

Absence at the Dinner Table:  
Loss of Eating Habits Through Filipino Generations

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## Introduction

Assimilation is a process of great interest, yet it is one that is not fully understood. It is deeply affected by several factors such as economic conditions, both of the immigrant's origin and that of the host country, social influences, politics on the international and the local scale, and many more. Even giving a clear, concise definition to the process has its obstacles. Min Zhou (2004) attributes assimilation to attaining education, "ascending into the middle class," and feeling "at home...in their adopted country," and delves into how it is affected by "the strength of the ethnic communities" (p. 139). Nee and Alba (2004) as well as Lott (2006) argue that there is not one kind of assimilation but different definitions, one for the immigrants and conditions before the Immigration Act of 1965 and one for those of the post-1965 era (Nee & Alba, 2004, p. 87; Lott, 2006, p. 80). It is particularly because of its ambiguity that assimilation needs to be studied, so that the trends of assimilation can be foreseen and utilized to benefit instead of harm.

In order to study assimilation's trends, research needs to be taken to a generational level. Since experience differs from person to person and family to family, a broader scope of how assimilation affects particular groups of people needs to be used. The particular groups studied in this research are Filipinos and Filipino Americans, who can be compared and contrasted with many other groups, such as Chinese, Malaysian, and other Asian groups as well as Mexicans and other Spanish influenced groups. Taking the different aspects of assimilation into consideration, studying the eating habits and food customs is an interesting yet valuable route to take. The trends in how eating habits are affected by assimilation can be used to study not only how they are affected in other immigrant groups but how other aspects of assimilation are developed as

well, and as Lee (1992) puts it, “there are certain parallels which become evident with acculturation” (p. x). However, eating habits are not just influenced by several factors or compared with other aspects of assimilation. These aspects directly influence the adaptation of eating habits, and conversely, eating habits reflect how other aspects of assimilation are developing. It is specifically how eating habits and food customs are intertwined with many other aspects of assimilation that make it the best indicator of the level of assimilation. Because eating habits are directly connected to other aspects of assimilation, the level of assimilation can be inferred from studying eating habits alone.

#### Methodology and Literature Review

By studying Filipino eating habits, the differences between several aspects of assimilation, such as environmental and ideological, become evident. With environmental and ideological factors in eating habits alone, however, the study quickly becomes quite complex. Environment consists of several different variables, some of which include location, availability, finances, and people. Ideology, on the other hand, is much more subtle and more difficult to quantify. Some examples of this include religion, identity, and tradition, all of which vary in circumstance. Studying how assimilation affects both of these aspects requires separate approaches, a quantitative analysis for environmental factors and a qualitative analysis for ideological changes.

The first step in this study is to identify the original eating habits and food customs of the Philippines. The original practice of Filipino eating habits has been studied by many researchers. In *Food and Culture*, Kittler and Sucher (2004) discuss Filipino eating habits in detail in a chapter titled “Southeast Asians and Pacific Islands,” along with Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian eating habits (pp. 303-332). Claudio (1994), too, addresses Filipino eating habits and

explains how to approach it from a dietetic perspective. The most relevant source, however, is one that describes Filipino eating habits from the Filipino perspective, as it details Filipino experience with food along with addressing eating habits rather than interpreting it from an outside perspective. Fernandez (1994) does this in her book *Tikim: Essays on Philippine Food and Culture*, writing to “provide a taste of Philippine food...[and] help the reader towards a wider understanding of what is Filipino.” (p. ix). Although it was written more than a decade ago, this source will reveal the most about original practice of Filipino eating habits, and the other sources will complement the information that this source provides.

After defining exactly what Filipino eating habits are, the next step is to analyze how they are modified or even discarded in the process of assimilating into American culture. Unfortunately, the adaptation of eating habits in the Filipino American community is not a thoroughly researched subject. In a fairly recent source, Kittler and Sucher (2004) exclaim that “little current information on the food habits of Filipino Americans has been reported,” demonstrating the scarcity of information on the topic (p. 327). Logically, without the data detailing the eating habits of Filipino Americans generations apart from their immigrant ancestors, there cannot be analysis on how original Filipino eating habits are modified into Filipino American eating habits. First hand accounts reveal substantial information but come sporadically as eating habits are not usually the main topic of interest. Fortunately, significant amount of research has been done on the subject of eating habits per se, spanning as far back as 1944 with Renner’s *The Origin of Food Habits* and as recent as 2008 with Counihan and Esterik’s *Food and Culture: A Reader*. Therefore, to study the modifications made on original Filipino habits as a result of assimilation, other groups of people with comparable eating habits and how their eating habits were adapted must be compared with those of the Filipinos.

In order to test if these modifications actually occur in the Filipino American community, they must be verified by research on the adapted eating habits of Filipino Americans. However, research in this area is limited as discussed above. Instead, the inferred trends will be checked against a survey conducted using a sample of Filipino American students, as well as students of other ethnic groups. These students are all from the University of California, Santa Barbara and are members of the campus's Filipino organization Kapatirang Pilipino and were chosen because of their ability to identify their eating habits as of Filipino origin or not. The results of this survey should be concordant with the patterns inferred from research on original Filipino eating habits and related trends of the eating habits of comparable groups. Deviations from these patterns suggest particular characteristics that the sample groups share that are not common to the entire Filipino American community and consequently, factors that may cause those characteristics. For example, being a college student or a member of an ethnic organization are traits most definitely not shared across the entire Filipino American community. Because the survey is largely open ended, common answers reveal significant details about the sample group. Furthermore, since this group offers a narrow scope of the very diverse Filipino American community, conclusions about the eating habits of this group can be projected out to other Filipino Americans who share characteristics with them.

### Original Filipino Eating Habits

To begin studying the original food practices of the Philippines, the country must be broken down into smaller regions for closer analysis. Although Filipino eating habits are grouped together as one, eating habits and food customs are not homogenous throughout all of the 7,107 Philippine Islands (CIA, 2008). Geographically speaking, Luzon (the northern region), the

Visayan Islands (the middle region), and Mindanao (the southern region) “represent the three principal regions of the archipelago” (Dolan, 1991). However, the eating habits and practices of the Philippines can actually be broken down into four regions. ). Claudio (1994) and Kittler and Sucher (2004) agree that eating habits divide the Philippine Islands into four regions: the previously stated three as well as Bicolandia (Claudio, 1994, p. 3; Kittler & Sucher, 2004, p. 315). Although these regions share many customs and traditions, they each have specific cooking styles and ingredients as well as areas of specialty. Because the survey participants largely come from certain areas, this plays a large role in analyzing the survey results.

Starting with the most diverse region, Luzon is the northern region and is the largest of the four (Claudio, 1994, p. 3). According to Claudio (1994), Luzon can actually be broken down further into northern, central, and southern Luzon. Since most of the survey participants claimed heritage in this region, breaking the group down into more identifiable parts gives a more detailed perspective of the trends. Northern Luzon is characterized by its use of fish and shrimp sauces as well as its ocean fish, while Central Luzon, the main rice producer of the country, is known for its dishes “rich in sauce” and its fresh water fish (Claudio, 1994, p. 3). Southern Luzon is characterized by its use of coconut products in its dishes and its specialty in sweet rice cooking. It is important to note that the provinces of Pangasinan and Ilocandia are located in northern Luzon, and Manila is located in central Luzon, as many participants of the survey identified ancestry in those provinces.

There were not as many survey participants from the other three regions, yet their traditions and practices are significant nonetheless. Compared to the ethnically diverse Luzon, Bicolandia is ethnically homogenous, mainly taking from Malaysian and Polynesian influences (Kittler & Sucher, 2004, p. 315). The dish *laing*, which includes taro leaves, chili, and coconut

milk, is the embodiment of this region's food preference, chili and coconut (Claudio, 1994, p. 3). Since the Visayan Islands are comprised of many islands rather than large bodies of land mass, it is attributed to an abundance of seafood and cooking styles that reflect this, such as *kinilaw*, which is raw fish marinated in vinegar (Claudio, 1994, p. 5). In addition, the sugar plantations of this region attribute desserts as one of the Visayan Islands' specialties (Kittler & Sucher, 2004, p. 318). Although there were not any survey participants hailed from Mindanao, the region's ideological influence is very important to discuss. Unlike the rest of the country, which is predominantly Catholic, the region of Mindanao is primarily Muslim, and therefore, features eating habits highly different from the rest of the country (Kittler & Sucher).

Moving away from environmental details, the ideological influences are strong and numerous in the Philippines. As already stated, the Philippines is primarily Roman Catholic, and because of this, Filipinos celebrate many religious festivals and practice several religious traditions (Kittler & Sucher). Of them all, the most influential on eating habits are Lent and Good Fridays. As De Los Reyes (1994) puts it, "On Good Fridays absolutely no one eats meat in Ilocos," and the same is true of most other parts of the Philippines as well (De Los Reyes, 1994, p. 163). In addition, many go to church "to receive the ash on their foreheads [as a] sign morally prohibit[ing] them from eating meat throughout the Lenten season" (p. 161). Filipinos also celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ as well and with just as much dedication, claiming to have the longest Christmas in the world (Kittler & Sucher, 2004, p. 324; Fernandez, 1994, p. 155). However, Filipinos do not center on just these two times of the year; they celebrate all year round through various festivals and saints' days. Unlike Lent and Good Fridays, the Christmas season and all religious occasions in between involve an abundance of food (Kittler & Sucher).

Fernandez describes this very well saying “we Filipinos made eating the occasion for ritual -- and ritual the occasion or eating,” emphasizing the role of food in celebrations (p. xv).

Ideology in this study is not limited to religion or spirituality. It includes other belief systems and even individual beliefs, superstitions, and general traditions. The most notable belief is the hot cold theory of foods, classifying foods as either hot or cold “based on their innate abilities or their effect on the body” (Kittler & Sucher, 2004, p. 325). This belief holds that particular diseases are due to an imbalance of hot and cold in the body, and to treat the disease involves eating a food classified opposite to the disease (Kittler & Sucher). A tradition widely practiced in the Philippines is food and its relation to hospitality. Being a host to one’s guests and serving them food is a gesture of hospitality. To reject the food is considered impolite, and to reject too many times is considered an insult to the host (Claudio, 1994, p. 5). Certain foods also have symbolic meaning behind them. Sweet rice and food made from it symbolize the bond between family members; dishes cooked with “newly harvested, green, or immature rice” symbolize bountiful harvest; long, uncut noodles symbolize long life (p. 6).

There are other facets of original Filipino eating habits that fall somewhere between environmental and ideological. One of these eating habits deals with meal pattern and daily routine. Fernandez (1994) explains that “the traditional Filipino breakfast...is different...in that it is not too different from lunch and dinner” in comparison to an American breakfast, which features specific food not associated with lunch or dinner (p. 19). The meal is accompanied by rice, as is lunch and dinner, possibly with some other food left over from the previous night. Additionally, Filipinos have a different idea when it comes to meals. Compared to American meals, there are very little restrictions on what is considered food for breakfast or food for lunch or dinner, and meals are more relaxed in terms of time and place. Because of this and the



closeness of the Filipino community, the phenomenon of street food in the Philippines is no more unusual than eating in one's own home or at a restaurant. Vendors provide food to help Filipino's hold out until their next actual meal. Fernandez argues that because "they are not considered 'serious' meals, [they] are given 'unserious' names like Adidas (chicken feet), helmet (for cocks' combs), and Walkman (for pigs' ears)" (p. 12).

Since the Filipino idea of what is a meal has been addressed, one very important issue in Filipino eating habits to consider is what is considered food to Filipinos. As the previous examples suggests, Filipinos use every edible part of an animal: "pigs' ears and intestines; chicken wings, necks, feet heads tails, combs, even intestines, meticulously cleaned and looped on thin skewers" (Fernandez, 1994, p. 9). This is due to many factors; Fernandez attributes this to the economic crisis of the 70's while Claudio (1994) says it "depends on weather, geography, main crops, and price" (p. 6). Nonetheless, Filipinos have learned to adapt their eating habits to cope with the low availability by using the entire animal or plant for food and using more effective cooking methods. For example, while cooking rice, one could boil an egg in the water while it is cooking and use the steam to finish cooking vegetables (Claudio, 1994). These habits that arise from the scarcity of food are closely studied in transition from the Philippines to the United States.

### Assimilation Trends

Now that a full description of the eating habits, beliefs, and traditions of the Philippines has been provided, a study of how they are modified to fit the American culture and environment can be done. In order to study the modifications on Filipino eating habits to produce Filipino American eating habits, three approaches are utilized. One is to generalize from first hand

accounts of Filipino Americans and their eating habits. Another is to compare eating habits with those of other ethnic groups and study how their eating habits are adapted. The last is to compare some Filipino eating habits with other changes as a result of assimilation, even other eating habits.

Although very scarce, first hand accounts reveal much more than they actually say about the trends of assimilation. Merina's (1992) regret that the tradition of using food as a gesture of hospitality "will be lost after [his] parents' generation" reveal the importance of family and the contrast in ideas about hospitality between Americans and Filipinos (p. 47). The closeness of the Filipino family plays a large role in transmitting traditions from one generation to the next. Contrasts in beliefs from one location to another also influence the resilience of an individual's practices. If hospitality is not reciprocated as it is in the Philippines, the Filipino notion of hospitality becomes overshadowed by American hospitality. Merina goes on to note the communal relationship in feasts and preparing for it, exclaiming that "the outpouring of warmth was incredible" obviously contrasting it with the lack of communal bond in the United States (p. 48). The deterioration of communal bond supports the conclusion that the strength of relationships, not just familial, catalyze the transference of food customs. Merina even addresses availability issues and how Filipinos adapt to it as "even the poorest families have all this food" (p. 49). From only one first hand account, hospitality, family bond, and availability were shown to have a significant influence on eating habits as well as reflect influences the eating habits have on the individual.

To make up for the lack of direct resources, Filipino eating habits and food customs can be compared to those of other ethnic groups and reveal the general trend of those habits across ethnicities. One belief to begin with is the hot cold food theory, which is shared primarily with

Mexicans as it originated from Spain but is also reflected in Chinese beliefs. For example, in surveys of older Chinese in northern California, Kittler and Sucher (2004) found that “approximately half of the respondents attempted to balance hot and cold foods” (p. 277). On the other hand, they also found that younger Chinese individuals preferred American food at home much more than their elder counterparts. More so, Kittler and Sucher found this to be true in Mexicans, stating that “the Mexican immigrants in the survey accepted the stereotypical American consumption patterns” (p. 219). This suggests that, although older Filipinos may hold on to the hot cold theory of foods, younger generations are more likely to disregard it and take on an American diet.

Speaking of diet, another tradition that Mexicans and Filipinos share is street food. Much like the Philippines, street food vendors were established because of what Solis and Vargas (2005) describe as “the deterioration of the economic situation in rural Mexico” (p. 124). Also, Mexican street food vendors provide food where people need it and for a low price, satisfying the needs of its customers as do the Filipino street food vendors. However, one aspect that is dissimilar is that for Mexicans, there was once “a social stigma attached to eating at a street stand,” whereas in the Philippines, it was a normal activity (p. 127). This dissimilarity demonstrates ideological difference between the two, that in Mexico, eating outside is seen as improper while it is not so in the Philippines. Furthermore, Mexican ideology of where and when it is proper to eat a meal is closer to the American ideology of what is proper than Filipino ideology, as American meals are usually confined to the home or indoors. This disparity between ideologies implies that Filipinos who retain their eating habits from the Philippines will more likely have a harder time adapting to the American ideal of where and what time is proper to eat than those who do not.

Along with the street food, Mexicans are Catholic as well and share many of the same traditions practiced in the Philippines. As Filipinos restrict their diet during Lent, Mexicans, too, abstain from eating meat on Good Friday (Solis & Vargas, 2005, p. 146). Additionally, they also associate certain foods with specific holidays (Kittler & Sucher, 2004, p. 216). In discussing foreign influences on Philippine cuisine, Fernandez states that “Unlike Chinese food, Spanish food became mainly fiesta food...the food for family reunions, Christmas, entertaining important guests, and feasts” (p. 224-225). Kittler and Sucher (2004) found that Mexicans continue to eat the traditional holiday food and even adopted American holidays, such as Thanksgiving, and the food associated with them (p. 220). Just as Mexicans hold on to their beliefs and continue to celebrate the religious holidays with the same food, Filipinos still eat the festive food for special occasions in the United States. A diversion from this trend would imply assimilating American beliefs and selection of food for occasion.

Staying on the topic of religion, we move on from discussing the influences Catholicism has in the majority of the Philippines to detailing the strict diet of Muslims in the region of Mindanao. Khare and Rao (1996) describe the forbidden foods as “carrion, blood, pig flesh, and the meat of animals slaughtered in the name of anyone but God” (p. 87). Some ingredients, like blood, are easier to avoid as only a small portion of Philippine cuisine utilize them. Pig flesh, however, heavily restricts entire categories of dishes and meals. *Lechon*, whole roasted pig, is out of the question, and *dinuguan*, even without the blood stew, is restricted for its use of pork and various pig organs. Kittler and Sucher (2004) go on to state that any byproduct of “four-footed animals that catch prey with their mouths [and] birds of prey that seize their prey with their talons” are restricted, therefore cutting out any other possibility of food involving pigs, such as

*chicharron*, fried pig skin (p. 84). Comparing to Catholic practices and their adaptation, these practices are stricter and more likely to be loosely followed as a result of assimilation.

Moving on to broader assimilation trends, research in the area of eating habits in general is extensive. Renner (1944) exclaims that “Changes in ways of life have often proved powerful enough to alter food habits,” showing just how long this subject has been under study (p. 222). The role of family in the assimilation of eating habits has been mentioned before and has been key to the process of assimilation. Germov and Williams (1999) describe family meals as “an important opportunity for family members to share news of the day’s events, express feelings, and listen to one another,” emphasizing food’s role in family bond (p. 155). The stronger the relationship between family members is, the more resilient eating habits are to assimilation. Germov and Williams go on to show that the feeding relationship between parent and child “helps the child to learn to discriminate between feeding cues and respond appropriately to them” (p. 155). Thus, family takes an active role in deciding what eating habits are weeded out in the process of assimilation. Because family has such a strong influence, the eating habits passed down from generation to generation are an indicator of the family’s closeness.

### Survey Analysis

Now that the rough work of describing original Filipino eating habits and how those habits are expressed in America has been accomplished, proper analysis of the surveys can be done. Although problems arose in conducting the survey, the survey yielded many results that can be analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The survey was designed to yield mostly open-ended responses so the patterns could be studied by both frequency and per answer. Almost half of the questions were geared toward identifying the sample group because with a group so

small, as much detail as available about the people within the group was necessary. The rest of the survey is open-ended so many responses did not converge to one trend, but some patterns have emerged. A qualitative analysis of the participants' individual answers, on the other hand, revealed more about Filipino eating habits than a quantitative analysis of the results as a whole for some questions. The survey questions and frequency tables of selected questions are available at the end of this study (Appendices A & B).

Beginning with identifying the sample group, the age range of the group of the same was very narrow, mostly staying within the ages of 18 and 21. The participants who responded demonstrated almost total representation of California, almost equally from the north and the south, as they indicated their hometowns. This group obviously represents a significant portion of the Filipino American community, harking back to the long history Filipinos have had in California. In Yuson's (1999) *Fil-Am: The Filipino American experience*, there are several articles about this history, titled "First Filipinos in California," "The Fil-Ams of San Fernando Valley," and "Fishing in the Bay Area" (pp. 57-62). However, Filipino communities can be found all over the country, in Hawaii, Illinois, New York, and Washinton, D.C. (Kittler & Sucher, 2004, p. 303). Thus, the results of this survey can be generalized to a large population of the Filipino American community, but only that of California.

The heritage of the sample group leans to particular areas as well. As seen in Appendix B-1, 22 individuals were surveyed, 14 of which indicated they were full Filipino, 5 indicated other ethnicities along with Filipino, and 2 did not indicate Filipino decent at all. More than three fourths of the sample group indicated heritage from Luzon, opening up for deeper analysis in the habits and preferences of the Luzon region. Also, at least half of the group was born in America, indicating that they were second generation Filipinos. A third of the group responded that they

were 1.5 generation Filipinos, born in the Philippines but raised in the United States for a significant portion of their life. Thus, the survey results reflect a fairly balanced group, with a notable amount of partial Filipinos and 1.5 generation Filipino to complement the majority full Filipino and second generation.

After identifying the sample group, their responses can be evaluated accordingly. The first question dealt with original Filipino habits if the participant was 1.5 generation or inherited Filipino habits if second generation. Unfortunately, the responses did not show any obvious patterns but when taken individually, they reveal significant data. One participant reported that she was currently observing Lent and therefore is not eating meat. Another participant reported struggling with Lent and restricting consumption of meat on Good Fridays. This reveals both the resilience of religious influence, yet also its loss of strictness after only one generation. Many participants noted that they eat rice with every meal, demonstrating the resilience of the Filipino idea of a meal and what foods dictate a meal. On the other hand, many made reference to eating *kamayan*, or eating with one's hands, both that they continue the tradition and that they do not. This shows that although the Filipino meal has held, the Filipino idea of what is appropriate about a meal has been influenced.

The next few questions focused on eating habits not attributed to the traditions and practices of the Philippines. When asked what American influences have affected their diet, a significant number responded with fast food as a major adaptation. On the topic of immigrants and fast food, Germov and Williams (1999) have said that "immigrants from developing countries...often have little experience with the idea that some foods are more nutrient dense than others," reiterating the drastic change in availability of food (p. 157). In the Philippines, the scarcity of food drove ingenuity in creating tasty dishes out of seemingly unappetizing animal

parts and utilizing more efficient cooking methods. In the United States, these practices that resulted from scarcity are no longer needed, and so, the ideal that any food is acceptable becomes invalid as well.

The subsequent questions dealt with what influenced their eating habits and reiterated significant trends in assimilation of eating habits as well as revealed other noteworthy patterns. Participants observed that family played a large role in maintaining their eating habits, again demonstrating the role of family in passing on food customs and traditions. Participants also noted nutrition and health issues as a major influence, noting allergies and even ulcer symptoms as causes. Others expressed nutrition in terms of preference, selecting American dishes over Philippine cuisine for a healthier balanced diet. One 1.5 generation Filipino even revealed the assimilation of his taste, now choosing many foods over Filipino food because he lost his preference for the flavors of Filipino dishes. Another factor discordant with the influence of family is the influence of friends and the status quo of American culture. Along with availability, participants noted the influence of friends and what is considered normal as a driving force to change one's eating habits.

Many participants focused on environmental factors that affected their eating habits. Participants noted issues with finances, scheduling, food preparation, availability, and location in respect to food source as driving forces to adapt their eating habits to more suitable routines. All these intertwine with one another and can be explained by a number of causes. However, an interesting result is that several attributed these issues with being a student and college life, one even describing herself as a "poor college student" (Survey, 2008). This reveals another factor that affects eating habits and food customs: education. Regarding education in general, a few noted school and cafeterias as influences on their eating habits, showing that this is not limited to



the university setting. Different levels of education have different effects on the process of assimilation. Thus, Min Zhou (2004) was correct in that assimilation involves attaining education (p. 139).

Finishing with the most open ended question, convergence, or at least a high degree of convergence, was not expected when asking the survey participant to list foods most commonly cooked in their families. However, the answers, though widely varied in content and breadth, included two dishes more than any other. Just about all participants that responded to this section reported *adobo* as a food eaten in their families. Fernandez (1994) hails *adobo* as the “national dish of the Philippines,” providing reason behind its popularity (p. 195). The other commonly listed dish is *sinigang* is a bit harder to explain. The reason could be behind its simplicity and versatility. As Fernandez describes it:

*Sinigang* is meat, fish or seafood stewed in sour broth with vegetables. It makes use of almost any product of the food landscape, in many combinations, and can be soured with tamarind, green mango, green pineapple, guava, or any of the sour tropical fruits or leaves of the regions. In the Visayas it becomes *tinola*, the broth soured only by tomatoes, yet throughout the principle is the same. (p. 223)

Fernandez likens *tinola* to *sinigang*, which was also listed as a response, and when put together with *sinigang*, comes close to beating the national *adobo*. Because these foods are so popular, they seem to be the most resilient in the process of assimilation.

## Conclusion

After a careful study from the original practice of eating habits and food customs in the Philippines to its adaptation in the United States, the influences eating habits have on other

aspects of assimilation and those that it takes from others demonstrate its function as an indicator of assimilation. Eating habits are defined by the groups' cooking styles and specialties, ingredients, and meal routine. However, they also reflect influences from out in the environment as well as in the mind and even soul of the individual. Eating habits reveal information about geography, economy, and food availability as well as religion, politeness, and intrapersonal relationships. These influence how Filipinos interact with and think about food, making food habits a sign not of the changes in environment that Filipino immigrants experience, but rather how they perceive those changes. This brings the study back to the definition of assimilation. Although what assimilation is comprised of still remains debatable, I argue that it is not about the environmental changes an individual experiences, but rather how that individual experiences those changes. Reasserting the main point, it is not simply that eating habits are intertwined with other aspects of assimilation; it is *how* eating habits are intertwined with them that establishes eating habits as a proper indicator of the degree to which an individual has assimilated.

Appendix A

Name:                      Age:                      Year:

Hometown, State:

Ethnicity (indicate others if multiethnic):

Generation:

- First generation – born and raised abroad
- 1.5 generation – born abroad but for the most part raised in the US
- Second generation – born and raised in the US
- Third generation or higher (please indicate)
- Other (for example, born in the US but raised abroad) and please explain.

If you are a first or a 1.5 generation, what eating habits (rituals, food preferences, cooking methods, etc. have you lost coming to the US? What are the reasons for this (influence, accessibility, other)?

If you are second or higher generation, what eating habits did you not inherit from your parents and what are the reasons for this?

What have you acquired from American culture and assimilated into your normal diet?

What factors in your environment influenced you to change your eating habits?  
(for example: family, friends, status quo, religion, etc)

What factors have influenced you to maintain your eating habits?

Do you have family dinners? If so, when and why do you have family dinners? If not, please explain why or how dinners work in your family.

If you know which region of the Philippines your family is from, please state below.

If you can state what foods are most commonly cooked by your family, please list them below.

Appendix B-1

Age		Year		Hometown		Ethnicity		Region of the PI		Generation	
18	5	1 <sup>st</sup>	6	SoCal	8	Full Filipino	14	Luzon	16	1.5	7
19	6	2 <sup>nd</sup>	6	NorCal	7	Partial Filipino	5	-N Luzon	7	2nd	11
20	5	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4			Not Filipino	2	-C Luzon	5	3rd+	2
21	4	4 <sup>th</sup>	4					-S Luzon	4		
22								Visaya	3		
35								Bicol	3		

Appendix B-2

American Influences		Factors to Change		Factors to Maintain		Family Dinners	Food Examples
fast food	9	friends/status quo	8	family	11	adobo	18
		money	3	health/nutrition	4	sinigang	13
		time	3			tilapia	4
		availability/location	8			tinola	4
		college life	6				

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