





Framing Food and Fitness

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The Charge: Investigate the Framing Potential of the Premises

“Help create a community environment that supports healthy children, youth, and families by making healthy foods available and increasing opportunities for families to engage in play and physical activity.”

WKKF Food and Fitness Concept Paper

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The Charge: Investigate the Framing Potential of the Premises

“Address the national epidemic of obesity..poverty, access to quality food, health care, physical activity opportunities, housing and education, social support networks and racism are among the critical factors that impact obesity.”

WKKF Food and Fitness Concept Paper

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Research to Date

WKKF

- 20 cognitive interviews CO and Chicago
- Media content analysis, 6 wks/9 outlets
- Cognitive media content analysis, 2006
- Simplifying model development
- 16 focus groups NC, MA, WA, IA, MI, NM

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Research to Date

TCE


- 20 cognitive interviews 4 CA communities
- 8 focus groups 4 CA communities

Together

National online experimental survey of 4500 US adults with over samples in CA, and with African-Americans and Latinos

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How does the public think about food and fitness-related issues?

- 40 cognitive interviews in CA, CO and IL
- 24 focus groups in CA, IA, MA, MI, NC, NM, WA

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The Framing Challenge

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS

- Systems thinking
- Conditions
- Built environment
- Societal norms/policies
- Quality of life

HEALTH INDIVIDUALISM

- Consumer thinking
- Choices
- Nature (abounds)
- Mindset
- Lifestyle

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Dominant Frames: Health Individualism

- Each person makes his or her own destiny; it is a personal responsibility to make healthy choices
- The consequences of these choices only affect the individual and loved ones

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Dominant Frame #1: Health Individualism

- Any individual or group disparities are due to:
 - 1) Knowledge of healthy living
 - 2) Character – discipline, priorities, will
 - 3) (Pop) culture – what's fashionable, acceptable, peer influences
- External obstacles exist but can be overcome

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Health Individualism in Public Thinking

[Health] all really depends on people's personalities, you know, whether they eat right. (Moderate white man, age 35, CA)

Q: People who have better-paying jobs or higher-status jobs tend to be healthier. Why do you think that might be the case?

A: If you have a higher-paying job you are probably more educated, and if you're more educated you pay attention to things like health, what am I putting into my body. (Conservative white man, age 32, CA)

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Health Individualism in Public Thinking

Q: Why are some communities healthier than others, do you think?

A: Why? I think it's because of education, as well as upbringing and people taking pride in themselves. For example, I think some parents, they don't seem to care about their children's health. They just let them do whatever they want, as far as eating habits or their general grooming.

Q: Why do you think that is?

A: I guess some people – they are just not disciplined. They're not disciplined with themselves or with their families. (Liberal Asian-American woman, age 39, CA)

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Consequences of Health Individualism

"You can only regulate people so much, you know. You can always bring the horse to water but you can't make him drink, too. So you can try and encourage people to live healthier lifestyles but it doesn't necessarily mean it's going to happen." (Moderate white woman, age 47, CA)

"It's up to the individual, you know. It's not society's or government's job to make sure you eat well or you try to take care of yourself." (Conservative white man, age 32, CA)

"I know a lot of people in today's society like to point fingers and blame other people for their own problems, but I mean if you're fat, that's your problem. You need to exercise, you need to take charge." (Conservative Hispanic woman, age 29, CA)

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Salience Doesn't Overcome Frame

*You know, I saw something recently about America's youth being obese and Americans being obese, but who pays attention? Nobody pays attention to it. **They just keep right on eating.*** (African-American man, age 50, Chicago)

*I think [obesity] should be treated like a disease. I think that it affects your entire body, it also affects your mind. ... It's a very holistic issue, you know, in terms of your body, and disease is similar as well, in terms of that it usually affects your whole body in some capacity or another. And I also think it should be treated like a disease because **you can die from it, and I think that might be the only way to get Americans to actually pay any attention to it.*** (White woman, age 36, CO)

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What the Health Individualism Model Crowds Out

- Social factors that influence health (isolation, depression, bullying)
- Physical factors that influence health (violence, poverty, early deprivation)
- Political factors that influence health (rural poverty, redlining, access to insurance)
- Economic factors that influence health (joblessness, lack of healthy food)

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Dominant Frame #2: Modern Life

- It's unhealthy, but inevitable – can't turn back the clock.
- Everyone has stress.
- Resistance is futile; get over it or wax nostalgic.
- Deterioration of community assumed; moral meltdown is responsible.
- We're all too busy to be fit.

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Modern Life in Public Thinking

I think maybe [fifty years ago] they didn't have as much medical knowledge so maybe in that way [they were less healthy], because things killed them that wouldn't normally. But as far as eating healthier and exercising, people weren't out drinking and smoking and drinking shots all night, they were eating well off the farm and going to bed early. (Liberal African-American woman, age 56, CA)

It's just the world we live in nowadays. Everything that's going on around us. (Conservative white woman, age 65, CA)

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Modern Life in Public Thinking

A lot of people are really driven, they've got mortgages and they've got car payments and they're all driving around in really fancy brand new cars so they put the pressure on themselves in a lot of ways too. But, I think that stress really plays a big role in people living shorter lives.

Q: *Do you think there is anything we could do if we wanted to change that?*

A: *Well, it's kind of on a personal basis.*

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Why Can't We Use Community?

The story of Community is the story of the Decline of Community.

"I would think [a healthy community is] one that works together to keep the environment clean. It goes back to the water, the soil, – just working together. We don't have communities like we used to have where people all got together and for a common goal . . . We've all gotten so busy. Technology supposedly makes our life easier, [but] it also speeds everything up because the faster technology can do something, the more you want to cram into your day. Two-parent working households I think have contributed to that. Both parents are out of the home, television, video games have kept kids inside instead of outside where they need to be." (liberal white woman, age 40, CA)

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Dominant Frame #3: It's About Lifestyle

- Fitness is a hobby or a goal, not the opposite of inactivity.
- The community is a place you find role models.
- It's about appearance/narcissism.
- It's a state of mind.
- Elitism vs. populism: most people don't have time to cook, shop organic, etc.

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It's All About Appearance



Q: *These days in our society, do you see too much emphasis on fitness, or not enough, or maybe an OK amount?*

A: *In some perspectives, I think that there's too much and, in some perspectives, I think there's not enough. Because I think there's like "over-exercisers," that they're obsessed with it, and I think that, unfortunately, the media and marketing have put a body image issue especially on women. In college, I knew women who would work out two or three times a day, which is a little excessive. So, in that perspective, I think the media puts pressures on women, that they need to be skinny and perfectly built. (White woman, age 29, CO)*

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Lifestyle Concerns in Public Thinking

*If you have a healthy community, within that community the people would probably be more likely to be more community-oriented with each other. **Because they feel good, and if you feel good, you're happy.** If you're happy you want to be involved with other people. When you feel lousy, you just kind of want to be by yourself a lot of the time, you know. (Conservative Hispanic woman, CA, age 29)*

Well, you've got to get back to culture. Certain ethnicities have a tendency to eat more fatty foods. It's just cultural. It's the way they grew up. (Liberal white man, CA, age 53)

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Less Dominant Frames: Civic Well-Being/Quality of Life

- Shifts from consumer stance to citizen stance possible
- Widespread belief that people unprotected from abuse by powers-that-be: industries, advertisers
- Responsible management of public resources needed

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Less Dominant Frames: Civic Well-Being/Quality of Life

- Attracted to stories where communities empowered to take collective action
- We could do that here vs. That would never happen here

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Three Cities Receive National Award...

The Community Quality of Life Foundation has announced the winners of its Excellence in Civic Wellbeing award. This year, three cities earned the Foundation's top honor for leadership in creating public environments that demonstrably improve residents' health and wellbeing: Belmont, MA, Waterville, VA and Richmond, IN. "Public officials make decisions every day in zoning and in the design of public spaces that directly affect the health and wellbeing of communities. Drive through any metropolitan area and the neighborhoods will change dramatically. Some have public environments that encourage health while others don't - this creates a Patchwork Effect in the nation's health picture. We've seen the impact physical structures can have in improving people's lives, and we're using these awards to highlight the best examples of change," explained Alan Robson, CEO of the Foundation. ...

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Focus Groups Respond

"I think it's like we're making better communities through these actions, and that's getting communities to work with their local government... Sometimes we blame a lot of things on government."

"It sounds as though these three mayors were really interested in their communities."

"It looks like the government and the citizens were working together."

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Focus Groups Respond

"I found it very interesting how we, the people, have the power to change our environment. It's saying look, you can go to Walmart or you can create 10 little locations so that people made the change in their community."

"I feel like neighborhoods and groups of people can make things happen. It can be tedious but we can go to the government. We are the government. Perhaps it's not the one that we wanted most. The people make it happen ultimately. That's where it starts. People organize, they join together and they are tremendously powerful and it is great to see that things can change."

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Can It Happen Here?

"I would like to see leadership and costs. Where is the money coming from? Who would be sponsoring the movement?"

"That won't work here in Boston."

"This is like the urban villages once attempted in Seattle. It was a great idea, but it failed."

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Less Dominant Frames: A Role for Government

- Acknowledgement that some communities are advantaged or disadvantaged
- Government (local, state, federal) should support community choices, not undermine them

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Less Dominant Frames: A Role for Government

- Government cannot/should not make up for individual behaviors
- Price affects choice (so lower price and people will be responsible or not as consumers)
- Alternatively, let the market fix it as people opt in or out

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Problem Definition Precludes Govt

Mentalist



Materialist



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Gov't Does Not Legislate Behavior

Q: What can a city do to improve the overall health and fitness of people who live there?

A: It's interesting in Chicago, the parks and rec department down at Millennium Park, they have yoga and pilates and different exercise classes in the park every weekend. White woman, age 53, Chicago

The government's role? Encouraging people to eat better, I suppose, to be fit, but they're already doing that. I mean it's up to an individual what they want to do. I don't think they can force people to do something. White woman, age 62, CO

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Frame Clash

"Now, granted, there are some people who are genetically tuned to be obese, but I see so many people that if they would just start walking around the block one time a day

...."
White woman, early 60s, CO

- Offer tax breaks for local food producers
- Limit vehicle speeds
- Improve security in parks
- Ban soda pop in school machines
- Restrict number of liquor stores
- Encourage clustered development

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Frame Clash

Q: We have become a flabby nation, [shouldn't we] be concerned about that?

A: I don't think we should be concerned about it. If a person's going to stuff his gut and die early, then let him do it. That's their problem. . . . Is the government going to come in and start dictating to people how they can be happy and how they can improve their quality [of life]?

White man, age 68, Fort Collins

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Less Dominant Frames Concern for Kids

- Habits start early
- Parents are to blame
- Advertising rarely mentioned by interview informants

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Less Dominant Frames Concern for Kids

- Kids/parents are exploited by (rogue) business practices
- Government should support public health
- Schools should be safe/healthy places
- Schools have made mistakes that are reversible

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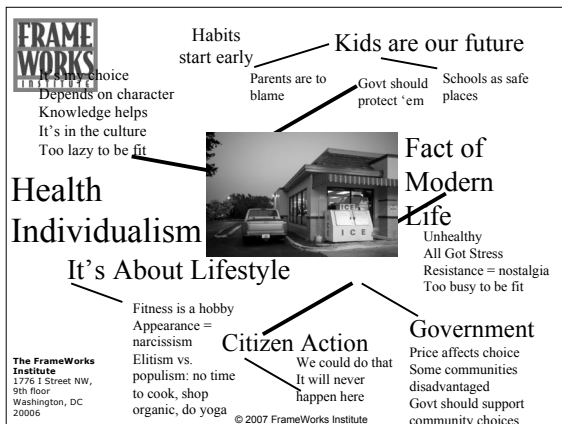
Focus Groups React

"The first issue is with our children, and physical education is not a big thing nowadays. I think that what we have forgotten is balance. We forget about their physical wellbeing. We have eliminated physical education, and kind of put it under the rug, but if we keep putting things under the rug, we will have a mountain after a while. And that is what we have now, and we are trying to figure out what's going on. We need to bring balance back into our school system. That it's not all just education, but education is part of being healthy and having nutrition."

Seattle, WA Democratic woman

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What is the public discourse on food and fitness?

How does this dialogue influence and constrain public choices?

- Media content analysis, 6 wks/9 outlets, 2006
- Cognitive media content analysis, 2006
- Media content analysis of food systems coverage, 27 outlets, 2006 inclusive

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The Pictures in the News and the Pictures in Our Heads

CMPA Content Analysis

- WPost, NYT, USAT, 3 news magazines, 3 PM network news, 7/17 – 8/31, 2006

5 areas of capture

- Food systems and access
- Physical activity, built environment
- School systems' role in promoting fitness, health
- Work environment: health and physical activity
- Obesity: causes and solutions

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The Pictures in the News and the Pictures in Our Heads

- Of 95 relevant stories, ¾ of all coverage focused on individual aspects of weight and nutrition
- ¼ stories addressed systemic or institutional factors
- 3X as many claims of individual responsibility as social responsibility
- No assertion of individual responsibility ever rebutted
- Opinions that blame social institutions rebutted half the time
- Only 4/5 were opinion pieces

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The Pictures in the News and the Pictures in Our Heads

Campbell Brown (anchor): Whose fault is it if you're fat? The CDC says two thirds of all Americans are overweight and that 30 percent of us are obese. But can we really blame the fast food industry? Well, some are trying. ...

Stone Phillips reporting: In the 1990s, lawyers successfully used the courtroom to curb smoking. Now some of the same lawyers want to sue the fast food industry to curb obesity. When somebody says, 'Eating at McDonald's made me fat,' what do you say?

Don Thompson: You know, I couldn't speak to why a person would say that.

Phillips: Don Thompson is McDonald's USA chief operating officer.

Mr. Thompson: At McDonald's, we're not the cause of obesity.

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The Pictures in the News and the Pictures in Our Heads

Phillips: But in August 2002, two girls claimed just that in a lawsuit, alleging that McDonald's was the blame for their obesity. When you first heard about that lawsuit, what did you think?

Mr. Thompson: Honestly, I thought it was a hoax. I really did. And as it moved forward and we heard more about it, I really felt like someone was deferring their responsibility.

Phillips: Do companies like McDonald's bear some responsibility at a time when obesity is a major problem in this country?

Mr. Thompson: Well, I think what level of responsibility we do have is to provide menu choice.

NBC Nightly News 8/16/06

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Cognitive Blindness

- No causes or consequences beyond the individual
- Consumer thinking is promoted
- “Scientific” solutions framed as news you can use
- Abundance of news, devices and products to help consumers do better
- Reinforcement of a Small Picture view: a limited, personal environment of products, habits, small choices
- Reinforcement of individual responsibility

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What’s Missing?

- Public health as something we all have a stake in.
- Public health as shaped by material forces (availability of foods, public transportation, “engineered” problems from zoning and design) as opposed to mentalist causes (knowledge, attitude, character).

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What’s Missing?

- Public health as something shaped by forces we can and do control through actions of governments and citizens.
- Public health as a common good or infrastructure that can and should be managed and maintained responsibly.
- Roles for government, community and industry in advancing and protecting public health.

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Public Health: Taking Back the Frame



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Why We Must Change the Frame

YOU SAY

- Go outside.
- Exercise
- Walk
- Eat better.
- Solutions exist.

THEY THINK

- It's not safe.
- Most people don't.
- It's old-fashioned, impractical.
- People eat what they want. No time. I try.
- Fast = cheap
- They wouldn't work here.

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Opportunities

- Children → Gets past individualism
- Schools → Gets past parents/habits
(elimination of PE, impact of govt on school diets) → Mistakes reversible
- Farm Bill → Gov't already there, a new/old idea
- Built environment → Man made = soluble; may provoke reconsideration in some

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Web-based Experiments

Supported by WKCF and The California Endowment
September – October 2007

- National sample of 4500 US adults
- Oversample of 2031 CA residents, including 18% sample of both Black and Hispanic respondents
- Respondents exposed to 1 of 4 value frames and 1 additional treatment – either a simplifying model or a domain
- Null condition received no frame exposure
- All exposed to same 7 policy batteries

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4 Values Reframes Developed and Tested

- Interdependence
 - About place, not people or groups
- Ingenuity
 - About our society as a whole before they are about specific groups
- Prevention
 - About broader goal of inclusion and improvement
- Fairness
 - Community is carefully defined as geographic
 - Explicitly connect goal to environmental conditions, ability to exercise, access to nutritious foods

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➤ Interdependence

Public policies often ignore the fact that **what affects Americans in one part of the nation affects us all and that we will only succeed when all parts of the nation are in good shape.** When we build communities where people can't breathe healthy air, exercise safely and conveniently, and get nutritious foods, these areas cannot contribute as they might to the nation's overall prosperity and the nation's progress is held back. As a result, we are unable to improve school test scores, physical fitness and workforce participation.

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➤ Ingenuity

We as a society are not devoting enough attention to effective policies and programs that would get American communities in good shape. **Smart states have been able to build communities where people can breathe healthy air, exercise safely and conveniently, and get nutritious foods.** These innovative investments have significantly improved conditions by raising school test scores, improving physical fitness and workforce participation in these areas.

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➤ Prevention

We should prevent further damage to our nation's quality of life by helping American communities get in good shape. Preventing unhealthy air quality, increasing safety and convenience in environments where people exercise, and increasing regular access to nutritious foods would save money and lives in the long run. And, by devoting more resources to addressing these problems before they become even more serious, we may be able to reverse declining school test scores, improve physical fitness and workforce participation.

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➤ Fairness

Some communities are struggling because they are not given a fair chance to get in good shape. We need to level the playing field so that every community's residents can breathe healthy air, exercise safely and conveniently, and get nutritious foods. When some communities are denied the resources they need to build these things into their environments, they are unable to improve school test scores, physical fitness and workforce participation.

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The Good News

- All 4 frames increased support for all 7 policies – there was only 1 non-performer in 28 conditions.
- Policies included improving school food and exercise policies, public transportation, parks and recreation, zoning and livability, availability of fresh food and restricting liquor stores.
- Some frames move opinion as much as 7 points.

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Simplifying Models

Doctors say that every town, workplace and neighborhood in America can be evaluated in terms of what they call its **Food And Fitness Environment**. The Food And Fitness Environment where we live or work is one of the most important things determining whether we end up fit and healthy or not. Some factors in the Food And Fitness Environment are fairly obvious, like access to pollution-free air, healthy food and adequate health care. The number of walking paths or fast food restaurants in an area also affects the overall state of public fitness. When we improve the Food And Fitness Environment of a place, the health of the people who live and work there improves as well.

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Simplifying Models

Experts have observed that every town, neighborhood and region in America can be evaluated in terms of its **Public Structures**. These include, for example, adequate transportation, markets with healthy foods, and schools with physical fitness requirements. Without these structures, however, community success is undermined. When they are well maintained, they form a kind of machinery that makes it possible for Americans to maintain their health and quality of life. When we improve the Public Structures in a place, the health of the people who live and work there improves as well.

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Combined Frame Effects

- Fairness + Food and Fitness: +12 pts
- Ingenuity + Public Structures: +7.3 points
- Interdependence + Food and Fitness: +6
- Prevention + Food and Fitness: +5

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What Domain?

- Is this about Health? Prevention + health = +6.4 pts
Ingenuity + health = + 6.4 pts
- Is this about Kids? Fairness + children = + 6.4 pts
- Is this about Environment? Interdependence + environment = + 4 pts
Largest effects are on policies about development – as much as 10 pts, always significant

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Matching Frame to Targets

- In CA, Interdependence more effective, Fairness less effective than nationally
- In CA, Ingenuity + Kids = +19.5 pts across all policies
- In CA, Fairness + Environment = +11.6 pts
- In CA, effects on Whites larger than nationally
- In CA, effects on Blacks flat except Interdependence + Environment (+6.1 pts)
- Among Hispanics, only Fairness + Health and Prevention + Children have significant positive effects

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An Evolving Toolkit of Frame Elements

- The Food and Fitness Model gets environment into the frame in subtle but powerful ways.
- If you use Fairness, make it about place, apply it to children, and use Food and Fitness Environment.
- Where intergroup competition is prominent, use Interdependence + Environment or Ingenuity + Children

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An Evolving Toolkit of Frame Elements

- When you talk about Prevention, use Food and Fitness Environment and connect it to Health.
- The Solutions Story (Ingenuity + Public Structures) is also powerful.

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Putting it All Together

Smart states are those that pay attention to effective policies and programs that would get communities in good shape. (INGENUITY VALUE) Experts agree that being healthy and fit in adulthood is largely determined by the communities that we live in as children. (CHILDREN AS DOMAIN) When schools are provided with nutritious foods, they become true learning environments, that shape strong minds and bodies. (CAUSAL SEQUENCE, MATERIALIST)

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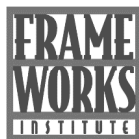


Putting it All Together

Cutting back on healthy foods and physical education in schools is a losing proposition for this country. (SHARED FATE, CONSEQUENCES) Today half of all students attend schools that have reduced their phy ed class to just one or two days per week. Part-time fitness is no more effective than part-time reading or math instruction. (SOCIAL MATH) We need to pay more attention to the Food and Fitness Environments that will determine whether our children end up healthy or not (SIMPLIFYING MODEL).

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