

Foodways Interview #2

Researcher's name: ___Ricardo_____

Participant's alias: ___Petri_____

Interview date: ___10/29/17_____

Interview setting's alias: ___Sunshine Community Center_____

1) Favorite foods and food taboos

a) What are some of your favorite foods or dishes, and why do you love these (e.g., a particular taste/smell/texture or because of childhood memories connected with these foods)?

Petri's favorite dish is a bean burrito from Taco Bell. He loves bean burritos from Taco Bell because, as a child, he would go to Taco Bell every week to get a bean burrito. At Taco Bell, he would eat five to six bean burritos. His love of burritos stems from the fact that during his childhood, his parents made him eat Indian food almost everyday. Due to eating it everyday, Petri grew to dislike Indian food, and viewed the days when he went to Taco Bell for burritos as "days off." In general, Petri loves Mexican food. He views the food as containing a good nutritional balance, with lots of nutrients and protein from the vegetables and meat. *He slurps on his coffee at this time, perhaps to give himself some time to think.* He also mentions how he loves the taste of a spicy bean burrito, as he loves the burn of spice. He summarized his preference for spiciness as "no pain, no gain."

b) What foods or dishes won't you eat, and why won't you (e.g., unpleasant taste/texture/smell, bad memories associated with them, some political, spiritual, or nutritional principles)?

Petri tries to avoid eating some Indian dishes. In particular, he dislikes dal (a curry made with lentils) and roti (flat bread), the dish he used to eat almost everyday as a child. While he was never a fan of dal and roti in the first place, the routine of eating it everyday made him firmly dislike the dish and Indian food in general. At college, he tries to avoid Indian food because he got "a lifetime's fill of it." *At this point, he slurped on his coffee and then slouched on the chair, with his arms behind him. I assume he was trying to relax as I asked him questions.*

2) Food procurement

a) Do you hunt, fish, or forage for any of your food? If so, please explain when, where, and how.

Petri said he does not hunt, fish, or forage for his food.

b) Do you grow or raise any of it yourself? If so, please explain when, where, and how.

Currently, Petri or his family members have a peach tree and a small strawberry patch. Petri said the peach tree was poorly maintained, and not producing any more fruit. While

the strawberry patch still yields strawberries, he said it was small – about the size of a 3x3 patch. *Petri pointed to the square tiles on the floor of the Sunshine Community Center to visually illustrate the size of the patch.* In addition, when he was a child, his parents cultivated a vegetable garden with cucumbers. However, they stopped cultivating the garden once they got older.

c) Do you buy it? If so, please explain where and how?

Petri buys most of his food. He usually buys food from restaurants or fast-food places, especially when he is on-campus. He mentioned Chipotle as his favorite fast-food restaurant. Petri also used meal swipes at the college dining halls, and sometimes ate dinners at club meetings (although he didn't pay for the food at club meetings, technically the food was bought by club funds). In addition, Petri buys food with a credit card supplied to him by his parents.

d) Does someone else provide you with some or all of your food? If so, who and how do they get it?

Petri's parents provide him with some food. Until recently, Petri had been on a diet. Unfortunately, his parents were not aware of this, so they gave him sweets every week. After receiving the sweets, Petri would give them to his friends without eating any. Occasionally, Petri and his parents would go out together to dine at Taco Bell. *At this point, Petri nodded his head and sipped coffee. He needed this time to pause before answering the remaining questions.*

3) Food preparation

a) Do you usually buy fully prepared meals (e.g., take-out from restaurants)? Explain what, how, and why.

Petri usually buys fully-prepared meals. He buys these meals from restaurants and from dining halls. When he was on his diet, Petri would eat a half slice of pizza, chicken, cereal, and sliced salami. Now that he is off his diet, he often goes to Moe's (a Mexican food restaurant located in one of the college student centers), eats three servings of meats, and eats cereal and similar foods. *He did not mention anything about vegetables initially. I had to ask him about any fruits or vegetables before he mentioned anything. This showed that he did not put much focus on vegetables/fruits and the nutrients obtained from them, focusing instead mainly on protein. In this manner, he is similar to Jeffrey.* After I asked him about vegetables, Petri mentioned that he eats cucumbers sometimes when he is bored of cereal. *His preference for cucumbers may stem from the fact that his parents used to grow cucumbers in their vegetable garden when he was a child.* I asked him why he prefers fully-prepared meals. *At this time, Petri started at me with his arms crossed. This showed that he did not give much thought in the past as to why he prefers fully-prepared meals.* He told me he eats them primarily because it is more time-efficient, as he has lots of work and does not have much time to prepare food. In addition, Petri does not know how to properly cook, as he is not frequently exposed to raw ingredients. As a result, he prefers fully-prepared meals.

b) Do you buy food that is almost fully prepared (e.g., that only requires microwaving or mixing with water)? Explain what, how, and why.

Petri abhors food that is almost fully prepared (such as Lean-Cuisine). He thinks the taste is off due to preservatives. *Petri takes a sip of coffee to think further about his dislike for this type of food.* He mentioned that while the health content is also another reason he avoids dishes that are almost fully prepared, he does not care too much about health value, so that is not the main reason why he avoids these foods.

c) Do you prepare meals using some processed and some raw ingredients? Explain what, how, and why?

Petri told me that he does not cook and prepare his own meals.

d) Do you ever cook entirely from scratch (from all raw ingredients)? Explain what, how, and why?

Petri told me that he does not cook and prepare his own meals.

e) Do others in your household do most of the preparation for you and can you report on anything they do to prepare the food? Explain, what, how, and why.

In the past, Petri's mother used to do most of the preparation for food. Currently, however, his mother is working more than she did in the past. As a result, they are obtaining catered food more often now. His mom makes their meals from scratch. For the roti and dal meal, his mom used to make her own rotis from flour, and buy lentils from outside to make dal.

4) Food consumption

a) Where do you eat (e.g., kitchen table, living room couch, car, park bench)?

Petri usually eats food at a table in a cafeteria, apartment, or house. He does not eat while moving or on the go.

b) When do you eat (e.g., do you have regular meal times or graze throughout the day)?

Petri eats at scheduled times. He schedules these times based on convenience in relation to his class schedule.

c) What utensils do you use to serve and eat your food (e.g., take-out boxes, china plates, chopsticks, cloth napkins)?

In a restaurant or cafeteria, Petri usually eats with a plastic bowl, fork, and napkin. He also may use a spoon and/or a knife in addition to or instead of a fork. When he goes

home, he uses his hands to eat dishes such as dal and roti. *I found it interesting that he mainly uses utensils in a restaurant and his hands at home. That is probably due to the different foods he eats in those locations, but it could also be due to his feelings towards eating with his hands and its relation to Indian food. If this is true, he may only eat with his hands to appease his parents, preferring to eat with utensils outside.* He also eats burritos with his hands.

d) Do you follow any particular rules of etiquette about eating (e.g., saying grace, hands on the table, proper ways of asking for something)? Explain how and why.

Petri initially said that he does not follow any particular rules of etiquette when eating. *After his initial response, he scratched his head for a couple of seconds. This showed that he was trying to remember if he had in fact followed any rules of etiquette about eating in the past.* He then remembered that, as a family, he and his family members tried to say thanks to various things in their lives before eating. However, they lost interest in doing that and eventually stopped, preferring to instead begin eating immediately.

5) Why do you procure, prepare and consume food in the way you do?

a) Do you do it this way out of necessity and practicality (e.g., financial budget, time constraints, or health concerns)? Please explain.

Petri noted that time is a major constraint in his preference for fully-prepared meals. In addition, he notes that he doesn't know how to cook, so that also influences him and makes him prefer fully-prepared meals. In addition, Petri noted that he has a health concern – he wants to get lots of protein without consuming many calories. As a result, Petri has altered the manner in which he procures, prepares, and consumes his food to reflect these goals (such as mostly getting meats in the dining hall, etc.).

b) Do you do it this way because your parents and parents' parents made and ate food in this way -- that is, is it because of your cultural heritage? Please explain.

Petri initially said that his parents nor his cultural heritage influenced the manner in which he procures, prepares, and consumes his food. *Once again, Petri sipped some coffee and scratched his head for a few seconds. He was probably thinking if his parents or his cultural heritage did in fact affect his foodways.* He then admitted that, since he grew up eating spicy Indian food, he is compelled nowadays to seek out spicy cuisines such as Mexican cuisine. Despite this preference for spicy food (and the fact that it resulted from Indian food), Petri avoids Indian food as much as possible.

Petri also said that his parents eat unhealthy, and he tries to be superior to them by eating healthier. For example, he said his parents each eat about six rotis, which contain lots of carbohydrates. Then, he said they wonder why they are gaining weight, despite the fact that they are consuming lots of calories via carbohydrates. He said that his parents “brought this upon themselves,” and that their clueless attitude (in regard to what is causing them to gain weight) irks him. He told me how angry he was that his parents used to tell him to lose weight and become stronger, but are hypocrites themselves. *During this*

discussion, Petri had an intense focus on me and moved his hands a lot. This showed how angry and passionate he was about how his parents are consuming and procuring food incorrectly, and how they blame him for mistakes that they are committing themselves.

c) Has your relationship to food been influenced by other culinary traditions you've come in contact with and/or by mainstream American culture, media, and advertising? Please explain.

After the heated discussion previously, Petri took a moment to relax and look up to think about his answer to this question. He said that watching Food Network on TV influenced his relationship to food. After watching gourmet chef competitions, he felt inspired to perform unique creations of his own, such as mixing coffee and ice cream. However, this did not taste good, so he was discouraged and stopped doing unique creations. He also mentioned that his usage of utensils was influenced by mainstream American culture (as he uses his hands to eat Indian food).

6) Do you talk a lot about food? Please explain: when, where, with whom, about what, why...?

Petri talks rarely about food. He discusses food sometimes while eating it. He also discusses food sometimes when deciding where to go for a meal. In addition, he tells friends about food if it is notably healthy or cheap. When he interned in New York City over the past summer, he talked more about food. For example, he mentioned how the interns and employees would discuss food destinations amongst themselves and tell each other to visit a particular restaurant. However, in the town in which he goes to college, Petri does not talk much about food – whether they are friends or family. However, he mentioned that he has begun to talk more about food with his mother, by telling her to eat healthier and better.

Petri said he does not talk much about food because he views it as a tool to better oneself. *At this point, he turned his head sideways. I assumed he was contemplating how to further explain his view of food.* He said that his view of food is similar to others' views of tools such as pens – he mentioned that no one talks about pens despite using them often as tools. Likewise, despite eating frequently, he does not talk much about food.

7) Do you have any other thoughts, feelings, or experiences connected with food that you would like to share with me, whether negative (e.g., chronic hunger, anorexia, obesity) or positive (e.g., an unforgettable meal, a secret treat, your grandparents' garden)?

Petri remembered a negative experience. When his little brother was born, his dad had to make food for him and Petri. Petri said the food his father prepared tasted disgusting. *Petri's eyes squinted and he made a slightly grimacing expression, showing how he still remembers the repugnant food his father made that day.* When Petri refused to eat the distasteful food, his father got angry.

In addition, until recently, Petri was on a diet. At the New York City office in which he interned, he received a daily allowance of \$25 from the company to purchase food. He often purchased unhealthy food, and gained a lot of weight. Petri became disappointed at his appearance and wanted to lose weight. He made a goal to eat 500 calories less each day for 15 weeks, so that he would lose approximately one pound a week. Petri successfully lost weight recently, so he ended his diet and entered a bulk-up phase.

Petri further discussed the measures he took during his diet to lose weight. He chose to avoid lunch each day. To help him avoid lunch everyday, he distracted himself from thinking about food by activities such as walking around and exploring his surroundings. *During this discussion, Petri was very animated and moved his hands a lot, and also intensely stared at me as he discussed his diet. This showed how passionate Petri was about losing weight.*

I asked him about whether, in hindsight (now that he completed his diet), he thought avoiding lunch was a good or bad decision. He told me he still thinks it was a good decision. He explained to me that he needed to consistently maintain the lower calorie levels everyday. If he skipped dinner, he would feel hungry, leading to either loss of sleep or eating to alleviate the hunger (and thus going beyond his calorie limit). As a result, he chose to avoid lunch to stay under his calorie limit and obtain good sleep at the same time. He told me that overall he was happy he chose to skip lunch during the diet, although he mentioned he could have fine-tuned his approach to make it better (such as by eating more vegetables). *After explaining about his diet, Petri sipped some coffee. The coffee seemed to help Petri relax and give himself a break to compose himself after questions.*

At this time, I told Petri the interview was over, and thanked him for his time.

Overall Experience: *I thought the interview with Petri went very well. Similar to the interview with Jeffrey, I learned a lot more about Petri even though Petri has been my friend for the last couple of years. For example, I was not aware of his food-related conflicts with his parents until this interview. It amazes me that, by asking Petri about his foodways, I learned not only about his foodways and food-related habits, but also his personal beliefs, goals, and relationships with others. This interview and the previous interview with Jeffrey really showed me just how influential food is in areas that at first glance may not seem food-related (such as relationships with others).*