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# **Understanding household food waste and healthy eating through practice theories**

**Nordic Conference of Consumer Research – 17th and 18th of May 2016, Aarhus**

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UMR MOISA - Montpellier SupAgro, France

# Context:

Food waste : environmental issues, resource overexploitation

**Food waste:** Food losses and waste refer to the decrease in edible food mass throughout the part of the supply chain that specifically leads to edible food for human consumption. '[...]“food waste”, [...]relates to retailers’ and consumers’ behavior. (Parfitt et al., 2010)'

## Initial finding

Fruits and vegetables: recommended food, but the most wasted... (FAO Footprint wastage,2013)

« Should » products versus « want » products (Milkman et al., 2010): « buying healthy food does not necessarily mean that healthy food is eaten » (Evans, 2011)

« Do not waste a crumb » to reduce waste, but is eating over one’s satiety really healthy?

↘ Cacophony related to food consumption? (Fischler, 2011)

## Problem:

*Is it possible to reconcile the objective of food waste reduction and the objective of healthy eating?*



# What do we mean with the term « healthy eating »?

## What is healthy eating



Component 1: Global knowledge  
about nutritional rules, to know how  
the body works and what it needs  
(Beyound, 2008)

Component 2: Being able to  
adapt one's intake to what the  
body needs at any a given time:  
hunger and satiety  
(Chandon, 2010)

# Research research - Hypotheses

Q1- What is the link between healthy eating practices and food waste practices?

H1- Buying food with the aim of following nutritional recommendations can lead to food waste.

H2- Respecting one's satiety can lead to food waste

H3- Commitment against food waste can lead to overconsumption

Q2- Is it possible to reconcile them with a holistic view of daily food practices?

H4- There are combinations of practices that answer both challenges

## Approach:

To study if food waste and healthy eating interact: **holistic view of the challenges related to food consumption**

To widen the levers for action: **more holistic approach of daily food practices**

# Theoretical framework: Practice theories

“A **routinized** type of behaviour which consists of several **elements**, interconnected to one other : forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, « things » and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge”  
(Reckwitz, 2002 )

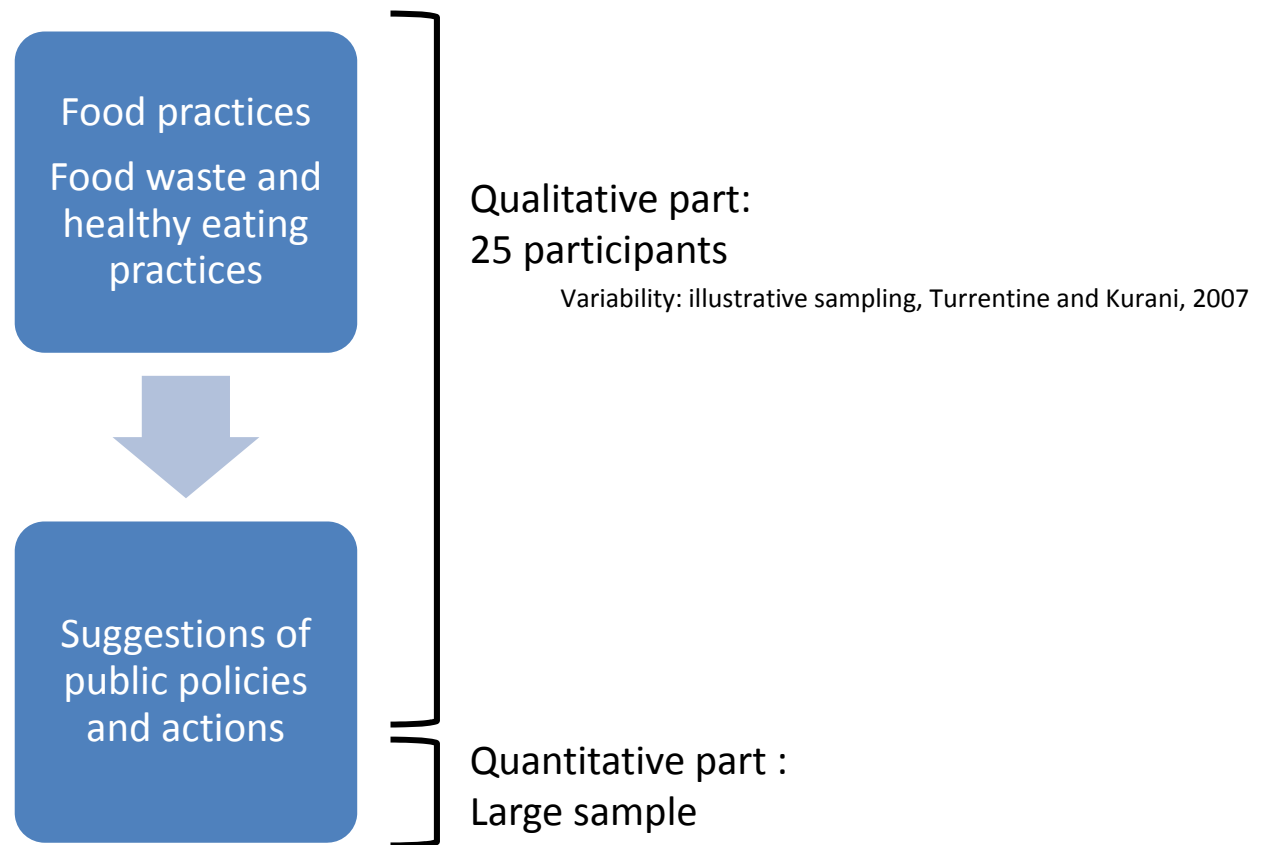
- ↘ Why? Because of their interest in the daily routine (Wahlen, 2011) – Holistic approach of action (Hargreaves, 2011)
- ↘ What is the principle? Focus on practices better than on individual, and contextualize consumption – Change from ABC paradigm (Shove et al., 2012) - Reconcile agency and structure (Halkier et al., 2011)
- ↘ How? Explaining the emergence of practices with their constitutive elements (Shove and Pantzar, 2005, Schatzki, 2002, Reckwitz, 2002, Warde, 2005), which can be:



# Global methodology

3 qualitative steps

1 quantitative experiment



# Material and method – 1st qualitative step

Objective : Describe global food practices

1st phase, projective method of collages:

« Represent your food practices, from supply to consumption and all your organization, thinking about what determines your daily practices. »

Advantage : Increases expression and imagination, helps participants to focus on their own experience (Cottet et al. 2008)



# Material and method/results :

Poster: a basis to conduct the interview



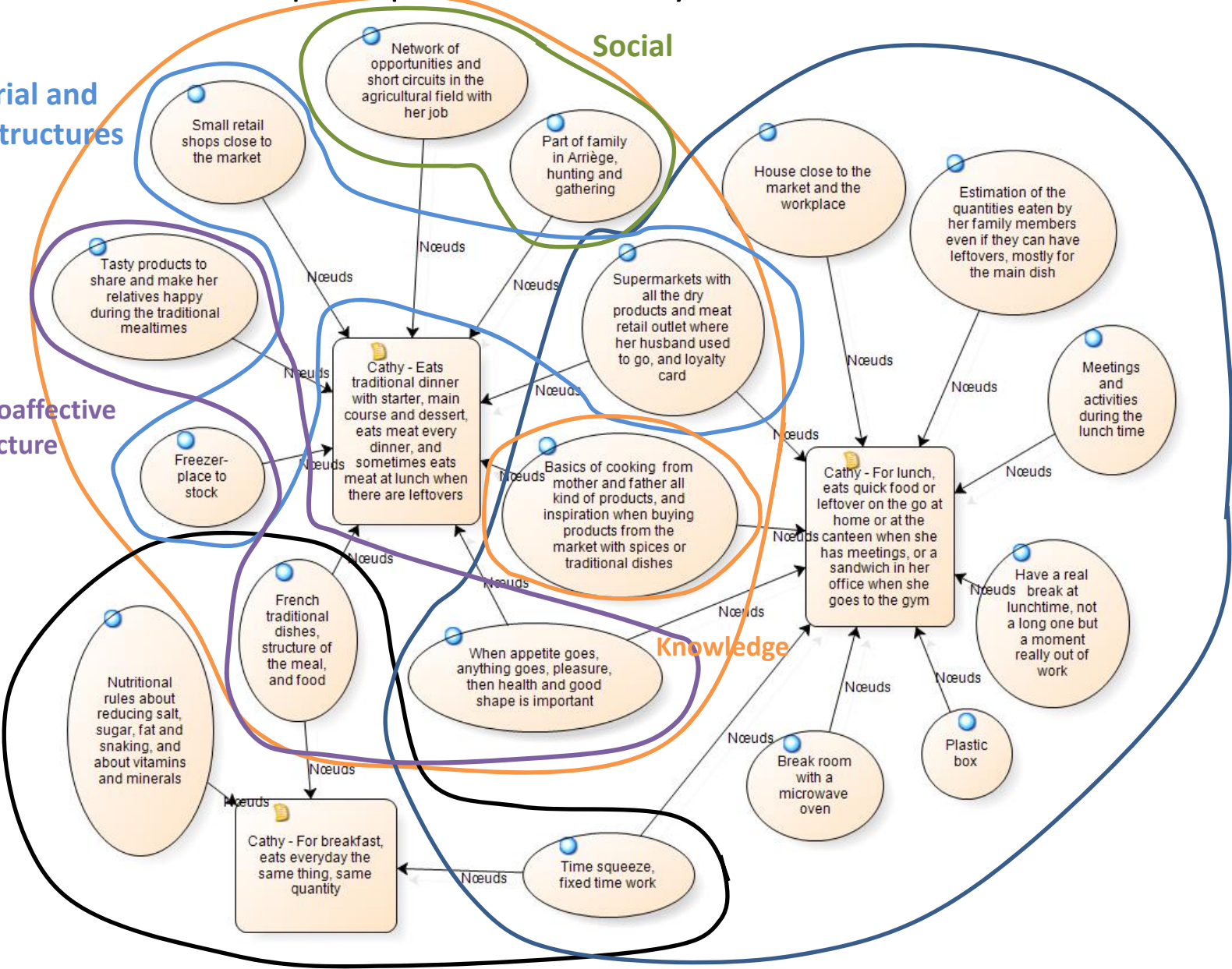
# Results: Food consumption practices of Cathy

Material and infrastructures

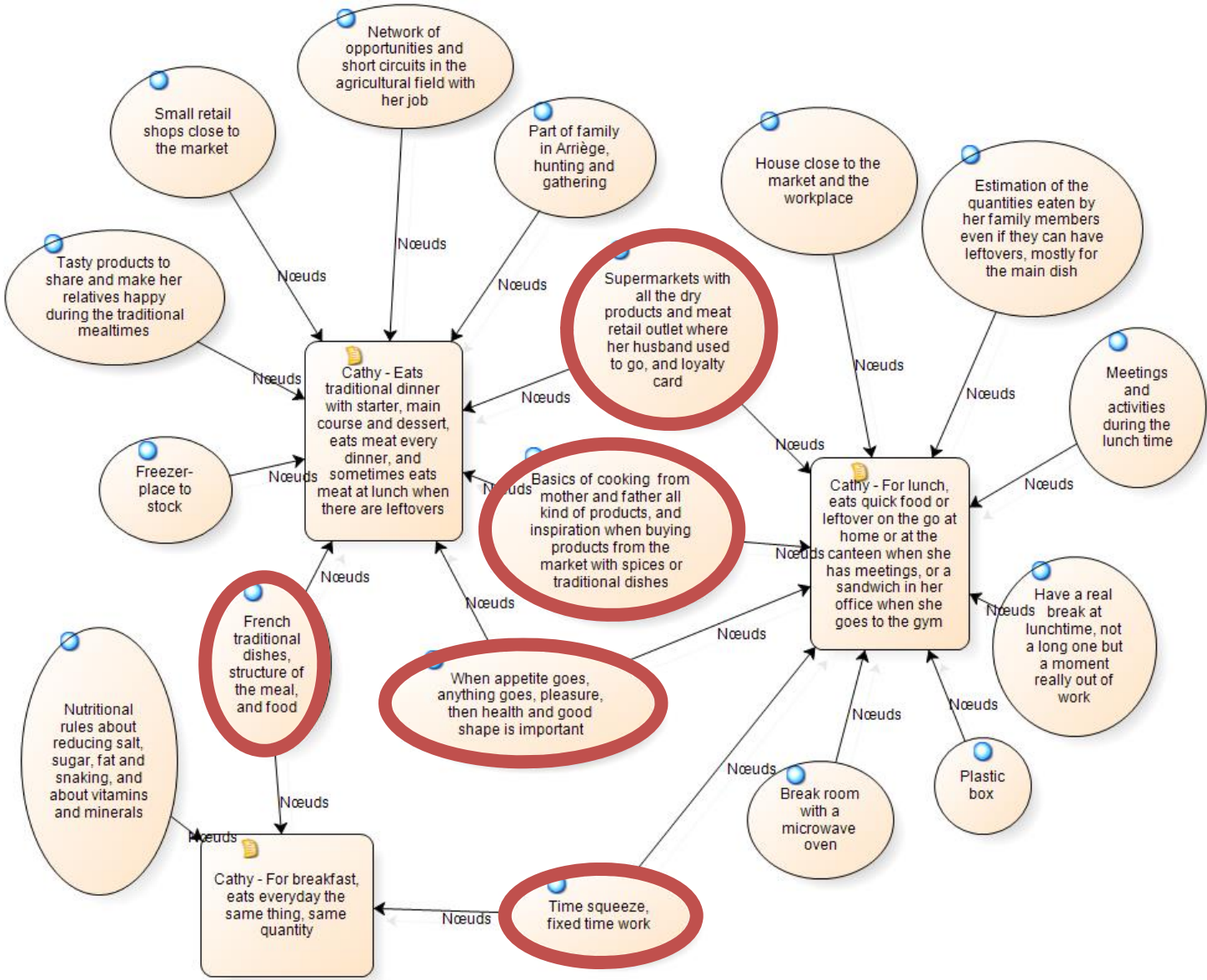
Social

Teleoaffective structure

Knowledge

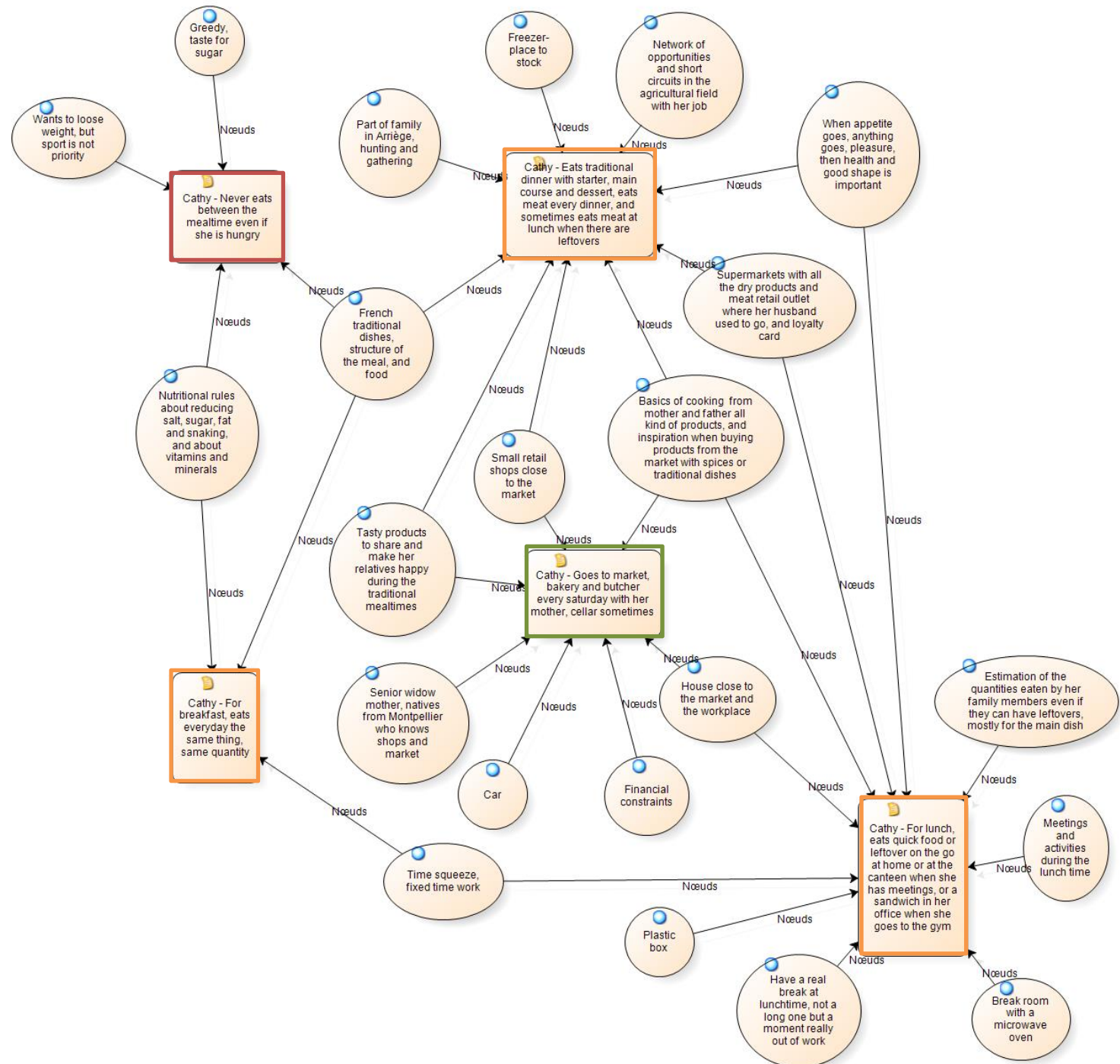


# Results: Food consumption practices of Cathy

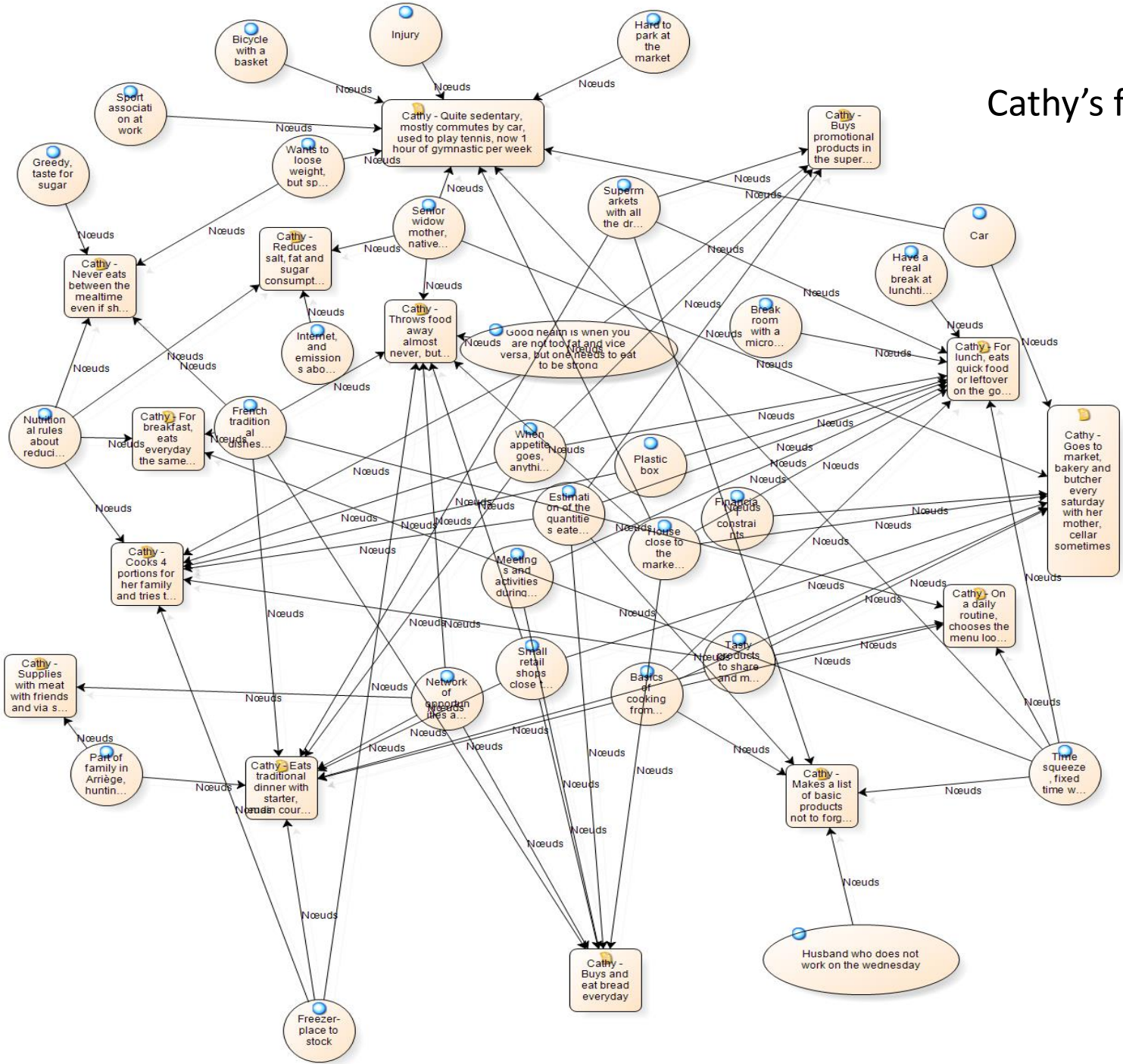


# Results: Some of Cathy's food practices

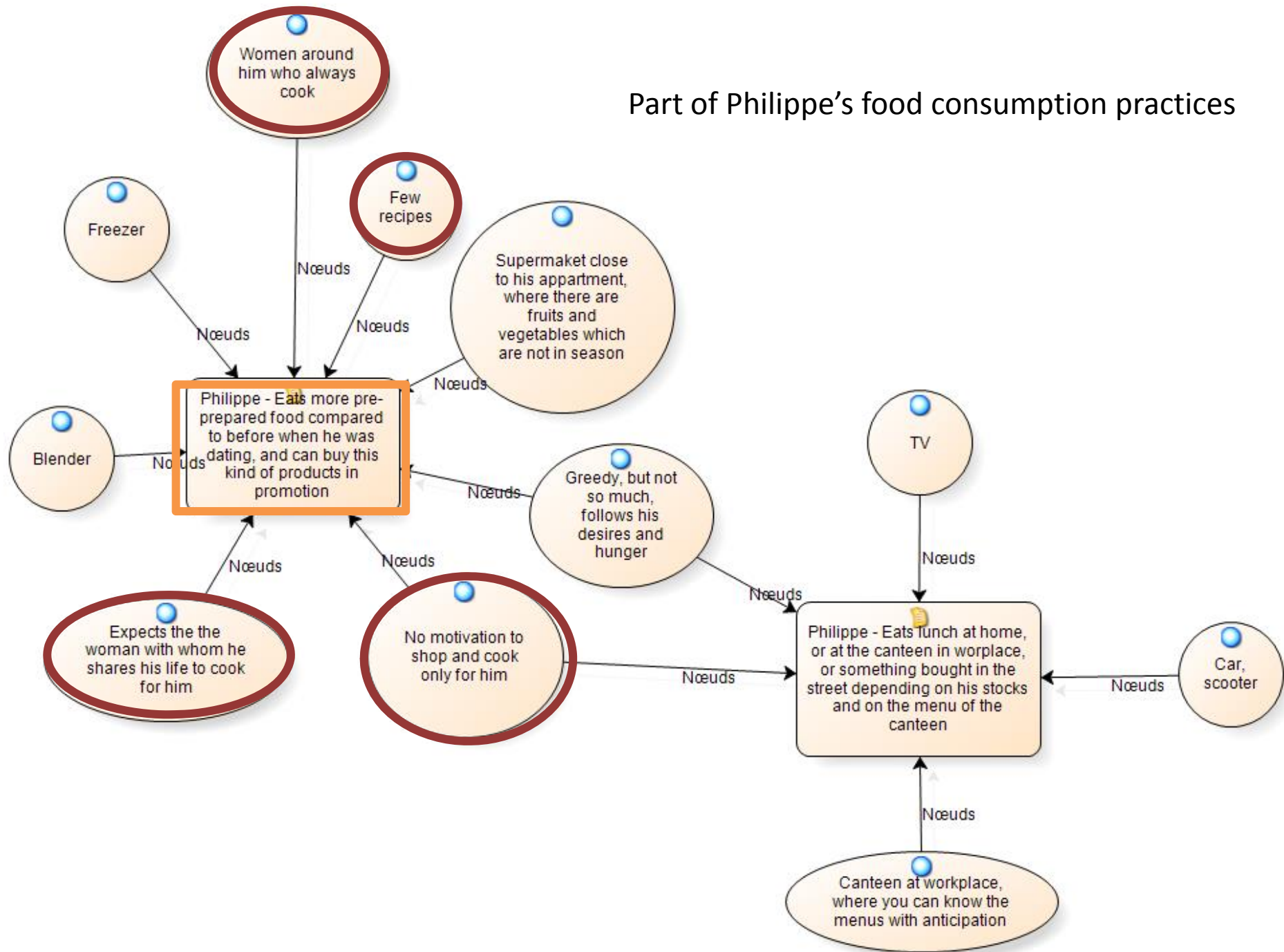
- Supply
- Snacking
- Consumption



# Cathy's food practices



## Part of Philippe's food consumption practices



# Material and method – 2<sup>nd</sup> qualitative step



## One month of photos made by the participants:

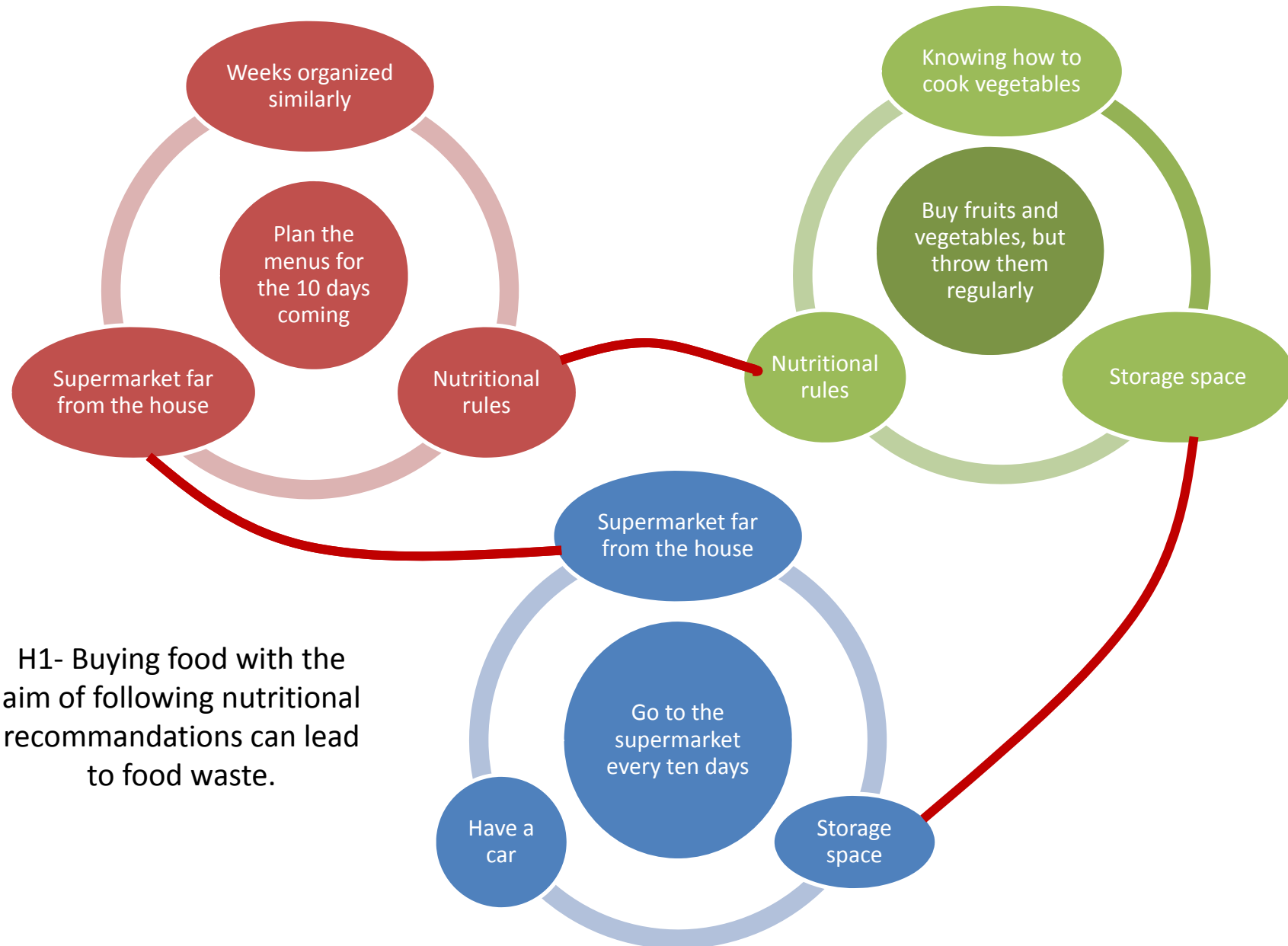
1. « You will have to take a picture of every food you put to the dustbin/compost, at home and outside during one month. The picture will be taken in the container in which the food was »
2. « Express yourself! Take photos representing for you « I've eaten too much because.... »: So when you feel you have eaten too much, take a picture of the causes you identify »

**Advantage:** Photo as an object of research: « collect information in situation where bias from declarative is really significant » (Dion, 2007)

## Last step:

- Interview the participants about the practices of throwing food and of overconsumption basing on the photos
- Discover the material environment of the household

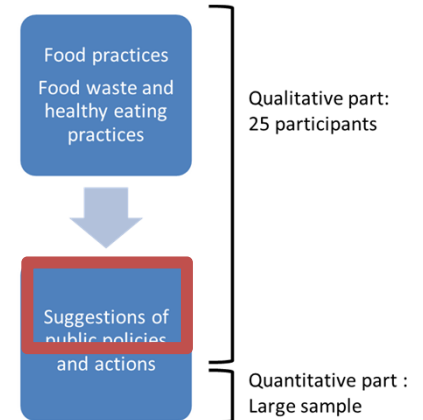
# Expected results



H1- Buying food with the aim of following nutritional recommendations can lead to food waste.

# Material and method – 3rd qualitative step

Objective : Suggest public policies or action based on the network of food practices related to supply, food preparation, consumption, snacking, exercising and storage



Method: Focus group with the participants to propose them new framework and collect ideas

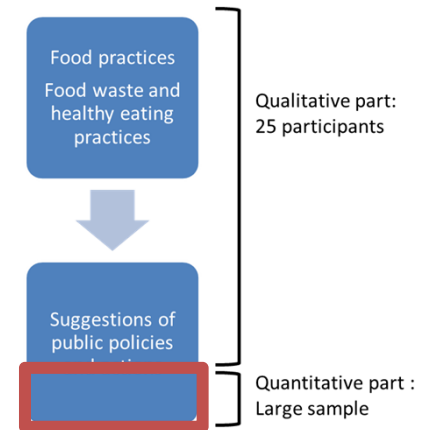
- ↘ Brainstorming?
- ↘ Groups of discussion?
- ↘ ....

# Material and method – Quantitative step

Objective : Partially test a public policy based on the network of food practices related to supply, food preparation, consumption, snacking, exercising and storage

Quantitative experiment to test the framework:

- Consumer's understanding
- Consumer's perception
- Consumer's prediction of the impact



# Contributions to social marketing and food studies

- Theoretical: understanding combined topics (food waste and healthy eating) with practice theories
- Methodological: suggest a protocol to apply practice theories from description of practices to public policy recommendations
- Operational: suggest a new framework of social marketing which is not based on ABC paradigm and which targets two societal challenges related to food consumption

## Limits

- Declarative/subjective practices
- Still do not know what would be the saturation of the data for food waste and healthy eating practices

## Perspectives

- Test the public policy we suggest as it would need longitudinal approach
- Extend this approach and methodology to other topics targeted by social marketing (smoking, recycling, binge drinking, etc.)

*Thanks for your attention!*