

Local Policies Related to Restaurant Menu Labeling: Barriers, Facilitating Factors, and the Role of Local Health Departments

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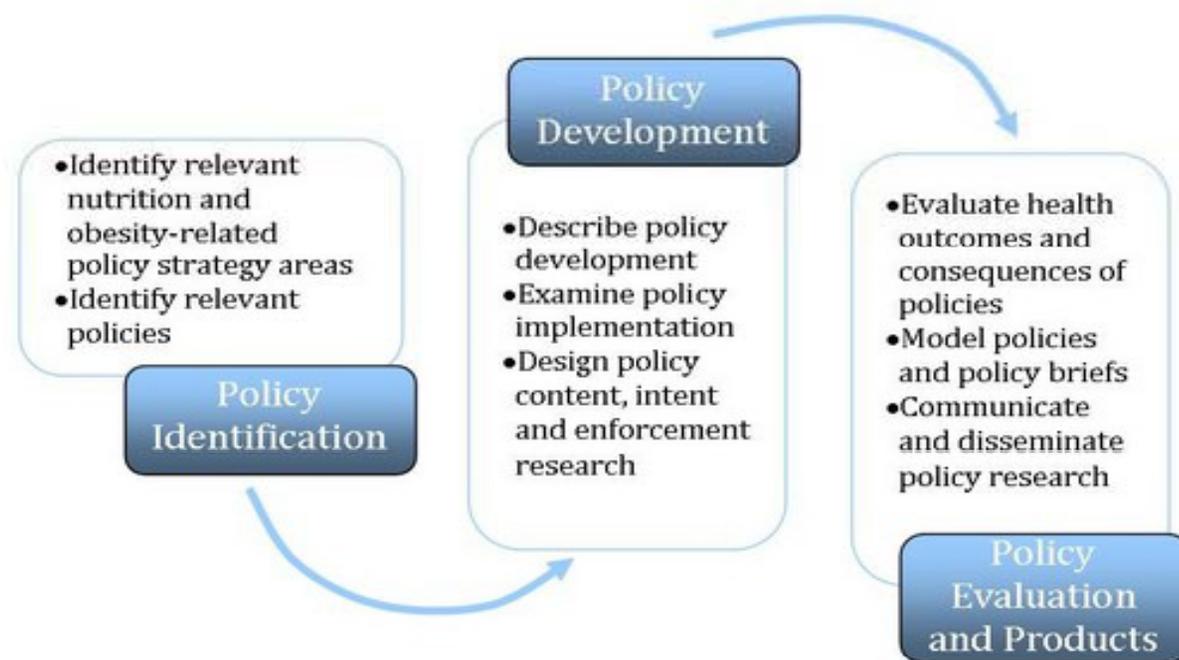


Policy Development is a Function of Public Health



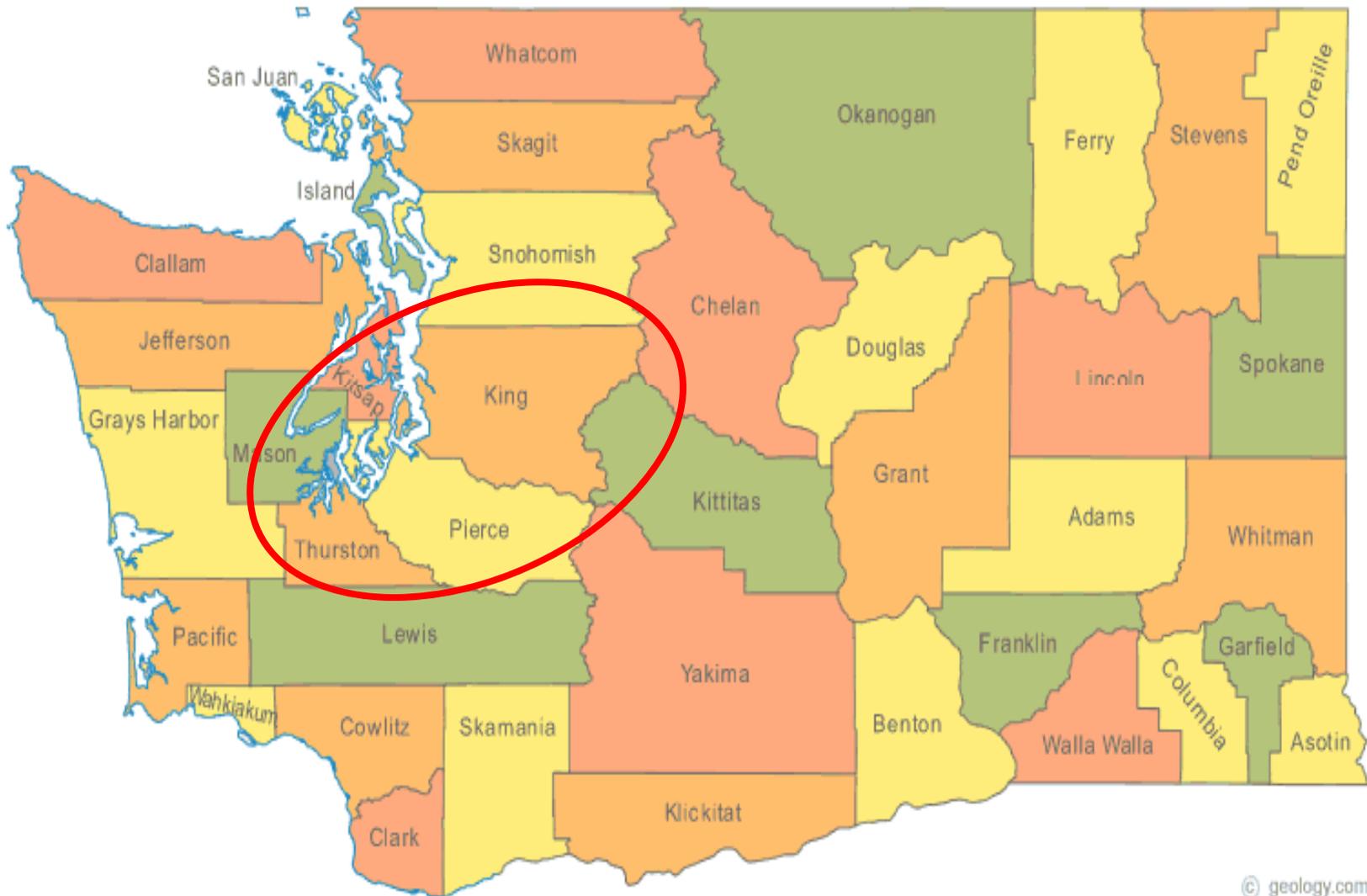
- Institute of Medicine
 - 1988: The Future of Public Health
 - 2011: For the Public's Health - Revitalizing Law and Policy to Meet New Challenges

Nutrition & Obesity Policy Research & Evaluation Network



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Three County Public Health Departments Work to Improve Restaurant Food



Approaches

King	With support from Health Department staff Board of Health passed regulation; mandatory menu labeling for “chain” restaurants started January 2009
Pierce	Health Department staff worked with non-chain restaurants to analyze recipes and facilitate menu labeling
Tacoma	Health Department staff worked with one local franchise owner who offered healthier options in kids meals and posted some nutrition information

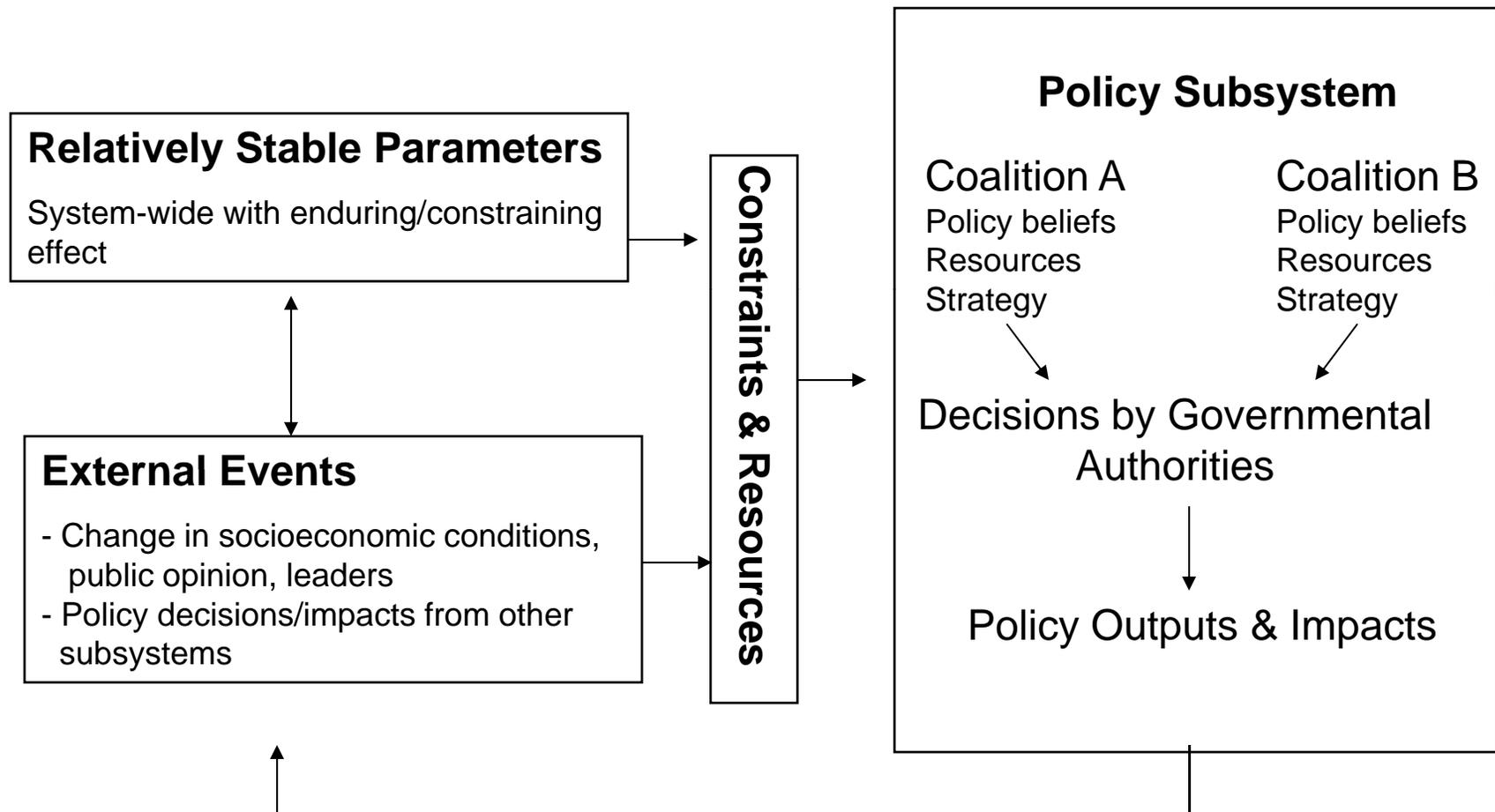
Design & Methods

Multiple-case, replication design

Data: documents and key informant interviews

- Interviews: public health practitioners (11), board of health members (9) , restaurant owners and restaurant association representative (10)
- Interview questions: explore themes related to policy process and change as described by the Advocacy Coalition Framework

Advocacy Coalition Framework



Adapted from: Breton E, Richard L, Gagnon F, Jacques M, Bergeron P. Health promotion research and practice require sound policy analysis models: The case of Quebec's Tobacco Act. *Social Science & Medicine* 2008; 67:1679-1689.

Common Agreement on Parameters

- Obesity rates are a concern
- Meals away from home are important determinants of food intake
- Restaurants need to be profitable

External Events

All: External funding for Policy, Systems & Environmental change; economic recession

King

- NYC precedent policy
- Support from CSPI

Pierce

- Industry push-back in NYC, King Co.
- Federal legislation

Thurston

- External funding for research with restaurants
- Close association with Washington Restaurant Association

Policy Sub-System Actors

King	Leaders: BOH, Public Health Director Staff: HEAL, environmental health Industry: restaurant owners, WRA Community: health organizations & advocates Center for Science in the Public Interest
Pierce	Leaders: BOH, HD manager, PH Director Staff: HEAL Industry: restaurant owners, WRA
Thurston	Leaders: BOH, senior HD leadership Staff: HEAL Industry: local franchise owner, WRA

BOH – Board of Health
HEAL- Healthy Eating Active Living

HD – Health Department
WRA – Washington Restaurant Association

Boards of Health



King

- King County Council Members (3)
- Seattle City Council Members (3)
- Suburban City Mayors (2)
- Health Professionals (2 voting/1 non-voting)
- Director of the Public Health Department (1)

Pierce

- Pierce County Council (3)
- Pierce County Executive (1)
- Tacoma Mayor (1)
- Tacoma City Council (1)
- Pierce County Cities and Towns Association (1)
- Health Professional (1)

Thurston

- The three elected Thurston County Commissioners



Policy Beliefs

ACF construct	Characteristics	Examples
Deep Core Beliefs	Fundamental, unlikely to change	Freedom, justice, fairness, population health as priority
Policy Core Beliefs	Basic strategies for achieving core values	Roles of education v.s. regulation
Secondary Beliefs	Related to administration & implementation	Environmental & behavior change strategies

Policy Beliefs

King

All agreed it is an appropriate role of public health (PH) to use regulation when necessary to protect the health of the community; population health is a priority; humans are resistant to change so we need environmental change; citizens entitled to nutrition information

Pierce

Board of Health (BOH) and PH practitioners less united on need for regulation & roles of PH; one BOH member had strong anti-regulation beliefs; freedom was priority belief; people & industry will make the right choice if PH provides information

Thurston

Role of PH is to collaborate with industry to assure the availability of healthy choices; priority value of freedom vs. regulation; inappropriate to take actions that could compromise industry profits

Policy Oriented Learning

- Ability of actors to learn how to find common ground to work together over time
- Strong demonstration in King County –
 - End result: ability to come together to modify regulations to be in line with what federal regulations were expected to be after passage of ACA

Implications for Practice

1. Policy Development models can be helpful.
2. Core policy beliefs can be barriers or facilitators of the policy process.
3. Lessons learned can be applied to future nutrition policy development.

Models to Inform Practice

- Understanding processes
 - ACF used to describe over 80 other policy processes
 - Can learn from previous initiatives
 - Examples: external events, leadership, economic context
- Plan future strategies
 - Constructs can guide planning
- Flexibility in application
 - Any given construct or theory does not apply to all situations
 - Combine constructs and theories for a best fit explanation

Importance of core policy beliefs

- Industry freedom OR consumer's right to know
- Educate OR regulate
- Environmental change OR individual responsibility

“...when society and communities and the environment are shaping people and encouraging people to be unhealthy, then it's our role to step in- especially if there are societal consequences.”

“This is still a free country even after yesterday (ACA passed), you know. We still have choices to make. The less mandated the better.”

Lessons Learned: Use of law and policy to advance nutritional health of the population

- Facilitators
 - Leadership support
 - Policy-mentors
 - “strong support from the community, the BOH and the medical community”
 - Resources for Policy, Systems and Environment work (PSE)
- The process unfolds over time
 - PSE work in King County going on for many years
 - Prepared policy advocates will look for favorable conditions and be ready to move on policy when the context shifts in their favor
- External events have variable impact
- Local political context matters

TACO
TIME
KIDS



Public Health 
Health & King County

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Read menu labels and make healthier choices.

1310 cal

740 cal

www.kingcounty.gov/health/healthyeating