Perception and implementation of nutritional recommendations: the prevention of obesity in France

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Perception and implementation of nutritional recommendations: the prevention of obesity in France

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4 points

- Methodology
- Nutritional recommandations and food preferences
- Recommendations and norms
- The diversity of implementation

Research about food preferences and acceptance of nutritional recommendations

- **86 semi-directive interviews, 800 pages of discourse**

- **3 operations of obesity prevention (n=52):**
  - Nutrition Service, hospital Hôtel-Dieu (Paris)
  - Roubaix, Epode city (« Together let's prevent childhood obesity »)
  - Teenager workshops « Eat better, move more », Val-de-Marne

  + General population (n=34)
- **Contrasted sample :**
  - Upper/middle/working class social strata ;
  - Paris / the suburbs / the country.

Nutritional recommendations and food preferences

« Eating well » and social classes

2 ideal types : upper / lower strata

A relation between food, health and obesity prevention?

A high and permanent attention to health and slimness in the upper strata

The link between food and health is not clear in the poor strata. Slimness is a matter of aesthetics

Upper strata

Lower strata

- Upper strata : food taste preferences are determined
  - Preference for “healthy” food
  - Tastes as an answer to a moral constraint : «taste of necessity » (≠ Bourdieu)
- Lower strata : “ tastes of liberty”
  - A food taste preference is only a food taste preference
  - Health is not a priority
  - Importance of food abundance and choice
    - Food : primary affordable luxury sphere
    - A way to participate in social life and in the consumer society

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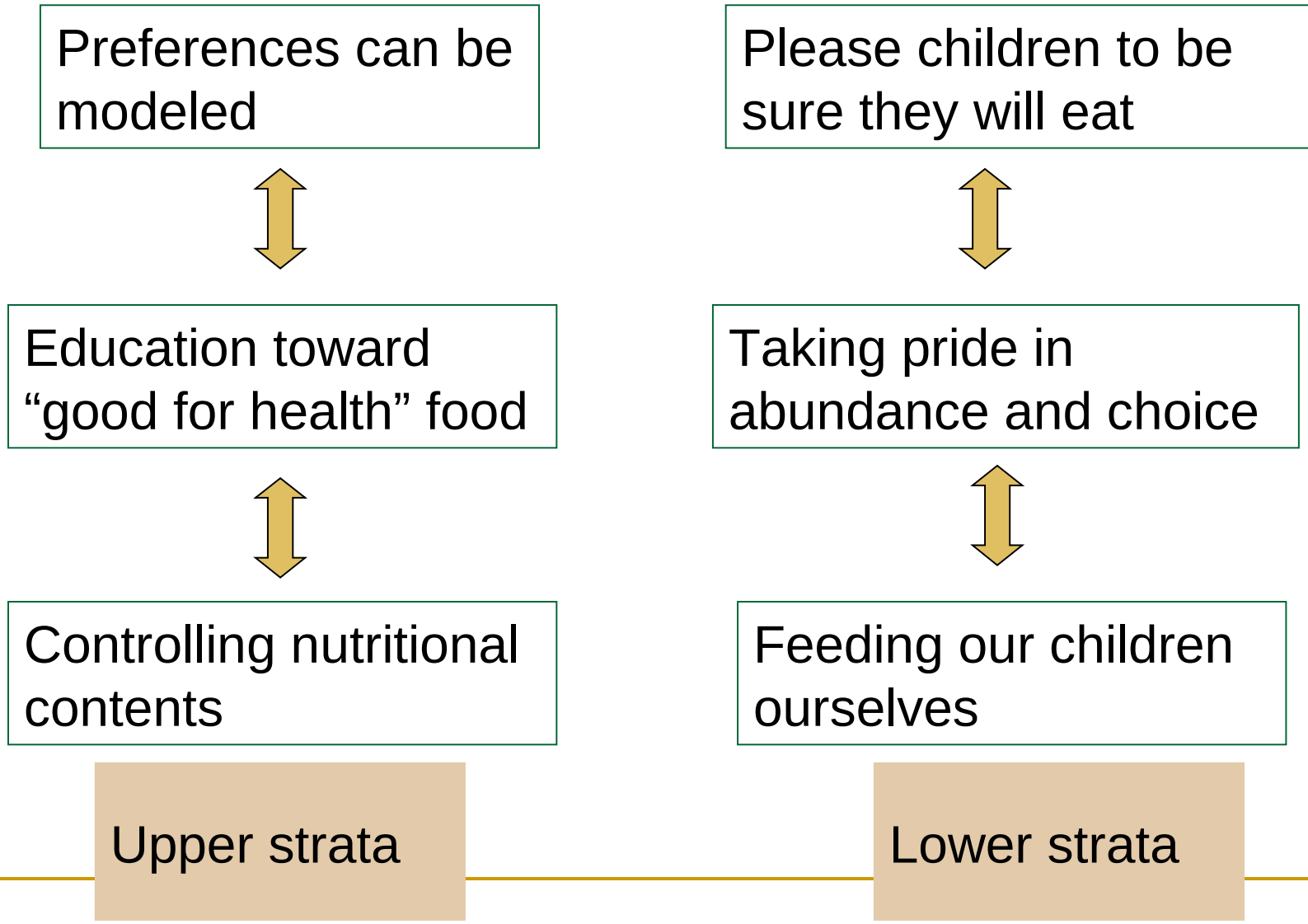
Feeding one' child well



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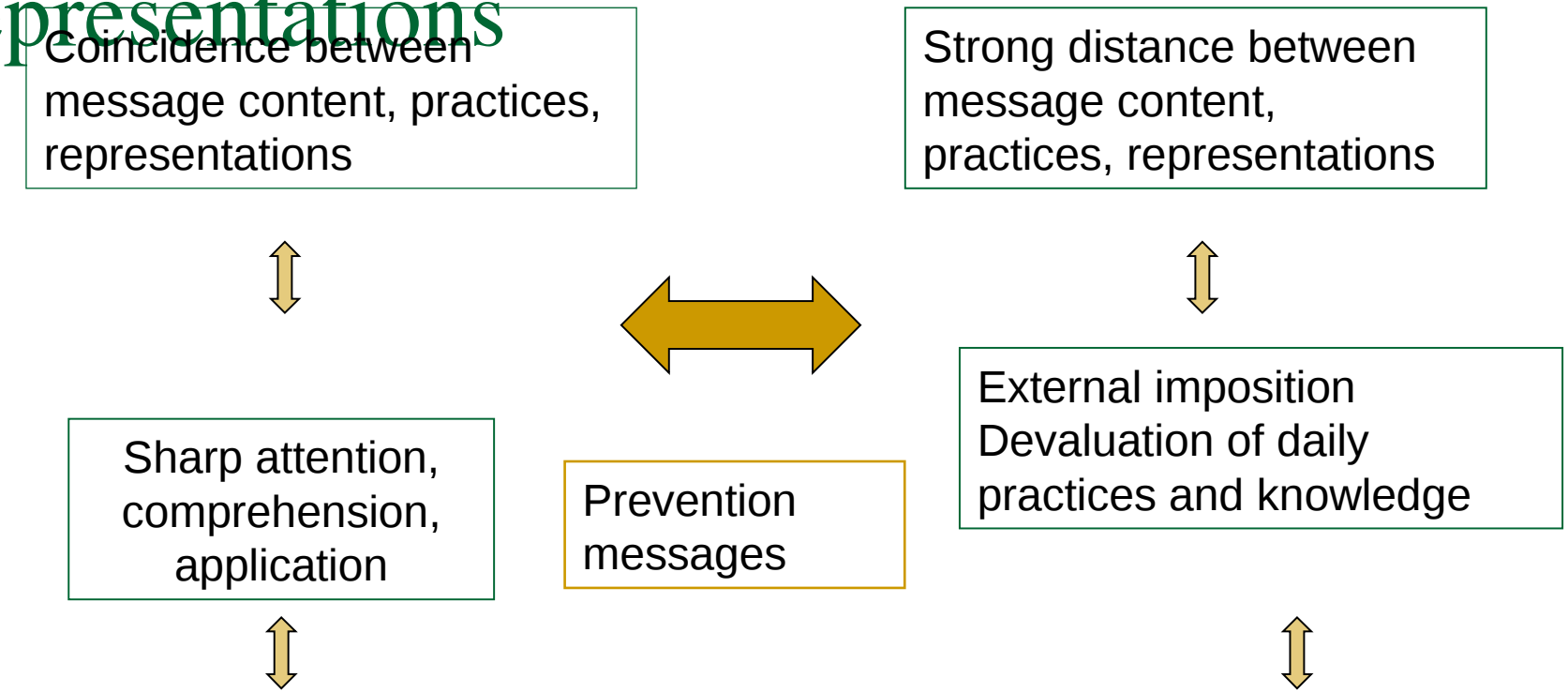
Nutritional norms, body norms

Recommandations as norms

The gap between prevention messages and food/body practices and representations



The implementation of recommendations

- Upper strata : a simple modification of previous practices or norms
- Lower strata : the domestic economy is called into question (a tight budget)
- The implementation of recommendations in relation to one's identity :
  - Daily food practices
  - Children's education
  - Symbolic corporal representations

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Body representations

- Children's bodies
  - Upper strata : early control of body weight
  - Lower strata : higher tolerance to plumpness and at a more advanced age
- Women's bodies
  - Upper strata : conforming to the dominant body norm
  - Lower strata : being overweight is a normal fact in the group one belongs to

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The diversity of implementation

Statistical and lexicography analysis

2 main oppositions and 7 clusters

Two different perspectives

Preventive

Long term

Hygiene of life

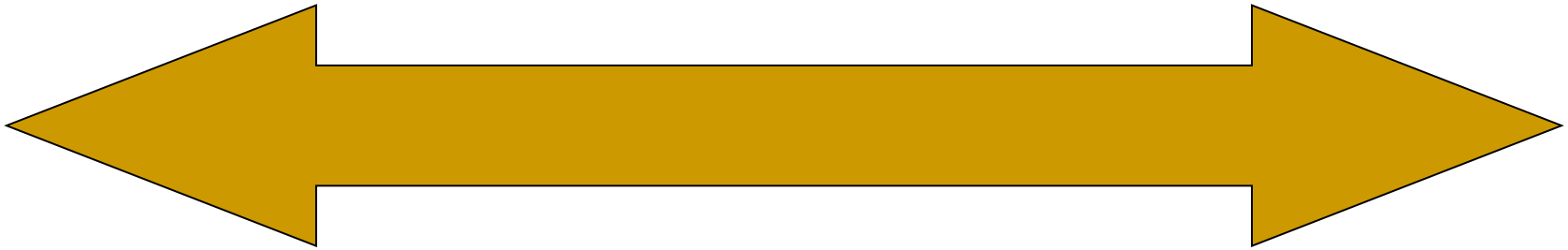
Recommendations are applied to all family members

Curative

Short term

Targeted treatment

Recommendations are applied to the one who is obese



Upper strata

Lower strata

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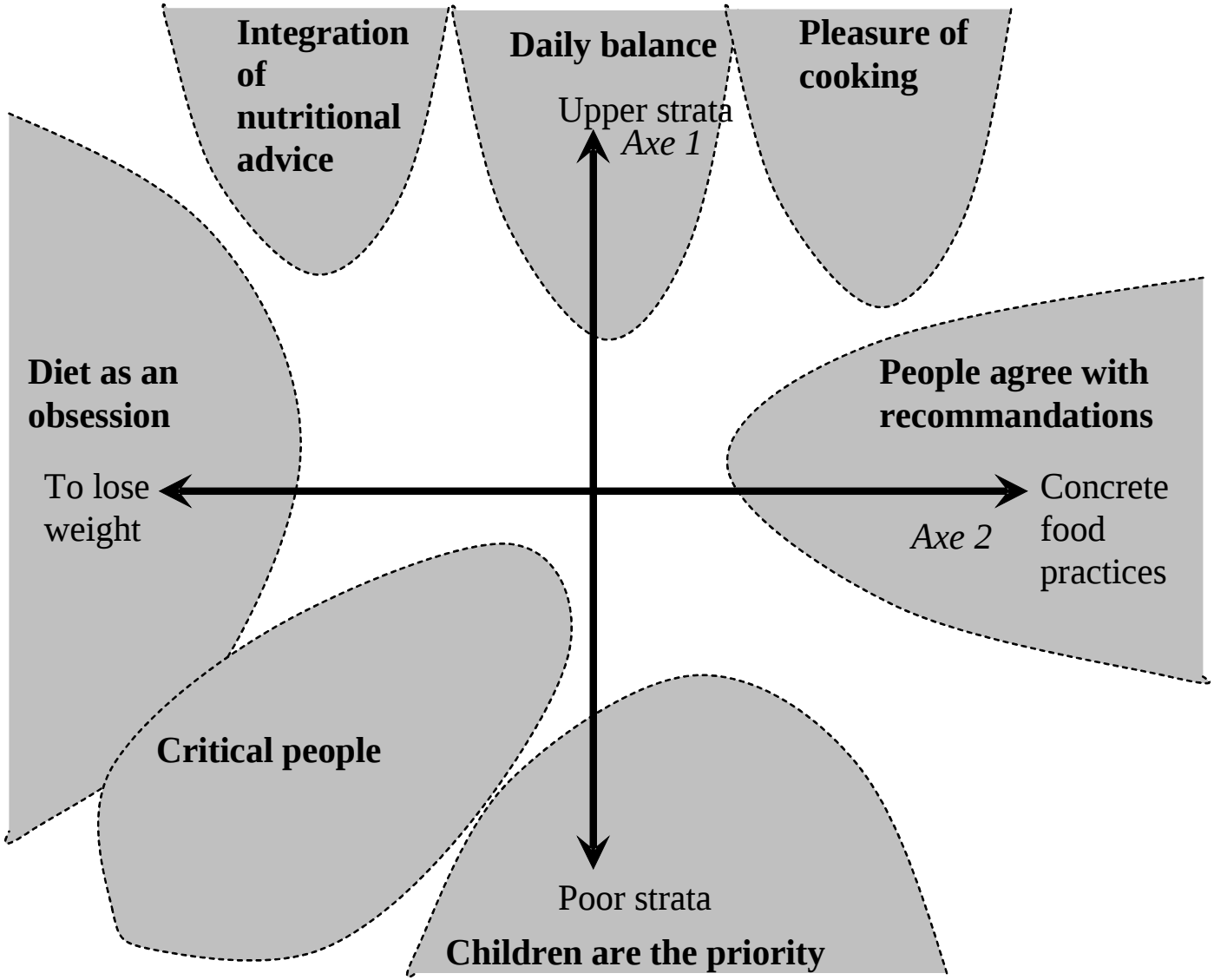
Integration of nutritional advice
Daily balance
Pleasure of cooking
Upper strata
Axe 1
Diet as an obsession
People agree with recommandations
To lose weight
Concrete food practices
Axe 2
Critical people
Poor strata
Children are the priority