Health and happiness democracy

Health and Happiness Democracy Research and Policy Issues This essay aims to address a two-fold objective, to wit: 1) explain and analyze the relationship of health and happiness to the well-being of an individual, and 2) analyze the research and policy issues and identify changes needed both in research and policy. Health and Happiness Democracy Health and wellness are influence by social context. During the 19th century, Emile Durkheim, a sociologist, studied the effect of social cohesion in the physical and mental health of an individual and found out that social destruction happens because of frequent changes in the society. Studies from California to Michigan established that social connectedness is one of the most powerful determinants of well being. According to the study, frequent participation in community activities and social gathering reduces the risk of having diseases like cancer or heart attack. On the other hand, sociologist James House and his colleague stated that social connectedness also contributes to the biomedical risk factors such as cigarette smoking and obesity. Researchers are not sure why social cohesion affects the well-being of an individual but they proposed theories why social cohesion matters. First, social networks offer assistance thereby, reducing mental and physical stress. It reinforce healthy norms and able to organize politically to ensure first-rate medical services. Another researcher named Lisa Berkman speculated that social isolation is a chronically stressful condition to which the organism responds by aging faster. The study made by the Harvard School of Public Health also associate low social capital to poor health. Studies, it implies that social cohesion directly affects health status. Social interaction also contributes to the well-being of an individual. Happiness, often times is correlated to material well-being and enjoyment. But the

happiness gained from social interaction, such as marriage, and education, offers a different kind of feeling that contributes to the longevity of one's life. Social cohesion, therefore, affect the quality of life by engaging the people into healthy norms and by providing feelings of support and satisfaction from emotional and physical needs. Research and Policy Issues Research and policy are like a pair of scissors. The results of the research contribute to the development of a new policy or it may affect the structure of the current policy leading to review and revisions. Policies may influence research and may impose questions that need to be answered. Research and policy may complement each other and go with the same direction with regards viewpoint but there are also times that the directions take by research and policy will contradict. Family and societal issues are usually the main focus of research and policy. Issues on grandparents' visitation rights, family leave act, research on the burden of the " sandwich generation", empty nest syndrome, etc. were some of the issues resolved and imposed with the help of research and policy. Myths regarding the elderly were also disproved and projected an image of elderly as someone that is an active member of the family that has rights, freedom, and independence. But research and policy issues concerning the family pose an implication between public and private considerations. There are no clear boundaries regarding when to consider a topic of research or policy as public or private matters. Dealing with family issues is the most delicate type of research and policy making as this may create a big impact on the social norms and practices as well as on the individual himself. Future researches must address clarity between public and private boundaries. Policy changes regarding the elderly must also be change because it only focused on the economic and stability matters.

Research and policy therefore, must go in a direction that promotes benefits of every individual. Reference: Putnam, R. D. (2000). Health and Happiness. Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. New York: Simon & Schuster. pp. 326-349.