

Columbus, Montréal - USA, Canada

Qualities of Public Health. Towards an Analysis of Aesthetic Features of Public Policies

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Contemporary challenges in public health

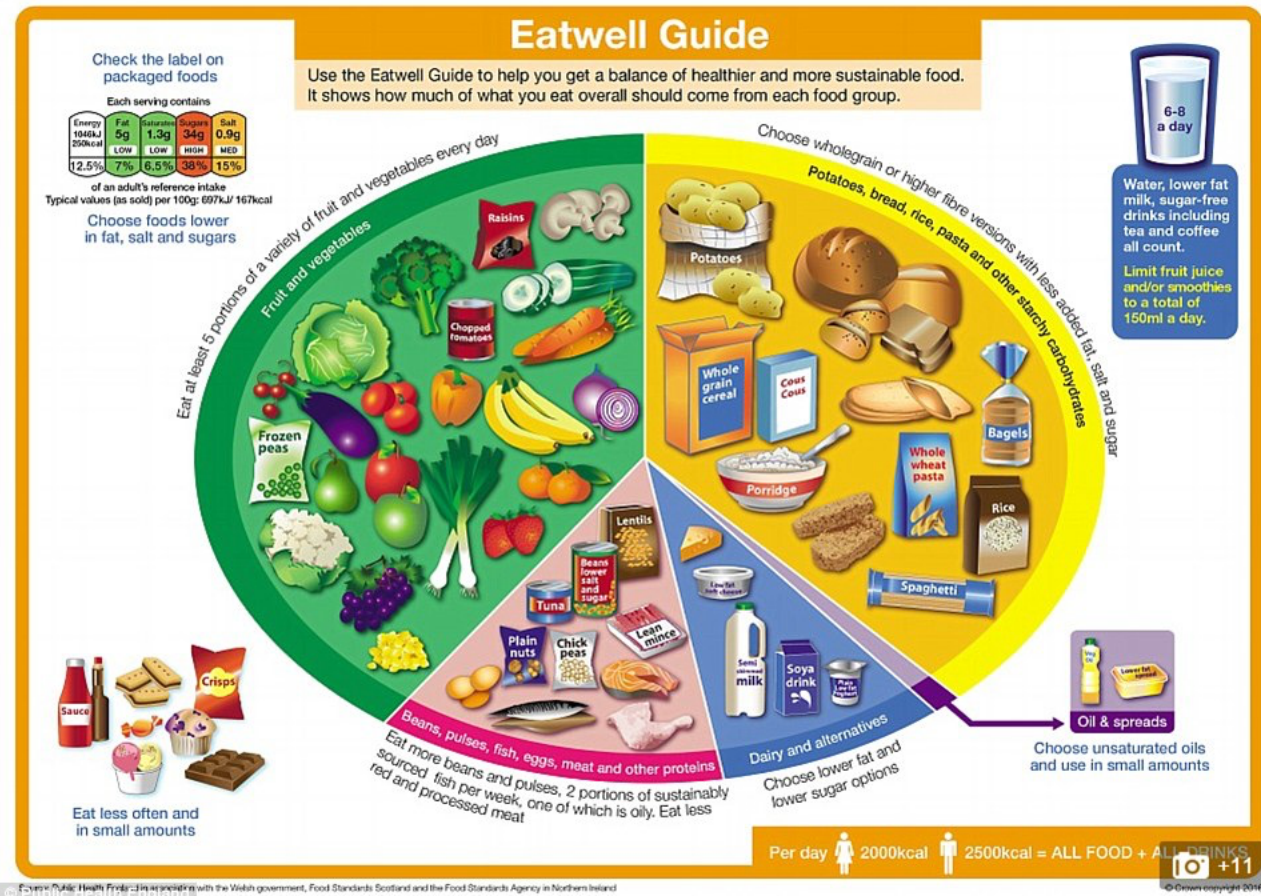
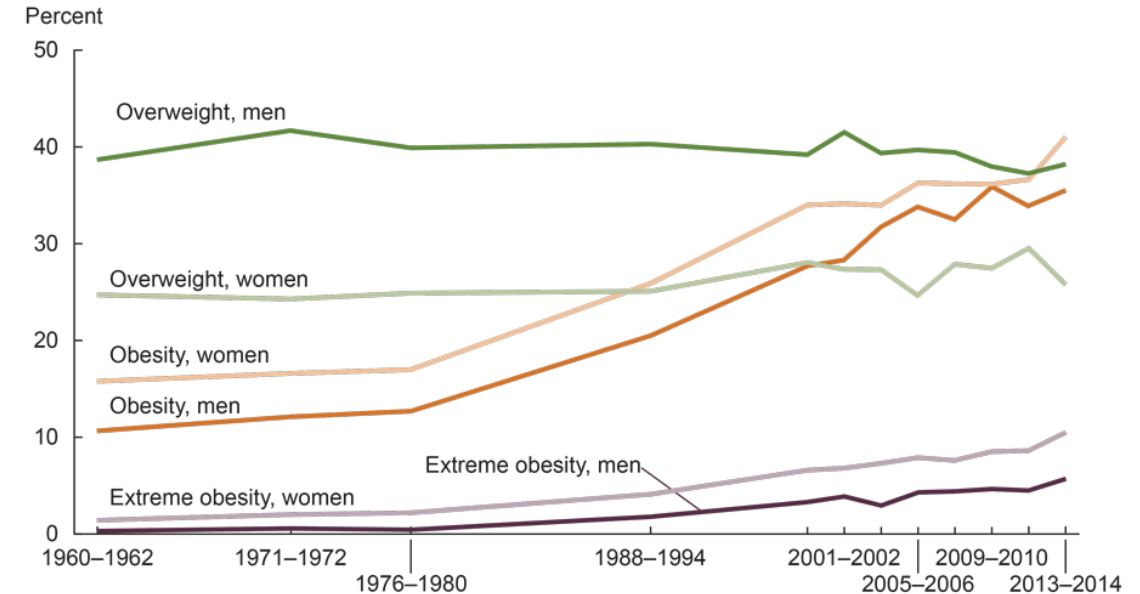


Figure. Trends in adult overweight, obesity, and extreme obesity among men and women aged 20–74: United States, 1960–1962 through 2013–2014



NOTES: Age-adjusted by the direct method to the year 2000 U.S. Census Bureau estimates using age groups 20–39, 40–59, and 60–74. Overweight is body mass index (BMI) of 25 kg/m² or greater but less than 30 kg/m²; obesity is BMI greater than or equal to 30; and extreme obesity is BMI greater than or equal to 40. Pregnant females were excluded from the analysis.

SOURCES: NCHS, National Health Examination Survey and National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys.

Building bridges between the realms of design and public health

Can a design approach to population health:

- shed new lights on the quality of experience offered by public health measures and policies;
- expands the specter of determinants considered in this domain to include factors that condition the fitness of public health measures and policies?

What is public health?

- A practice which seeks to understand and favor the conditions of population's health (Fassin, 2008)
- Public health is concerned by the various determinants, material environment, social environment, individual behaviors, health care access, genetics, that affect people's health (Lalonde, 1974).
- Public health action range span from health promotion, prevention, technology to administration

Research hypothesis:

Aesthetic experiences is a lever to engage people adopting healthy behavior

Theoretical postulate:

Following environmental and realist aesthetic (Berleant & Carson, 2007) we consider aesthetic experience phenomenon emerging from the features of a situation.

Realist aesthetic experience is based on two classes of features:

1. *Physical features of the situation*
2. *Relational features of the situation*

Research context and methodology:

Empirical data

4 undergraduate social design student thesis projects

1. Community Kitchen in food desert community
2. Empowering active living
3. STIs Awareness
4. Food Saver

Specific Research Questions and Corresponding Units of Analysis

1. How the general design problem relates to public health issues?
Unit of analysis: Issues considered by students during their explorative research phase
2. Assess how designers connect with public health?
Unit of analysis: The nature of the diagnostic forged and the effective design brief
3. What does realist aesthetic framework allow to reveals about experience engage by these design projects
Unit of analysis: the experiential qualities of the features of the design solutions

1. Community Kitchen in Food Desert Community



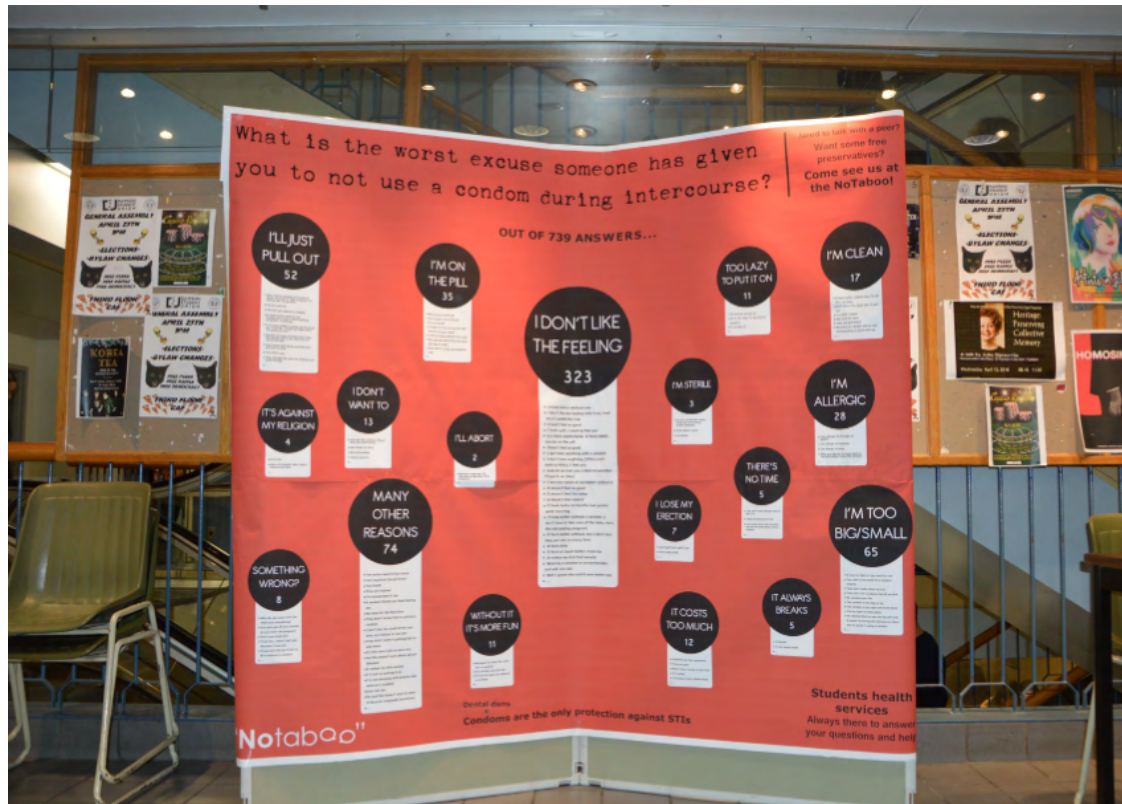
Problematic	An important part of Montmagny's population, in the Canadian province of Québec, lives in precarious condition in a food desert area.
Public health issues	Limited commercial access to various produces makes it difficult to adopt good and healthy eating habits.
Design mandate	Enable the adoption of healthy autonomous eating habits amongst precarious population living in food desert.
Design solution	Interactive web portal linked to community kitchen activities which disseminate good practices at home while shedding light on locally available products, and ways to find alternative produces.
Layout for health	Inducing alternative healthy culinary practices and food products in the community will increase people's curiosity and eagerness to access a larger offering, pressing local grocers and producers to fulfill this new demand.
Experiential quality	Friendliness, pleasure, discovery, self-realization

2. Empowering Active Living



Problematic	Montreal's citizen bitter relationship with winter jeopardizes their Nordic culture.
Public health issues	Wintering behaviors leads to less active lifestyle.
Design mandate	Make city dwellers embrace an active outdoor lifestyle in winter despite the hindrance that comes along going out in the cold weather.
Design solution	Kick sled sharing service installed in a community network of white back alleys where local dwellers can use the device for fun or running errands.
Layout for health	Allowing a free and quick access to a seasonal active transportation device, the solution will multiply the opportunities for citizens to domesticate wintry weather, increasing their readiness to adopt an active lifestyle all year round.
Experiential quality	Sense of place Nostalgia Easiness

3. STIs Awareness



Problematic	College students face the risk of catching STIs because many still have unprotected sex, despite easy access to condoms.
Public health issues	The lack of information and motivation to prevent STIs
Design mandate	Raise young adults awareness of STIs, making them realize the risk of their practices and the magnitude of collective unconsciousness.
Design solution	Information display which exposes the practices, ideas, and prejudices about sex and STIs of students who confessed anonymously on an online survey platform.
Layout for health	Presenting boldly, and publicly candid testimonies about sex and lay beliefs about STIs, will fuel an ongoing discussion amongst peers, raising group awareness for issues related to sexual practices, and helping young adults to overcome shyness in front of a legitimate source of information.
Experiential quality	Awe; Playfulness; Belongingness

4. Food Saver



Problematic	People misunderstand how to rightfully use refrigerators spaces and lacks knowledge about food conservation. As a consequence, a lot of food, end up being wasted.
Public health issues	Limitation in the capacity to consume quality food
Design mandate	Improve people's understanding and know-how concerning personal food preservation techniques
Design solution	New refrigerator layout to make proper storing of different foods easily intelligible and practicable.
Layout for health	Changing the way to store produce will increase people's concern about the values of food.
Experiential quality	Tidiness, Self-awareness, Dignity

Aesthetic experience as a component of health policy success

1. It seems reasonable to consider that health policies and devices can be linked to æsthetic features of situations ;
2. Design of touch points and of conceptual models represents a means of shaping the æsthetic experience that emerges from the adoption and engagement of users in healthy behaviors
3. Realist and environmental æsthetic seem to offer an operable framework to base on empirical evidences the assessment of the impact of design on æsthetic experience of health policies and devices.

These are very theoretical, partial conclusions. The framework has still to be refined, but at least with it, we escaped metaphysic to enter into refutable territory.

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