May 2020

Interview conducted in May 2020. The participant received a participant information sheet before the interview and provided written consent. The purpose of the interview was explained prior to asking any questions and recording the interview. The participant had then the opportunity to ask any additional questions for clarification. It was explained that when the interview questions asked for digital devices or ICT devices this implied smartphones, tablets, computers and TVs. Depending on the situation of the participant the relevant device could be referred to. The recording was transcribed non verbatim.

Speaker 1: Okay, so we are starting the interview with some demographics. Could I ask how old you are?

Speaker 2: I am 28.

Speaker 1: And do you live alone?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: And do you normally cook at home often?

Speaker 2: I wouldn't say often. I would say maybe twice a week. Twice a week, yeah...

Speaker 1: Okay. And how long are you already living alone?

Speaker 2: Uhm... For two and a half years.

Speaker 1: Okay so looking at a normal average day. When would you normally get up in the morning?

Speaker 2: Around about now [note: the interview was conducted at 11am on a weekday].

Speaker 1: And would you then make breakfast?

Speaker 2: Yes, yeah. I start with my coffee and then I make some breakfast.

Speaker 1: And what would you normally have for breakfast?

Speaker 2: I like to eat some crackers. I like sweet breakfasts. So sometimes it would be crackers with chocolate sprinkles or jam or something. And other times I enjoy a yoghurt with fruits and granola.

Speaker 1: And you would make those breakfasts always yourself or would you as well buy them?

Speaker 2: I always make my own breakfast.

Speaker 1:   And it is kind of the same breakfast every day?

Speaker 2:   Kind of... yeah.

Speaker 1: And where would you normally eat your breakfast? Would you sit down at a kitchen table?

Speaker 2: Yes. Yeah.

Speaker 1: And your breakfast, would your normally eat that alone?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: So would you say that you eat it alone on nearly every day of the week.

Speaker 2: Yeah, actually yes.

Speaker 1: And when you eat your breakfast. Do you use any kind of digital device while you eat?

Speaker 2: Yes. I always use my phone. My cellphone and it is because it is the morning you know... getting up. I would scroll through Instagram or catch up with messages so usually I am quite social on my phone during breakfast yes.

Speaker 1: And you would use your phone the whole time while you eat breakfast?

Speaker 2: Uhmm... no not the whole time while I am eating but it would be kind of next to me and I am thinking... I would say yes, I suppose.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 2: Yeah in that sense.

Speaker 1: And do you enjoy eating your breakfast this way?

Speaker 2: Yes, I really like that moment. It is like my own kind of moment of the day. And I eat whatever I want so all the sweet things and I totally allow that. It is kind of my happy moment. And mind you, in this quaratininen time so I get up at 11ish and that is my normal getting up. If I have a job or go to the university it would obviously be earlier. Then I would say that it would be around 8 o'clock or something like that.

Speaker 1: But your routine would be kind of the same? So you still sit down you have your breakfast, use your phone?

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: And would you do any other activities apart from using your phone? Do do you read like newspapers or magazines or do you listen to music in the background?

Speaker 2: Yeah that is a true one. Usually I switch on some music, yeah.

Speaker 1: Any kind of music? Or is the radio?

Speaker 2: Spotify. I usually play my own playlists. It depends what I am feeling for but not too intense though. Quite relaxed.

Speaker 1: Okay, so next meal: lunch. When would you normally eat lunch?

Speaker 2: Uhm. Again I don't really have a routine. If I had a job or something it would be during lunchtime but I tend to skip lunch now.

Speaker 1: And what would you eat?

Speaker 2: Yeah, I usually would have a snack.

Speaker 1: What kind of snack would that be?

Speaker 2: Hmm.... Some fruits sometimes. I would have some fruit. Uhmm like a banana or [inaudible]. Yeah or some strawberries – so just some fruits. Other times when I am actually hungry I would have a sandwich... savoury.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: No pancakes...no.

Speaker 1: And has your eating habit changed a bit during the last few weeks of Corona?

Speaker 2: Absolutely.

Speaker 1: Yes?

Speaker 2: Absolutely! Because I am doing less activities. I am not that hungry anymore. I don't have... I don't need lunch.

Speaker 1: So but before Corona. Because your breakfast was a bit earlier, did you use to have lunch?

Speaker 2: Yeah that is true. If I would to have my lunch break and if I would be able to get home then I would switch on some series on TV.

Speaker 1: So you would go home, make your lunch and watch some series on the TV.

Speaker 2:   Yeah and I would say it would be sandwiches then.

Speaker 1:   And would you make those yourself or would you buy them?

Speaker 2: So when I go home and watch some series I would always make my sandwich myself. But if I don't go home and stay at the working place, I would normally buy it because I don't like to carry stuff around.

Speaker 1: And those series that you watch. Are there any particular ones that you like to watch?

Speaker 2: [inaudible] not sure maybe a recommendation but I have been watching Narcos Mexico. I really liked that one. So no, I have been watching a few different ones but I am not really engaged anymore.

Speaker 1: So but when you sit down and have your lunch. Would that be in front of the TV? So the living room or would that be mainly the kitchen, where you could see the TV?

Speaker 2: Yeah it would be like this. From my kitchen table where I can see the TV.

Speaker 1: And do you pay attention to it then or would it be more like some background noise?

Speaker 2: No I do really pay attention. I would be engaged.

Speaker 1: So and your lunch, would you normally eat that alone?

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: So would you say that it is nearly every day of the week? Or is it maybe a bit different on the weekend?

Speaker 2: It is different on the weekend because then I don't have a routine and my social activity might interfere with having alone lunch or anything like that [inaudible].

Speaker 1: So would you say that on the weekend you would have your main meals more with other people being around?

Speaker 2: Yes, yes for sure. But also on the weekdays if we are talking about dinner. So yeah...

Speaker 1: When would you normally eat your dinner? Is there a specific time?

Speaker 2: Usually when I get hungry and this could be quite late so it would be around 8 o'clock.

Speaker 1: Okay. And is there a specific dish that you would tend to eat for dinner?

Speaker 2: What I really like to make for myself is stir fry vegetables with noodles so it is more like an Asian dish. And then I either use chicken, or pork or shrimps or just mushrooms. And mainly it's vegetarian but I sometimes change that up. But mainly it's vegetables but I really like the stir fry because it is really quick and I don't need to worry about too long and then I will make enough so I have for two more days.

Speaker 1: So you tend to eat for dinner something warm?

Speaker 2: Yes, only warm.

Speaker 1: And would you eat your dinner at the kitchen table then or would that be in the living room?

Speaker 2:   Uhmm... you know what. Actually now that I think about it. The lunch I would sit on the couch because it is usually a sandwich and I just take it with me and then I relax because you know, I am exhausted from various things and I would be sitting on the couch but for dinner, I would sit at the table because it would get messy.

Speaker 1: And dinner, would you normally eat that alone as well?

Speaker 2: Usually, yes. Usually throughout the week, yes.

Speaker 1: And on the weekends as well?

Speaker 2: It is difficult because I have been quarantining for so long now. It's kind of hard to remember. But on the weekends it's usually… I would have an actual weekend as I would go and visit my mum or I would have dinner with friends. And I like to go out for dinner then. So I don't want to sit at home… or someone invites me over for a dinner party which is great. And then I would never use my phone or any devices. But if I was alone, I would. I would usually use my laptop because then it is closer to me and I don't need to look at the TV. And then I usually sit at this place [kitchen table]. I try not to do work, when I am eating but sometimes I am like uh I might you know… check an email.

Speaker 1: And before the Corona lockdown. Would you say that was kind of the same routine? Or would you have dinner a bit earlier or later?

Speaker 2: No, no 8 o'clock. For sure. Yeah around 7.30 -8.

Speaker 1: And would you use your laptop or your phone at the same time? Or do you play music?

Speaker 2: Sometimes. Because a lot of people get off work or they are like free and they message me and then I also having dinner and then I might get distracted and it is a bit stressful. But yeah with my phone and my laptop and having dinner.

Speaker 1: So do you feel that using both devices while having dinner is a bit distracting?

Speaker 2: Yes, I think so. So I try to usually switch off my phone or put it away. But not very far from me. It is always around. Yeah.

Speaker 1: Do you feel there are certain activities or apps that make it more stressful?

Speaker 2: No it's not because I am just getting messages. So it is the social part that may be interfering. But not necessarily during cooking because then it could be fun you know. Because then I am like 'I am making this' or I am sharing the recipes with friends.

Speaker 1: So you use the device as well while you cook?

Speaker 2: Sometimes yes. Then I take some pics and share it with friends. Or I keep it as a memory like "hey that was a great meal that I made".

Speaker 1: Okay, so these were like the main dishes and now are coming some situations or motivations that might be a bit different from your normal routine. In general how do you feel when you eat alone? Do you have any thoughts about that?

Speaker 2: You know I really like it because for me... I find it annoying when you are having dinner with someone and you are having this nice meal and they want to talk to you. So I think having dinner with one other person I find more annoying than having dinner with more people because you don't have to talk the whole time. You know because one dish gets eaten and the other doesn't and that just irritates me. That really irritates me. So I don't mind it. I like eating alone. For that reason.

Speaker 1: Do you think there are any specific places where you tend to use your digital devices while you eat alone? So for example, being in a restaurant to have dinner. Do you think there are specific spots in your surrounding or the way you interact with the environment that are more prone to motivating you to use a digital device.

Speaker 2: To use it?

Speaker 1: Yes, while you eat.

Speaker 2: The only device that would then be around is my phone. And I tend not to use it or usually I try not to use it. It depends on the context though. Because if you try to meet up with another friend or if there is a lot going on and you are with say with another person then maybe one of is more on the phone. Uhm but I try not to so I usually try to put my phone down so face downwards and I try also not to put it on the table - not to put where it is within hands reach. So if there is anything going on I can look at it but I have to do an extra effort like it will be under the table but I won't be like texting under the table like yeah... yeah if that makes any sense.

Speaker 1: Yes!

Speaker 2: Okay.

Speaker 1: And do you occasionally go to a public space like a restaurant to eat alone?

Speaker 2: No, but I have done it before several times and yeah I kind of like it.

Speaker 1: So and in those instances would you still try not to use your phone by putting it down?

Speaker 2: No. I would be using my phone yeah. Usually I would be sitting at the bar if there is a bar to have a chat with the people who work there [inaudible].

Speaker 1: And do you think there are certain times of the day, the week or the year during which are more likely to use the device? For example, when you travel alone.

Speaker 2: Yes, winter.

Speaker 1: Winter?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: Why do you think that is?

Speaker 2: Because it is dark and I am not very happy and I really hate winter so usually when I tend to feel a little bit lonely I am way more active on my phone. Now in summer I also eat later.

Speaker 1: And would you then use messenger and Instagram to stay in touch with people? Or do you use programs like Netflix?

Speaker 2: When?

Speaker 1: During those winter periods when you feel alone.

Speaker 2: Usually Netflix. Yes, and if I would be social with friends and family it would be WhatsApp and Instagram messages. I try not to start scrolling through feeds though. It would be messages. It wouldn't be me just looking for things on Instagram. Not really when I am eating. It would be task oriented so I would be popping a message to someone.

Speaker 1: And would those be apps that you generally use?

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: So no news or magazine or online reading?

Speaker 2: No, I am not really reading.

Speaker 1: Could you explain what your motivation is while eating a meal?

Speaker 2: That is a good question because I have been wondering about this of course since you are doing this project. It is I think it is for not feeling 100% alone.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: But within your own control…. And I like that. I think it is to choose to look at it or to not and to engage and there are always enough friends that are always able to reply. You know I have that sense of security that I am not fully alone. But when I feel withdrawn. When I am not feeling fantastic… then I would use Netflix rather because then I am not interested in the world and I would be fine.

Speaker 1: So and you already touched up this: Do you feel the digital device contributes to the eating experience? Do you feel it makes the experience better?

Speaker 2: Better. I think that is quite a strong question. I think it has pluses and minuses. It could for sure. Probably… I mean. If there was [inaudible] a digital device and I would be reading a book. That would irritate me. I would be annoyed while I am eating or I would be turning a page. Or it would be interesting like a newspaper… I don't like.. so.. I could look at this thing that is alive… a movie for example… and…. or listen to music for example. So I am not watching Netflix all the time. Sometimes I am just listening to music and I am thinking… so… I think then definetly it contributes to a better experience… but if it would be phone like a said earlier then it could be distracting because I have this need to reply quite quickly because I don't want people to think like that I am ignoring them or something and I feel a little bit of stress for sure and I think it can actually disadvantage the experience.

Speaker 1: Okay… What do you think about people who eat their meal alone in a public space while they use their digital device? Do you have any opinions about that?

Speaker 2: Hmmm…. no. I think that is very understandable. Actually I would be very curious to see a person not using their digital device while eating alone in a public space.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 2: I might feel more interested and intrigued to walk up to them and start a conversation, you know… But I don't have necessarily have an opinion about it. I think how it… I see it just as a normal thing.

Speaker 1: And if you think about people who eat alone at home. Do you have an opinion about that?

Speaker 2: You know sometimes I think 'how sad' and then I am like wait! I do the same! It is not sad at all. So at first… years ago I thought yeah it is kind of sad but then when you were a kid you weren't allowed to

watch TV and sit at the dinner table. And now I am like 'no but...' actually it's just like a... it's a 'life-thing'. So no...

Speaker 1: Uhm... okay so we have already touched upon the fact how the device has an effect on your eating experience. If you think about other people: Do you think there are positive and negative things as well?

Speaker 2: Yeah so I think it really depends which device you are using. And I will change it up for you, so as I said, sometimes I would be watching a series and other times I would be watching a series and be on my phone. That is not a good thing. Sometimes I am just listening to music which is great because it is almost like meditating. I think the listening to music is the nicest but I am less engaging with the outer world because I am more in my own head and if you don't want to be there if you just want to take a break from it all and just you know mindlessly eating your meal and umm... just watch your series that can be a nice experience. However, when I am eating and I am watching a mindless series and I am focusing on the series, I am still like enjoying my meal but I tend to overeat.

Speaker 1: So you tend to eat more?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: Why do you think that is?

Speaker 2: Because I am not registering what I actually eating. Maybe I made too much for myself and I think the brain just doesn't give the signal quick enough that you are full and you kind of are ignoring it anyway because it is nice in your... [inaudible] comfort actually.

Speaker 1: So do you think there could be a risk for other people as well?

Speaker 2: Yes I think... if you for example overeat or you have to be mindful how much you are eating and you really need to pay more attention then I think that could definetly have a negative impact.

Speaker 1: Uhm so if you think about a future scenario where digital devices could be used in any kind of way. How do you think they could contribute to a healthy eating habit.

Speaker 2: I think music can actually have a great impact because the pace of the sound can make you speed up or slow down. So talking about a maybe healthier way to consume your food. So not what you made but how you eat it and uhmm I think so then music can really help. So sometimes I am watching a movie... I am just going off on this. I was watching, you know, „the edge of tomorrow" the other and I wanted to eat something and I just couldn't watch this movie it was so intense so I was like no... no... this

is not what I am going to be watching while I am eating it is too hectic and I can't enjoy it while eating unless I am eating a pizza or something… uhhhm or if it is a Spanish movie and I really cannot focus. The Mexican cartel series I was like 'okay, I have to really focus' or 'I cannot understand Japanese'. So that is a problem… but I think it could definetly be with music and perhaps reading something. So if you are reading a book on your phone which is just so much nicer if you like to do that than having an actual book with paper and maybe fruits gets on it. I think slowing yourself down could have a good impact. Does that answer your question?

Speaker 1: Yes! So and the next question concerning issues we already touched upon. So yeah these are all the questions that I had for the interview.

Participant is thanked for their time.