



Seattle's
sugar-
sweetened
drink tax:
An analysis of local news

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Seattle's sugar-sweetened drink tax: An analysis of local news

Public health practitioners around the world are excited about the potential of enacting taxes to reduce consumption of sugary drinks: Based on the success of the first sugary drink taxes in Berkeley, California,¹ and Philadelphia — and the long history of successful tobacco taxes — we know that sugary drink taxes could help ensure that whole communities avoid premature death from Type 2 diabetes and other nutrition-related diseases. Sugary drink taxes are potentially more important than ever in 2020, since they generate needed revenue for cities that have been economically devastated by the global COVID-19 pandemic: Cities like San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Denver have used sugary drink taxes to fund food and nutrition programs,^{3,4} renovations to outdoor spaces,⁵ and other needed services during pandemic-related shutdowns.

Although evidence demonstrating the benefits that sugar-sweetened drink taxes bring to cities around the country has increased in recent years, not all success stories are straightforward. Take Seattle, Washington, for example. In the spring of 2017,⁶ then-mayor Ed Murray proposed a 1.75-cent-per-fluid-ounce tax on sugary drinks and, despite pushback from the beverage industry and local businesspeople, the city council passed the tax in June of that year.⁷ The policy went into effect on January 1, 2018.⁸ The tax was not an unqualified victory for health advocates, however: Following heavy spending from the beverage industry, voters in November 2018 passed I-1634, which prohibited local government entities in Washington state from imposing any new taxes or fees on any grocery item.⁹

Advocates are eager to understand the nuances of the public narrative that surrounded the Seattle sugary drink tax and the lessons it might hold for tax supporters working to promote similarly structured taxes in other areas. We know that a public narrative that upholds excise taxes as effective can bolster support for sugary drink taxes. Moreover, understanding nuances in the narrative can help advocates make the case and anticipate their opposition. News coverage provides a window into the public dialogue about sugary drink taxes and elevates issues on policy agendas.^{10,11,12} News coverage also shapes how issues are perceived and discussed,^{13,14} including, for example, whose perspectives are seen as credible and valuable, what language is used, which solutions are elevated or ignored, and how arguments are framed.



To that end, Berkeley Media Studies Group (BMSG) is supporting the Voices for Healthy Kids Initiative by evaluating news about the Seattle sugary drink tax to answer key questions including: How did local news characterize the tax? How, if at all, did niche publications like blogs frame the issue, and did their coverage differ from mainstream reporting? Who spoke in the stories, and whose perspectives were left out? And, perhaps most importantly, what lessons does the coverage hold for advocates interested in advancing similar proposals today?

What we did

BMSG conducted an ethnographic content analysis of news published before and after the passage and implementation of the 2018 sugary drink tax in Seattle. In partnership with the Voices for Healthy Kids Initiative, we identified a universe of news outlets in Seattle and its surrounding regions. In addition to mainstream sources like *The Seattle Times*, we included conservative-leaning outlets and blogs to help us better understand opposition framing, as well as ethnic media outlets such as *The Seattle Medium*, *Univision KUNS*, *Northwest Asian Weekly*.

We developed search strings based on our prior analyses of sugary drink taxes in the news.^{15,16,17} We then searched the LexisNexis news database for English-language articles published in Seattle-area outlets and blogs between January 1, 2017, and December 31, 2018, that mentioned the sugary drink tax proposal. We searched smaller or niche outlets that were not available via LexisNexis individually, using keywords including “soda,” “soda tax,” “sugary beverage,” “sugary beverage tax,” “sugary drink,” “sugary drink tax,” and “beverage tax.”

Drawing again on our previous analyses of sugary drink taxes, we prepared a draft coding instrument that captured arguments for and against sugary drink taxes, speakers who were quoted in the news, and other variables. We refined and finalized the coding instrument after reviewing a small, representative sample of articles about the Seattle tax: For example, we added a coding category to capture politically divisive language, which regularly appeared in coverage of the Seattle tax.

Before coding the full sample, we trained coders on the coding document. We then used an iterative process and statistical test to ensure that coders’ agreement was not occurring by chance. We achieved a satisfactory level of agreement (Krippendorff’s alpha $>.8^{18}$) for each coding variable.



What we found

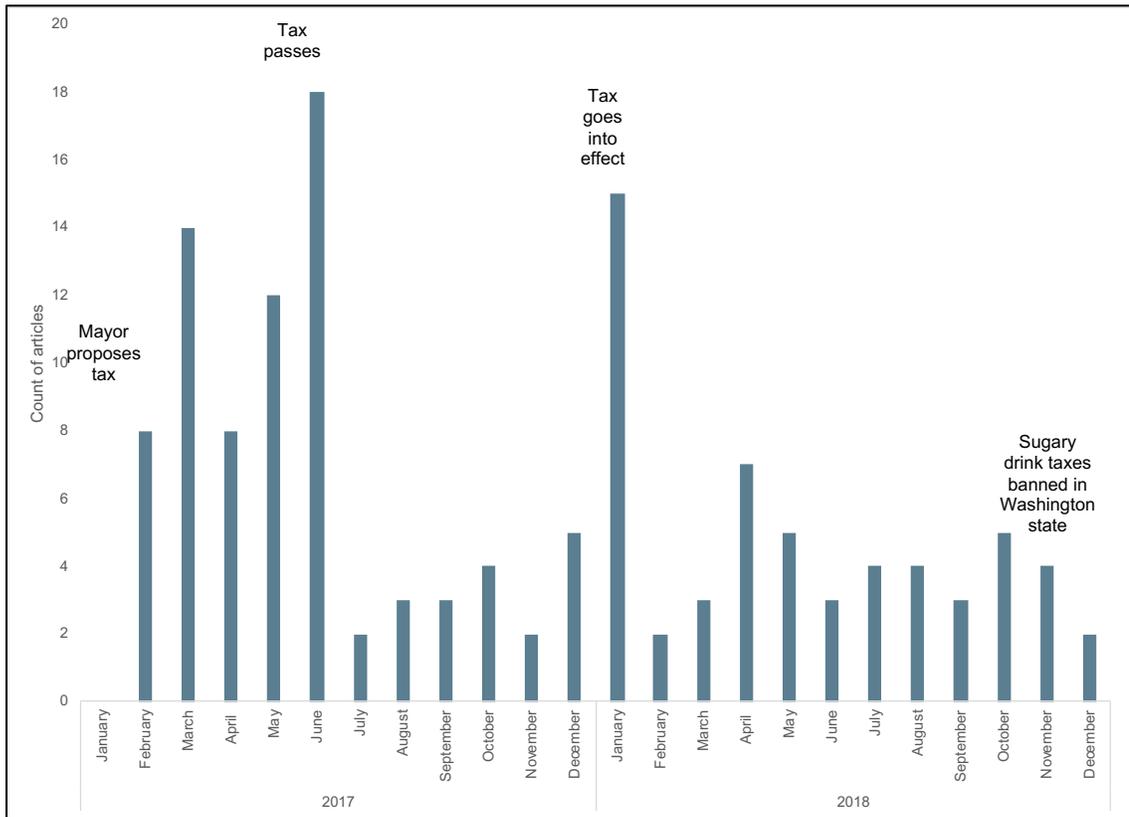
Across outlets, we found 415 articles, from which we took a random 50% sample for in-depth coding. Our final sample included 212 articles, of which 62 were irrelevant (that is, they were not about sugary drink taxes in Seattle or were about taxes in areas other than Seattle). The high volume of irrelevant articles was due in part to the limited search capacity of the smaller sites we included in the sample, and to the presence of articles about cities other than Seattle that were compiled in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. In addition, we discarded articles about I-1634 unless they also addressed the Seattle sugary drink tax.

Of the remaining 150 articles about the Seattle tax, 14 came from conservative-leaning blogs. However, this analysis focuses on stories from mainstream outlets because lessons informed by stories from traditional media will be applicable to advocates working in different locations around the country, while blogs may be less appropriate for, or relevant to, other tax battles. For information about how conservative blogs framed the tax, see Page 14.

Ethnic media outlets contained very little coverage of the tax. Indeed, some outlets (like *Univision KUNS*) did not discuss the tax at all. Consequently, a full comparison between ethnic and mainstream outlets is not possible. However, where relevant, we highlight stories and findings from these outlets throughout the analysis.

Our final sample included 136 stories (“relevant articles”) about the sugary drink tax from 35 outlets (see Appendix A). Of those, 41 articles (30%) contained only a passing reference to the tax. For example, one opinion article from early 2017 denounced Ed Murray as “the most taxing mayor in city history” and mentioned the recently announced “24-cents-per-can soda tax for education”¹⁹ as one example, but said nothing more about it. Stories appeared throughout the year, with peaks around major milestones in the policy process, like the passage of the tax in June and the tax taking effect in January, 2018 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. When did articles about the Seattle sugary drink tax appear in local news, January 1, 2017 - December 31, 2018? (n=136 relevant articles)



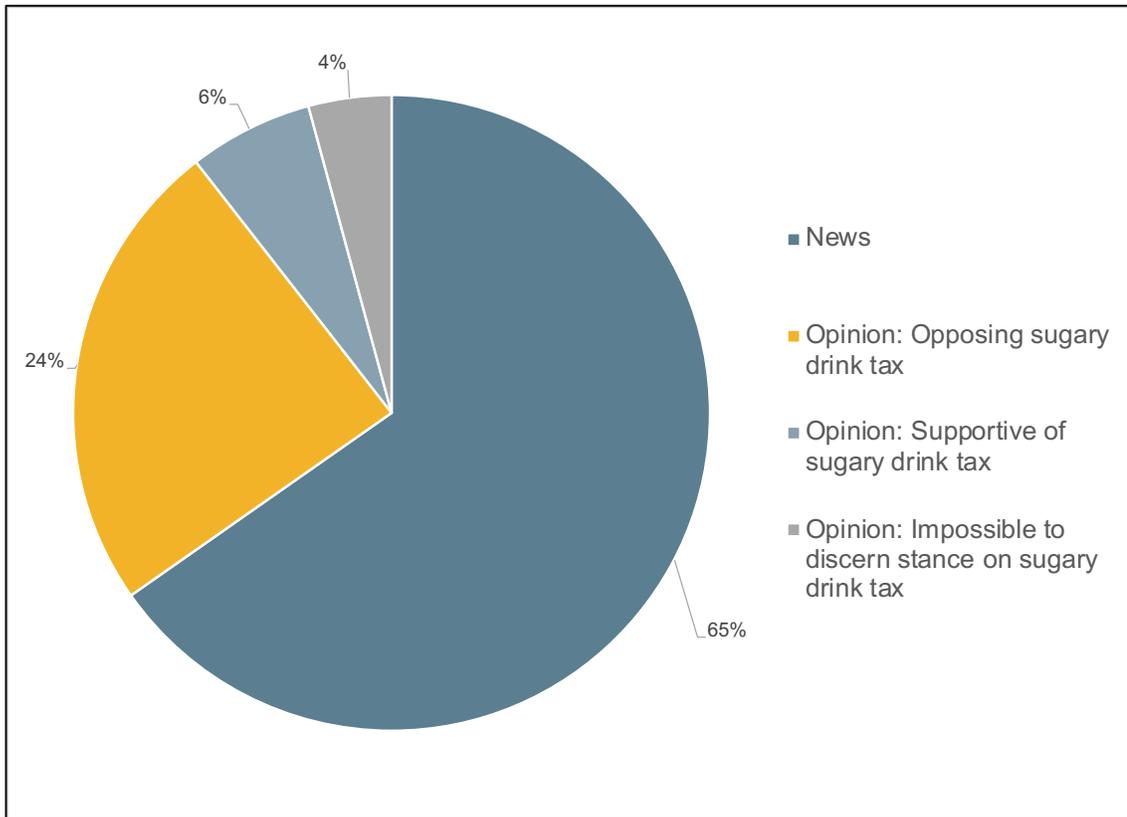
The remainder of this analysis will focus on the 95 articles with substantive discussions of the tax (“substantive articles”). Nearly two-thirds of the substantive coverage was news (65%), while 35% was opinion writing, including letters to the editor, editorials, op-eds, and blogs (see Figure 2). The majority of opinion coverage (70%) opposed the tax, while 18% of opinion pieces supported the tax. A few opinion pieces (12% of opinion coverage) presented arguments on both sides, like a story from *Crosscut* that gave equal space to commentary from a supporter of I-1634 (a representative of the Teamsters Union) and two detractors (a local physician and the head of the Washington Healthy Kids Coalition). The authors each spoke at length about their divergent opinions of the original Seattle tax.²⁰

Why were stories about the sugary drink tax in the news?

We wanted to know: When the Seattle tax was in the news, why? Why that story, and why that day? Reporters commonly refer to the catalyst for a story as a “news hook.” Many factors can influence why reporters and editors select some stories and not others, from the details of a specific incident to what else competes for attention

during the news cycle. We identified the news hook for each article by answering the question, “Why was this article published today?”

Figure 2. What kind of coverage did the Seattle beverage tax generate, January 1, 2017 - December 31, 2018? (n=95 relevant articles)



The sugar-sweetened drink tax most often appeared in Seattle news (48% of substantive stories) because a milestone was achieved, either in the policy process (like the official unveiling of the tax proposal²¹) or in its implementation. For example, a number of outlets reported on the reveal of the unexpectedly high tax revenue during the first months after it was implemented²² (see Table 1). Controversies or disputes related to the tax were the impetus for almost a third of the articles (32%). Many of these stories centered on pushback, as when a local restaurant owner erected a bluntly worded sign decrying the proposal.²³ Other news hooks that drove coverage included events like city council meetings (8%) or the release of new data about sugary drinks (5%).

Table 1. News hooks for articles about Seattle sugary drink tax published between January 1, 2017 and December 30, 2018

News hook	Percentage of substantive articles (n=95)
Milestone or breakthrough	48%
Injustice or controversy	32%
Community event	8%
Release of report or data	5%
Seasonal/holiday peg	4%
Feature or investigative report	1%
Other (irony, etc.)	1%

Who spoke in the news?

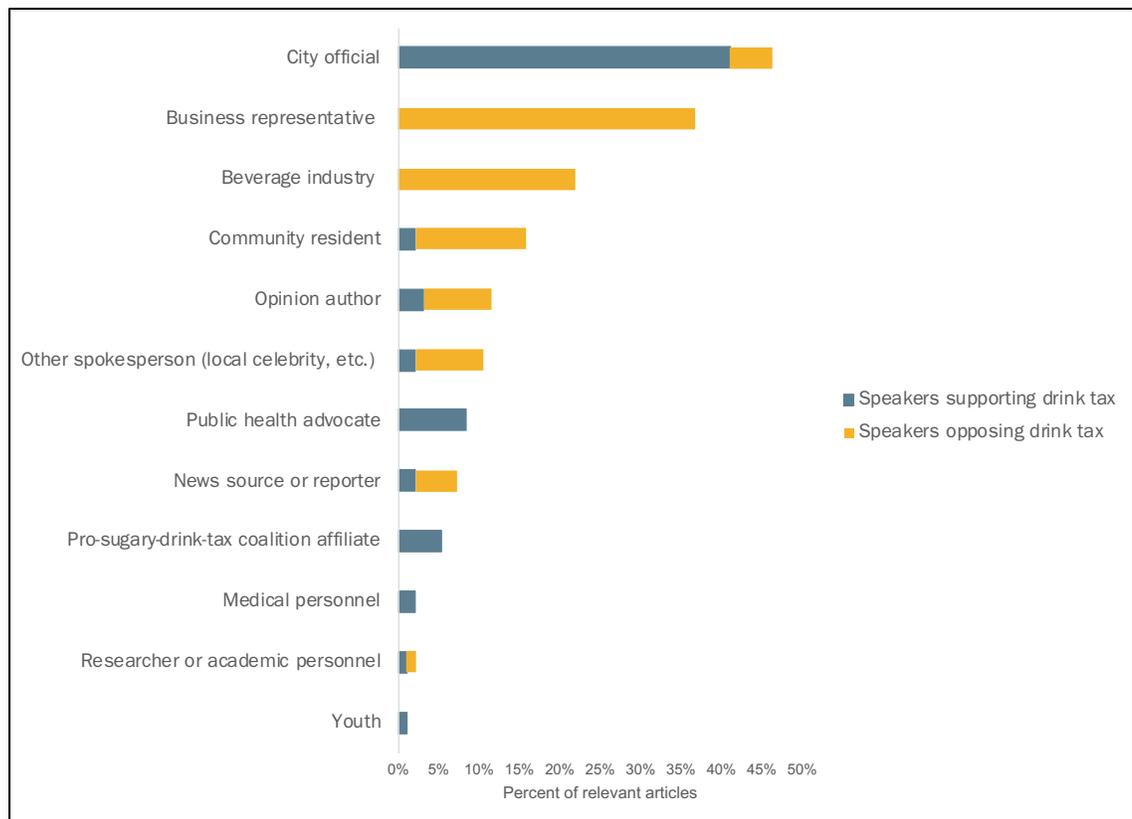
To understand whose perspectives are elevated in the news (and whose are obscured), we evaluated which speakers were quoted in the news about the Seattle tax and how they spoke about the proposal (Figure 3). Speakers opposing the tax were quoted more often than were supporters: 77% of substantive articles included at least one speaker who opposed the tax, compared to 64% of substantive articles that quoted at least one tax supporter.

City officials most often spoke in favor of the tax (41% of relevant articles). Then-Mayor Ed Murray, who proposed the tax, was the supporter most often quoted: He regularly described the expected health benefits of the tax, sometimes naming industry-sponsored, youth-targeted marketing as a rationale. On the day the bill was signed into law, for example, he observed, “I’m pleased to sign legislation that holds corporations accountable for profiting off products that put people’s health, particularly young people’s health, at risk.”⁷

Public health advocates (8% of relevant articles) and members of the Seattle Healthy Kids Coalition (5%) were also frequently quoted speaking on behalf of the tax. Medical practitioners almost never appeared in the news (2% of articles); when they did, they most often discussed the health harms of sugar, as when Dr. Steven Masley explained that “people who eat too much sugar ... experience ‘brain fog.’”²⁴ Only 28% of

substantive articles mentioned specific diseases associated with sugar intake, like Type 2 diabetes or hypertension, and these diseases were rarely named by medical or public health professionals. Instead, city officials most often listed these and other health issues while describing the need for the tax.

Figure 3. Who spoke in the news about the Seattle beverage tax, January 1, 2017 - December 31, 2018? (n=95 relevant articles)



Community residents rarely appeared in the news making the case for the tax (3% of stories). One example was 10-year-old Sophia Harrison, who made a strong case for the sugary drink tax, saying, “Sometimes, kids can be tricked into thinking that sports drinks and artificial fruit juices are good for you.” She concluded, “With everything going wrong in the world, [the tax] is a chance to make something right.”²⁵

Business owners were by far the most regularly quoted anti-tax speakers, arguing against the proposal in 37% of substantive articles. Most often, these speakers were local small business owners who denounced the sugary drink tax as a challenge.²⁶ Occasionally representatives of larger businesses appeared in the news, notably Jennifer Cue, the owner of Seattle-area Jones Soda Company. Cue was regularly quoted



decrying “the ramifications of this proposed tax on small businesses like ourselves”²⁷ and calling on the city to “[create] something that’s a bit more broad based, that doesn’t impact one industry so much.”²⁸

Other speakers quoted in the news protesting the sugary drink tax included local and regional representatives of the American Beverage Association (5%) and speakers from a local industry-funded anti-tax group, Keep Seattle Livable for All (4%).

What arguments about the sugary drink tax appeared in the news?

Anti-tax arguments appeared in the news more often than did arguments supporting the measure (81% of articles vs. 67% of articles with pro-tax arguments, see Table 2). Because health, economic, and equity arguments dominated the coverage, our analysis here focuses on how these frames appeared in the news (for a listing of the prevalence of all arguments, including those that appeared infrequently, see Appendix B).

Table 2. Product, health, economic, and equity argument frames for articles about Seattle sugary drink tax published between January 1, 2017 and December 30, 2018			
Supporting frames	Yes (% of substantive articles, n=95)	Opposing frames	Yes (% of substantive articles, n=95)
Product			
Sugary drinks play a unique role in causing health harms	31%		
Health			
The tax will cause people to consume less soda	34%	This tax/sugary drink taxes in general will NOT make people physically healthier (Tax won't cause people to buy/consume fewer sugary drinks, people will just drive somewhere else)	18%
The tax will raise money for prevention/health programs	33%		
Economics			
This tax will benefit/improve/not negatively affect the economic health of the community/country	39%	This tax will harm local business, or the industry as a whole	48%
		This tax will harm local consumers/the general community	37%
Social/racial justice			
People of color and people living in poverty (*people oppressed by capitalism) will benefit most from this tax	23%	People of color and people living in poverty (*people oppressed by capitalism) will suffer most from this tax (tax is regressive)	45%



Health arguments: Will the tax make Seattle healthier?

As in previous analyses, many arguments in support of the tax focused on its potential to improve community health. Advocates argued that the tax would make people healthier by decreasing intake of sugary drinks (34% of substantive articles), as when local doctor Benjamin Danielson observed, “From a health standpoint, implementing sugary-drink taxes works. Consumption goes down.”²⁹

Dr. Danielson concluded, “We can all agree that sugary drinks have no nutritional benefits,”²⁹ an argument that was repeated in 31% of substantive articles. Other tax supporters pointed out that sugary drinks are a leading source of added sugar in the American diet³⁰ or denounced sugary drinks for their role in causing health problems like diabetes and dental disease.³¹

Tax proponents also argued that the tax would improve the health of Seattle residents by supporting local programs to promote physical activity and access to healthy foods (33% of articles). For example, an op-ed published in 2018 opposing I-1634 described the earlier success of the Seattle tax in “deepen[ing] the city’s investments in proven community programs ... [that] lower barriers to accessing healthy food choices for the very communities who are targeted by soda industry marketing and most affected by the Type 2 diabetes and obesity epidemics in our country.”²⁰

In almost one-fifth of substantive articles, tax opponents dismissed the possible health implications of the tax and described it as ineffective (18%). These arguments often maintained that consumers would simply go elsewhere to purchase sugary drinks, resulting in no net change in health.³² Other tax opponents complained that a tax on just one product would be ineffective, in light of the prevalence of other sugary or high-fat foods³³: Local radio host Tom Curley, for example, argued, “There’s no evidence that shows people won’t consume some other type of sugary thing. They might not drink a soda, but then they’ll go ahead and drink a milkshake. ... When I go into a Bartell and they have the price announcing what the soda tax is on top of it, I don’t know if that’s going to stop somebody who’s dying for a Coke.”³⁴

Economic arguments: How will the tax affect Seattle financially?

Compared to advocates in other cities,^{15,16,17} supporters of the Seattle proposal were unique in that their single most commonly used argument addressed the economic benefit of the tax for the community (39% of substantive articles). Sometimes arguments that the tax would benefit the city financially were explicit, as when Seattle City Council members Lorena Gonzalez and Teresa Mosqueda rebuffed claims about economic devastation with a statement celebrating that the tax would enable the “expansion of important programs that increase access to healthier food choices, as



well as early learning and education programs, for all of [the] city’s residents.”³⁵ Usually, however, the economic benefits of the tax were more subtly implied by statements about the amount of money the tax raised which, several articles noted, was significantly higher than expected.^{22,36,37}

By contrast, tax opponents relied heavily on arguments that framed the tax as a threat to the economy. Almost one-half of all substantive articles (48%) included at least one argument alleging that the tax would negatively impact the local economy. Local restaurateurs and shop owners themselves often made this argument and painted a grim picture of the effect of the tax on their business. A typical comment came from the owner of a Seattle store who noted, “Stores just down the street are advertising for people to buy drinks there because they don't have [the] Seattle soda tax. Once our customers leave they may not come back.”³⁵ Similarly, a local restaurant owner worried, “If I double [the price of a soda], that's like the price of the burger. I don't think people will be paying that. ... I don't want to upset customers.”³⁸

At times, tax opponents argued that the harm caused by the sugary drink tax would go beyond business owners and affect the community as a whole (37% of substantive articles). A community resident writing to *The Seattle Times* promised, “If I have to pay a soda tax ... I will go to Renton or Shoreline or Bellevue, wherever doesn't have a tax. And as long as I am there, I will do all my shopping there which means my tax dollars will flow out of Seattle.”³⁹

Equity arguments: Does the tax help or hurt people of color and people living in poverty?

Tax advocates regularly used the news to argue that people of color and people living in poverty would benefit most from the tax (23% of articles). This is perhaps not surprising since the tax was, from its inception, framed as a measure to combat inequity: In the State of the City speech during which he announced plans for the tax, Mayor Ed Murray described it as an effort to raise funds to “eliminate the opportunity gap between white students and African American/[B]lack students and other historically under-represented students of color.”⁴⁰ Murray’s remarks, themselves quoted many times, were also, at times, echoed by other tax supporters.²⁹

A small number of substantive articles (7%) mentioned targeted marketing to communities of color. Councilmember Tim Burgess, for example, justified his support of the tax proposal by noting that “sugar-sweetened beverage consumption leads to negative health outcomes. ... [C]ommunities of color and young people are disproportionately targeted by the beverage industry’s advertising and marketing campaigns.”⁴¹



Tax detractors also brought equity to the forefront. In almost half (45%) of all substantive articles, opponents mentioned regressivity, arguing that the tax would “hit poor people the hardest”²² and “make it harder for [middle-class families and working people] to stay in Seattle.”⁴² Some detractors spoke about inequity in greater depth. A local radio host, for example, mocked tax supporters’ goals saying, “[They] made \$4.5 million after transferring income from mostly poor minorities to the government, which will then take that and create government work jobs, like for instance, somebody handing out bananas and apples and oranges to people that don’t want them.”³⁴

Some tax opponents went a step further and described the tax as not only regressive, but as harmful to communities of color. A particularly powerful criticism of the tax came from an editorial published in *Northwest Asian Weekly* (which ran two editorials opposing the tax), written by Daniel Kim, executive director of the Korean Grocers’ Association of Washington. Kim said that “the small, family-owned groceries that will be affected by this tax were built from the ground up by proud immigrant families” and called on Seattle residents to protest the tax and “continue building an inclusive hometown that honors the hard work that immigrant families have put in to keep their businesses and communities running.”⁴³

Ultimately, Mayor Murray met these and other accusations of regressivity head on: In a widely quoted statement, he retorted, “You know what’s more regressive? You know what’s really taking money out of African American communities? Tolerating an education system that is failing students of color every day.”⁴⁴

**A “cash grab” in “the nanny state”
How conservative-leaning blogs framed the Seattle sugary drink tax**

Our final sample included 14 posts from 12 conservative-leaning blogs, of which 11 substantively discussed the Seattle sugary drink tax. In general, the posts followed the patterns of news from mainstream outlets, but there were a few notable differences. For example, the overwhelming majority of blog entries that substantively discussed the tax were published because of a perceived controversy (8 posts of 11), like one with the headline “Seattle Mayor Taxes Diet Soda to Combat White Privilege” and whose author argued, “So long as it punishes white people, Seattle voters probably won't mind if [a] sin tax on soda has the same effect there as it did in Philadelphia.”⁴⁵

Though politically divisive language⁴⁶ and arguments about government overreach⁴⁷ appeared in mainstream news, they were significantly more common in blogs. For example, almost all posts (9 of 11) included language that evoked strong political divisions between progressives and conservatives. One post derided progressives for “facilitating heroin addiction ... but punishing those filthy low-lives [sic] who want a Coke or Gatorade,”⁴⁸ while another described the measure as “how liberals hurt the little guy.”⁴⁹ All blog posts also took a strongly anti-government tone, either by suggesting government overreach (a typical post was titled “Sin Taxes and the Nanny State”⁵⁰) or by describing government officials as duplicitous perpetrators of a “political tax-grab.”⁵¹

As tax advocates develop their strategies, they should consider whether there are important niche outlets like blogs that could shape how key audiences receive their messages. If so, it will be important to be nimble and responsive, since blogs are often published and disseminated rapidly. If they engage with blogs, advocates should also prepare for their work to be framed in a more aggressive way than it will be in mainstream news. For example, if a strongly conservative outlet is an important outlet for media work around a sugary drink tax proposal, advocates could be prepared with statements and talking points that help speakers address and shift away from government overreach arguments by framing city investment in the proposal as positive and necessary.



Summary and preliminary recommendations

The Seattle sugary drink tax, like others before it, was a controversial policy. Its tensions were reflected in news coverage, which featured far more opinion pieces that opposed the tax than supported it, as well as many more anti-tax than pro-tax arguments. As we have seen in previous analyses, many arguments opposing the tax warned of disastrous economic consequences, while supporters tended to emphasize the health benefits of the tax. Equity-related arguments were voiced by both sides, with proponents declaring the tax a solution to racial inequity, while tax detractors framed it as racist and regressive.

City officials were the strongest voices for the tax: In particular, former Mayor Ed Murray's comments on racism, health equity, and the future of the tax were widely quoted. By contrast, the local business community was a dominant voice in anti-tax conversations, with many local business owners sharing their experiences and frustrations.

Taken with previous analyses, this research contributes to a growing body of knowledge on how sugary drink tax news debates play out within the communities where they are proposed. Based on these findings, we offer preliminary recommendations to support Voices for Healthy Kids as the initiative plans media outreach and communication in support of future tax proposals. Of course, these recommendations should be considered in light of the particular overall strategy tax advocates will be pursuing; ballot initiatives will require different considerations, for example, than taxes enacted through other processes.

- **Cultivate authentic voices to support the proposal:** Authentic voices are people who speak from their own lived experience with the issue at hand. They are especially important sources for journalists because they can provide a unique perspective on an issue based on that lived experience, whether personal or professional. In Seattle, authentic voices (many of them business owners) often spoke against the tax, but the pro-tax side was dominated by politicians, with community members, medical professionals, or other authentic voices rarely appearing. Going forward, tax advocates could consider early in their campaign how to cultivate, train, and support a diverse group of authentic voices who can share their invaluable perspectives and increase the credibility of pro-tax messages about how the measure will affect different communities.
- **Plan for newsworthy moments:** The Seattle sugary drink tax appeared most often in the news during key moments in the policy process (like when the proposal was announced, when it passed, and after it went into effect). Proponents of upcoming tax policies could plan to take advantage of similar

moments in the policy process when news about sugary drink taxes will attract a lot of attention. Another strategy is to anticipate times during the year when journalists regularly cover issues that might be related to sugary drinks and create news that brings the benefits of a tax into the story. For example, the first day of the local high school football season could be a good time to create news around the sugar content in sports drinks. Advocates can create a timeline of key moments in the policy process for media action (such as the day before a vote), along with anniversaries, milestones, or seasonal events, when it will be easier to create news about sugary drink taxes and why they matter — for example, by issuing a report, giving an award, or making a public announcement.

- **Use opinion space to advocate for the tax:** We found very little pro-tax opinion coverage in our analysis of Seattle news. This is a missed opportunity because opinion pieces are a powerful tool both for bringing an issue to the public’s attention and for reaching local decision-makers. It can, however, be challenging to secure placement. Therefore, sugary drink tax advocates should plan to generate opinion coverage as part of their overall and media strategies to ensure that there are staff and resources available to develop, pitch, and disseminate proactive and reactive opinion pieces. One proactive strategy is to meet with editorial boards to ask for a masthead editorial supporting a sugary drink tax or pitch an op-ed to highlight the tax’s benefits from a particular authentic voice’s point of view. A reactive strategy might be to write a letter to the editor in response to a news article or editorial to address misinformation or shift the conversation about a sugary drink tax.
- **Make equity an element of the tax, not just the arguments about the tax:** Equity was central to Seattle sugary drink tax news — on both sides of the debate. Going forward, sugary drink tax advocates should be aware that their opponents may well use some of the same arguments about health and racial equity to undermine support for sugary drink taxes. The coverage from Seattle elevates the importance of how power is distributed in campaigns. Advocates will have a hard time making authentic equity arguments if they do not have diverse leadership who share decision-making responsibility. Similarly, advocates will be able to more successfully challenge regressivity arguments when the tax comes with mechanisms for ensuring that the benefits accrue to the communities who are inundated with marketing and are suffering most from diseases related to sugary drink consumption. For example, recent investments of revenue from sugary drink taxes to help communities hit hardest by COVID-19 illustrate how taxes can help address inequities.



Conclusion

Sugary drink taxes are an important tool with great promise for protecting the public's health, especially when they are directed to elevating equity. The news coverage from Seattle illustrates how the debate around taxes is evolving and brings into sharp relief the fact that future policies will be considered against an ever-deepening political divide. While "nanny state" arguments have always been present in sugary drink tax debates, we found the rhetoric in Seattle news coverage more politically charged. Advocates will need to be prepared to withstand harsh critics by fashioning robust campaigns that represent broad constituencies who can authentically make the case for how taxing sugary drinks can help us create just, equitable communities where everyone can thrive.



Appendix A: Outlets

Outlets with substantive coverage of Seattle sugary drink tax published January 1, 2017-December 31, 2018		
Outlet	Number of articles	% of total (n=136 relevant articles)
The Seattle Times and affiliated blog	32	24%
Trade publications (12 publications, 2 or fewer articles/publication)	18	13%
Puget Sound Business Journal	13	10%
KING5	9	7%
Q13 FOX	8	6%
MyNorthwest	8	6%
The Stranger	7	5%
KOMO	5	4%
Seattle Post-Intelligencer	5	4%
KUOW	4	3%
KIRO Radio	4	3%
770 KTTN	4	3%
Crosscut	4	3%
Northwest Asian Weekly	3	2%
The Daily News	3	2%
Tacoma News Tribune	2	1%
The Seattle Medium	2	1%
International Examiner	1	1%
KIRO7	1	1%
Seattle Weekly	1	1%
Chinook Observer	1	1%
The Herald	1	1%



Appendix B: Arguments about the sugary drink tax

Supporting Frames	Yes (% of substantive articles)	Opposing Frames	Yes (% of substantive articles)
Problem Definition			
Diet-related chronic diseases are a "problem"	8%	Diet-related chronic diseases are NOT a (high-priority) problem	1%
These diseases cost the country/community money	3%		
Product			
Sugary drinks play a unique role in causing health harms	31%	Sugary drink taxes do NOT play a unique role in causing health harms	8%
Health			
The tax will cause people to consume fewer sugary drinks	34%	This tax/sugary drink taxes in general will NOT make people physically healthier (Tax won't cause people to buy/consume sugary drinks; people will just drive somewhere else)	18%
The tax will raise money for prevention/health programs	33%	Education and individual choices about diet and physical activity make people healthier (a tax is not the right solution, personal responsibility)	8%
		The money won't go where they say it will (to health/education programs)	4%
Economics			
This tax will benefit/improve/not negatively affect the economic health of the community/country	39%	This tax will harm local business, or the industry as a whole	48%
It will balance the budget	0%	This tax will harm local consumers/the general community	37%
		The tax will raise the price of food or drinks (incl. diet beverages) across the board	8%
Industry			
The sugary drink industry is behaving badly in general (in terms of marketing/targeting, etc.)	3%	The sugary drink industry/tax opponents are NOT behaving badly.	1%
The sugary drink industry/soda tax opponents are behaving badly "in this campaign"	0%	Advocates are behaving badly in this campaign, being duplicitous or have ulterior motives	6%
Government			
This tax is an example of the proper role of government/does not impeded true choice	5%	This tax is an example of government intrusion/Individuals should be able to decide for themselves	9%
This tax is a "good first step"/precedent setting/community will build on history of innovation and leadership by implementing tax	4%		
Social/racial justice			
People of color and people living in poverty ("people oppressed by capitalism) will benefit most from this tax	23%	People of color and people living in poverty ("people oppressed by capitalism) will suffer most from this tax (tax is regressive)	45%
People of color and people living in poverty ("people oppressed by capitalism) are targeted by the sugary drink industry	7%		



Appendix C: References

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