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G. Daniel Lassiter

NEEDS

Human needs are advocated, rejected, or problematized by different groups of scholars. This essay deals only with the first group. For surveys of "rejectors" and "problematizers" see Doyal and Gough (1991) and Springborg (1981), respectively. Human needs are grounded in human nature as Williams (1987, p. 101) and Gasper (2002, section 6.3) argue. Márkus (1978) systematizes Marx's views: Human beings distinguish themselves from animals as their vital activity, work, is oriented toward need satisfaction through mediations (*tool-making animal*), a view confirmed by modern paleoanthropologists (e.g., Leakey 2001). Through work humans become *universal natural-historical beings* capable of transforming all natural elements into objects of their needs and activities and of developing their *human essential forces* (needs and capacities) and creating themselves. Through work, which breaks the animal subject/needs-object fusion and makes human conscience and self-conscience possible, humans become a *universal conscientious being*, as conscience expands with work objects. In work the conditions of humans as *social universal beings* are given. Work is always social: Men and women work for each other using inherited means and capacities. Lastly, human beings are *free beings* who can actualize, by their conscious decision, the objective possibilities created by social evolution.

According to Maslow ([1954] 1987, chapter 4), human needs are *instinctoid* as men and women only inherit the impulse but have to learn the other two elements of instincts (object, activity). Fromm ([1955] 1990, p. 23) argues that at a certain point of evolution, life became self-aware and action ceased to be determined by instincts. This rupture in the dominion of life by instincts is the same implied in work as a mediated activity, as tool making is not instinctual and means a huge liberty leap.

Marx ([1857] 1973) conceives needs (except biological original needs) as produced in a similar sense as products and capacities are produced. Production creates not only consumption objects but also consumption modes, consumption impulses, and the consumer himself. The

historical character of human needs expresses itself in the *humanization of biological needs* and in the *creation of new needs devoid of biological roots*: for example, aesthetic and cognitive needs. Marx's conception contrasts with neoclassical economics' instrumentalist view of production at the service of the sovereign consumer and his preexistent preferences, not needs (Rothenberg 1974).

Wiggins (1998) distinguishes needs from desires/wants and defines rigorously needs and the needed object. In the following three paragraphs his ideas are explained and other viewpoints are incorporated.

Distinguishing needs from desires/wants. Needs are not strong or unconscious desires (or preferences):

> Unlike desire, or want, then need *is not evidently an intentional verb.* What I need depends not on thought or the workings of my mind (or not only on this) but on the way the world is. Again, if one wants something because it is F, one believes or suspects that it is F. But if one needs something because it is F, it must really be F, whether or not one believes that it is. (Wiggins 1998, p. 6)

Doyal and Gough (1991, p. 42) distinguish between *objective needs* conceived as goals universally associated with *prevention of serious harm* and *subjective wants*, which are not.

Need and human harm. The special force of the term *need* and the normative character of noninstrumental but categorical/absolute needs come from the *noncontroversial character of its purpose, avoiding human harm or human flourishing* (Wiggins 1998, pp. 9, 13). Doyal and Gough (1991, pp. 2, 39) adopt the similar concept of serious harm ("significantly impaired pursuit of goals") or flourishing but also define needs as *universal*, with which Fromm ([1955] 1990, chapter 3) and Max-Neef, Elizalde, and Hopenhayn (1986, p. 27) agree: If all human beings have the same capacity to suffer serious harm or to flourish, all have human objective basic needs conceived as universalizable goals, Doyal and Gough argue. Fromm and Maslow identify the serious consequences of unsatisfied needs as physical or mental disease: For example, Fromm ([1955] 1990, pp. 30–36) identifies *narcissism* (which in its extreme forms is equivalent to insanity) as the consequence of the insatisfaction of the need for intimate relations.

On the definition of the needed object and needs. Wiggins defines the object needed: "A person needs *x* (absolutely) if and only if, whatever morally and socially acceptable variation it is … possible to envisage occurring within the relevant time span, he will be harmed if he goes without *x*" (1998, p. 14). He also defines needs as "*states of dependency (in respect of not being harmed)*, which have as their proper objects things needed" (1998, p. 16). This distinction of satisfiers and needs is made by many

authors, and Max-Neef et al. (1986, pp. 41–43) also distinguish satisfiers from goods as different analytical spaces in the sense of spaces developed by Amartya Sen (1983, p. 335). Orthodox economists, and paradoxically Sen (1985), usually restrict satisfiers to goods and services, whereas Lederer (1980) identifies objects, relations, and activities as satisfiers and Boltvinik (2007), on the base of Márkus's description of Marx's conception of human nature and of Max-Neef's satisfiers and needs matrix, has identified seven types of satisfiers: goods; services; activities; relations; information, knowledge and theories; capacities; and institutions.

Needs constitute what is called "thick ethical concepts," speaking of which "factual description and valuation can and must be entangled" (Putnam 2002, p. 39). To use this term "with any discrimination one has to be able to identify imaginatively with an evaluative point of view." Needs, poverty, and Sen's capabilities are entangled terms in which description depends on evaluation (Putnam 2002, pp. 62–63). The entanglement thesis defeats many frequent criticisms addressed to scholars on the grounds that they incorporate values, and we can illustrate this with Fitzgerald's criticism of Maslow. When Fitzgerald (1977, p. 49) states, "Speaking on the need of self-actualisation is either tautological or unequivocally normative" (that is, it is not synthetic or falsifiable), he adopts the logical positivists tripartite classification of all judgments, which constitutes the expression of the fact/value dichotomy: (1) synthetic or falsifiable; (2) analytical (false or true by the rules of logic only, and thus tautological); (3) without cognitive meaning (ethical, metaphysical, and aesthetic judgments). He thus states that speech on the need for self-actualization is located in categories 2 or 3.

Poverty (usually defined as economic incapacity to satisfy needs) is a central field of application of the concept of needs and is dominated by economists who are advocates of the fact/value dichotomy and rejectors of the concept of needs. As they conceive that rationality cannot be present in matters of values, they assume, and insist on it all the time, that the definition of the poverty threshold (highly charged with values) is an arbitrary act by the researcher, promoting a total void on this topic and making it easy for all those who want to minimize the extent of poverty to use thresholds that deny most human needs. They are impoverishing poverty studies in the same way that they impoverished welfare economics, as Putnam (2002, chapter 3) describes.

SEE ALSO *Development Economics; Ethics; Fromm, Erich; Functionings; Marx, Karl; Maslow, Abraham; Needs, Basic; Poverty; Sen, Amartya Kumar; Universalism; Want Creation; Wants; Welfare; Welfare Economics*

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Julio Boltvinik

NEEDS, BASIC

People's basic needs include the requirements for survival, health, and fulfilment: food, water, warmth and, shelter at one extreme and self-expression and self-actualization at the other. However, questions of how to understand, identify, and meet basic needs remain somewhat contested.

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) proposed two primal, biologically based instincts: self-preservation and fulfilling the sexual drive to procreate (Rickman 1937, p. 85), distinguishing the need for life from the death wish, or the aggressive drive to destroy or even self-destruct (Freud 1933, pp. 133–144). Carl Jung (1875–1961) transcended Freud's individualistic notion of instinct, incorporating historical and cultural factors that externally impel the person (Progoff 1953, pp. 33–39). Jung proposed that in later life a psychologically healthy person shifts from fulfilling more basic needs to a focus on self-realization, and this informed Henry Murray's ideas about self-actualization (1938).

Abraham Maslow (1908–1970), influenced by Murray, developed his hierarchy of needs in the early 1940s (Maslow 1943), based on a five-level pyramid from people's most basic physical "deficiency" needs to the most fulfilling "growth" needs, the satisfaction of each making possible the progression to the next. While deficiency needs leave the individual at rest when met, growth needs persist, continuing to motivate the person. The pyramid includes: (1) biological and physiological needs, for air, food, drink, sleep, shelter, warmth, and sex; (2) safety needs, for protection and security boundaries; (3) affection and belonging needs, for loving relationships in the family and satisfaction at work; (4) esteem needs, for appreciation by others, status, reputation, and recognition of achievements; and (5) self-actualization needs, for personal development and fulfilment. Three more levels of growth needs were added in the late 1960s (Maslow 1999), their precise origins being uncertain, however. These included (6) cognitive needs, for knowledge and understanding; (7) aesthetic needs, to create or appreciate beauty and harmony; and (8) transcendence needs, enabling other people to achieve self-actualization.

Maslow drew on anthropologist Ruth Benedict's application of the concept of synergy in cultures where cooperation was rewarded to everybody's benefit, applying this concept to work organizations to increase motivation, functioning, and production. He studied how to achieve synergy—that is, convergence—between the interests of the commercial organization and its employees through enlightened management based on humanistic theories about meeting people's needs.

Maslow's optimistic view of human nature and the satisfaction of needs informed Douglas McGregor's Theory Y (1960). McGregor proposed two contrasting managerial theories about human nature: theory X, that people meet their basic needs by expressing their fundamental selfishness and laziness; and theory Y, that they meet their needs by expressing fundamental tendencies toward being cooperative, hardworking, and productive.

From an economic perspective, John Maynard Keynes (1930) distinguished basic or absolute needs—for food and drink, for example—which are limited because they disappear once a person is satisfied, from relative needs—for advancement and superiority over other people—which are insatiable. However, more affluent people's needs to enjoy eating and drinking beyond satisfying basic appetites are widely recognized. Also, there are many further reasons why both absolute and relative needs are insatiable, such as the desire to improve one's quality of life.

Perspectives on responding to basic needs have widespread application beyond psychological work with people, including social policy, counseling, health care, social care, and education. Jonathan Bradshaw (1972) distinguishes four categories of social need: *normative*, judged according to a predetermined norm or standard; *comparative*, specified in relation to the needs of other people; *felt*, or wants experienced by people rather than judged by others; and *expressed*, as stated by people in the light of their experience. The strengths perspective developed by Dennis Saleeby (2002), involves assessing people's needs from their strengths and potential rather than simply deficits, building on their existing knowledge, skills, and resources to enable them to cope with challenges and difficulties. Person-centered assessment involves keeping individual needs at the center throughout the process of assessment and ensuring that the person's perception of his or her basic needs is always taken into consideration at every stage. In these terms, analysis of basic needs is more holistic, assessing the needs of whole person: the stage of the life course reached, the capacity of relatives, partners, and careers to respond to needs, and the resources available in the family, neighborhood, and wider environment.

Conceptions of basic needs not only cross disciplinary boundaries but also have transnational currency, although the ways these are presented may foster an illusion of global consensus rather than reflecting the reality of the contested nature of proposed responses, including those based on human rights. Basic needs derive not just from what are held to be physical or psychological imperatives but also from socially and politically constructed statements, some of which cross cultural and national