birth it is believed that she needs a lot of fat to gain her strength, and this is added to the soup. The pastoralists had different names for the fat that comes from milk, which is called siagi and the fat that comes from meat mafutato. Many pastoralists knew that goat milk was more nutritious and fatter than normal milk. They used to use goat milk if there was lack of cow milk and vegetables, especially if there were kids in the household, because they needed the fat and energy. The problem with goat milk was the availability, there were always goat kids that needed the milk of their mother, and therefore they could very seldom take any milk from the goats.

5.2.6 Introduction of new foods

Several new dishes have been introduced to Malinzanga during the last years. Pilau is one of them. This is rice mixed with different types of meat and/or vegetables. Both the pastoralist and the agriculturalist use this dish in ceremonies and festivities. I was served pilau with cow meat at a circumcision ceremony with the Masai, and many agriculturalists told me they were going to eat Pilau with chicken meat at Christmas. They reason given for the adaptation of this dish, was that it is easy to make and can be made for many people. And it contains rice, which is regarded as nice food both with the agriculturalists and the pastoralists.

Another new dish is the chipsi. This is like an omelette, with fried slices of potatoes in it. This dish is common snack food in all of Tanzania, and two stands making chipsi was in Mlowa when
I came to the village, I were told they had just been open a couple of months. One of the stands had to close shortly after, while the other one was thinking about shutting it down and reopen it when people got money again. It was mainly men and young people, both pastoralists and agriculturalists, ate *chipsi* bought from these stands. A Hehe woman told me that she would never pay 500 shillings\(^{42}\) when she could make it herself with own eggs and potatoes.

### 5.4 Food and culture

We have now seen what foodstuff the people in Malinzanga produce and what they use in their diet, how the meals are composed and under what circumstances the meals are served and eaten. I will now present how food and culture are connected in Malinzanga and how food is valued, perceived and classified by the different ethnic groups. I will show how food as a symbol becomes an expression of ethnicity, how food taboos in the different groups separate what is edible and non-edible. And finally I will present how the people in Malinzanga classify food according to use, taste and status.

In chapter 4, I presented the two terms diet and cuisine. I will in this part focus more on cuisine that according Weismantel is the cultural transformation of food into meals and dishes (Weismantel 1988), and present the use, perception and classification food in Malinzanga in context of cuisine.

### 5.4.1 Ethnicity and food as a symbol

Up to this point I have focused more on the similarities than the differences between the ethnic groups in Malinzanga. This part will pay more attention to the differences. The different ethnic groups living in Malinzanga have different ways of valuing and classifying food. This is evident when one looks at what they see as everyday food and food for ceremonies. There are significant differences between the different ethnic groups. The differences are most evident between the agriculturalists and the pastoralists.

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\(^{42}\) 500 shillings are approximately 2,5 NOK
5.4.2 Food in ceremonies

All the groups in Malinzanga have ceremonies where food plays an important role. Often there are different types of food connected to different ceremonies. It is not uncommon that the Hehe and Bena marry their second cousins. This means that the parents of the couple getting married are cousins and the grandparents are brothers or sisters. When this happens there is a ceremony for the parents of the couple. In this ceremony the parents are supposed to eat a goat to break the family (lineage) bond between the two families. After they have eaten the goat they will no longer call each other cousins. The grandparents do not eat the goat meat, because the bond between brothers and sisters are too strong and should not be broken. In this ceremony the meat of the goat is given power to be able to ‘break the family bond’ between the two cousins, so that they may be connected like in-laws, rather than cousins.

While I was in the village I participated in one circumcision ceremony for six Masai boys. They slaughtered one cow for each of the kids and the different parts of the animal were used for different purposes. The cattle in Malinzanga are zebu cows, meaning that they have a fat lump on their backs. These are given to the father and grandfathers of the boys during the ceremony. An mzee (meaning old man in Swahili) Masai told me that the boys are given blood the first day and fat the second day after the circumcision. Some parts of the animals that are slaughtered are seen as special and have different value than others. The heart and liver is given to the boys that are being circumcised to give them strength and to make them heal faster. After the boys have been circumcised they are held together in a house to heal properly. They eat and sleep in this house and are not being social with anybody else. After a month or so they are let out to the forest. They are dressed up in black clothes with big feathers in their hair and are allowed to carry a bow and arrows.\footnote{They explained that the bow and arrows are used to harass the young girls when they go to fetch water in the evening. The arrows are but in the end so it doesn’t hurt much to be hit with them. The reason why they do this is because they want others to be in pain when they are.}

I also participated in one ceremony that the Mangati held for their elders. They slaughtered a sheep and the elders that were to participate in the meeting had a piece of sheepskin around one finger. They wouldn’t tell me what the meeting was about, because that was secret business. But
I was told that the elders were the ones that were advisors among the Mangati and they were going to have a meeting. This was something they did twice a year. After the meeting was finished they ate goat meat, *ugali* and drank a lot of home made beer. The Mangati worship the spirit of their ancestors, and the elders is seen as mentors with a lot of knowledge. Therefore is it that they have a ceremony for the elders, to praise them, and so that they can have a meeting. The ceremony is also a social gathering and an opportunity to share food.

In times of drought the Masai living in Malinzanga gathered together and bought some black sheep. They believed that if they sprinkled water on the black sheep it would shake and water would sprinkle as rain, and it would mean that it would start to rain.

These are a few examples of food used in different ceremonies and there are probably more. The examples have mostly been about meat, this is because, meat is perceived as the finest food to serve on a social occasion. Rice is also much used as food in ceremonies on the side of meat, and more and more often is *pilau* with meat and rice served. Rice is by both the agriculturalists and the pastoralists perceived of as fine food and is mostly used on social occasions by both groups.

5.4.3 The edible and non-edible and food taboos

Leach\(^44\) (1964) said it is a matter of culture what you classify as food. Because there are many things that we don’t want to eat or don’t look upon as food, even though it is ‘very much eatable’ and maybe also very nutritious. In principle some of these things we don’t want to eat are attached to a food taboo. As we saw in chapter 4 a food taboo can both be explicit and inexplicit. I will here show the explicit food taboos found in the different ethnic groups in Malinzanga.

For the agriculturalists the food taboos are inherited patrilineally. Meaning that the children inherit the food taboos of his father. This means that a man can have a different food taboo than his wife, but the children would all have the same food taboo as their father. If the man wanted to eat what was a food taboo for his wife, she would cook it, but not eat it herself. The rationale is that if their father got sick from eating it the children would get sick, even though their mother could eat it. There were different perceived consequences of breaking a food taboo. The most

\(^{44}\) See chapter 4, page 13.
commonly believed consequence is that you’ll get skin diseases or that the body dries completely and the skin cracks and makes wounds. There were many different food taboos’, some examples are, to eat duck meat, eating an animal that has been bought or received without a head, and eating the meat of a cow that has died under or just after giving birth. The food taboos follow the lineage since it follows the line from father to children. While discussing food taboos in a Bena household, my assistant found out that he had the same food taboo as the husband in the household, showing that a food taboo can be shared between several lineages. I did not hear about anyone that had married someone with the same food taboo.

The two pastoralist groups in Malinzanga said they saw wild animals, birds, pigs and fish as taboo food. Some said they would be sick and vomit if they ate it, or get skin diseases, and for them this food was not perceived as edible. While visiting a pastoralist homestead I asked about the food taboos they had, and why they had them. The husband said the reason for these food taboos was that there was no need for them as herders for cattle, goats and sheep to eat other types of meat, and that the animals kept by humans have the best meat, milk and blood, and that there was a reason why these animals have been domesticated.

In chapter 4 I referred to how Leach (1964) explained how the English do not eat animals that are too close or too distant. In Malinzanga one Mangati man explained to me why they couldn’t eat elephants; they are too similar to humans. He explained that the elephants use their trunk to eat their food, just like humans uses their arms. The female elephants have their breasts on the upper side of the body between the ‘arms’ like women, and the elephant kids stay with their parents for several years.

The Masai and the Mangati in Malinzanga have the same food taboos. One Masai man once answered to a question about the difference between the agriculturalists and pastoralists that the Mangati and the Masai have the same food taboos but the Hehe and Bena have different. And this is true. The pastoralists in the village all had the same food taboos. They could have different things they didn’t like according to preferences, but the food taboos were the same.
As we have seen food taboos vary from the different groups and they tell something about what is seen as edible and non-edible. While talking to a Hehe woman she told me that many of the food taboos they had before were disappearing and were no longer used. This she explained was because they had got new knowledge about what was good and bad food. But she also said that they used to eat more insects before, but this they had made a taboo on now, because it was not a proper thing to eat. This shows that new knowledge on nutrition can both abolish food taboos over time, but it can also introduce new ones. The people get more and more influences from outside the village mainly from Iringa town and are introduced not only to new foods, but also to a new way of classifying food.

5.4.4 Classification of food

All people think differently about food. What we choose to see as good and bad food, proper food or snack etc will vary from person to person. We have personal tastes, but we also have cultural variations in preferences on what we eat and how we eat it. In chapter 4 we saw that Bourdieu (1995) sees taste as socially constructed and used to differentiate and distinguish. In Malinzanga this is very much true, I would often hear comments like “it is only the pastoralists who likes dona” or “you eat ugali like a Hehe” and “only poor people eat that”. How we classify food tells something about what we look upon as important. In the presentation I will distinguish between the way the agriculturalists and the pastoralists classify their food and between classification of food in relation to use, status and taste.

5.4.5 Food classification for how foodstuff is used

As we have seen the meals in Malinzanga have a special structure. One word can mean and refer to different things. We will now see how the different people in Malinzanga classify and use different foodstuff according to the structure of the meal.

As presented before ugali and mboga, are not only one thing and always constant. They can be made with different ingredients. Kumbwe is a different category of food with different types of food. Ugali and mboga will never be perceived of as a Kumbwe. People in Malinzanga told me that eating kumbwe is not perceived of as ‘food’. If you ask a man in Malinzanga that has just eaten a sweet potato if he has eaten, he will most likely say no. So ‘food’ is perceived of as ‘meals’ and kumbwe is not in this category, and are therefore not perceived of as ‘eaten’.
Breakfast is on the other hand a meal and therefore ‘eaten’ event though it might just consist of chai. Kandy is as mentioned a dish that does not have the ‘normal’ meal structure (ugali and mboga), but is perceived of a meal and are classified in the same group as ugali and mboga. Kandy therefore functions as a substitute for these two elements.

What people in Malinzanga perceive as tasteful depends on factors like availability and tradition. But what is tasteful is again classified in different ways, in regard to different food categories and different values related to status given to food. In Swahili the word chakula means food. For the agriculturalists in Malinzanga the word chakula is synonym with ugali. Ugali here refers to the meal and therefore also other dishes that are classified in this category like kandy. If someone is asked if they have eaten, they refer to ugali. If the person asked has just eaten a snack he will still say that he hasn’t eaten since it wasn’t ugali. This indicates the key role of ugali in the diet of the people in Malinzanga. One mother once asked me to take her back to Norway with me, but when I told her there aren’t any ugali in Norway she just shook her head and said she would rather starve in Tanzania than to live without ugali. Ugali is in this way both a function, like the staple, and main component of the meal and a category of things. Rice, cassava, sorghum, millet and kandy are categorized together with ugali because they have the same function and can therefore substitute each other. During the rainy season, when most of the staples have run out, boiled pumpkin is also in this category, even though it is not a staple food, but because it serves as the main component of the meal.
This table shows how *ugali* both is a function in a meal as a necessary element as being *ugali*, but also all the different things that can be used as *ugali*. Pumpkin is eaten as the main component of the meal in the wet season, when the availability of staples is very low. It is often served with fresh or fermented milk on the side, which is eaten by both pastoralists and agriculturalists, but more by the agriculturalists. The table is representative for both the pastoralists and the agriculturalists, but we will under categorization according to status and value see the differences between the two groups. While I was staying in a Masai household, I one day wanted to make food for them. I bought a lot of potatoes and made mashed potatoes with milk. I presented it as *ugali a la Norway*. They were very fascinated because they had never thought about using Irish potatoes to make *ugali* before. Even though Irish potatoes are not much used, they are grown in the village and can be bought in Mlowa. This shows that there is room to introduce new foodstuff that can be used as *ugali*.

Mboga translates from Swahili to English to vegetables and/or side dish, but it is here used as the word side dish or relish, what is on the side of *ugali*. In the same way as with *ugali*, *mboga* has both a function as a component in the meal as a relish, and as a category of foodstuffs. As we have seen earlier there are several foodstuffs that can be used as, and in the *mboga*. To explain the different types of *mboga* one often says *mboga* and the name of the main ingredient of the *mboga* in that meal. The people in Malinzanga explained to me that when they talked *mboga* as a
type of food and not as the function as the side dish to ugali, mboga refers to the green leaves they often use in their cooking of mboga. So when they say that they are going to eat mboga mboga is means they are going to eat mboga with vegetables referring to the green leaves they classify as vegetables. Mboga mboga is the most common mboga I observed, together with beans. Mboga maharagwe means beans cooked to be served on the side of ugali.

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**Mboga**

| Function               | - Sauces or stew on the side of ugali  
|                       | - Vitamins, proteins and mineral source of the meal  
|                       | - One out of two components in the meal structure  
| Category of things    | - Meat from cow, goat, sheep, kuku and possibly wild meat  
|                       | - Beans  
|                       | - Cabbage  
|                       | - Mboga mboga, leaves of sweet potato, cowpeas, beans, pumpkin leaves, spinach, wild plants.  
|                       | - Fermented milk  

Table 5. Mboga as a function and as a category of things.

Everything that is served on the side of ugali is therefore mboga. When milk is fermented and used on the side of the ugali the milk is used they say, as a vegetable in mboga. Blood is also, mostly among the pastoralists, used as mboga when it is on the side of ugali as well as meat. While visiting an agricultural household I experienced that there were three bowls with food, one with ugali, one with meat and one with vegetables. But this time there were many guests and the vegetables were for the children. When meat is served as a kumbwe or without ugali it is meat and not mboga.

Tomatoes, onions and pilipili together with vegetable oil are perceived as spices and not vegetables because it is used to add taste and can be used in any mboga. Everybody said they grew a lot of vegetables, but very few grew tomatoes or onions, these came from the neighbour village that had better irrigation and could grow all year. So the vegetables the people grew were mostly the green leaves, which is often the main component in mboga.

45 These are the green leaves of the plants presented under diet in Malinzanga earlier in this chapter.
Kumbwe is what you eat in between *chai*\(^{46}\), lunch and dinner. It can vary according to the seasons. It can be fruits like mango, and bananas, both sweet and not and it can be buns, chapatti, *bagia* etc. Most of the food in this category is bought from people that have established small petty businesses making this. Sweet potato is in this category because it is eaten boiled in between meals. Irish potatoes are used in *chipsi*, a dish similar to Spanish omelette, with fried Irish potatoes.

The pastoralists have almost the same way of classifying food according to usage as the agriculturalists. The pastoralists I talked to said they had only eaten *ugali* for a couple of decades, before that their diet consisted of meat and milk and wild plants, fruits etc. The pastoralists themselves explained the shift to *ugali* and *mboga* happened because it was no longer enough grazes available to increase the livestock heard, and they started to grow more maize and sorghum. The pastoralists eat their *ugali* almost exclusively made of *dona* or sorghum flour. I observed that the *ugali* made in the pastoralist households had a much harder consistence than the one made in the agriculturalist households. But they also have different *mbogas*. They use much more milk in their *mboga*. Meat is the most prestigious food, but it is seldom eaten. Only on very special occasions do they slaughter. The pastoralists have therefore the same structure as the agriculturalists on how food is used, and the different categories in a meal. But as we have seen the meals often have different content from what is normally used among the agriculturalists.

In table 4 and 5, we have seen the different foodstuffs that can be categorized under *ugali*, *mboga* and *kumbwe*. There is also a wider range of substitution that occurs on the basis of special occasions and in emergencies. A Masai woman told me that when there was a lack of milk they would buy more vegetables than normal, because vegetables can replace milk and milk is more expensive to buy. And amongst the pastoralists, they told me that if they were lacking both foodstuff for *ugali* and *mboga* and they did not have any money they would slaughter an animal and eat only things from the animal for a meal. They told me that often a cow could last for up to two months. After showing how the people in Malinzanga classify food according to meals structure and use, I will now proceed to explain how food is classified according to status and value.

\(^{46}\) As mention earlier snack can also be eaten with *chai*.
5.4.6 Classification according to status and value

As we have seen ugali made of maize can be made with three different types of flour, kiwerege, sembe and dona. Kiwerege is the most expensive and labour demanding flour to use, because it has to be milled twice, soaked in water for three days and then dried in the sun. It is among the agriculturalists a stigma attached to eating dona, especially in the dry season. Goffman (1963) explains that a stigma can refer to the “situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance” (Goffman 1963:9). ‘Stigma’ has historically been referred to bodily signs on people that expose something unusual and have affected the moral status of the person. Today stigma refers more to the disgrace itself than to the bodily evidence of it (Goffman 1963). In Malinzanga agriculturalists that are eating a lot of dona are categorized as poor, and to be poor has a negative connotation, and perceived as somewhat shameful. The agriculturalists do not, however, think about the pastoralists eating dona in the same way as they do amongst themselves. The pastoralists as a group are by the agriculturalists classified as so different according to food habits, so it is not the same.

Goffman states that it is the society that “establishes the means of categorizing persons and the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for members of each of these categories” (Goffman 1963:11). This means in the contexts of Malinzanga that among the agriculturalists, eating dona all year around is seen as something not natural and ordinary and that the society is in a way ‘categorizing out’ the poor people to be outside the norm.

Both food taboo and stigmatized food has to do with the way one classifies food. The difference is that tabooed food is not seen as edible while stigmatized food has to do with how one values food and is strongly un-preferred food. Stigmas have to do with categories of people, and food refers in this connection to the person eating it, while tabooed food refers to the quality of the food. Taboos of food is often made on the basis of knowledge of that specific foodstuff, and that eating it will cause the person eating it harm. Radcliffe-Brown (1939) explains that food taboos are connected to religious perceptions and by eating tabooed food you will become ritually unclean and need to be cleansed.
Goffman explains that stigma refers to the situation of the person. In the context of Malinzanga this means the situation one who eats stigmatized food puts him/herself in a position where the person will be perceived as poor.

In one Masai household that I visited where the mother in the house was a widow. She would often sit down beside me and ask if we could share stories. This was according to her the best way we could get to know each other. I was thrilled about this and really enjoyed the long conversations we had together. We also talked about food, and the purpose of food. She said that food was to give us energy and to relieve the sensation of hunger. She also said that food was connected to desire, and this was the reason why different people ate different food. I found the use of the word desire fascinating, because it is what makes us make the choices the way we do, but it also raises a question about where this desire for special types of food comes from, and why is something desirable for some more than for others, it has to do with personal taste and how our taste is socially adopted and formed by our socio-economic environment.

The Masai lady continued to explain that food she desired was ‘sweet’, while other food was not so good, and might cause her to vomit. Many pastoralists explained that they would vomit if the food were not sweet. Food can also be sweet if it is the right food at the right time. To serve ordinary food in festivities and ceremonies, are not looked upon as proper (therefore it is not ‘sweet’), since food plays such a crucial role in the ritual and social life among the pastoralists. It was a general consent among all the pastoralists that meat, milk and blood were always sweet unless it was very rotten. The desire for different foodstuffs can also be translated into taste and what is tasteful, because one desires what tastes good.
Table 6. Classification according to value among the pastoralists and the agriculturalists

1 Rice is high value food. Among the pastoralists rice is mostly used in ceremonies and special occasions.
2 Millets are never used as the only ingredient in *ugali*, but is used mixed with either maize or one of the other staples.
3 Pumpkin is only used as *ugali* in the dry season when staples are lacking, and is hard to value since it is only available at some times in the wet season.
4 The pastoralists’ *mboga mboga* are slightly different from the agriculturalists. The pastoralists use more wild plants and okra.

The table shows how the agriculturalists and the pastoralists classify different foodstuffs according to value and status. Among the agriculturalists *kiverege* is looked upon as higher status food than *dona* since it is the most expensive and the most demanding to make. This shows that the price and effort to make *kiwerege* means something when deciding what is good and proper food and that the people that can’t afford to eat *kiwerege* are therefore according to the agriculturalists poor. When you eat *dona* you also use more of the maize so you get more flour of the maize than you get when you mill *kiwerege*. I hardly observed anybody eating *sembe ugali*, but many ate *dona*.

Milk and spices like tomatoes, onions, vegetable oil and pilipili can be used in different types of *mboga*. By using these spices and milk the *mboga* will rise according to social value. The use of ‘spices’ in *mboga* makes the food taste more but it also gives the food more social value and are perceived of as ‘better’ food. One reason for this might that these foodstuffs have to be bought, and make the food more expensive and exclusive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agriculturalists</th>
<th>Social Value</th>
<th>Pastoralists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Ugali</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>Kiverege</em></td>
<td>High value</td>
<td>- <em>Rice</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>Rice</em>¹</td>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>Dona</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>Dona</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>Sorghum</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>- <em>Sorghum</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>Millet</em>²</td>
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<tr>
<td>- <em>Millet</em>²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>Pumpkin</em>³</td>
<td>Low value</td>
<td>- <em>Millet</em>²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mboga mboga</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mboga</em></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>Meat</em></td>
<td>High value</td>
<td>- <em>Meat</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>Cow</em></td>
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<td>- <em>Cow</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>- <em>Goat, sheep</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>Goat, Sheep</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>Kuku</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>Kuku</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>- <em>Milk</em></td>
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<td>- <em>Milk</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>- <em>Beans</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>Beans</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>Cabbage w/spices</em></td>
<td>Low value</td>
<td>- <em>Mboga mboga</em> ⁴</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Rice is high value food. Among the pastoralists rice is mostly used in ceremonies and special occasions.
2 Millets are never used as the only ingredient in *ugali*, but is used mixed with either maize or one of the other staples.
3 Pumpkin is only used as *ugali* in the dry season when staples are lacking, and is hard to value since it is only available at some times in the wet season.
4 The pastoralists’ *mboga mboga* are slightly different from the agriculturalists. The pastoralists use more wild plants and okra.
The pastoralists did not have the same value and status connected to *kiwerege* in relation to *dona*. They eat almost exclusively *dona*. There are probably several reasons for this. The first is a practical reason. Since they live in the forest, the milling machines are far away and it takes a lot of time and energy to take the maize back and forth to the milling machines. The second reason is economical, pastoralists often have smaller pieces of land and therefore get less maize, and *dona* is more economical because you use the whole corn. Maybe the most important factor is the third one that has to do with taste, the pastoralists use much more milk in their cooking, this makes the food softer and milder and tastes better with *dona ugali*.

For the agriculturalists *ugali* made of sorghum have even lower status than made with *dona*. The government have long tried to introduce more production of sorghum in the rural areas in Tanzania, and they give free sorghum seeds to the chairman to distribute to the people in need of seeds. But most people do not want to produce sorghum, because of the stigma of eating it. Among the agriculturalists sorghum are mostly used to make *pombe*. The pastoralists on the other hand gladly produce and eat sorghum.

Rice is the high status food among the pastoralists. Rice is served on festivities, ceremonies and on special occasions. Wealthy pastoralists eat rice daily in periods of the year. Rice is also used at special occasions among the agriculturalist. Many eat rice for Christmas. When I asked agriculturalists about the difference eating rice and *kiwerege*, many said they preferred *kiwerege* on a every day basis because as one Hehe woman told me: “you get tired of rice, but *kiwerege* you can eat every day”.

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6 Concluding Discussion

The objective of this study has been to investigate the socio-cultural dynamics of food in Malinzanga. On the basis of a two months fieldwork I have described living conditions and conducted analysis in relation to the concepts livelihood and production, diet and meals, food and culture. Further I have analysed the findings in relation to cultural classification and cuisine and how this provides constraints and opportunities with regard to nutrition and food security.

Chapter 5 presents the analysis of the main findings of this study. I have showed how the four ethnic groups have strong preferences concerning livelihood and production. We have seen how the different groups share meal structure, while the choice and use of the ingredients and the preparation of the meal is quite different among the groups. These preferences concerning different foodstuffs and ways of preparation can be seen as an expression of ethnicity and culture. In this study these aspects are referred to as ‘cuisine’. Another important finding is how the different ethnic groups have quite different ways of classifying food. The classification of food is among the agriculturalists an expression of status, that stigma signifies poverty and is attached to some foodstuffs. In this concluding discussion I will discuss some main aspects of my findings in relation to cultural classification and changing diets, before I continue to discuss my main findings in relation to the two terms access and choice.

6.1 Cultural classification and changing diets

By looking at the cultural classification of food in the different groups it is possible to analyse how new foods have been introduced and accepted in Malinzanga. Kumbwa and the relish to *chai* in the morning appear to be two entry points in the meal structure where new foods have recently been accepted. What this food has in common is that it is accessed at the different trading centres, and because these foodstuffs are bought, money and the status attached to money are involved. As we have seen is social value of food perceived of as an opposite of poverty, and are therefore related to wealth. Mobile phones and diesel run generators are new technologies that have been introduced to Malinzanga that is seen as signs of wealth. According to Lien (1989) changes in eating patterns can arise as a consequence of changes in availability of food. Lien also explains that it is related to socio-cultural conditions. Adaptation and acceptance of new foods will be
affected by the meeting with new impulses from outside the close social milieu, and make it possible for values and attitudes concerning to change (Lien 1989:17). In Malinzanga the adaptation of new foods are therefore connected to status, and it is necessary to understand the link between high value food and wealth when introducing new foods. When new foods are introduced they will be valued and classified by the people, so it is important that the food is perceived of as high value food that can fit into the already existing structure of status and stigmas on food. Aid food is perceived of as low value food, and are therefore stigmatized, so is sorghum. There is status related to being able to buy items that has recently been introduced to the village like mobile phones and diesel run generators, and some people therefore sell off too much of their harvest to be able to buy them. In relation to food security in Malinzanga it is possible that this may have a negative effect of food security in Malinzanga.

The use and consumption of *ugali* and *mboga* are on the other hand more stable, and have not seen much change. This is probably because the foodstuffs used in these categories have been available for a long time, and people’s preferences regarding these two categories have been manifested through generations. This is somewhat different for the pastoralists who told me they have only the last decades started to eat *ugali* and *mboga*. Before, their diet consisted in a larger degree of meat, milk, blood, wild fruits and plants. Even though they have adapted the same meal structure as the agriculturalists, the pastoralists have different preferences as to ingredients and ways of preparation and have therefore a different ‘cuisine’ than the agriculturalists.

The objective of the PANTIL nutrition project is to develop interventions that will increase the nutrition status of the people. This can be done through introduction of new foods in the diet. For new foodstuffs to be accepted one has to be aware of the meal structure and how food is classified and valued among the different people in the village. As we have seen, several new foods and meals already have been introduced in Malinzanga. We have mentioned *chipsi* and *pilau*, but also some of the different types of *kumbwa* and what is eaten with the *chai* have not been used for so long. The analysis indicates that the morning meal with the *chai* is a good entry point for introducing new foods. It is becoming more and more ‘normal’ to eat something besides the *chai*. On the other hand when it comes to the *ugali* I think it is harder to change the agriculturalist’s perception and high valuing of the *kiwerege*. Among the agriculturalists it is
accepted to eat *dona* if you are about to do heavy work, because *dona* gives more energy. The stigma attached to eating *dona* therefore only occurs when it is eaten in seasons when there is little work and if it is eaten without working afterwards. I believe that this could change if better knowledge on the lack of nutrients in *kiwerege*, and not only focusing on high and low energy, more people might start to supplement other types of grains etc in their *ugali*. Another entry point for new food could be in the *mboga*, because what the *mboga* consists of is often a result of what is available in terms of ecology and economy, and this has to be recognized if new foods are to be introduced.

It is also important to mention that a shift in production will lead to a shift in the diet, so the introduction of new foods could happen in relation to agricultural interventions. Another thing is people’s opportunity to extend their vegetable gardens to include for example more tomatoes. In the village the access of water through pups are not limited as such, and a bucket with some soil to grow tomatoes would lower the expenses people have on buying tomatoes. Many were complaining on the prizes of tomatoes.

### 6.2 Access and choice

In chapter 4 Ellis’s definition of livelihood was presented. He states that a livelihood’s assets can be recognized as consisting of five types of capital (Ellis 2000). He argues that activities in the household are conducted on the basis of these capitals and access to them, and that access to these capitals are mediated through institutions and social networks. Therefore livelihood, production and food consumption are closely linked.

In Malinzanga this can be seen in light of two aspects: access and choice. Access refers to the availability to the five capitals identified by Ellis, that is natural, physical, financial, human and social capital. In this way access refers to the material aspects of livelihood, production and food available for the people in Malinzanga. Choice refers to the decisions that people can make in relation to production, consumption and eating habits. What I can say about choice in the context of Malinzanga is based on my findings concerning values and preferences and are expressed though culture and ethnicity. The way the people in Malinzanga make choices on livelihood and production is shaped by ethnicity, cultural values and norms. Choices made can be both implicit
and explicit, meaning some are reflected upon while others are in a way ‘taken for granted’ and are not seen as choices because it is a part of their ‘habitus’. I chapter 4 we saw that Barth uses ethnicity as a term to describe people that share similar cultural values and how this expresses ‘differentness’ to others. Malinzanga can in the context of choices and actions related to food habits be seen as a cultural expression of ‘differentness’ among the different groups.

The pastoralists and agriculturalists have different access to natural capital in Malinzanga because most pastoralists live in what is called ‘the forests’ while most agriculturalists live in ‘the village’. This is also a result of choices and adaptation according to mode of production. Access to grazes for the animals are much better in the forest than in the village, and the agriculturalists with cattle in the village do only have small herds because of lacking space. The distance to both the irrigated fields along the river and the rain-fed land is much shorter for the agriculturalists living in the village. But as we have seen the access to pastures are becoming limited also in the forest, and having big herds of cattle is getting more difficult. Many pastoralists are therefore choosing to have more crops, while many agriculturalists now sees the economical benefit of having some cattle. This shows a tendency that the different ethnic groups are getting more similar with regard to mode of production. But changing to similar mode of production does not mean they handle it in the same way. To belong to an ethnic group is also an identity, and the values and cultural preferences expressed in a group does not change, even though one start to grow more crops or have more cattle.

There are many things concerning diet and nutrition that are not only subject to choice. These are related to access. The environment and changing season have a large impact on diet, work tasks and amount of work. Availability of the different foodstuff, depends on the season, and so does the work that need to be done. The seasons also have an effect on food security, while the storages of maize is relatively full during the dry season, it is getting emptier throughout the wet season, and many people experiences food shortage. This mostly affect people that run out of staples in the end of the dry season, before the new vegetables come in the start of the wet season. Many suffer from this problem and that is why the government sends out grain rations to those who struggle the most.
Dona flour and even more so sorghum flour are classified as low status food by the agriculturalists. People consuming this are stigmatized and perceived as poor. Both sorghum and dona flour made of maize are better alternatives than rice and kiwerege flour in relation to nutrition value. Sorghum, as a crop, is more drought tolerant than maize, and by grinding dona flour from maize, more of the grains are used and gives more flour than if it were grinded to kiwerege flour. Furthermore food security is related to access to these staples, which is better for dona since you get more flour from the grains and for sorghum because it is more drought tolerant. But neither sorghum nor dona have any high social value and are not perceived of as tasteful. This provides a challenge when it comes to promote the use of sorghum and dona.

In chapter 5 we saw that there is a perception of what is tasteful as ‘sweet’, and how some food gives more energy than others.

![Figure 3. Energy and sweetness of food.](image)

According to Bourdieu taste is an inherited disposition and taste is different between different classes and different groups, depending on social organization. Taste and preferences as such is therefore factors in classifying food. The choice of not to produce sorghum, is a result of cultural
classification that affects the foodstuffs available in the diet and also food security and nutrition. It is an expression of cuisine and culturally embedded preferences and there is made a link, connecting sorghum as food with low status. Sorghum production and consumption is therefore in most cases not a result of lack of access, but rather a choice and a question of taste.

The pastoralists have a different cuisine, and do therefore not value *dona* and *kiwerege* in the same way. For the pastoralists in Malinzanga meat, milk and blood are still perceived as high value food. They described to me that their affection and preference for *dona* was that it is better together with milk than *kiwerege*. In this way one can see that *dona* get higher status among the pastoralists than *kiwerege*. The pastoralists also prepare the *ugali* somewhat different from the agriculturalists because they make it much firmer than the agriculturalists that prefer the *ugali* to be soft which is perceived of as more tasteful.

In this chapter I have summed up and discussed my main findings using the concepts of cultural classification and changing diets and access and choice. Hopefully this thesis can contribute to the PANTIL nutrition project’s efforts to meet its ambitions and aims to improve the nutrition status and knowledge about nutrition in the project villages.
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