

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Brief Consumer Profile	2
Maria's Shopping Experience Now	2
<i>Maria's Shopping Decisions</i>	2
<i>Pre-Interview Analysis of Maria's Shopping Decisions</i>	5
Maria's Shopping Experiences Over Time	8
<i>Shopping with Maria's Family</i>	8
<i>Food and Brand Preferences</i>	9
<i>Shopping in Cuba</i>	10
<i>Evolution of Grocery Stores</i>	10
<i>Store Advertising Over Time</i>	12
Comparing Past to Present Shopping Behaviors	14
<i>Comparison of Maria's and Maria's Mother's Shopping Behaviors</i>	14
<i>Comparison of Maria's and Maria's Mother's Brand Preferences</i>	16
Appendix	18
<i>Interview Questions</i>	18
<i>Transcript Legend</i>	19
<i>Transcription of Maria's Interview</i>	19
<i>Field Notes</i>	N/A
<i>Interview Notes</i>	N/A

Mature Consumer Behavior

Executive Summary

Shopping with Maria Perez-Stable, a mature consumer who visits Meijer every Saturday and additional stores as needed, revealed various shopping behaviors and beliefs of Maria as a mature consumer. The experience also highlighted the main shopping behavior and decision influences in Maria's life.

Many of the habits Maria held for her shopping trips were congruent with those of her mother, whom she used to shop with as a young child. Because her mother was very interested in saving money, she would pay close attention to sales and had a willingness to stray from her preferred brand if another was more affordable. Maria is just as enthusiastic with sale items, but she is more likely to add additional items to her cart because of these sales.

Maria's brand preferences are also very similar to those that her mother had. Because her family was originally from Cuba, moving to the United States in 1960, her mother was very interested in branded products. The Cuban supermarkets were stocked with mostly American brand-name products, so Maria's mother knew many of the brands that she liked and stayed loyal to those brands after moving to Ohio. Maria acquired this behavior from her mother, and is very attached to the older, well-known brands, such as Campbell's, Kellogg's, and Smucker's.

One main difference between Maria's choices now and her childhood shopping experience is her lack of focus on saving money. When she was younger, her family would actively search for coupons and ways to save money to stay on budget. Presently, Maria does not participate in these actions. She does not worry about her funds—she focuses on how she can get exactly what she wants for the best value.

Maria Perez-Stable

Maria Perez-Stable is an unmarried, mature consumer and is a sixty-four years of age. She is a librarian at the Waldo Library at Western Michigan University. She has lived in Kalamazoo, Michigan for thirty-eight years, moving away from her family in Cleveland, Ohio in 1979. She was originally born in Cuba, but she and her family migrated to the United States around the time she was six years old. Maria is a very verbose and intelligent woman. She does not enjoy cooking, so eats an abundance of salads and foods that are edible in their raw states. She enjoys spending time with her friends, as well as visiting her family in Cleveland.

Maria's Shopping Experiences Now

Location: Meijer

Date and Time: Saturday, October 7, 2017 at 4:00 p.m.

Maria's Shopping Decisions

Maria's primary grocery store of choice is the Meijer in Portage, Michigan that is located on Westnedge Avenue. She likes to go to Meijer precisely because of its convenience as a one-stop-shopping store. She doesn't mind the size of the store as much as some of her other friends because she can easily find most toiletries, clothes, home needs, and food that she needs all in one place. She does not (technically) have to go anywhere else.

Still, she sometimes chooses to visit other stores. Her secondary choices are both smaller locations: D&W or Harding's. She does not mind either one because they are both Spartan stores, but sometimes D&W is too expensive for her liking. Her main reason for branching away from Meijer for these stores is that it does not carry the right kind of salad mix that she desires. Maria only likes to buy butter lettuce, a product she discovered while travelling to Italy in 2003. Before butter lettuce, she used to eat iceberg lettuce, even though she did not entirely enjoy the crunchy quality it holds.

Occasionally, she will visit Costco or, starting very soon, Trader Joe's, as well. At Costco, she likes to buy a certain kind of Moscato wine that is not sold at Meijer, and Trader Joe's was a prominent store in Ohio that she enjoyed visiting. She is fond of some specialty items sold at Trader Joe's, including crackers, Biscotti sticks, and the coffee filters sold there. She commented that she will usually only visit these two stores once a month.

Maria goes to the grocery store once a week for her necessities, always entering the store from the middle doors and veering towards the right side. She uses a list for shopping, usually doing a decent job of sticking to it and only buying a couple of unplanned products. She never crosses things off of her list, though she commented that it would be a good idea, so she sometimes forgets to grab items on the list. If she ever forgets her shopping list, she tries to guess what was on it rather than going back to retrieve it. In the store, she visits the toiletries and other cleanliness products first, if they are needed. During the shopping trip, Maria stated that she chooses to shop this way so that her refrigerated food products do not sweat or warm up an excessive amount.

At Meijer, Maria proceeded to select some deodorant and shampoo products, and then her Aquafresh toothpaste. She explained that she used to buy Crest toothpaste because of its

seemed credibility and high quality, but that she switched sometime around 2007 when the brand stopped making standalone containers. She was sure to check with her dentist to be sure that this was not a mistake.

After leaving the toiletries section of Meijer, Maria gradually made her way to the back of the store, moving along the main, tiled aisles while scanning the aisles with home décor and furniture. As she reached the far left corner, the large display of sale items caught her attention and she browsed the selection to see if there were any products to her liking. She mentioned that she liked to search this section more than any endcaps or other display because it would sometimes have sale items she desired. These products include toilet paper for her church to donate to the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission, Campbell's soup sales for fifty-nine cents, and sometimes cereal. She investigates the sale standalone every week because Meijer sets out new sale products every week.

Because Maria had been shopping at Meijer since moving to Kalamazoo, she was well versed in where the products she bought were placed. She knew her routine exactly, effectively entering alpha or beta mode when necessary. Occasionally, she will take note of a sale or lose track of where the products she wants are placed, but, for the most part, she knows where all of her groceries are located.

After years of shopping, Maria has pinpointed the exact brands that she likes. She specifically buys Meijer-brand milk and European whole grain bread, Yoplait yogurt, and Sargento cheese. She used to buy Kraft cheese but decided to give Sargento a try once when it was on sale. She determined that she liked the Sargento cheese as much as Kraft, and that she prefers it because it is a thicker, "off-the-block" shredded cheese instead of the thin slices that she cannot taste on her salads.

Maria also always adds Coffee-Mate creamer and diet, caffeine-free Pepsi to her cart. She talked about how she grew up in a Pepsi family and always has the soda in her house. She also always purchases JIF peanut butter, Campbell's soup, Quaker oatmeal, and two types of cereal: Honey Nut Cheerios and Quaker Squares. Goldfish crackers are her favorite worktime snack, so she buys them every time she goes to Meijer, and she chooses some fresh fruits and vegetables, such as bananas, cherries, apples, and carrots. Most of the foods she selected supported her statement of not liking to cook food very often.

For the most part, during this shopping trip, Maria followed her list, only buying one product—batteries—that was not recorded. She checked out in a lane with an employee scanning the products and used two reusable Meijer bags she had bought a while back for most of her items, and then exited out of the same doors through which she entered.

Pre-Interview Analysis of Maria's Shopping Decisions

Maria uses a shopping list when going grocery shopping. She admitted that she would never leave if she didn't have a way to limit herself, which was exactly what the list provided to her. Some research suggests that shopping lists actually do the opposite of limiting people—it actually makes them buy more. What is interesting about Maria's choice to use a list is that she does not cross off the things she finds and adds to her shopping cart. Sometimes, she even forgets to buy items listed because of her failure to partake in this task. Because of this one small detail, two possible results could take place: she could buy extra products often because of the presence of the list, or she could actually stick to the items on the list, for the most part, because she is never actually positive she has everything she needs. Lists are helpful as reminders, but if they

are not adjusted as products are added, that might impact the influence they have on consumer to buy more. This possibility was supported by the fact that Maria only bought one item that was not on her list: a package of batteries.

The Aquafresh toothpaste that Maria bought while shopping was another interesting observation to make because of her admittance to switching toothpastes recently. Her reasoning for the switch was that Crest, her previous toothpaste supplier, had gotten rid of the toothpaste dispenser that stood on its own. Just this one change in the packaging design caused her to completely lose her brand loyalty to the company and choose one that would fulfill her wants. The credibility of Crest, which she admitted she believed was high, and the perceived low credibility of Aquafresh did not stop her. She did seek out the reassurance that her decision was valid from her dentist, but once she had confirmation that it would not affect her health as long as it had the correct ingredients, Maria was completely fine with the shift in loyalties. This kind of mentality only supports the notion that packaging is very important to consumers, and one small change can disrupt the entire market.

Product availability is not something that changed Maria's loyalties. Though she did not need to do this during this shopping trip, Maria mentioned that, if one of the products she usually bought during her shopping trips was not available, she would go to a different location for that specific product. She would not be willing to compromise and choose another brand for the time being like the woman, Pam, did in the Buy-ology video; she would find what she wanted somewhere else. Maria mentioned that the last time she went looking for her favorite butter lettuce at Harding's, the store did not have it, and she left, empty-handed, to find it at D&W. When asked about whether the size of the product influenced her decision-making, she replied

that she had never had to worry about the right size not being present. The most important thing to her was that her specific kind of food was in stock.

The time that Maria stated she would try new brands was when one of the foods she bought regularly went on sale for a different brand. The temptation of the lower price is what led her to choosing to try her current first-choice Sargento cheese instead of sticking with her usual choice of the Meijer-brand cheese. A smart decision by Sargento led to Maria switching her brand preference for shredded cheese altogether.

The one brand that Maria will always hold a preference for is Diet, caffeine-free Pepsi. Even though she doesn't drink the pop very much, she always has Pepsi in stock in her house. She stated that she grew up in a "Pepsi family," and that would never change. The continuous presence of Pepsi in her childhood had such an influence on her that she now keeps those memories in her mind by keeping Pepsi in her house.

Sometimes, if she gets lucky, Meijer puts its Pepsi stock on the sale display that Maria said she browses every time she goes to Meijer. Sale items seem to snag Maria's interest very often in the store, which might connect to some experiences in her past.

Maria has a specific, scheduled amount of times she visits particular stores during the year. She visits Meijer religiously, once weekly, and will shop at D&W or Harding's interchangeably whenever she discovers she needs her butter lettuce. Once every month, she visits Costco for other specifics (such as her favored Moscato). Now that Trader Joe's has been added to the mix, she stated that she will also begin shopping at Trader Joe's monthly for specialty items that she likes there, such as Biscotti sticks, coffee filters, and olive oil. Her willingness to shop at various stores and routine times may connect to her past experiences.

Maria clearly stated—multiple times—that she does not like to cook. She actively avoids cooking by choosing mostly foods that she can eat without cooking. Her dislike of cooking could possibly be a personal preference, or may be due to a circumstance around her childhood or her family’s preferred methods of eating meals.

Maria’s Shopping Experiences Over Time

Shopping with Maria’s Family

At least until Maria was in the fifth grade, Maria’s mother would take Maria and her siblings grocery shopping on Saturdays. Maria’s mother was a housewife—or a homemaker, as Maria preferred to say—and she did not learn to drive until Maria was in the fifth grade, so Maria’s father would have to drive them on Saturdays to pick up the groceries. Once Maria’s mother learned to drive, she would sometimes go during the weekdays while the children were in school.

The family would visit various grocery stores depending on the specific foods that Maria’s mother would want for the week, such as Pick ’n Pay, Stop and Shop, and Fisher Foods. She carried a little red clicker with white buttons to keep track of the cost of groceries because they were on a budget. Maria’s father did not do any of the grocery shopping—which is what Maria believed was the reason her younger brother once stated that shopping was a woman’s job. Maria was sure to quickly correct him on this statement because she did not entirely enjoy shopping and did not believe that only women should be subject to the “necessary evil” of grocery shopping.

Maria's mother would cook dinner for the family each night—going out to eat was not much of an option for them because they did not have the money to spend. Eating out was a luxury the family sometimes enjoyed once or twice a month, visiting Big Boy. Once McDonald's was a more popular chain, they would occasionally eat there because of its affordable prices. But going out to eat was a nice treat for them because Maria's mother usually prepared their food.

Food and Brand Preferences

Maria's mother was the family member that chose the foods and brands that the family consumed. There were certain types she liked, which was the reason they visited various stores—different grocery stores had different brand offerings. She preferred the meat in one store and the produce in another store, so she would go to both. The staple products—such as cereals, soups, milk, and ice cream—could be bought at any store without any fuss.

Maria's mother was a brand person. Other than the basics, like milk and ice cream, she preferred brand-name products over house brands. Campbell's soup, Kraft cheese, Smucker's jam or jelly, JIF peanut butter, Betty Crocker cake and brownie mixes, Zesta crackers, Fritos, Tropicana orange juice, Kool-Aid, and Carnation evaporated milk. They also always bought General Mills and Kellogg's cereal products, Quaker Oats, Pepsi, and Delmonte canned fruits and vegetables.

The foods listed above were all prominent in Maria's household as a child, along with many others. Fresh apples and oranges, spaghetti, lettuce, salad dressing, potato chips, cream of wheat, and coffee with coffee creamer were always available. They also ate white bread for a while, but that eventually evolved into wheat or multi-grain as more breads were introduced.

Shopping in Cuba

During the interview, Maria mentioned that she and her family had moved from Cuba to the United States (U.S.) in 1960. Though she had been young and did not remember much about Cuba's grocery shopping atmosphere, Maria recalled that the grocery stores in Cuba, called "supermercados," had not been large like Meijer and Wal-Mart; they had been more similar to Harding's and D&W in size and product selection.

These supermercados had also sold a large amount of American products along with their selection of Cuban generic foods. The United Fruit Company was the organization that came to mind when talking about the prominence of U.S. food products in the Cuban grocery stores. She also explained that Kellogg's and Quaker Oats oatmeal were two very popular U.S. brands in Cuba, and that her family loved them throughout her childhood. Maria was certain this was how her parents knew which products they wanted when they moved to the U.S. She also made mention that they became more familiar with North American products when they studied as international students in the U.S. for college.

Even so, before moving to Ohio, their family did not know or have interest in foods like peanut butter, macaroni and cheese, or pizza. None of these foods sounded appetizing to them, so it took them a while to try them and become accustomed to the different American foods present.

Evolution of Grocery Stores

When Maria's family moved to Ohio, they would visit smaller grocery stores like Kroger and Stop and Shop for their food. There was not Meijer or Wal-Mart—no large stores with a variety of food, retail, and home products. Even when Maria moved to Michigan, the only grocery

options were Harding's, Jewel, and Meijer, the largest and most unique. But as time progressed, more stores opened, and, along with them, more food options. Health food stores, such as Sewall and Earth Fare, as well as other, nontraditional, Meijer-like venues, including Aldi, Target, Wal-Mart, and Costco became more popular. Other small grocery stores, such as Save-A-Lot and D&W, joined the community as well, providing an abundance of access to groceries and other household needs. And now, Trader Joe's has set up shop to continue this expansion.

In the simpler times, when there were only a few stores to choose from, there were also only a few grocery products to choose from in all areas of food. There were not multiple flavors, like Barbecue and Sour Cream and Onion. There were just potato chips. There were only simple Fritos. Only regular flavors stocked the shelves—nothing special, like the shelves of various Oreo types that rule the cookie aisle. When Maria was young, there was one kind—that was all.

Along with fewer kinds of foods, there were fewer brands being offered. Back then, there were only two brands of almost everything: one large name brand, such as Kraft, and the generic house brand. Smaller, less popular companies, like Sargento, did not populate the shelves. Now, most products have multiple brands and choices being offered to consumers. There are brands for the stores themselves, including a Trader Joe's, a Meijer, an Aldi, and a Food Fare brand, along with various others.

Because of the many products now stocking the shelves, it is even harder to notice if any products disappear from the shelves. Maria supported this when she stated that she did not notice any brands disappearing over time. The brands of food that she looks for while shopping were still available, so she was never forced to switch to a different brand. She had no need to look at the other brands: until her chosen brand was spotted to activate her alpha shopping mode, she would continue through the store in beta mode, actively ignoring any useless information.

A contributor to her limited knowledge on brand disappearances could be the lack of change in store setup. Maria admitted that the way grocery stores organize their food and stock the shelves has not changed much other than in quantity. She is still able locate the section that she needs to be in for certain items quite easily, and, with the large number of options, it is easy to lose less prominent brands in the fray. So, although the choices have expanded, the display techniques have not, in her opinion, changed much at all.

Store Advertising Over Time

Maria's mother was a newspaper and women's magazines reader: *Women's Day*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Family Circle*, to be specific—all of which advertised to homemakers and featured ads for and coupons to grocery stores. Her mother was a big coupon shopper because of her family's need to save money. Nowadays, the newspapers still are a huge advertising medium for grocery stores, and Maria pointed out that, when she was younger and now, they have always been in color in order to catch the reader's eye. The placement of these advertisements and coupons in the newspaper suggests that grocery stores are trying to draw in consumers from the older target market—such as Generation Xers and Baby Boomers. This connection can be made because the more recent generations have moved away from reading newspapers to focus on newer inventions, such as the Internet. Yet, Maria stated that she is not a coupon shopper, but when she does find one she wants, she usually forgets about it and, since there are none in the store, she usually ends up not using them.

Grocery stores advertised on TV when Maria was younger—she and her siblings loved to see the Kellogg's commercials, and she enthusiastically added that it had been surreal to

interview in Battle Creek and see the Kellogg's company as a real place. They never specifically advertised certain products and still do not usually focus on specific products. Today, there are still some TV ads generated from grocery stores, but Maria claims that the newspaper is where they are most present.

Similar to television advertising, not much radio advertising was used at any point in time for grocery stores. Maria stated that when it is used, both in the past and present, it is to advertise the store and not usually actual items. There are definitely a couple of outliers to this rule: Later, Maria admitted that she will occasionally hear radio ads for Harding's on specific sales for food products that the store has.

When Maria was younger, the Internet did not exist, so there were no advertising techniques used on it. Now, Internet advertising is one of the most popular ways for stores to promote themselves. They have their own websites where they can advertise their products and various deals, and they can also advertise on other websites, using banners, pop-up ads, and commercials. This allows for much more flexibility and reach in their advertising. But, these techniques are not very effective when advertising to the more mature consumers that do not tend to use modern technology as efficiently. Maria said that she knew others use the Internet as a resource, but she does not.

Another modern technique of advertising that Maria does not use is Meijer's M-Perks system. While younger consumers might love the system and the "easy" way to save money, Maria passionately expressed her dislike for M-Perks because she could not figure out how it worked. She gave up on it in one day and has not tried it since. This is one way that stores could be losing some of their older audience: they create technologically advanced shortcuts that the later generations do not understand how to operate.

What has not changed very much from the past, according to Maria, is in-store advertising. There are still sale signs highlighting products that catch her eye while she walks around, and there are still aisle displays and endcaps. The main difference she noticed about these advertisements was that there are currently less cardboard standup displays as there were in her past. She finds those to be very effective ways of catching her eye because she has to work to actively avoid them, but they are less prominent and, thus, less operational than they were before. The sale and special deal signs that hang around products in the store influence Maria's choices very much, though—she spoke about them more as reminders of items she forgot to add to her list than advertisements. This familiarity is great for products because it shows that consumers are fond of and appreciate their advertisements, and that they actually work.

Comparing Past to Present Shopping Behaviors

Comparison of Maria's and Maria's Mother's Shopping Behaviors

Maria goes grocery shopping once a week on Saturdays to pick up the items she needs for the week. As a child, Maria used to go shopping with her mother once a week, also on Saturdays. After stating this similarity in her interview, Maria admitted that her own shopping schedule might have been influenced by the shopping schedule that her mother held when Maria was younger. Maria mimicking her mother's behavior is not surprising at all—consumer behavior can involve many people in the decision-making process, especially when it involves a reference group (which, in this case, would be Maria's mother).

Maria is also very willing to—and does—visit various stores when she is shopping for specialty items that are sold only at specific supermarkets. Though she did not specifically voice this connection in the interview, this behavior is also very much like that of her mother. The frequency of her mother's visits to her numerous grocery stores was not determined, but Maria did imply that her mother would go to any store she wanted on a given weekend. This is somewhat different from Maria's decision to always go to Meijer for the standard foods and to additionally go to her secondary store choices as needed. Still, the willingness to shop at multiple grocery stores for the specific produce or brand desired was definitely passed down. Store flexibility might even be a sign of the times: Maria explained that some of her friends also have the philosophy that shopping at different stores for certain food products is a necessary occurrence. They will not accept less than the best in their food.

While Maria's mother utilized a list and Maria does the same, the purpose for having the list is somewhat different between the two. Maria's list is to not forget what she needs. Despite this list, because she does not choose to mark off things that she has acquired, she still ends up forgetting items sometimes. She also is willing to stray from her listed items if she spots something that has an appealing benefit or that she forgot she wanted.

On the other hand, Maria's mother's list was made with precision, calculation, and specificity. Nothing was forgotten. Every item's price had been calculated with a small calculating device that showed the total price of products attained, and it was all budgeted to ensure there would be enough money to pay for the groceries her family needed. The list was a strict guide to her shopping.

The difference in list functions between Maria and her mother also highlights another big difference between the two relatives: Maria's mother was a coupon shopper through and through,

while Maria does not care about coupons at all. She actually finds them to be a nuisance. But Maria's mother, from what Maria explained, would "scour the ads" for coupons. Her mother would read women's magazines and the newspaper and actively search for coupons to help save money on food. The availability of money differs very much between Maria's past and present, and directly influenced her different life stages.

One money-saving behavior that Maria, like her mother would, cannot help being attracted to is the presence of a sale. Maria talked about how she finds sale tags and displays very distracting—she purposefully visits the large sale setup in Meijer every time she goes shopping. Her reasoning behind this behavior is that her mother taught her how to find good value in product sales. If she notices a product similar to one that she always buys is on sale, she is usually pretty willing to try the sale item. That is how she discovered her first choice Sargento cheese after a lifetime of defaulting to the Kraft cheese that she was used to from her childhood.

Her mother was definitely willing to change brands for a week if something else was on sale for a lower price. Again, grocery shopping for Maria's mother involved a lot of planning to keep on-budget, so, when she could find a better value on a product she needed, she would take advantage of it.

Comparison of Maria's and Maria's Mother's Brand Preferences

Maria and her mother have an abundance of the same brand preferences. Like when she was in her earliest life stage, Maria's house is still stocked with brands including Campbell's, JIF, Smucker's, Tropicana, and Pepsi, as well as very many other products. Kellogg's, General Mills, and Quaker Oats products are always in stock in Maria's cupboards—she never lost her love of

those brands. Even despite the influx of choices available to consumers in the food marketplace, Maria consistently chooses to stay with her older, preferred brands because she knows those are what she likes. She does not need to try anything else, and if something she wants is not in stock, she will find it somewhere else. Compromise for certain branded foods is not an option. It never was with her family, either.

Despite product availability failing to sway brand loyalty in Maria and her family, sales can influence these decisions much more convincingly. As discussed earlier, Maria's mother would go for sale items that were cheaper than her chosen product any day, and Maria will do the same. A lower price for a similar product is enticing, no matter what the reason is for considering the sale. And, sometimes, at least in Maria's case, these sale decisions lead to new brand loyalties. Maria never admitted to her mother switching brands for any of her preferences, but Maria herself did end up changing her favored brand of shredded cheese, as well as her toothpaste brand, as discussed earlier. The change from Kraft to Sargento shredded cheese was all about the thickness of the cheese slices and the initial sale price. One small price drop can expose consumers to new products and change any consumer's brand loyalty, and that is what happened with Maria. Her mother was never stated to permanently switch brands, but Maria did.

Another difference between Maria's shopping and her mother's shopping is one of the purposes of buying their specific food choices. Maria does not enjoy cooking, and, therefore, will not buy meats or many foods that take an extended amount of time to prepare. Her mother was willing to buy these meals to cook for the family, so she had more shopping decisions to make in that category. Since Maria does not buy these foods and does not pay attention to those brands, it cannot be assumed that she would necessarily follow her mother's footsteps in those choices, but, from what was found in her interview, that would be an educated guess to her behavior.

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your grocery shopping experiences throughout your lifetime and how they have changed over time.
2. Did you ever go shopping with either of your parents or adult family members as a child? If so, tell me about those experiences?
3. What foods did your family always have in your cupboard or refrigerator growing up? How do these compare to the foods you always have in your storage now?
4. How did your family make decisions on which brands to purchase? How does this compare to the way you decide which brands to purchase?
5. How flexible has your family been with buying certain brands?
6. How flexible has your family been with choosing grocery stores?
7. What shopping habits do you believe were passed down to you by your family?
8. How have you noticed store displays and layouts changing since the time of your childhood?
9. Tell me about any observations you have seen in the prominence of certain brands in the grocery store over time.
10. Are there any brands that have disappeared or become more popular?
11. What are some ways that in-store advertising has changed and how do you think this has affected your shopping?
12. How affective have you found in-store sales and promotional materials to be throughout your lifetime?
13. When you shop, you tend to pay more attention to standalone displays. Why do you think this is?

Transcript Legend

 = Shopping with Maria's Family

 = Shopping in Cuba

 = Food and Brand Preferences

 = Store Advertising Over Time

 = Shopping Habits

 = Evolution of Grocery Store

Transcription of Maria's Interview

Date and Time: Friday, October 13, 2017 at 2:30 p.m.

Length: 38:26

Olyvea Davis (OD): So, my first question is: Tell me about your shopping experience throughout your lifetime and how it's changed over time.

Maria Perez-Stable (MP): You don't want me to go back to when I was a kid, right?

OD: Yeah!

MP: You do?

OD: Yeah, if you remember that far, that'd be great.

MP: Yeah, no, my mom used to take us grocery shopping.

OD: Okay.

MP: Yes... Kroger's...the—the local; this was in Cleveland, so some of the local stores. So, yeah, I've been grocery shopping all my life. I hate it. I hate grocery shopping. It's a necessary evil. So, how has it changed? I—I, mmm, I don't remember what days we—I think it was also a Saturday thing. I think we used to go on Saturdays. Maybe back then I liked it, but I don't now. So...I mean, obviously, done in person, that hasn't changed. Usually once a week. That was what my mom normally did, and so maybe that's why I do that. I know one time I really yelled at my younger brother. He and my dad and I were out, ugh, the Wednesday before Thanksgiving; grocery store was a zoo. My brother must've been about ten and he says, "Ugh. This is women's work." Yeah, I turned on him. Disabused him of that notion—it's not women's work.

OD: Okay.

MP: Yeah, so I'm sorry I can't really say anything more, um..."

OD: No, it's okay, I have more questions and maybe it'll stir things."

MP: For me, it's—it's once a week, and did it as a kid, and... I remember my mother using her—ugh, nobody uses these anymore; it was like a little clicker thing where you would keep track of what you were spending. You probably don't even know: it was a little plastic thing and it had—it had cents and dollars. And so, if something was one seventy-nine you might type in—you—you know—ma—might do one eighty. That was to keep track of how much money you were spending.

OD: Oh.

MP: ‘Cause we—we were on a budget so...she was watching that carefully.

OD: So, did you get that from the store, or...?

MP: You could—you purchased that. No, you purchased that. Yeah, that was just a little gizmo that you would purchase.

OD: Okay.

MP: I can still picture ‘em: they were red. With little white things that you just—you know, you just pressed. And so, it kept track.

OD: Um, so, did you—okay, so I guess you answered that question. I said, “Did you ever go shopping with either of your parents, um, as a child?”

MP: Never—my—my father was not the grocery shopper. Oh God, no. No...no, no, no. It was my mom. Which is probably why my brother thought it was women’s work. She was a housewife. So...she—you know, she was home during the day. Although I know she went shopping when we were in school, too, but um.... In fact, yeah, she did, once she learned how to drive—yeah—I know why we went on Saturdays; ‘cause my mom didn’t learn how to drive ‘til I was in the fifth grade, so Dad had to take us. But, once mom learned how to drive, then she would go while we were in school. Yeah.”

OD: Um, okay, so what foods did your family always seem to have in your cupboard or refrigerator while growing up?

MP: Campbell’s soup...brand name, bread...milk, ice cream, spaghetti...I have to picture the, um...cereal, oh my gosh, of course, cereal...juice, Kool-Aid...did I say—peanut butter, mac ‘n cheese...cake mixes and brownie mixes, that sort of thing....I’m trying to picture the, um, where she kept the, hmm.... Um, we ate a lot of canned fruit. She had some fresh fruit, but—are you thinking just the cupboards; you’re not thinking the refrigerator?

OD: No, you can do fridge, too.

MP: Anything? Anything?

OD: Mmhmm.

MP: Yeah, I mean, apples and oranges. But we did eat canned fruit, like pears and peaches. My mom hated grapes, so she never bought those. Lettuce, salad dressing, cheese. No yogurt: she hated that, too, so she didn’t buy it. Um, I’m trying to think.... I’m sure I’m forgetting many, many things.

OD: That’s okay because my next one is just, “How do you—how does this food compare to what you always have with—in your cupboards and fridge now?”

MP: Well, Mom also had meat. I mean, my mom cooked; I don't cook. Yeah, so yeah, there was—there was—there was beef; there was chicken. Um, oh, pancake...pancake mix. Syrup. That was in the regular stuff. Since I don't cook, I don't have meat and all that stuff. I do make pancakes. And as you know—as I told you the other day, lettuce is my staple. I do have soups; I do have peanut butter. No cake mixes, no. Oh, we also—we also—yeah, we almost always had potato chips. Potato chips or Fritos, I don't buy any of that. I'll just eat it. Of course, we had crackers, like Saltines—Zesta—Zesta was our... Zesta Crackers was the brand we bought. So, um...but no chips and none of that for me.

OD: Just—

MP: Oh, she—we also had jams and jellies. You know, that's another thing that we—we always had around.

OD: Why no chips and or anything nowadays?

MP: Are you kidding? Oh my God. Because I can't control myself, and I'm always watching my weight, so...mm mm. Every now and then I'll treat myself to a bag of, you know, the, um...the round tortilla chips, which are my favorite ones. But no, no; no control. No control. Yeah, I have found in my life that there's just certain things I should not be buying because I just...consume it. Way too fast. I don't keep ice cream, I don't...you know, I don't... I do have the peanut butter and I do—I do love cheese; I have yogurt, so... And I have a little bit of jam, or jelly, not much.

OD: So, of the things that you used to get as a kid, like ice cream and...all the things that you don't get now, would you—if you were to go back and buy those—would you get the same thing that you used to get as a kid or would you get some—a different flavor?

MP: Well, you know, things have changed since I was a kid. Back then, you just had potato chips. Ya had Fritos. We didn't—I mean, Doritos and things like that came along later. If you're talking about brand names? Or just the—the items themselves?

OD: I'll talk about brand names later, but right now just, like, the flavors that you had then, was it....?

MP: Okay. Okay. They were just regular. Yeah, so, yes, I don't like flavored potato chips. Or the spicy things—I don't like that, so yeah. I would—now, whether it would be the Lays or whether it would be a reduced fat...probably, I would look for something like reduced fat. Although, not with Fritos. Actually, I don't think there is with Fritos. So, I might—I might look for that, uh, certainly with things like ice cream...yeah, I would look for reduced fat. Or even, like, with an ice cream thing, um, frozen yogurt—or something. That would not be the pure ice cream. Is that enough, um, you think....

OD: Um hmm.

MP: Enough of a...response?

OD: Um hmm. So, um...how did your family make decisions on which brands to purchase?

MP: My mom pretty much made that decision. Um hmm. Now, how did she make the decision? I'm guessing advertising came into play, um.... Maybe—maybe her upbringing; maybe the brands she had used. Like Smucker's...uh, Campbell's.... 'Cause we—we moved to the—we—we're immigrants, so we moved to this country in 1960, so there are a lot of foods we didn't know. We did not know peanut butter. We did not know pizza. We did not know macaroni and cheese. Took us a long time to try these things because they didn't sound good to us. They sounded gross, actually. Um...so, I don't know...you know, I—I don't know that I can answer that question. Some of it was probably trial and error. I know that, with things like milk, that we would just buy the house brand, like the Meijer mil—oh, well we didn't have Meijers—but whatever the house brand was. But even in orange juice...she—no, she always bought brand names. Tropicana—that's the one I was thinking of the other day, is the one that I use. Um...so, apparently, my mother was attracted to brand names. Carnation...you know, evaporated milk. Betty Crocker. Betty Crocker for cake mixes and brownie mixes and that sort of thing. And, my mom was a voracious reader of women's magazines. *Women's Day*, *Family Circle*, um... *Good Housekeeping*, and, especially back when I was growing up, those magazines advertised heavily to...to housewives. If I may use that word. Or to homemakers—maybe you could say that—homemakers. And, although my mom did not watch a lot of TV, all that stuff was being advertised on TV, as well.

OD: Um, so...

MP: Oh, coffee. We had coffee; I forgot about coffee.

OD: And you still have coffee today?

MP: Decaf, but yes. Oh yes. Yes, yes. And creamer, you know, that sort of thing.

OD: Um, so, when you said you were immigrants...

MP: Um hmm.

OD: ...and moved in 1960?

MP: Um hmm.

OD: Um, where did you come from?

MP: Uh, I'm from Cuba.

OD: Oh okay, okay. And, were—did you live in Cuba for a time before coming?

MP: Almost six years, yeah.

OD: Okay, and then...what was shopping like in Cuba? Do you remember that?

MP: Ah. No, I could not tell you that.

OD: Did your parents ever tell you anything about, like, the—how the di—the differences between...?

MP: I know that they had a lot of American—American products. I know that. I mean they—my God, they were making, um...I'm trying to think who had a big presence there. Yeah, 'cause they—because sugar was grown there. I think it was United Fruit Company. So, um, their...I'm sure that their shelves were full of American products, which was probably why she was buying them when we moved here. Yeah, I—I'm ninety-nine percent sure that, uh, because of the relationship between the two countries, that—I me—I, they probably also had some generic or, you know, Cuban-made things, but, um... There were grocery stores. You know, there were—uh, they call 'supermercados;' there were grocery stores. I mean, not the size of Meijers but, back then, nobody was the size. You know, back then, it was just a normal—like, like a...like a Harding's here. They were just normal—normal...supermarkets, not...you know. Wal-Mart or Meijer-size.

OD: Right, not like chain supermarkets or something.

MP: I have no idea what—what—what kind of—no I have no—no I couldn't tell you that; I don't know.

OD: Okay.

MP: But there were supermarkets.

OD: Um hmm.

MP: You didn't just go to a little...a little bodega or something. I mean, I'm sure they were there too, but I—I—I'm pretty sure my family shopped at a supermarket. And my parents both came to school—they were both international students and came to study in college in the US, so they would've been exposed at that point, also, to American...American food goods. Oh, you know, like Hershey's and....

OD: Okay. Um...

MP: Nor do I think, back in the day, there were as many brands as I think there are now. You know, like Quaker Oats. My—my mother loved...oh, what's that stuff she liked? Cream of wheat. Cream of wheat—I can't remember who made that. But, I'm sure, Quaker Oats; I'm sure oatmeal was another thing that was...that, you know, was used a lot over there and then... Corn Flakes. Oh, Kellogg's, oh my God, Kellogg's, yeah. I was so thrilled when I came to—to interview here, it's was like—everybody's like, "Oh my God! It's Battle Creek! Kellogg's of Battle Creek!" Which is how they used to—when I was a kid, that's how the commercials were and it's like, "Oh my God! There it is!" You know? Something you heard about your whole life

'cause we all love cereal there, at home, so it's like, "Oh my God, it's the real deal." It's—it's a real place.

OD: Okay. Um, so, for the brands that your mom used to buy, how to those brands compare to what you buy now?

MP: Yeah, well, quite a few are the same. Um hmm. Kellogg's, uh, who makes Cheer—General Mills. Uh, JIF. Pepsi. We were a Pepsi family. I'm sure that—I don't know why, it's—you—I don't know. We were all Pepsi drinkers. Um...I already mentioned Smucker's—Aunt Jemima. Tropicana...for the orange juice. You know, things like ice cream and the like, the—the—the branding there wasn't...wasn't so much. Delmonte, um, for the—for the fruits and, uh, for the canned fruits, and—and vegetables. Kraft, for the cheese. Although I told you I switched to Sargento, but.... And, you know, something like bread, that—that's...breads have changed over time. We were white bread eaters, but eventually that changed. She was buying more of a multi-grain, or a—a wheat. Um...but I don't buy much bread. Again, 'cause I love it and it's not good for you, so.... So, many of them are the same. Many of them are the same.

OD: How flexible has your family been with buying certain brands?

MP: So you mean me? You're not talking 'bout me when—when I was back as a kid?

OD: Well, you can talk about how your parents were, and how you were, like how willing you were to switch brands if something else seemed more appealing.

MP: I didn't switch very often. I told you I switched the toothpaste, but that's not food. Um...oh, you might, like with—with orange juice, there's—I'm trying to think what the other big brand was.... There's Tropicana; there's another one. Yeah, you—you might switch it around if one was on sale. Mom did that a lot. If something was on sale. But, I'm telling you, she did not buy the house brands. Except for milk. With milk and ice cream, she did. But not almost anything else; we never bought generic Corn Flakes or...no. I would say, I'm—I'm more inflexible. After all, I just want what I want. But Mother, because we were, you know, she was feeding the family, would be more flexible. She was a big coupon shopper, and she would scour the ads. She was also an avid newspaper reader, so she would scour the ads and see what was on sale. And sometimes she would stock up. Like people do now. And so—so if it's a staple good that's not going to go bad, she would stock up on that, but if, uh...if I could think of the other big orange juice people. You know, if Tropicana wasn't on sale but the other brand was, then she would buy that. We were real picky about cereal. No generic cereal for us. My brother was Cheerios; I loved Frosted Flakes; my sister tried everything: Alpha Bits, Count Chocula—something new came along, she tried 'em all. But Alpha Bits—oh, Captain Crunch, oh my God, that was, like, her favorite. Olyvea, it's almost like, back then, there was one brand. Like, Smucker's. That was it. You had Smucker's and then you had the generic: the house brand. Maybe. It's, um, Campbell's. There weren't—back when I was a kid...there was no—I'm trying to think what we have now.... I know there's—but that's—Pacific—Pacifica that comes in those

cartons, but, um...Progresso. There was no—I don't remember Progresso. It was, like, Campbell's. So, uh tha—that, I, that's something I've seen in my lifetime is more of an explosion of options. Um...and—and, um...and brands and whatever. And, now, it's even crazier because you have the Aldi brands. And you—now you have the Trader Joe brands and you have the, um...Food Fare brands. And....

OD: So, stores, as well, have expanded?

MP: Um hmm, um hmm. Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah, there was nothing. Yeah. You had the gro—there were numerous grocery stores, but they were grocery stores. Supermarkets.

OD: Um hmm. Um...so actually, that's one of my questions. Um, it was, "Tell me about any observations you have seen in the prominence of certain brands in the grocery store over time." So we can talk about that, and then the question was, "Are there any brands that have disappeared or become more popular," um, and just talk about, have you noticed...?

MP: Oh, I don't know. That have disappeared? You know, almost nothing disappears, I thought Tang had disappeared, but, um...I don't think it has. That's what I had in college. Had it four years in college and never touched it again. Um...you know, I don't know if things have disappeared. I'm sure they have, but I don't know that I—what I can think of that has. I mean... I—I... I'm not sure anything major. I don't cry crocodile tears about "Oh, I can't get this anymore." Um...there's cert—like I said, there's been—because there's—there are more grocery options now. When I first came to Kalamazoo, there was Harding's, there was Meijers, and there was a store from Chicago called Jewel. And that—that was pretty much it. There were—there were, you know, there was Meijers here and a Harding's there and another one there, but, um... and then, after Jewel left, eventually D&W came in. And now—now you've got a bunch—now you have more specialties. 'Cause you have the health food stores that sell food, like Sewall's. Um, which has been around for quite a long time, I just—I'm not a health foods, you know, shopper, so it wasn't really on my radar. And, 'course now you buy food at—anywhere: You buy food at Target; you buy food at Wal-Mart; you buy food at Food Fare, or at Earth Fare, or whatever it's called. An—and Aldi's and Save-A-Lot, and so there—there's just a lot more options now. And some of these stores, I think, have their own house brands. So...there are way more options now than in my—from what I remember. Uh, growing up, just a lot more.

OD: Um hmm. Um, how have you noticed the store displays and layouts changing since you were a kid?

MP: Not really—the only thing I noticed more as a kid were, uh—and I'll tell you, uh, in a minute why I remember this—but the cardboard—there were more of these cardboards—I still see—see them now and then, like they would just stick it in the aisle. And they were—they were advertising something special. I'll give you an example: so they may be advertising—or not adverti—but showcasing Christmas Kleenex. Or...certain teas for the holidays, like peppermint

at Christmas. So they'll be like these thick—they're cardboard standups. I don't see as many of those—those were much more popular when I was a kid, and one of the reasons I remember is my sister, as a kid, ran the cart right into it and knocked over a display of, um...deodorants. They ran all over the store; this is how I remember. But, um, you know, otherwise, not really. I don't think that—that—um, you still have shelves... I don't think there's a whole many different ways of displaying them the way they do it.

OD: Um hmm.

MP: If you're gonna do it efficiently.

OD: Um hmm.

MP: So, everything is, pretty much, still on shelves. Just the way it always was. Um... yeah. Yeah, no, I don't think I've seen a lot of change um...in that aspect.

OD: Okay. Um hmm. Um, how do you think, um, in-store advertising has changed, and, uh... has it—how has this affected, like, the way you shop?

MP: Well, there used to be a lot more...I mean, the—the stores would always have their newspaper ads. But, with the demise of newspapers, or the decrease in newspapers, I don't know, you know, uh, how—I still subscribe to the newspaper. That's just a...that's a leftover from my growing up years. Because we—we used to subscribe to two. There were two daily newspapers in Cleveland. So, I grew up with a newspaper. And I do look through the Sunday ads. That's when they come, now, is on Sundays. Now, what people do? Of course, everybody's got websites, are people—are shoppers going online and looking at the—the weekly sale ad online? I suppose some people do. Yeah, so, uh, that's one—that's one way it has changed. Um...radio was not a big—I mean, you didn't—you didn't hear on the radio “Oh, apples are one-twenty-nine a pound this week,” so radio has not affected...uh, nor—nor was there advertising for actual stores and goods on TV, either. Mainly, it was newspaper. And now, I think that's moved over to the internet, possibly the apps on your phone...um, that sort of thing.

OD: And was radio...is radio now not really there?

MP: The only thing I hear on the radio is that Harding's commercial: Get in; get out; get home. Um, you know, actually, Harding's, uh, I do. Every now and then, I do hear an ad for Harding's. You know what, every now and then, I do. I listen to the Oldie's station, and they sometimes will do—they'll—they'll be—not often, but I'll—I'll hear, now that I think about it, um, “This week, blah blah blah, bananas, nineteen cents a pound,” or whatever. But radio, for me, I don't ever remember that being a big advertising for actual items. You might hear and advertisement for the store, but not for actual items. But, I—I think radio is not very common. Nor was it ever very common, I don't think. They really, the—I—I think the—the grocery stores re—rely on the newspaper advertising. And, if you're watching your, you know, your dollars and cents, when

that ad came out, you would look. You know, you would look and then you'd make your list. Um, and like I said, you could stock up. If you had the room to store stuff.

OD: So, uh, how has this affected your shopping? Has it—has...the ad cha—changes been...?

MP: You know what, I'm at the point where I don't even care anymore. I'm not, uh, I'm not shopping bargains. Uh, so, I don't—I don't really look through—I don't look through the grocery ads. I don't really care. I'm gonna buy what I'm going to buy...uh, yeah. Um hmm. That's pretty much it. So, it has not affected me. No, I—like I said, I—I—they—they come in the paper, but I...I move right on by. No.

OD: Um...okay, so the next one was, "How effective have you found in-store and sales promotional materials to be throughout your lifetime?" Um, did they affect your mom when she was shopping in any way? Did she see something and be...?

MP: In-store? I mean, mostly, I'm pretty sure that Mom would look at what came in the paper; what was—what was printed in the paper. Um, in-store, are you thinking that you walk in and they hand you a flyer? Is that what you were think—or just—just that you—that they highlighted something that was on sale?

OD: Anything in the store: they could hand you a flyer; they could highlight things on sale....

MP: Oh yeah, I mean it—they—they highlight something, that does catch your eye. Especially if it's something that—that you buy on a regular basis. So...if you're asking, "Could you change your mind once you went in there because you saw something?" Yeah, sure. Yeah. And, you know, you never were able to remember everything you list—your list was—was the best you could do, but sometimes it's like, "Oh yeah, yeah, I forgot that I needed this and that." So yeah, in-store, um...if—if there's something that catches your eye. Like I said, uh, sometimes they have those things on...endcaps, but not anymore, they just have those things in front—usually in front of the item. Yeah, like, "Buy...buy five and get two dollars off," or, you know, that sort of thing. I do see that in the—in the grocery stores. So yeah, that might change your mind. Or I might walk by and see some of Be—Bell...what are those—Belvita, which I keep here for lunch. And it's like, "Oh that's a good price. Hmm, it's on sale, I'll get it." Even though it wasn't on my list. So yes, I can be influenced by—by in-store—in-store...I jus—I guess you'd call that advertising. Yeah.

OD: Um, how have ads changed over the years? Have they really changed that much?

MP: No. No, and what I've also noticed is that, um...grocery stores, they're—no they're it—they all have their distinctive way of advertising, so...I swear to God, the Meijers ads now look the same they did when I moved here thirty-eight years ago. And the Harding's ads look pretty much the same. So, I—I think, within their own, I don't think they've changed much. I'm not talking about Target; I'm talking about the grocery stores. Yeah, they're pretty much the same. Um...color. Well, yeah—but...well, I don't know, when I was a kid, I don't know that things—

that there was so much color in the newspaper. But the ads were in color, though. The newspaper didn't have much—I—no, I think the ads were in color. Because it's—it's more attractive and more eye-catching. But honestly, Olyvea, I don't think that grocery advertising has changed that much. Just...that I can remember. Mm mm.

OD: Um...okay, let's see...so, how flexible has your family been with choosing grocery stores? Did you always go to the same ones, or...?

MP: No, my mom was the—no. No, we—she did many different ones. She did Pick-n-Pay, she did Stop and Shop, um.... Those were the—oh yeah, she did Fisher Foods, um...I—I suspect that she must've had her favorites for certain things. Uh, I remember her talking about, "Well, I like the meat from this store, and I like the—the—the produce from this store." So I think Mom—Mom hopped around. Mom hopped around. And those were the main things because your staples are the same. Your Cheerios are the same no matter where. Uh, she certainly didn't shop around for different brands of milk or ice cream. I think mainly, what it was, was either the meat—the meats and the chicken, or—the fresh meat and chicken—or the produce. But, no, she—she was pretty flexible, she just—she went numerous places. Yeah.

OD: Um hmm.

MP: And I know people that say—if I—if I chose meat and chicken, if I—if I bought it, I probably would do the same, but I have—I have a friend who says, "Oh, I won't buy, um, you know, meat or chicken from anywhere except Whole Foods." Okay, so there—there are people that are still...in that mode, that there's certain places that, you know. And I hear people say, "Oh, I really like the produce at wherever." So.... But look at me: I have to go to D&W to get my, uh, uh, my butter lettuce so....

OD: That leads perfectly into the next question, which is, "Which shopping habits do you think were passed down to you by your family and your mother's shopping?"

MP: I think the weekly. I think the weekly thing. Um...you know, other than that, um...unless you—you know, you consider the brand-buying a shopping habit. I don't know exactly that that's—that's a shopping habit, but...and generally, because we grew up...since we were immigrants, we didn't have a lot of space money, probably, we—we were taught the value of looking—uh, you know, of a good value. Okay, of a good value. Which might mean buying, let's say, the—the—the bigger box of cereal rather than the smaller one; that sort of thing.

OD: Okay, so, when—you said that, when you shop, you tend to pay more attention to, like, displays that are standalones rather than endcaps...so, um...

MP: You mean if I—if I—no, yeah, I don't pay much attention to the endcaps. I don't.

OD: Yeah, um hmm. So, why do you think that is?

MP: I don't know. I—I really don't know, I just...the grocery store endcaps don't do much. The gr—the endcaps in other stores, like Target and the like, sometimes have sale items and the like. I—I don't know, it just—I—I hardly ever look at the endcaps. I don't know why. I'm sorry I can't—they just don't catch my eye. I'm more—I—I'm more attuned, I guess, to the rows, and, like, reading up to make sure I'm in the right row, um.... So it's funny; I don't really look at them. Sorry.

OD: It's fine. Um....

MP: The standalones, if they're in the aisle—and I tell you, it doesn't happen a lot: the store that does it the most is D&W. D&W is the store where I see that the most, and Harding's. Meijers doesn't usually do it, um.... But, because they're, like, right in your way, almost. Because—'cause you have your aisle, and instead of having the things on the shelf, you have something in front of it. So, it catches you eye—either that or you're gonna run into it like my sister and knock it all down. So, I—I can't tell you why, they just, the—the endcaps do not catch my eye. Probably, I'm looking to not run into somebody as I turn the corner; go down another aisle.

OD: So, when you shop, you don't use, like, the newspaper coupons or anything because you...?

MP: I do not use those M-Perks—I hate that whole system. I hate it, hate it: I couldn't figure it out, and I gave up on it. Almost right away. I will—I do a u—I do use a few coupons, but they're mostly the Sunday—the generic Sunday coupons that come in the mail. Um...because the—the—the ads—the store ads don't have coupons. You know, you get those generic ones. So, I don't do a lot of coupons. Uh, they're just a nuisance. But it's—but if it's something that I buy regularly, like my CoffeeMate or something, then I will. I'll cut it out, then I'll always forget I have them, and...yeah.

OD: So, this—I guess this isn't really related to shopping—it might be—but, since you don't eat, like, you don't like to cook a lot, do you—does that mean you go out to eat a lot, or, do you just...?

MP: No I have salads. Yeah.

OD: Okay. So, that's, like, your main...?

MP: Yeah, that's my—that's my staple. So I have salads probably four days a week, and one day I might have soup. And I—I—I make homemade pesto with a group of friends, so one—one—one day I'll have pesto, 'cause I freeze it, like, for the whole year. And then I might have frozen pizza, might be the other. And, you're right, maybe one of those days, I'll—I'll be out, but no, no—oh God, no. Not only is it expensive, but you balloon out, so.

OD: Um hmm. Did you go out a lot with your family when you ate?

MP: We had no money. No, no. We had no money. We would go out maybe—maybe once a month to Big Boy. I don't know if you're old enough to remember the Big Boys, which was just,

like, a family restaurant. And that was a real treat. And—and maybe once a month or once every two months—no, we did not go out. And then, along came McDonald's, which was so cheap that, you know, we might've done that once or twice a month. Yeah, but no, no. We did not eat out very much. Not like people do now. And it isn't even a—we didn't have that big a family. There were five of us, and then my—when my brother came along, there were six of us, but, you know, it's expensive.

OD: Um hmm.

MP: And sometimes, Olyvea, if I do go out, I don't eat everything and so I bring it back and then that becomes, you know, dinner the next night, so. Leftovers. Leftovers. Yeah, I'm sorry that I can't answer meat and chicken questions for you.

OD: No, that's fine, it's just about your shopping, so....

MP: Yeah. Yeah.

OD: Um...so, did your family ha—did your mother have any preferences with meat and chicken, or, like, brands or something that she would always buy?

MP: No. Uh—that, I don't remember. Uh—meat? No, the meat was...the store meat. So there were really no...there were no brands there. At least, when I was growing up. And, the chicken...I think was the same thing. It was just whatever the store had. You know, whatever they were putting out. There was no—back then, there was no Tyson Chicken or anything like that, so she just—that's—that—that is one thing she bought the store brand, if you want to call it the store brand. It didn't really have a brand. It just had the store name on it.

OD: So was there any, um, like, branded meat, other than the store brand?

MP: You're talking about raw meat?

OD: Yeah, when you were younger?

MP: Mm mm. Mm mm. Nope. Nope. There might've been branded meat of...in, like, um, lunch-in meat...uh...like, that you would put in a sandwich, but...but not—not the fresh stuff. Mm mm. Nope. Is there branded stuff now?

OD: I don't think so.

MP: I mean, there's—there's...there's, the Jenny-O Turkey. There's, you know, the turkey has a brand. That Jenny-O, I think, or something. I know Tyson has branded chicken. But beef? I can't even think that, of course I don't look at it, 'cause, um...so I don't know. I think it's kind of gross. Raw meat. I like beef but I don't like to look at it.

OD: Mm hmm. Um...and then, so, I asked that one. So, I that's all I have, now.