

***Health & Wellbeing: The Systems that Bind them and
Ideas that Separate them***

Name: Morgan

McGowan-Boswell

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Student ID: 2203790



What is Health?

The definition and understanding of health will change to accommodate the complexity of the context it is applied to.

1a) Health as the absence of illness.

2a) Disease as deviance.

3a) Health as balance.

4a) Health as function

1b) To be considered a 'normal' human, one must be healthy (without illness) Giddens and Sutton (2017, p. 435).

2b) To prevent the disruption of society, medical professionals must legitimize your 'illness'. Giddens and Sutton (2017, p. 436).

3b) A common belief amongst many cultures is that health is a balance between the individual and their environment. Giddens and Sutton (2017, p. 436)

4b) If the individual is able to sustain a enjoyable lifestyle that is fulfilling with the addition of leisure then they can be 'labelled' as healthy. Giddens and Sutton (2017, p. 436).



Health & Society

Macionis and Plummer (2012, p. 724) have stated that the connections between health and society can be condensed and divided into several aspects.

1a) Health relative to others.

2a) Health and Morality.

3a) Cultural standards of health.

4a) Health and living standards.

5a) Health and social inequality.

1b) The viewpoint of the society one resides in, influences the 'standard' of health.

Macionis and Plummer (2012, p. 724).

2b) If ones health is not aligned with the social norms (e.g. albinos & dwarfs) then 'othering' becomes visible. *Macionis and Plummer (2012, p. 724).*

3b) Cultural standards of health will change and adapt with each generation. *Macionis and Plummer (2012, p. 724).*

4b) Living standards directly interlink with health as 'poor societies' contend with things such as malnutrition. *Macionis and Plummer (2012, p. 724).*

5b) Though the body is physical it is still a product of society to be socially configured. Medical regimes organise the work around birth, disease and death. *Macionis and Plummer (2012, p. 724).*



What is Wellbeing?

As stated by (*Our Health and Wellbeing Today, 2010*) wellbeing is important to maintaining an acceptable level of health.

Wellbeing enhances our health through several main modes aspects.

Economic – Having a household and individual income from employment or pensions. *Wilson et al. (2015, pp. 14).*

Psychological – Avoids anti-social behaviour, continuously builds social networks, manages emotions. *Wilson et al. (2015, pp. 14).*

Social – Has a strong engagement with the community, maintains a positive sense of belonging, maintains social capital. *Wilson et al (2015, pp. 14).*

Physical – Keeps active through exercise as well as increasing the usual amount of daily / weekly activities. *Wilson et al (2015, pp. 14).*

Mental – If one is successful in achieving all the previous forms of wellbeing then mental wellbeing will also be achieved by default. *Wilson et al (2015, pp. 14).*



Wellbeing & Society

Subjective Wellbeing:

It has been argued that subjective wellbeing is far too difficult to quantify / define but should still be explored through three components.

Evaluative – acknowledging and reflecting on the entire satisfaction of life. (*Maccagnan et al., 2018*).

Eudemonic – Understanding the purpose of life. (*Maccagnan et al., 2018*).

Emotional – Taking into account both positive and negative affective state. (*Maccagnan et al., 2018*).

Objective Wellbeing:

Said to be one of two components that make up wellbeing. Internal – subjective and external – objective. *‘develops from the perspective of perception and one’s evaluation of human society’*. It has been stated further in order for one to positively strive for *‘good things’* then the society constituting the grounds of state need to create conditions that provide opportunities for success. (*Alatartseva et al., 2015*).

Monopoly Capitalism

The conversations surrounding health and wellbeing are commonly dissected through a psychological and medical lense.

Researchers from a sociological standpoint have argued that under the guise of capitalism, 'normality' and your ability to serve the system will not only dictate your role but also affect your economic opportunities and social capital.

'The intimate relationship between mental health and social conditions has largely been obscured, with societal causes interpreted within a bio medical framework and shrouded with scientific terminology'. Matthews Capitalism and Mental Health (2019)

Monopoly Capitalism – Term coined by Marxists Paul Baran & Paul Sweezy.

Conclusion

As the previously stated research, researchers and evidence demonstrates, health and wellbeing cannot be simplified. The variables that impact health and wellbeing exist in different levels of society.

Psychologists, medical / clinical professionals and sociologists etc can systematically theorise the cause and affect for the positive & negative increase and decrease in health and wellbeing but it will remain a theory.



Reference List

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