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# YOUNG EATER'S DIET: A COMPLEX SITUATION MAKING DIFFICULT THE MATCH WITH CLASSICAL GROWTH DEVELOPMENT MODELS

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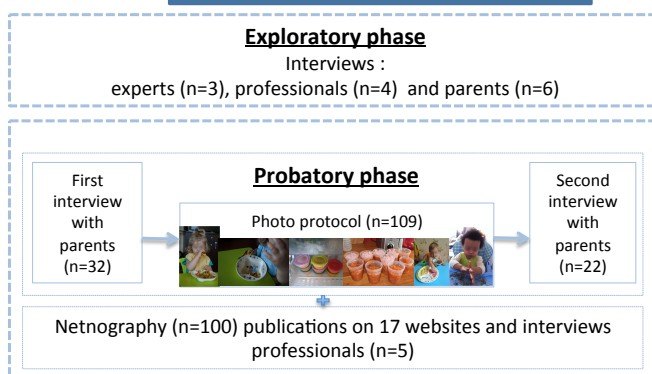
## CONTEXT

- Beyond nutrition, food has hedonic, social and cultural functions
- Assumptions on crises in behaviour and feeding habits & assumptions regarding an educational crisis
- « *Social uncertainty* » with regard to the child (Javeau, 2006) and food's child (Dupuy, 2013 ; Dupuy & Rochedy, 2015 ; Rochedy & Poulain, 2015):
  - Industrialised food** : consequences on knowledge and acceptance of products? (crises, conspiracies, deficient transmission of cooking skills); effects on neophobia ? ; difficulty of introducing new foods?
  - Standardised food** : what « signposts » for parents/children? ; tastes are homogenised or even « averaged »: decrease in sensory range? ; what sensory projections?
  - Medicalised food** : fluctuating discourse on nutrition: nutritional cacophony ; perverse effects: normative injunctions, responsabilisation...? ; regulation of appetite (greedy baby), doses
- However, few studies exist on the socio-cultural dimensions of French babies' feeding practices during diversification

## OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

- Analyse the **material** dimension of young children's eating habits (industrialised or "homemade", textures, portion size, quantity of nutrients, etc.), along with the different children's phases of development and during food socialization process;
- Explore the **immaterial** dimension by understanding parental activities around children's food as the result of a triple process (material, cognitive, emotional/affective);
- Capture the **social norms** and the **cognitive discrepancies between norms and practices**

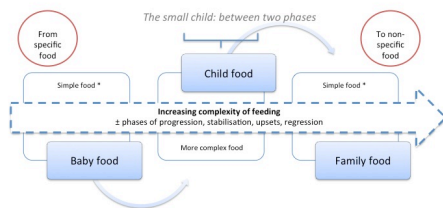
## METHOD/DESIGN



## RESULTS

### 1 - Socio-cultural analyse of the process of baby's feeding diversification

a non linear & complex process made of phases of progression, stabilisation, upsets, regressions and new attempts



Children are confronted with widely differing situations, which compete or even contradict each other in the principles of socialization that they develop

### 3 - From organisational routines to transient rituals

- Mode of organisation (Parents)**  
Creating routines : time marker, time-saving; decrease in physical/mental load
- Mode of education (Children)**  
Creating rituals : gives the child a stable framework



Putting ingredients together to avoid spills when learning to grasp (eg: spinach with semolina)



Deferring the introduction of solids (eg: single ingredient puree in robot blender cooker)

### 2 - Food socialization, which is the introduction of the baby to his own cultural group through his food repertory, implies to go beyond nutrition to apprehend baby's feeding diversification process

#### In terms of content

- Tension between milk and first introduction of other foods
- Tension between specific and non-specific foods
- Tension between different textures, portion sizes, increasing number of ingredients, meal structure

#### In terms of presentation

- From a bottle to varied foods in jars
- From jars to children's cutlery to normal cutlery

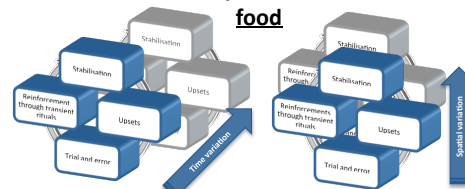
#### In terms of place

- From a person's arms to a high chair
- From a low table or high chair to the family table
- + in the home versus outside the home

#### In terms of timing

- Several meals to + or - 4 meals
- Meal eaten alone to meal eaten at the same time as the parents
- + ordinary versus out-of-the-ordinary dimension

### 4 - ...because there have plurals situations & contexts of food



Socialisation and education are a task in common: children, parents, families (siblings, peers, grandparents)

## CONCLUSION

- This socio-anthropological study allows considering 0 to 3 year old baby's feeding practices beyond classical theoretical growth development models and highlights the importance of **young eaters' socialization** and its consequences
- It demonstrates that young eaters are **plural** with complex eating habits requiring constant re-adjustments from their caregivers

Dupuy A., 2013, *Plaisirs alimentaires, Socialisation des enfants et des adolescents*, Sociologie, Collection Tables des hommes, PUR.

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