



The Biopolitics of Lifestyle: Foucault, Ethics and Healthy Choices (Interventions)

Christopher Mayes

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A growing sense of urgency over obesity at the national and international level has led to a proliferation of medical and non-medical interventions into the daily lives of individuals and populations. This work focuses on the biopolitical use of lifestyle to govern individual choice and secure population health from the threat of obesity. The characterization of obesity as a threat to society caused by the cumulative effect of individual lifestyles has led to the politicization of daily choices, habits and practices as potential threats. This book critically examines these unquestioned assumptions about obesity and lifestyle, and their relation to wider debates surrounding neoliberal governmentality, biopolitical regulation of populations, discipline of bodies, and the possibility of community resistance.

The rationale for this book follows Michel Foucault's approach of problematization, addressing the way lifestyle is problematized as a biopolitical domain in neoliberal societies. Mayes argues that in response to the threat of obesity, lifestyle has emerged as a network of disparate knowledges, relations and practices through which individuals are governed toward the security of the population's health. Although a central focus is government health campaigns, this volume demonstrates that the network of lifestyle emanates from a variety of overlapping domains and disciplines, including public health, clinical medicine, media, entertainment, school programs, advertising, sociology and ethics.

This book offers a timely critique of the continued interventions into the lives of individuals and communities by government agencies, private industries, medical and non-medical experts in the name of health and population security and will be of interests to students and scholars of critical international relations theory, health and bioethics and governmentality studies.

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