

Using Newspapers as an Evaluative Tool for Media Advocacy

Lessons from the
SmokeLess States
Evaluation

Catherine Siebel

University of Illinois - Chicago

Co-Author:

Katherine Clegg Smith

Bloomberg School of Public Health,
Johns Hopkins University

Media Advocacy: What it is, what it does

Goals:

1. Setting the agenda

- Establishing the primacy of certain **topics** over others

2. Shaping the debate

- Establishing the primacy of certain **values** over others

3. Advancing a policy approach

- Establishing the primacy of certain **solutions** over others

(Wallack, 2002; Chapman 2001)

Media Advocacy: What it is, what it does

What forms does media advocacy take?

- News Releases
- Letters to the Editor
- Op-Eds
- Interviews with the Press
- Media Events

(2000 APHA Media Advocacy Manual)

Media Advocacy: The import of newspapers

- Newspapers often serve as an ‘alternative electorate’ for policy makers (Mutz & Soss, 1997).
- Health-related articles in prominent newspapers command the attention of politicians; can lead to the passage of important legislation (Otten, 1992).
- Newspapers serve as a source of record for other news media (e.g., radio, television).

Using Newspapers as an Evaluative Tool

- We know that media advocacy is a vital component in promoting public health goals.
- AND we know that newspapers are vital to this process.
- SO: How best to monitor the coverage of a given public health topic?

How DO we do it?!?!

OUR DATA

- Every daily newspaper in the country (N=1,492)
- Clipping Service
- One-third sample by day
- Archived by date

OUR CODING SYSTEM

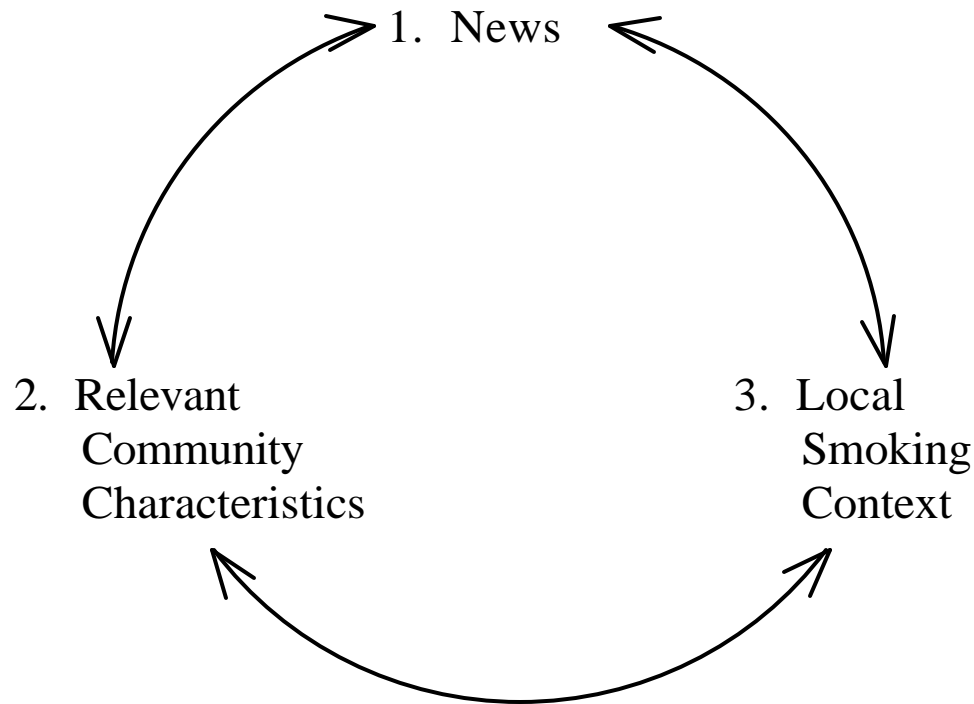
- Inductively derived
- Twelve variables
- Prominence: front page, image, square inches
- Content: tobacco focus, tobacco company, lawsuit, article type, theme, topic
- Tone: Event, Opinion Slant

The coding process

- System took 18 months to create (Clegg Smith et al, 2002)
- Team of four coders
- Use kappa to check intercoder reliability on a monthly basis
- Consistently above acceptable range (.7 or higher)

Data Options

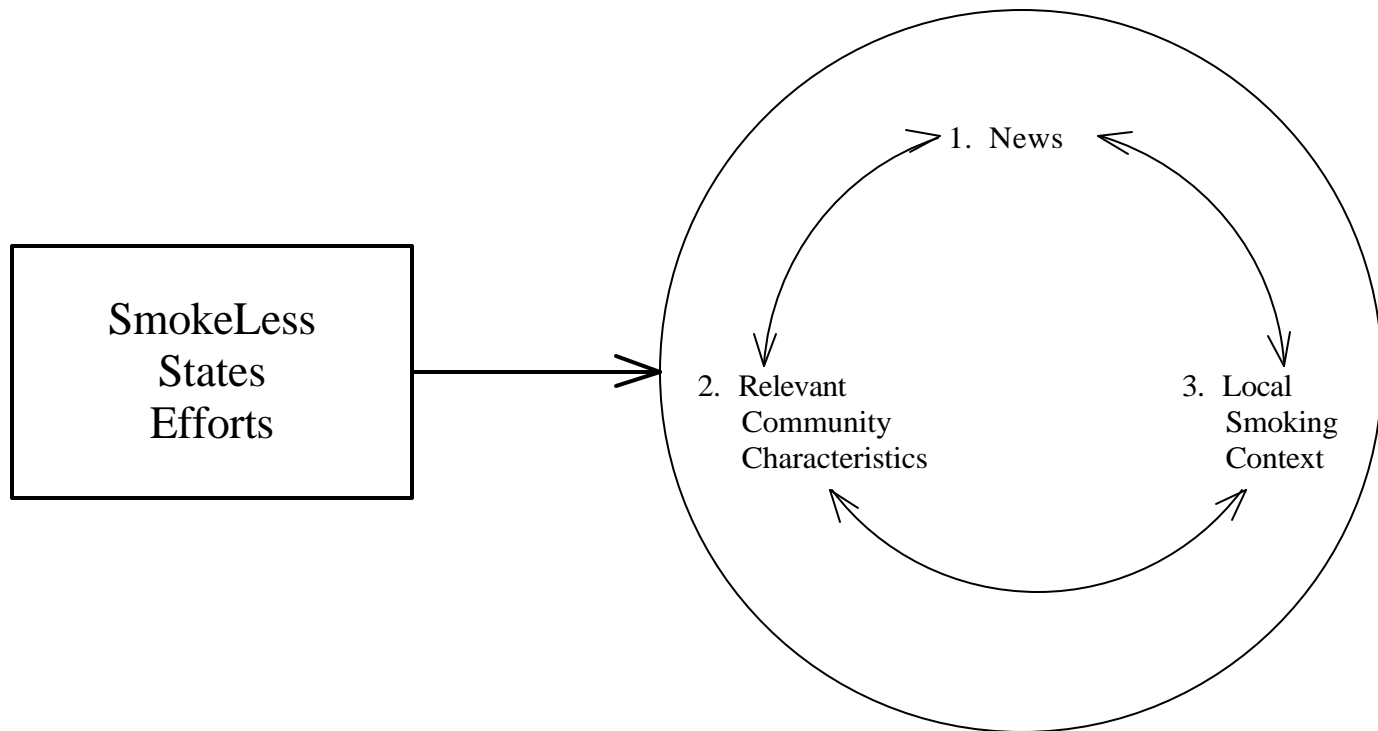
As part of a larger social context: Youth Smoking and the Media



Data Options

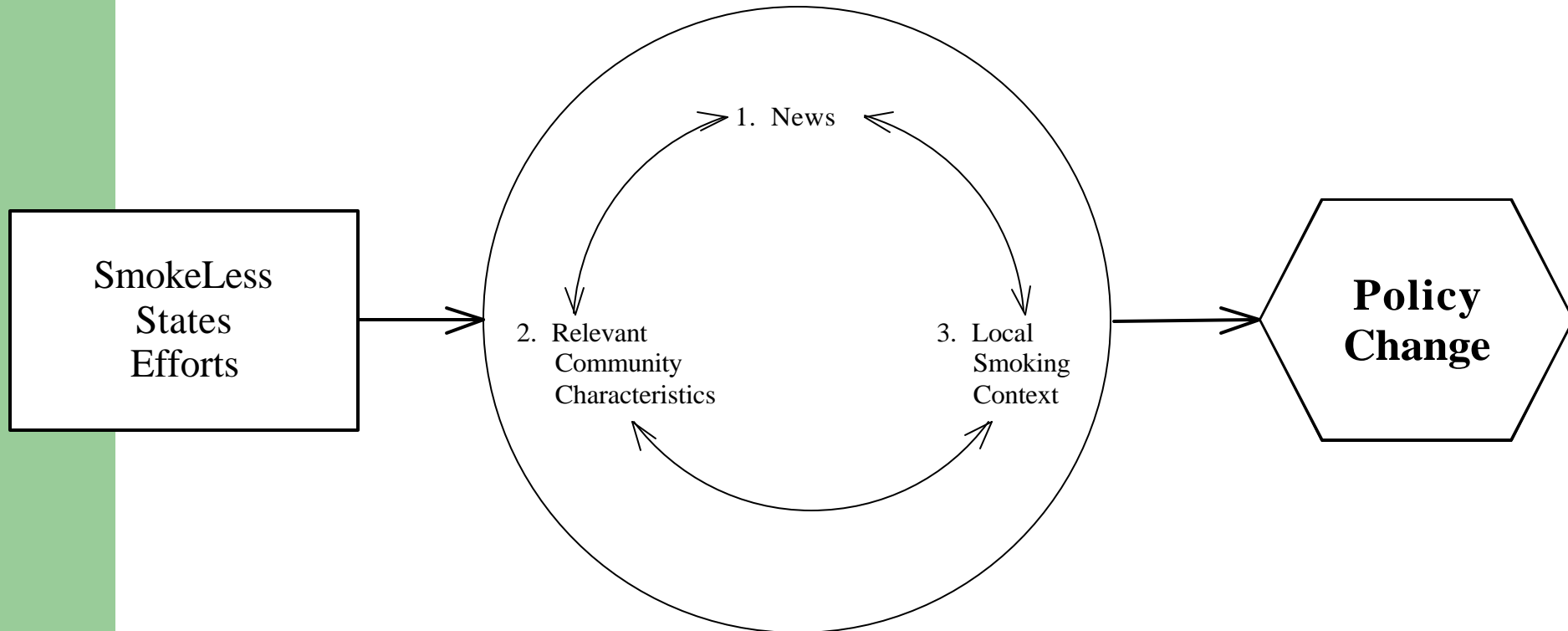
As an outcome measure: **SmokeLess States**

- Media Advocacy → Increased news coverage



Data Options

As an intermediate variable: SmokeLess States



Data Options

As a tool to understand how issues are framed

Current projects being undertaken:

- Analysis of tax coverage across the country (Clegg Smith, Siebel, Chaloupka)
- Analysis of letters to the editor (Siebel)
- Examination of tobacco farming stories and the nationwide variation in coverage (Siebel)
- Variation in AP stories (Martin, Siebel, Haggerty)

Preliminary Data, 2002: Frequency of Themes

Theme	Freq	Valid %
Health Effects	1095	6.14
ETS & Related Bans	4876	27.36
Tob Consumption	597	3.35
Advert & Promo	602	3.38
Econ Issues	2618	14.69
Farming	875	4.91
Product & Reg	1731	9.71
Addiction & Quitting	527	2.96
Youth Access & PPU	759	4.26
Educ, Prev & Cess	2596	14.57
Unintended Damage	113	0.63
Tob Industry	653	3.66
Other	779	4.37
Total	17821	100.00

Preliminary Data, 2002: Mean Article Size by Division

Census Division	Mean Sz.	N
	(sq. in.)	
New England	31.20	1493
Middle Atlantic	32.55	2250
East North Central	30.34	3742
West North Central	30.06	1495
South Atlantic	32.28	3521
East South Central	36.76	1522
West South Central	31.60	1492
Mountain	29.94	1121
Pacific	31.82	1171
Total	31.78	17807

Preliminary Data, 2002:

Mean Article Size by Selected States

State	Mean Sz.	N
Delaware	24.68	243
Georgia	33.35	305
Hawaii	28.35	66
Illinois	28.58	549
Kansas	34.56	134
Kentucky	41.53	687
Louisiana	29.31	150
Nebraska	26.19	217
Nevada	35.57	74
New Hampshire	31.15	125
New Jersey	37.18	301
North Carolina	36.61	1084
South Carolina	27.13	222
Utah	27.56	25
Total	31.78	17807

Conclusions

- Media Advocacy is vital for promoting public health goals; newspapers are a key measure.
- These data are highly versatile, and can be used in a number of analytic capacities.
- Preliminary findings indicate high levels of variance across states, and encourage us to pursue other cross-state comparisons.

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