

ASSESSING STATE POLICY CHOICES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON SCHOOLS' FOODS AND CHILDREN'S DIETS

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Overview

- Policy choices
- State legislatures' policy choices re: obesity prevention
- Policy choices and school availability of sweetened beverages
- Policy choices and child consumption of sweetened beverages
- Political, economic, industry, social determinants of state policy choices

Policy choices

- Choice 1: Do something symbolic or material

- Symbolic: write a resolution

- March 2010, US Congress declares that March will be “Childhood Obesity Awareness” month

- Material: write a bill that uses governing resources substantively or procedurally

- Information

- Authority

- Treasure

- Organization

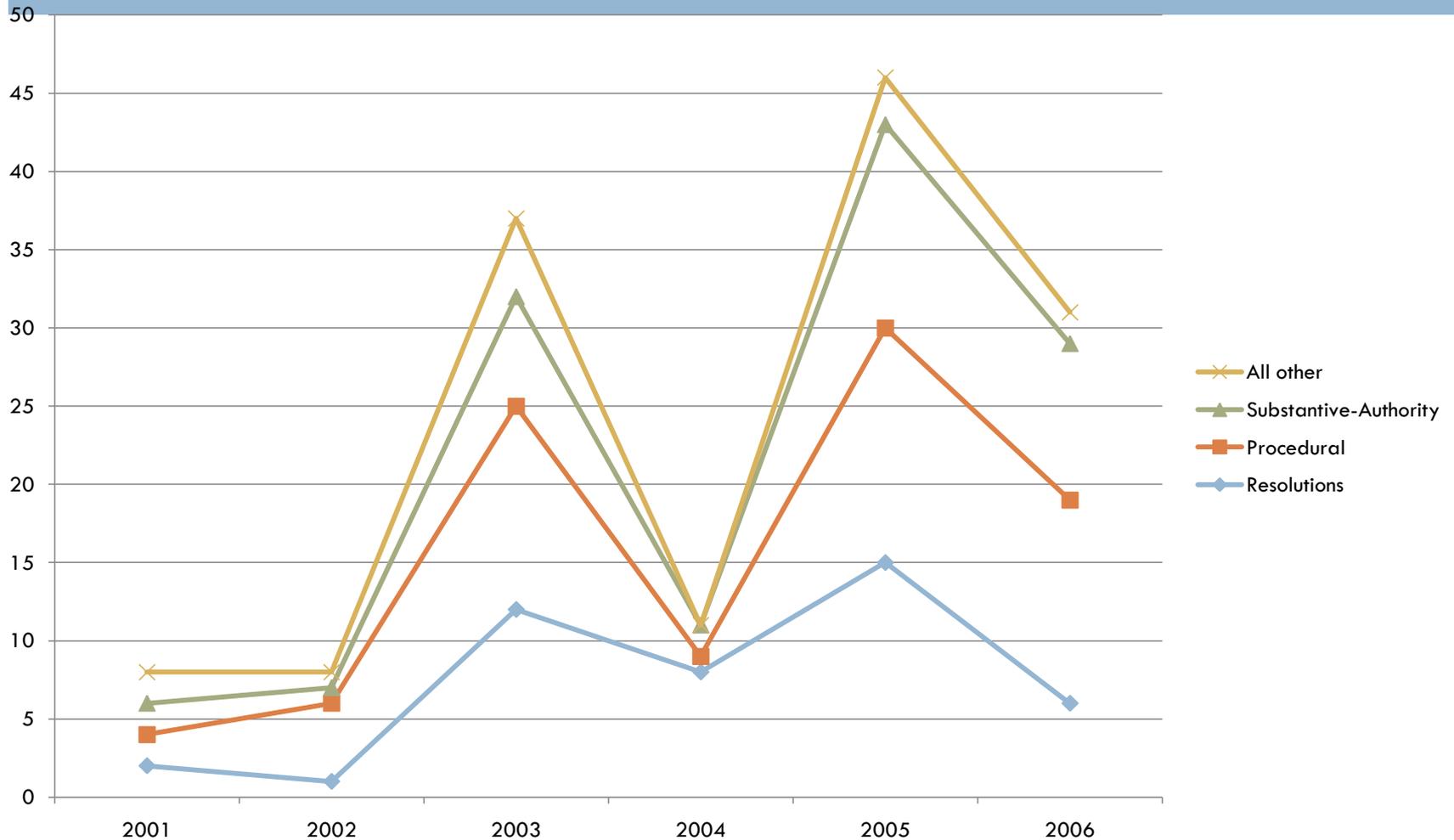
Does the policy choice matter?

- Evidence that any policy choice is better than another is limited
- Advocacy for some policy choices (e.g., regulation) is stronger than for others
- Evaluations of the causes of consequences of policy choices are needed

Data & Methods

- NetScan retrieved text of 1,267 bills related to childhood obesity prevention or school foods from 2001 to 2006
- Bills were coded according to governing resources using Atlas Ti
- Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort 5th & 8th grade panels
 - ▣ Principal report of school food availability
 - ▣ Child report of consumption of foods (e.g., sweetened beverages)
- Analysis conducted in Stata using xtmixed

All state policy choices over 5 years



State categories of policy choice

State Policy Choice	Number
No legislation	21
Resolutions	6
Procedural approaches	8
Regulations	4
All other substantive	1

State's characteristics associated with policy choices

	No legislation	Resolutions	Procedure only	Regulations	Other substantive
Adult Obesity Prevalence	26.0	26.4	27.6	28.9	31.5
Obesity-attributable health care (\$millions)	\$1,225	\$1,508	\$2,630	\$3,322	\$1,163
% Democrats	31.3	36.5	35.2	37.7	37.3
% liberal	19.1	19.1	19.9	20.6	15.9
Farm-income (\$millions)	\$1,031	\$836	\$1,069	\$3,692	\$1,248

State policy choice availability of sweetened beverages

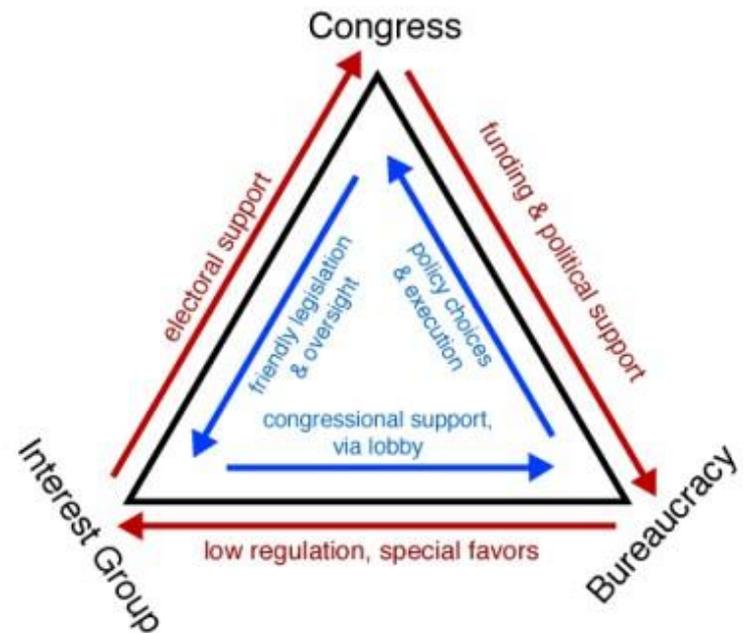
	No legislation	Resolutions	Procedure	Regulations
Never available	12%	17%	16%	15%
Always available	31%	27%	29%	34%
Increased availability	10%	19%	15%	9%
Decreased availability	46%	37%	40%	43%

State policy choice and children's sweetened beverage consumption

	Change in times/ day Between 5 th & 8 th	P-value
Constant (adjusted)	0.53	<0.000
Policy choice		
No legislation	Reference	
Resolution	0.08	0.017
Procedure (e.g. wellness committees)	0.06	0.054
Authority (e.g., regulation)	0.02	0.567
Resolution	Reference	
Procedure (e.g. wellness committees)	-0.07	0.303
Authority (e.g., regulation)	-0.02	0.651

Discussion

- Kingdon describes “perverse effects” of policy process
- Agricultural policy widely recognized as an example the “iron triangle”
- State policy choices in this context:
 - Don’t matter
 - Are a bad fit



Future directions for nutrition policy analysis

- Understanding the ‘fit’ between policies and contexts:
 - ▣ If regulation, the often advocated policy choice for nutrition is unlikely to yield results, what will?
 - Procurement guidelines (organizational)
 - Training and technical assistance (information)
 - Taxes (treasure)
 - ▣ What are the benefits of procedural approaches?
 - Development of local leadership on issue
 - Local fit

Policy Experiment Opportunities

- Changes to SNAP to increase healthy purchases
- Farm-to-school programs in South Carolina
- Improvements in the School Meals Program
- New federal competitive food regulations

Acknowledgements

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Evaluations

- Please remove your evaluations from the folder

- Complete evaluations before you leave today and drop in the evaluation box

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