Well-being, Wellness and Basic Human Needs in Home Economics

McGregor Monograph Series No. 201003

October 18, 2010

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NOTE - this monograph was inspired by Monograph No. 201002, which deals with positioning the human condition concept within home economics. Although there are similarities in content, No. 201002 provides a very detailed discussion of Hanna Ardent's theory of the human condition. This monograph focuses much more detail on well-being, wellness and basic human needs. As well, whereas several American initiatives were woven into the story shared in No. 201002, they are individually analyzed in this monograph for evidence of their usage of these concepts during the last 20 years.
Introduction

For over a century, home economists have consistently claimed that the profession’s mission is to optimize the quality of life and well-being of individuals and families. Some practitioners also describe the profession’s raison d’etre as enhancing wellness and, more recently, achieving basic human needs (e.g., Nickols et al., 2009). The first premise of this monograph is that these three concepts, although related, can be clearly distinguished. The second premise is that the profession should augment its focus on well-being and wellness with theories of basic human needs so that it can begin to see the human condition as its raison d’etre.

The second premise is predicated on two assumptions. First, the standard concepts of well-being and wellness, as home economics understands them, are too limiting to address the pressing, complex, global issues facing humanity. Second, the concept of basic human needs brings us closer to a concern for the human condition (Brown, 1993). East (1979) proposed that home economists should focus on the home and family for the good of humanity. If the profession does not give the human condition the emphasis it deserves, it cannot attend to the problems and opportunities that the human condition inevitably will pose, problems that deeply impact family well-being, wellness and the ability to meet basic needs: poverty, unequal income and wealth distribution, insecurity, violence and conflict, injustices, unsustainability, and uneven development (McGregor, 2010).

To develop this idea, the monograph is organized into four sections. Section one provides generic definitions of each concept generated outside the home economics profession. Although we are not the only profession to employ these concepts in our practice, we have engaged in several key initiatives either directly or indirectly related to their role in home economics. Section two profiles eight such American initiatives undertaken during the last 20 years. Each enterprise is analysed to determine its architects’ references to well-being, wellness, basic human needs, and the human condition. In an attempt to generate insights to inform international conversations, section three provides a friendly critique of these initiatives. Section four offers a four-pronged approach that integrates leading-edge versions of well-being, wellness and human needs, with the human condition as the anchor - the highest order concept.

As a caveat, the author deeply respects the collective intellectual efforts behind each of the eight American initiatives. The overall critique is not criticism; no offense or disrespect is intended. Observations serve only to illustrate evidence, or the potential, of conceptual migration towards higher and deeper ideas. Indeed, the author holds the architects of these theoretical and conceptual innovations in extremely high regard; they are all pioneers in their own right. This monograph strives to bring their ideas together for the first time, juxtaposed against each other as a means of shedding light on their intellectual and philosophical contributions to, what have become, anchor concepts for the profession. It will become evident that intellectual progress vis-à-vis these conceptual contributions is readily evident over the last 20 years in the United States, paving the way for future innovations at the international level.
Generic Conceptualizations of Well-being, Wellness and Basic Human Needs

This section shares generic conceptualizations and theoretical innovations for each of well-being, wellness and basic human needs developed outside the field of home economics. They merit investigation because they have, continue to or have the potential to, inform conceptual innovations in home economics, especially towards a focus on the human condition.

Well-being

The concept of well-being is very broad and diverse. The particular approach adopted to discuss well-being reflects both the purpose of the initiative as well as any disciplinary and theoretical perspectives (King, 2007). A new initiative of the Canadian government (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2010) conceptualizes well-being as comprising 10 areas: learning, work, leisure, social participation, security, financial security, environment, health, family life, and housing. Marshall et al. (1995) defined well-being as “a state of being where all members of a community have economic security; are respected, valued and have personal worth; feel connected to those around them; are able to access necessary resources; and are able to participate in the decision-making process affecting them” (p.1).

Indeed, King (2007) identified two approaches to conceptualizing well-being: (a) the eudaimonic approach focused on resources (the social context) and/or things people can do with the resources available to them; and, (b) the hedonic approach, linked to subjective experiences of personal pleasure or satisfaction. The former is an income-consumption based approach (i.e., the means to well-being), and the latter is a desires-based approach (i.e., the achievement of well-being). Regarding the latter, Nieboer, Lindenberg, Boomsma and Van Bruggen (2005) distinguished between (a) subjective overall well-being of individuals and (b) the multiple dimensions of well-being that impact an individual’s evaluation of his or her current state. Such dimensions tend to include economic, social, psychological, physical, and personal autonomy (Ryff, 1995). Subjective, individual well-being reflects both the extent to which people’s needs are met and their perspective on the future. Understanding whether people are experiencing a high profile of well-being requires the close examination of their lives as well as their interpretations of their life experiences.

King (2007) augmented individual well-being (see previous paragraph) with collective well-being, comprising community, ethnic and cultural groupings, and other groups of shared interest and/or characteristics. He suggested that collective well-being is influenced by family relationships and networks, neighbourhood and community networks, housing tenure, available government resources and policies, transportation infrastructures, labour market interaction, and people’s power and agency. Similarly, he identified an objective approach to well-being, one that provides a voice for those who might be unable to adequately articulate their level of well-being.
The objective approach is based on the assumption that well-being is dependent on a set of needs that are common to all people - the collective.

**Wellness/Holistic Wellness**

Dimensions of wellness and well-being often tend to overlap. Most conceptualizations of wellness include the four conventional dimensions of well-being: economic, social, psychological and physical. As well, wellness always includes an occupational or vocational component, and an intellectual component (curiosity and growth, lifelong learning, creative stimulation, and lively interaction with the world) (Hettler, 2008; Montague, Piazza, Peters, Eippert & Poggiali, 2001; Omar, 2002). Many wellness centres on university campuses now tender seven- or eight-dimensional models of holistic wellness. They have added the eighth element of environmental wellness (e.g., the North Dakota State University Wallman Wellness Center, 2010).

Architects of well-being and wellness concepts often represent their ideas in lists with attendant definitions, assuming that a list is sufficient if the categories are broad enough to form a flexible framework applicable in diverse settings. In response to the implied fragmentation, some wellness scholars advocate a holistic perspective, appreciating that wellness represents proper alignment attained through personal empowerment - the balanced interplay of body, mind and spirit (e.g., Hettler, 2008; McCusker, 2002). Holistic wellness embraces the concepts of self-responsibility, self-direction, choice, and optimism (Montague et al., 2001).

In his **Six Dimensional Model of Wellness**, Hettler (2008) viewed it as an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more successful, positive and affirming existence. By applying his wellness hexagon model, individuals become aware of the interconnectedness of the six dimensions and of how they contribute to healthy living - it is a pathway to optimal living, a positive approach to life. Montague et al. (2001) referred to this as **whole-person wellness**, which respects both the complexity of humanity and that people are multidimensional beings. As well,

Wellness is a **choice**: a decision you make to move toward optimal health.
Wellness is a **way of life**: a balanced lifestyle you design to achieve your highest potential for well-being.
Wellness is a **process**: an understanding that there is no end point, but health and happiness are possible in each and every moment.
Wellness is the **integration** of body, mind, and soul: an awareness that the choices we make in one area affect all others. (Cabrini College, 2010, p.1)

**Wellness and well-being are different.** Although definitions of wellness often use the concept of well-being in their explanations, wellness is different from well-being. Wellness is
more about a personal choice that affects one’s well-being. It is a precursor or pre-condition for well-being, grounded in mental, physical and emotional health (McCusker, 2002). Jonas (2000) clarified that health is a state of being while wellness is a process of being. Seiwell (n.d.) noted that accomplishing wellness is contingent upon people going through the process of questioning their current state of being. Wellness is conventionally associated with health and freedom from disease while well-being is a contented state of being happy, healthy and prosperous (King, 2007). Wellness emphasizes individual responsibility for well-being through the practice of health-promoting life-style behaviours (Lisako Jones, 2001). Wellness is a dynamic process while well-being is a less-than-dynamic state.

**Basic Human Needs**

There is little agreement in the general literature about how to conceptualize basic human needs (Huitt, 2007). This opinion notwithstanding, this section profiles two seminal theoretical approaches to basic human needs as a construct. Although there are striking similarities in their conceptualizations, the assumptions underlying each approach are profoundly different. Maslow (1943, 1954, 1968, 1971) assumed that people must meet the lower need(s) before being able to move to the higher levels. Max-Neef (1991) assumed, instead, that human needs are interrelated and interdependent, that simultaneity, complementarity and trade offs are features of the process of needs satisfaction. Burton (1990 and Rosenberg’s (2003) theories of human needs are focused on conflict resolution and prevention and non-violent communication; this monograph focused on the more generic contributions of Maslow and Max-Neef.

**Maslow’s hierarchy of basic human needs.** Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is one of the most popular and often cited theories of human motivation (Huitt, 2007). In his original conceptualizations, Maslow (1943, 1954) tendered five levels of needs: physiological, safety and security, belongingness and love, esteem, and self-actualization. In 1971, he added a sixth level beyond self-actualization, that of self-transcendence, the need to connect with something beyond ones self. Maslow and Lowery (1998) added two more levels: cognitive (the need to know and understand) and aesthetic (the need for beauty, symmetry and order). The original five-level hierarchy of needs model remains a definitive classical representation of human motivation; and the later adaptations serve best to illustrate aspects of self-actualization, his original, fifth, highest order need.
Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs is often represented as a triangle or pyramid (see Figure 1). Only when the lower order needs of physical and emotional well-being are satisfied are people concerned with the higher order needs of influence and personal development and growth. Conversely, if the things that satisfy the lower order needs are swept away, people are no longer immediately concerned about the maintenance of their higher order needs. The lower four layers contain, what Maslow (1971) called, deficiency or deprivation needs. If these needs are not met, the individual’s well-being is compromised - security, food, shelter, personal safety, air and water, and emotional needs (connectedness), all required for existence. The top four layers represent actualization needs, in other words, the quest for knowledge leading to character development. When these needs are met, the person experiences a greater sense of wholeness and fullness as a human being. Achieving or striving for transcendence leads to deeper relationships with the unknown and the unknowable. People learn to connect to something beyond themselves, gaining wisdom and enlightenment. Per actualization needs, behaviour, in this case, is not driven or motivated by deficiencies but rather one’s desire for personal growth and the need to become all the things that a person is capable of becoming.

Maslow (1971) posited that the two layers, deficiency and actualization, are interrelated rather than sharply separated; however, his theory proposes that the lower level needs must be
satisfied before higher-order needs can influence one’s behavior. Huitt (2007) reorganized Maslow’s eight needs into three levels: (a) self existence; (b) relatedness to others (personal identification with groups and significant others); and, (c) growth (of self-knowledge, competencies, character and relationships to the unknown and unknowable).

**Max-Neef’s theory of basic human needs.** Fifty years after Maslow’s theory was originally developed, Max-Neef (1991) tendered a taxonomy of *nine human needs*: subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, idleness, creation, identity, and freedom (see Figure 2). There may be a tenth need, transcendence, but he is not convinced that it is universal. There are four existential categories of human needs: (a) being (qualities), (b) having (things), (c) doing (actions), and (d) interacting (settings). Human needs are the same for all peoples; they are universal and constant through all human cultures and across historical time periods. What changes is *how* the needs are *satisfied*; hence, what is needed is a way for communities to identify their wealths and poverties according to how their fundamental needs are satisfied.

![Max-Neef's 10 Interrelated Basic Human Needs](image)

**Figure 2** Max-Neef’s 10 interrelated basic human needs

To that end, he tendered a process (called *satisfiers* or strategies) by which people can meet these nine needs. Strategies are cultural, contextual, specific and negotiable (Kök, 2007). Using the nine categories of needs and the four existential categories, Max-Neef (1991) developed a 36-cell matrix, filling each cell with satisfiers (see Table 1). He asserted that
satisfiers have different characteristics; they can be positive or negative. Destroyer satisfiers address one need but end up destroying others. Pseudo-satisfiers only promise to fulfil needs. Inhibitors satisfy one need while inhibiting others. Singular satisfiers meet one need while ignoring others. And, synergistic approaches not only satisfy one need but lead to the satisfaction of others. He maintained that his taxonomy and matrix allow for the achievement of in-depth insights into the key problems that impede the actualization of fundamental human needs in society, communities and homes. He further believed that all human needs are necessary, and all are equal. Any need that is not satisfied reveals a human poverty, a compromise to a desirable human condition. Finally, he believed that needs can be satisfied at different levels, and with different intensities, and that needs can be satisfied at the level of the individual, the social group, or the environment (Alkire, 2002).

Max-Neef (1991) categorized basic human needs into two categories: (a) existential (Being, Having, Doing and Interacting) and (b) axiological (nine additional needs, 10 if one includes transcending). Existential needs relate to experiences (levels of activities); everyone has the need to be, have, do and interact. Axiological needs refer to values. People will be, do, have or interact in order to meet a need that they value or believe to be worthy of attaining. The axiological needs are arranged in order of gradual enlightenment, from subsistence to freedom.

To aid in the interpretation of Table 1, consider that Cell 15 represents meeting the need of ‘Doing of Understanding.’ Said another way, it represents different ways of Doing to actualize the need for Understanding. Cell 24 represents different ways of Interacting to actualize the need for Leisure. Cell 1 represents different ways of Being to actualize the need of Subsistence, and Cell 18 represents different ways of Having to actualize the need for Participation. The use of the matrix increases awareness on one’s individual or community situation (gaps between needs and capacities-potential), eventually leading to strategies to meet fundamental needs (Max-Neef, 1991).

**Table 1 - Basic Human Needs Satisfier Matrix (extrapolated from Max-Neef, 1991)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existential Needs</th>
<th>Satisfiers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being (qualities or attributes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subsistence</td>
<td>physical and mental health, equilibrium, adaptability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>protection</td>
<td>care, adaptability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>autonomy</th>
<th>work insurance family</th>
<th>take care of cure help prevent</th>
<th>living space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>solidarity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respect</td>
<td>friendships, family, relationships with nature, partnerships</td>
<td>share, take care of, express emotions, make love, appreciate</td>
<td>privacy and intimate spaces of togetherness, home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sense of humour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>generosity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>sensuality</td>
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<tr>
<td>tolerance</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>affection</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>respect</td>
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<tr>
<td>sense of humour</td>
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<td>generosity</td>
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<tr>
<td>sensuality</td>
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<tr>
<td>tolerance</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>critical capacity</td>
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<tr>
<td>curiosity</td>
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<tr>
<td>intuition</td>
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<tr>
<td>discipline</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>rationality</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participation</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>receptiveness</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>dedication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sense of humour</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>willingness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dedication</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leisure</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imagination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>tranquillity</td>
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<tr>
<td>spontaneity</td>
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<tr>
<td>recklessness</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>creation</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imagination</td>
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<tr>
<td>boldness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>inventiveness</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curiosity</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passion</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>abilities</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skills/processes</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>techniques</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sense of belonging, self-esteem, consistency, assertiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language, religions, work, customs, values, norms, symbols, habits</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get to know oneself, grow, commit to oneself, confront, actualize</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>freedom</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>autonomy</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-esteem</td>
<td>equal rights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>open mindedness</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tolerance</td>
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</table>
Interim Summary

By way of summary, it is important to recognize the self-evident overlap among various conceptualizations of the three concepts (see Table 2). That being said, it is imperative to note that each initiative provided different definitions of these various dimensions (too detailed to set out in this monograph) meaning the terms are not directly comparable. Also, each initiative was predicated on different assumptions - the crux of how they truly differ. Most initiatives related to well-being listed the various dimensions but did not suggest integration. Wellness scholars actively argued for a holistic, integrative approach to wellness to augment the tendency to list various dimensions. Maslow called his theory of human needs an hierarchy, intimating that the lower levels have to be met before the higher levels. More recently, he recognized that they are interrelated rather than separated; however, most people tend to assume they are hierarchical, and that the categories of needs are organized in order of relative importance. Max-Neef’s approach reflects a system of interrelated and interactive basic human needs, assuming that simultaneity, complementarity and trade offs are key features of needs satisfaction. The context in which the needs (or lack thereof) are experienced determines the order of their satisfaction. The discussion now turns to a chronology of home economics-related initiatives identified for analysis for this monograph.

Table 2 - Comparison of dimensions of well-being, wellness and basic human needs
(due to different definitions, not all categories are directly comparable)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Well-being</th>
<th>Wellness</th>
<th>Maslow’s Human Needs</th>
<th>Max-Neef’s Human Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>physical</td>
<td>physical</td>
<td>physiological</td>
<td>subsistence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(basic life needs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social</td>
<td>social</td>
<td>belongingness, love and affection</td>
<td>affection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional</td>
<td>emotional</td>
<td>self-esteem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aesthetics</td>
<td></td>
<td>aesthetics</td>
<td>creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spiritual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>economic</td>
<td>vocational/occupational</td>
<td>creation (work)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal/political autonomy</td>
<td>freedom</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community/cultural</td>
<td>participation (in civil society)</td>
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<tr>
<td>moral</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>environmental</td>
<td>environmental</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intellectual</td>
<td>cognitive (to know and understand)</td>
<td>understand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-actualization</td>
<td>creation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-transcendence</td>
<td>transcendence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(beyond self)</td>
<td>identity</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Chronology of Eight United States Home Economics-Related Initiatives**

The previous section provided distinctions among the three concepts: well-being is a state, wellness is a process, and human needs are physical and non-physical elements necessary for human subsistence, growth and development, as well as all those things humans are innately driven to attain (cf. Burton, 1990; Nygren, 1989). This second section of the monograph chronicles eight home economics-related initiatives from United States, which either directly or indirectly dealt with these three concepts between 1989 and 2009 (see Figure 3). They are presented chronologically, appreciating that some initiatives have influenced others, and that each deals with different combinations of the three concepts, to different degrees. This is the first time that all eight initiatives have been brought together and juxtaposed against each other in order to gain insights into how well-being, wellness and basic human needs (and the human condition) have been (re)conceptualized over time by the home economics profession in United States.
The notion of basic human needs has been in the profession’s rhetoric since the beginning, appearing in the conversations of those attending the Lake Placid conferences (1899-1909). Brown (1985, p.257) explained that a small cadre of participants at Lake Placid believed families have a moral obligation to attain and gain satisfaction from attaining basic human needs. At the 1902 meeting, Alice Chown explained, “home economics in its broad sense was a subject for developing... the meaning of the physical, social, moral, esthetic [sic] and spiritual conditions of the home” (as cited in Brown, p. 263).

In the late eighties, in two special issues of *Home Economics Forum* (now called *KON FORUM*), Kappa Omicron Nu (KON) re-introduced basic human needs as a central idea for home economics (see [http://www.kon.org/archives/forum/forum3_2.pdf](http://www.kon.org/archives/forum/forum3_2.pdf) and [http://www.kon.org/archives/forum/forum4_1.pdf](http://www.kon.org/archives/forum/forum4_1.pdf)). Nygren (1989) observed that worldwide attempts to theorize and conceptualize the notion of basic human needs began in the middle of
the last century. She entreated home economists to search for consensus on the concept of basic human needs because its attainment impacts well-being. Burns (1989) broached the topic of higher order human needs, distinguishing between the biologically-based need for sensation and the acculturation-based need for uniqueness. Neither are crucial to survival (like food, shelter and water), yet they do influence people’s behaviour directed towards experiencing variety, novelty and complexity (sensation) and being different from others (uniqueness). There is general agreement that basic needs (whether survival- or non-survival-oriented) are central to human motivation, because needs are forces that induce people to action (Burns & Rayman, 1989). Resultant human behaviour from these actions creates the living conditions of humanity.

Marjorie Brown’s Normative Approach to Well-being (1993)

Brown (1993) tendered a comprehensive discussion of well-being as a central concern for the profession. She positioned well-being as one of the five basic ideas of home economics. Brown noted that home economics has historically interpreted well-being as two dimensional, comprising four types: “(1) economic and physical well-being through efficiency in management and the control of things in the home and (2) social-psychological well-being through interpersonal relations and personality development within the family” (p.49). She concluded that, as a basic idea, well-being was highly abstract, internally complex and conceptually vague; yet, she agreed that well-being was a “partly shared idea” that is “subject to a variety of interpretations” (p.49).

Brown (1993) challenged the profession “to develop a new and articulated way of thinking about the purpose of home economics” via a “whole interpretative scheme of well-being” (p.111, italics added), one that is normative in its approach. By this she meant stating how things ought to be as opposed to stating, factually, how things are. In addition to describing the economic, social, physical and emotional states or conditions of families and individuals, the profession would go further and interpret those conditions using such concepts as justice, interests, equity, freedom, rights, responsibilities and power (see McGregor, 2010). Brown believed the profession should use this normative approach when “analyzing contemporary society for existing conditions that bear on individual and family well-being” (p.111). The normative approach to well-being can “serve as a common professional purpose in our practice and as a basis for evaluating the existing realities in which individuals and families live” (p.111).

The Scottsdale Framework (1993)

At a visioning exercise in Scottsdale, Arizona, informally called the unity and identity conference (Vincenti, 1997), members of the American profession endorsed The Conceptual Framework for the 21st Century, with an attendant name change to Family and Consumer
Sciences (FCS) (American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences [AAFCS], 1993; Simerly, Ralston, Harriman & Taylor, 2000). This became known as the Scottsdale Framework. Because the Framework used the concept of well-being, not wellness, those endorsing the document, de facto, endorsed well-being. The Framework envisioned the enhancement of well-being as one of three overall Outcomes of FCS practice.

The Framework conceived well-being as multi-dimensional but was not consistent in how it conceptualized the concept. In one section (Profession is Concerned With), it identified four/five dimensions of well-being: physical, psychosocial, economic and aesthetic. In another section (Outcomes), a different list was used, with some overlap: physical, social, emotional and economic, minus aesthetic but with cognitive. This represents internal inconsistency in conceptualizing well-being (AAFCS, 1993).

The Scottsdale Framework called for a holistic approach to practice, meaning a desire to emphasize the organic or functional relationship between parts and the whole. The Framework also stated that FCS practice would be unified through its focus on an integrative approach and on the discovery, integration and application of knowledge (AAFCS, 1993). It also noted the profession was concerned with developing and using resources to meet human needs and would take a leadership role in shaping society thereby enhancing the human condition, but these concepts were not elaborated upon within the Framework. The Framework identified, as another Outcome of professional practice, “the enhancement of the quality of the environments in which individuals and families function,” but it did not explicitly link this Outcome back to basic human needs or the human condition.


In the mid-nineties, like-minded FCS practitioners arranged for the AAFCS conference planners to include sessions about a theory of family well-being. Two sessions were held in 1996, with a follow up in 1997, three in total. These sessions were sponsored by Kappa Omicron Nu. A background paper with responses was prepared for 1996 (Mitstifer, 1996), and a collection of reflection papers was prepared for 1997 (Henry, Mitstifer & Smith, 1997). Framed as a scholarly study of family well-being, the sessions were predicated on the assumption that “it is rather unsettling to think that with all of our attention to definition for almost a century, we have not spent more time on this concept” (Mitstifer, p. v). Also, both sessions were billed as dialogues, appreciating that, through dialogue, a group becomes open to the flow of a larger intelligence leading to a larger common pool of meaning about well-being accessible to the group (Mitstifer, 1995).

Henry (1996, 1997), from Australia, remarked that, as valuable as the dialogue was, the participants were unable to articulate a definitive theoretical framework of well-being. Baldwin (1997) referenced her own earlier framework for well-being (Baldwin, 1996), noting it could
have been further developed to provide wholeness of perspective. Smith (1997), acknowledging
that the many dimensions of well-being are not mutually exclusive, fell short of referencing a
holistic approach. Braun and Bauer (1997, p. 73) noted, “Well-being...is a state of being in which
basic needs are met” (emphasis added). Breland (1997) referenced the need to appreciate the
complexity of needs satisfaction. McFall (1997) juxtaposed well-being against ill-being, defining
the latter as either boredom or anxiety, depending on the skill-level available to complete a
challenging task. Well-being was conceived as the degree of comfort experienced when skills
equal the challenge. She further posited that quality of life is a function of personal well-being
(physical, mental and emotional) and satisfaction with one’s environment (intellect, social,
material, financial).

Pendergast (1997) affirmed that although well-being is viewed as the central focus of
home economics, “well-being is a slippery concept” (p.31). She eschewed a confined list of
categories of well-being, preferring the term dimensions of well-being because it is less isolating,
finite and absolute. She questioned whether we should be focused on individual well-being,
family well-being or both, suggesting that “perhaps it is either/or/both depending upon the
context in which well-being is being considered” (p.33). She urged us to reflect on the limitations
we have placed on our thinking about a theory of well-being. Those in attendance at the AAFCS
conference sessions believed the conversation and intellectual journey around a theory of well-
being should continue (Mitstifer, 1996).

McGregor and Goldsmith’s Conceptualization of Well-being (1998)

McGregor and Goldsmith (1998) clarified the differences among quality of life, standard
of living and well-being. “Quality of life has to do with the perception of, and the level of
satisfaction or confidence with, one’s conditions, relationships and surroundings. Standard of
living is the actual level of living being experienced. Well-being is the state of being ‘well,’
happy, healthy, or prosperous” (p.5). Their scholarship regarding these three concepts was
recognized as one of the seven key papers representing intellectual contributions in the United
definition of well-being, cited earlier. McGregor and Goldsmith conceptualized well-being as
comprising seven dimensions: economic, physical, emotional, social, political, spiritual and
environmental (see also Henry, 1995a). Each of these elements was discussed at length in their
article. They were among the first to bring spiritual well-being to home economics’ rhetoric.
Spiritual well-being is an emerging aspect of family well-being that was originally intended to be
part of our profession under the auspices of aesthetics and spiritual conditions (Baldwin, 1996;
Brown, 1993; Bubolz & Sontag, 1988). The other new dimension of well-being tendered by
McGregor and Goldsmith was political well-being, referring to family and individual
empowerment and autonomy based on moral and ethical freedom rather than, or in spite of,
political government activities.

In contemporary home economics initiatives, Smith (1997) proposed moral well-being (meaning of life and what it means to be human), as well as aesthetic well-being (the beauty of human life and the best of humankind). Pendergast (1997) offered the concept of cultural well-being. Leading up to the 21st century, home economists were enriching their conceptualization of what constitutes well-being.


In 1999, an open summit on the future of FCS in higher education was held in Arlington, Texas. KON shared Open Space Session Notes for a range of Summit issues, posting a document at its website. In the session that focused on the core values of the discipline/profession, participants identified “a wholistic, integrative approach to the study of factors related to the well-being of individuals, families and communities” (Summit Steering Committee, 1999, p.7). They reported “we have forgotten about the holistic aspects of our discipline” (p.7). This loss included insights into how an integrative approach could influence how the profession conceptualizes well-being. The concept of wellness was identified in a session about what constitutes an effective core curriculum for socializing people into the profession; however, wellness was combined with nutrition and health rather than as a stand-alone, core concept. ‘Nutrition, health and wellness’ was combined with systems, management, policy, and ethical/social responsibilities to comprise the five core FCS concepts. The Summit participants did not report any discussion of basic human needs but they did recognize, as a core value, “improving the human condition - the individual, family, and community in their different contexts in the world” (p.7).

National Standards for FCS Curricula (2000, 2008)

The national standards for FCS education are intended to provide a strong and clear conceptualization and a common direction for FCS education at local, state and national levels. (National Association of State Administrators of Family and Consumer Sciences [NASAFCS], 2008). Both the original (Vail, Fox & Wild, 2000) and the recently revised 2008 version of the standards incorporated well-being and wellness, but separated them, linking wellness with nutrition. The intent of any FCS curriculum is to (a) strengthen the well-being of individuals and families across the life span, and (b) promote optimal nutrition and wellness across the life span (NASAFCS, 2008). The process framework for the standards (Fox, 2007) identified four processes that students need to learn and use: thinking, communication, leadership and management. Under Leadership Processes, Fox (p.5) clarified that students should learn that “Responsible citizens are concerned about the well-being of all society members and take social
action to meet those needs” (emphasis added). Otherwise, neither of the three concepts are referred to within the learning processes. Students are not expected to manage, communicate or think about wellness, well-being or basic human needs.

There are 16 standards, reflecting content or subject areas. None of well-being, wellness or basic human needs are stand-alone standards. Well-being is mentioned in the title of three standards, and wellness is part of a competency in Standard 10.0. Standard 6.0 refered to Family - evaluate the significance of family and its impact on the well-being of individuals and families. This same sentiment is reflected in Standard 15.0 on Parenting - evaluate the effects of parenting roles and responsibilities on strengthening the well-being of individuals and families. Standard 14.0 is titled Nutrition and Wellness - demonstrate nutrition and wellness practices to enhance individual and family well-being. Standard 14.0 elaborated on five components of wellness - physical, emotional, social, psychological and spiritual - that are supposed to enhance well-being. It advocated that people practice wellness in order to enhance well-being (the higher order concept) (Fox, 2007; Yahnke & Wissman, 2000).


Body of knowledge (BOK) is a term used to represent the complete set of agreed-to concepts, terms, principles and activities that make up a professional domain, as defined and advocated by the relevant professional association. The term also refers to the document that defines that knowledge, plus it can refer to a professional reading list, a library, a website(s) and a description of professional functions (Tipton & Henry, 2007). BOKs serve as the intellectual foundation (the head) of a profession with the heart representing the mission, and the soul representing the values and philosophy, the why of the profession’s existence (AAFCS, 2001; Anderson & Nickols, 2001). They contain the main domains of learning and respective high-level topics or knowledge areas. Because BOKs represent current best practices and the big picture view of a profession, they must remain current and legitimate. The AAFCS is the only professional home economics association in the world that has generated a BOK document.

Drawing on the 1993 Scottsdale Framework document, AAFCS generated an official BOK, first published in 2001 (AAFCS, 2001; Anderson & Nickols, 2001; Baugher et al., 2000). With subsequent revisions, it was posted to the AAFCS website in 2003 (Baugher et al., 2003), and recently rearticulated with a definition of basic human needs (Nickols et al., 2009). The original version of the BOK contained three key concepts (basic human needs, individual well-being, and systems theory and life course development), with wellness as a cross-cutting theme (Anderson & Nickols, 2001). The current BOK placed basic human needs at the core, surrounded by individual well-being and two different key elements: family strengths, and community vitality. Wellness remained one of five cross-cutting themes in the most recent version (Nickols et al.) (see Figure 4).
In the year leading up to posting the inaugural BOK to its website, AAFCS devoted an issue of the *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences* to the special theme of Body of Knowledge (Anderson, 2002). In this issue, Fain and Lewis (2002) wrote about the *wellness concept* in relation to the BOK. It was the first time that wellness along six dimensions was framed within the home economics literature, understood to be a way of living that integrates an individual’s six dimensions in order to function optimally: physical, occupational, social, spiritual, intellectual and emotional. They challenged the profession to gain a thorough understanding of the knowledge base surrounding an *holistic approach* to wellness. This holistic approach is elusively evident in the AAFCS (2001) *White Paper* on the BOK, if practitioners are able to make the intellectual linkages. Practitioners are expected to connect the fundamental principle of “grounding practice in an integrative, synergistic holistic focus” (p.2) with the theme of wellness, understood to “encompass health and well-being” (p.5).

When defining basic human needs, Nickols et al. (2009), in their update of the AAFCS BOK, referenced both an earlier version of Maslow’s (1968) work and an approach tendered by the World Bank (Narayan, Chambers, Shah & Petesch, 2000). The latter offered a six-level typology of basic human *needs*, but used the term well-being: (a) material well-being, (b) bodily well-being, (c) social well-being, (d) security, (e) freedom of choice and action, and (f) psychological well-being. This approach closely mirrored the profession’s conventional listing of multiple dimensions of well-being (e.g., Brown, 1993; McGregor & Goldsmith, 1998; Smith,

![Figure 4 AAFCS Body of Knowledge (used with permission)](image-url)
Using this approach, Nickols et al. eschewed Max-Neef’s (1991) well-articulated theory of basic human needs and opted instead to define basic human needs using elements from AAFCS’ BOK. Basic human needs is defined as: “components of human existence that must be satisfied for individuals to develop their human capacity for personal well-being and interpersonal relationships that support social institutions and culture” (Nickols et al., 2009, p.272, emphasis added).

Friendly Critique of United States Home Economics Initiatives

Of the eight initiatives discussed in this monograph (see Figure 3), two thirds focused mainly on well-being (n=5), one concerned itself with basic human needs, and two addressed well-being and human needs. The only initiative in the 1980s focused on basic human needs. All five initiatives in the 1990s concentrated on well-being. In the 2000s, efforts included various combinations of all three, but mainly well-being, with a renewed focus on basic human needs as a core concept (e.g., AAFCS BOK). Over a 20-year time frame, many American professional associations were involved with these initiatives, as were three individual authors.

Mitstifer’s (1996) observations about the AAFCS conference sessions on a theory of well-being pertain as well to the concepts of wellness and basic human needs. She acknowledged the existence of multiple interpretations, the prevalence of incoherent points of views, and that “it will take time, suspended assumptions, and collegial regard for the development of a free flow of meaning and of windows to new understandings” (p. v). Cognizant of this natural ambiguity during conceptual innovations, this section offers a friendly critique of the eight initiatives. The intent is to identify opportunities for rich international conversations about how to move these intellectual innovations forward.

Well-being and Wellness

Regarding well-being and wellness, Brown (1993) recognized well-being as one of the five basic ideas of home economics. She suggested that the descriptive categorization of four types of well-being be augmented with a normative approach whereby home economists would interpret the conditions of humans rather than just describe different states of well-being. The Scottsdale Framework envisioned the enhancement of well-being as one of three overall outcomes of FCS practice, but was inconsistent when it identified aspects of what constitutes dimensions of well-being (AAFCS, 1993). Those who attended the AAFCS 1996-1997 conference sessions on a theory of family well-being expressed frustration that a theory was not achieved, but agreed that the scholarly study of such a theory, through dialogue, should continue.

McGregor and Goldsmith (1998) offered a list of aspects of well-being with detailed definitions. They employed a fragmented approach with no effort to integrate, save to relate well-
being to its sister concepts of quality of life and standard of living. The 1999 Summit on FCS in higher education referenced “a holistic approach to well-being” as a core value of the profession; yet, they listed dimensions of well-being (a linear, fragmented approach). They combined wellness with nutrition (instead of conceiving wellness as a stand alone concept).

The 2008 National FCS standards did not include well-being or wellness as stand-alone standards; instead, they took the position that each of nutrition and wellness, family and parenting effect well-being, instead of the other way around. These three aspects of family life are seen to strengthen, enhance or impact well-being. There is no discussion of the converse, that the state of well-being affects nutrition, parenting or the family. The architects of the standards did not proffer a holistic approach to either concept. They did advocate the system of actions approach (Fox, 2007), which can lead to holistic integration, providing people understand what it means.

Fain and Lewis (2002) urged the architects of the AAFCS BOK to embrace a holistic perspective of wellness. However, wellness was, and continues to be (Nickols et al, 2009), packaged with four other cross-cutting themes rather than as a key, standalone element, as is well-being (see Figure 4). The AAFCS BOK intends for practitioners to employ an integrative, holistic approach to wellness; however, this intention needs to be scaffolded and reinforced, preferably drawing on the holistic approach to wellness attributed to Hettler (2008), Montague et al. (2001) and Omar (2002), non home economists. The current conceptualization of wellness in the AAFCS BOK includes nutrition, disease, health care, and psychological health (Nickols et al.). Non-home economist architects of the wellness concept take the idea further, arguing that wellness represents proper alignment attained through personal empowerment - the balanced interplay of body, mind and spirit (e.g., Hettler, 2008; McCusker, 2002). Holistic, integrated wellness embraces the concepts of self-responsibility, self-direction, choice, and optimism (Montague et al.).

Basic Human Needs

KON’s 1989 initiative reintroduced the concept of basic human needs, referencing the founding conferences at Lake Placid as originators of the idea for the profession. Nygren (1989) commented, “it behoves us to continue the search for a consensus on basic human needs and the means for their attainment” (p.9). She asserted that well-being is predicated on having basic needs met. As with other scholars who focused on well-being, Nygren believed that well-being is a higher order concept than human needs. Within the Process Framework of the 2008 National FCS Standards, there is nominal mention of needs and to the ‘well-being of all society members’ (but not directly to the human condition) (Fox, 2007). None of the 16 standards referenced basic human needs or the human condition. The 1999 Summit on FCS in higher education recognized improving the human condition as a core value of the profession.
It is exciting that basic human needs is now the core element in the AAFCS BOK (see Figure 4), with a definition of the concept finally tendered by Nickols et al. (2009), see earlier. However, despite the advances offered by Max-Neef (1991), reflecting a dynamic approach wherein needs are equal, are all necessary and are interrelated and interactive, Nickols et al. eschewed his theory and continued to reference Maslow’s (1968) hierarchy (categories arranged according to relative importance). Moreover, they employed Maslow’s five-level hierarchy of needs, instead of the eight levels now associated with his theory.

Because it was de rigueur in the formative years of the profession (cf. Nygren, 1989), earlier home economists relied on Maslow’s notion of human needs. However, the traditional and ongoing reliance on Maslow’s hierarchical approach infers, whether intended or not, that the architects of the AAFCS BOK continue to embrace an hierarchal approach despite their concurrent reference to integrative elements. This inference is tempered somewhat by the assertion of the inaugural AAFCS BOK architects that Maslow’s theory is not really hierarchal (AAFCS, 2001). “Rather than a hierarchy, where one level must be met before achieving the next, it is helpful to consider basic human needs as a set of Russian stacking dolls. Some needs may be met while others are still being sought” (AAFCS, 2001, p.3).

Finally, the definition of basic human needs in the AAFCS BOK, tendered by Nickols et al. (2009), did not privilege the broader understandings of the concept from contemporary theorists (cf. Burton, 1990; Max-Neef, 1991). Nickols et al. opted instead to define basic human needs as comprising the key elements and some themes of the AAFCS BOK (see Figure 4): capacity building, individual well-being, family strengths and global interdependence (represented in interpersonal relationships), and vital communities. While this definition is a much needed innovation for the AAFCS BOK, it is too narrowly construed given current theoretical innovations for the concept, especially the complex system-oriented approach to needs tendered by Max-Neef.

**Insights for an International Conversation: A Four-Pronged Approach**

These observations and friendly critiques notwithstanding, this monograph has illustrated that the American profession is conceptually evolving regarding these three fundamental concepts. Although they are continuing to refine their understanding of them, and how they are interrelated, they concurrently experienced some conceptual slippage and an inability to completely leave behind descriptive, linear, fragmented and hierarchical orientations.

But, there was forward movement as well, if not well coordinated or across the board. One initiative called for an integrative approach to holistic notions of wellness. More recent initiatives have begun to consider basic human needs as the conceptual anchor, but they resorted to an hierarchical approach instead of a systems approach. There seemed to be a general consensus that well-being is the higher order concept (rather than wellness or human needs). The
rhetoric intimated that wellness and human needs determine well-being, instead of the other way around, a sentiment espoused in the generic notions of wellness discussed earlier in the monograph. One initiative tendered a normative approach to well-being, arguing that such an approach would result in an enhanced human condition. One initiative intimated a link between basic human needs and the human condition; specifically, the Scottsdale Framework said the profession was concerned with meeting human needs and that it would assume a leadership role in shaping society so as to enhance the human condition. The subsequent AAFCS BOK placed basic human needs as the core, anchor concept and maintained that the achievement of these needs can be measured by well-being, quality of life and standard of living. There is no mention of the human condition as a related construct in the BOK. The 1999 Summit recognized the human condition as a core value of the profession.

There are several important lessons for the international home economics community, as we strive to move forward on this issue. First, the analysis shared in this monograph has illustrated that, although these three concepts are interrelated, they also are intellectually unique, differing profoundly due to their underlying assumptions. Using this insight, the profession needs to make some concrete decisions about which of these, as well as the human condition, should be our highest order concept. Second, this analysis of the 20-year intellectual journey in the United States shows that these decisions will not come easy. People hold allegiances to each concept, and they harbour different understandings and ownership of them. Preparing this monograph reinforced the lesson that it takes courage to respectfully and constructively critique others’ initiatives, and expect to be criticized (not criticized), all the while leaving open the doors of communication and collaborative action. Third, more coordination is needed among disparate efforts if we want to build on emergent, vanguard ideas (e.g., human needs and the human condition), better ensuring that conceptual assertions will hold more authority and gain wider acceptance. Fourth, reliance on conceptual innovations from other disciplines and theorists is crucial if we want to keep our thinking fresh and vibrant. Fifth, at the same time, our profession must respect its profound responsibility of doing all of the above while linking our intellectual insights to the everyday life of families, the basic social institution of society and a key determinant of the human condition, and vice versa.

A Four-Pronged Approach

This monograph was premised on the notion that the concepts of well-being and wellness, as home economists have come to understand them, are not sophisticated enough to deal with the problems of humanity. We need more intellectually robust concepts, including basic human needs and the human condition construct. Human needs theory promotes understanding from the base of our common humanity (Kök, 2007). He explained that “human needs theory attempts to unify human beings..., creating a common understanding of who we are and how others need and
feel the same way we do. ... Human needs theory emphasises common humanity” (p. 94). The
world will never be sustainable unless society is designed so that it meets the fundamental needs
of every person, leading to a life-affirming human condition. Indeed, McGregor (2010) further
imagined that the core of the profession’s raison d’etre, the anchor concept, could become the
human condition construct, in a reciprocal relationship with well-being, wellness and basic
human needs. Using insights gained from the generic and home economics’ perspectives on these
three concepts (see Sections one and two and Table 2), the following framework emerged from
the analysis shared in this monograph - a four-pronged approach (see Figure 5).

Figure 5 Four-pronged approach - human condition as
core concept

First, home economists could conceive of wellness as a multi-dimensional, holistic,
dynamic, life affirming process, holistic because each dimension (the part) cannot be separated
from the whole - they each inform the other (see Figure 6). The dodecahedron is transparent so as
to illustrate the interconnections among the eight dimensions. They are not just a list; they are
inherently interconnected, with one depending on the other(s). Through their holistic interaction
as a complex whole, wellness can be said to coexist as a choice, a process, a balanced way of life,
and an integration of mind, body and soul. Using the concept of holistic wellness, home
economists can assume that people are responsible for their own well-being through the practice
of integrating the eight dimensions of wellness. Fulfilling this responsibility depends on meeting
basic needs and achieving normative well-being, all of which shape the human condition.
Second, in the process of achieving or striving for holistic wellness (a journey, not an end-state), people come closer to satisfying their system of basic human needs. A need is something that is necessary in order to live a healthy life. Needs must be met or else something essential or important cannot be achieved. Any need that is not satisfied reveals human poverties, compromises to a desirable human condition. Max-Neef’s (1991) theory of human needs holds that everyone is faced with satisfying a system of needs that are interrelated, interdependent and interactive. They do so through strategies that combine their qualities and attributes, things and material resources, and actions and agency in a variety of settings and contexts. His theory holds that all needs are equal and all must be met; how and to what extent is another matter. And, although the conception of need may vary radically between different people, cultures or different parts of the same society, there are some fundamental, basic needs that all humans must meet, else people and societies cannot survive and thrive (see Figure 7).
Third, accepting that wellness and human needs are both in a reciprocal relationship with well-being, and that well-being is the higher order concept of the three, home economists can mature their practice by augmenting the descriptive approach to well-being (a static state), with the normative approach. This is a significant innovation from Brown (1993), a home economist. The descriptive approach generates information and facts while the normative approach provides crucial context. In addition to describing the various states of well-being of families and individuals, the profession would go further and interpret those conditions using such concepts as justice, interests, equity, freedom, rights, responsibilities and power (see Figure 8). This interpretation serves as a basis for critical inquiry into, and evaluation of, the realities that individuals and families face everyday. Critical inquiry leads to clarification of assumptions, hidden values, and power relationships. Instead of saying, for example, “What can home economists do to address an inadequate state of economic well-being?,” a normative approach would have us ask “What should we do given what we know about injustices, insecurity, rights infringements, and inequitable relationships that lead to the state of low economic well-being?” Failing to address the underlying causes of specific states of well-being means we perpetuate undesirable human conditions for the entire collective, manifested in the everyday lives of individuals and families as they interact with their community and their near environments.

**Figure 7** Basic human needs as complex system impacting human condition, based on Max-Neef (1991)
Fourth, the conditions of humanity (and vice versa) are influenced by people’s choices and the opportunities and barriers they face as they strive to: (a) assume responsibility for holistic wellness; (b) satisfy their system of interrelated, universal needs; and, (c) approximate a normative state of well-being. Families are the basic democratic unit in society, the main social institution (McGregor, 2009). If home economists agree that strong homes and families are germane to the state of humanity, they have to consider shifting their focus to the human condition, while remaining committed to the concepts of well-being, wellness and basic human

**Figure 8** Normative well-being approach (Brown, 1993)
needs. The conditions of existing as a human being include: being born, living, being in relationship with others, the collection of things generated from work (including material things and institutions and structures, called worldliness), being in relationship with the earth, and dying (Arendt, 1958). There can be no doubt that wellness, well-being and human needs profoundly impact all of these aspects of the human condition (and vice versa) - the proposed highest order construct (see Figure 5 again, to the right). If people are not well, if their system of basic needs is not being met and if they are experiencing a state(s) of ill-being not interpreted from a normative, critical perspective, the conditions of their humanity are negatively affected, as are those of society.

Yet, home economists seldom reference humanity; our mantra is “Quality of life and well-being of individuals and families.” This should not be surprising, given that, in the broader literature, well-being and wellness are commonly used in conjunction with individuals and families while the notion of condition is usually associated with humanity (McGregor, 2010). Home economists have historically used the terms family well-being and the personal wellness but seldom say “the individual condition,” the “well-being of humanity,” or even the “human condition.” It is time that this changed. The Scottsdale Framework actually had the right of it - the profession should be concerned with developing and using resources to meet human needs and taking a leadership role in shaping society thereby enhancing the human condition. But its architects stopped short, placing well-being as one of the three overarching outcomes of professional practice instead of the human condition. Similarly, the architects of the AAFCS BOK placed basic human needs at its core - as the anchor concept for the profession - but did not reference the human condition. The Summit was the only initiative that recognized the human condition as a core value of the profession.

Conclusion

East saw the writing on the proverbial fall thirty years ago, when she professed that “home economics is focused on the home in order to improve humanity” (1979, p.141). Home economists around the world are invited to continue the conversation around the relationships among, and the preferred or perceived higher order status of, well-being, wellness and basic human needs vis-à-vis the human condition. These three concepts, now part of our intellectual repertoire, deeply respect the essence of the human condition. It behoves members of the profession to migrate to a higher conceptual level. Ongoing conceptual reflections and theoretical innovations, such as that evidenced in United States during the last 20 years, will ensure that the profession’s central, intellectual constructs remain on the vanguard, and are relevant to the needs of humanity. “We need to embrace deep, vanguard conceptualizations of humanity and home economics...for the good of the world” (McGregor, 2010, p.25).
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