NEEDS AND BASIC NEEDS

A clarification of meanings, levels and different streams of work

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1. INTRODUCTION

> Take the notion of meeting basic needs. It is truly a revolution [in South
> Africa]... I have set out these past six months to change the whole orientation
> of the department [of Water Affairs] to basic human needs. (Asmal,
> 1995:13,16)
> ...the realization that whilst modernist development may be dead, 'needs'
> undeniably persist... (Porter, 1995:85)

The weaknesses of "economic man" pictures of people's preferences, decision-making
and welfare lead many thinkers to employ concepts of "needs". So for example: the
revived institutional economics of the European Association of Evolutionary Political
Economy includes "identification and evaluation of real needs" (by participatory
democratic processes) in the definition of its theoretical perspective; much gender
planning now operates in terms of "practical and strategic gender needs" (e.g. Moser,
1989); and fulfilment of basic needs has been the stated priority of the new government
of South Africa.

Of particular interest here is that the conceptualization of "human development"
put forward in UNDP and other channels in the 1990s grows from 1970s work on basic
needs (e.g. ILO, 1976) which had been heavily criticized from various quarters (see
e.g. Fitzgerald, ed., 1977) and partly pushed aside by 1980s neo-liberalism. Basic
needs theory was refined and systematized by Sen and others in the 1980s (see e.g.
Sen, 1985; Stewart, 1985; and comparisons of Sen's version with the earlier work, by
Stewart, 1989, and Crocker, 1992 & 1995). The "human development" approach and
the work of Sen, Nussbaum and associates are presented as a refined foundation for
development ethics and development policy and as an alternative to neo-liberalism.

At the same time attacks on needs theorizing have grown, from various sides.
Besides the criticisms from orthodox economics (e.g. Stern, 1989), for whom any
differentiation between or deviation from wants is an arbitrary intervention, have come
further condemnations. Critics of socialism and of the welfare state (e.g. Springborg,
1981) typically stigmatize the term "needs" as meaning those wants that people seek
to have fulfilled without payment, and/or as the legitimizing veil for the authority of
state bureaucrats. Various feminists (e.g. Fraser, 1989), post-modernists and Greens
(e.g. Illich, 1992), allege that needs language is irredeemably marred by paternalism
and essentialism.

What do "needs" mean in these claims and counter-claims? Unfortunately many discussions, both pro- and anti- needs discourses, remain seriously confused. This paper helps show how and why. It has three main sets of objectives.

(i) To highlight distinctions that help us to understand a spectrum of positions and avoid talking at cross-purposes. This is done in Section 2. The major distinctions are, firstly, between explanatory, instrumental, and normative modes (Sections 2.1, 2.2), and secondly, between different levels (2.3) when interpreting concepts of need.

(ii) To suggest, in Section 3, that while *positive* needs theories which try to explain wants/desires partly in terms of deeper quasi-biological constants face problems, they still play a useful role in querying widespread but fundamentally inadequate "economic man" and "plasticine man" approaches. We will consider as an example the questionable common assumption of the insatiability of consumer demands for commodities.

(iii) To clarify, in contrast, the distinctive nature and roles of normative needs analysis. We must at the outset underline the relevance and basis of a normative distinction between priority needs and (other) wants or desires (Sections 2.1, 2.2). We then in Section 4 sketch a framework for normative needs analysis; and highlight that the role of normative basic needs theory is to suggest minima and types of access or opportunity which each citizen must have, that can be acceptable to and/or obligatory upon any social philosophy, but beyond which they are free to differ.

The paper thus provides tools for ordering the debates on human needs from the 1970s and the present, as a prelude to more detailed critique or construction of needs theory; it will not essay that deeper theorizing itself. The basic needs approach offers a counter policy-discourse to liberal and neo-classical welfare economics, with ideas of basic needs taking a somewhat comparable background role to "economic man" but as an alternative to that dead weight. While the paper gives some of the flavour of the necessary further work, it does not go deeply into numerous important issues that needs theory must face (see e.g. Lederer ed. 1980, Stewart 1985, Doyal & Gough 1991, Ramsay 1992). Rather it seeks to clarify and focus discussion, by arguing the points stated above; and in particular to specify the rationale of normative theorizing on basic needs and to distinguish this frame for policy-argumentation from contested positive theories of needs. This still requires attention to the positive theories, such as the popular Maslow model, noting their contributions yet limits as bases for development analysis and policy.

2. THE GRAMMAR OF "NEED" AND "BASIC NEED"

2.1. Meanings: positive and normative

Although both the labels "positive" and "normative" have other senses or connotations, which can dominate in everyday usage, we adopt them here with the senses conventional in English language economics:- "positive" as meaning factual, actual, relating to description and explanation of what exists; and "normative" as meaning valuative, relating to grouping or grading what exists, in terms of its degree of goodness, rightness or appropriateness.

Needs analyses with normative purposes try to prioritize amongst wants, both for and between individuals. This prioritization denies that every want of the same intensity is equally normatively important or should be valued by how much the wanter is willing to pay to fulfil it. In other words, a distinction is proposed between wants and needs. The greater the degree of scarcity the more important is such prioritization. Normative "needs" discourses arise thus when people reject the market as arbiter of all valuation, and hold that some goods have priority, e.g. health, shelter and literacy for all. The normative claim builds on positive claims: namely that without those goods, people cannot function and contribute in society.

There is also widespread use, both in professional and everyday contexts, of positive meanings of "need" again distinct from "want". Some concern posited deeper drives in human personality. Others fit under the concept of "felt need":- person A feels a strong desire to have S (e.g. a sunshine holiday), and is expected to suffer or be notably uncomfortable if without it, which makes this mental state more than a want alone. It remains a separate question whether such a felt need is justifiable as a priority -- a normatively justified need -- required for functioning in some normatively (especially socially) desirable way. (By speaking of "socially desirable" we consider "needs in their socially evaluative use"; Braybrooke, 1987:77.) Some needs in this positive, descriptive sense are in fact undesirable. There are things that some people may both desire strongly (e.g. dominance over others) and suffer without (viz. having nobody to dominate), where we would conclude that the people should indeed suffer.

Thus not all wants or felt needs are justified needs. And vice versa, a need may be justified regardless of whether the person feels the need (e.g. for education, or to pass a test before driving). Plant (1991) summarizes an extensive literature which

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corroborates a distinction between normative-needs and wants, by analysis of English-language usage. So does the neo-conservative Scruton (1983), and the classic "Fowler's Modern English Usage" (my discussion is limited to English). Livingstone & Lunt (1992) present similar findings from interviews with the general public.

We will here, like most economists, keep "wants" to refer to felt or conscious desires; and, unlike many economists, we will distinguish them from "needs", whether in the sense of deeper drives or of requirements, whether normatively justified or merely contingent requirements (i.e. if I need S to do D, the need for S is contingent on D, and only justified if D is justified). The common failure to respect the wants-needs distinction(s) partly reflects inevitable disputes over whether many particular (normative or contingent) requirements are justified; but it also reflects that on other occasions in English "want" *can* mean "need", "lack" or "require" -- e.g. as in "the child wants for nothing", "the state should help those in want" (Collins English Dictionary, 1979). Of the meanings for "want" given in this leading dictionary, seven are of that family, whereas another eight concern wishes, desires, or felt needs. The nine everyday meanings given for "need" are much more united: eight lack any mention of feelings, and seven concern requirements, while the other meanings concern being in extreme poverty or difficulty.

Some libertarians maintain that the notion of justified "needs" distinct from wants is nonsensical, and that claimed "needs" are just wants, specific to each person. Simple counter-examples to this view are vitamins and vaccinations. In another extreme view, both felt and justified needs are seen as universal in substance as well as type; counter-examples are found in any textbook of anthropology or social policy. A third position holds that needs are radically socially relative (e.g. a claim that European women need independence but Asian women do not, due to cultural differences). If this position is true it remains important to analyse the varied needs. The stronger version, that people are totally moulded by society and hence their needs are totally socially relative -- the "plasticine (wo)man" model -- is unconvincing. It suggests that there could never be dissatisfaction with a society, neglects non-nurture factors, and is also refuted by the same counter-examples as before (vitamins, vaccinations). Two more plausible positions might be that needs are partly universal in substance but partly socially relative in substance, or that all needs are socially relative in substance but (largely) universal in type.

The relationship between positive and normative analyses is uneasy. Some authors

believe there is no sustainable distinction between the two. While accepting that the distinction is not perfect, and sometimes "grey", I suggest that it is demonstrably real and useful. Some other authors argue that not only is the distinction perfect but that only on the positive side of the dichotomy can one speak of "analysis"; normative discourse is merely a matter of tastes and attitudes. As we will see from the example of normative needs discourse, that position is mistaken. Next, claims about justified needs should take into account any well-based positive theories of needs; but available positive theories are often controversial, over-generalized and misused.

Further, talk about "needs" is frequently not clear on whether the term is being given a positive or normative sense or both; partly because the notion of "needs" as "requirements" or "requisites" links the two types of discourse and is so ubiquitous that to establish clear meanings demands extra care. I suggest we divide the positive category into two and so distinguish three broad meanings of "needs" -- related to wants, requisites and priorities, respectively -- and three corresponding areas of work. Within that perspective, we can further clarify the "grammar" of "need" and "basic need".

2.2. Three sets of meanings and three areas of work

I suggest here a set of three generic meanings that span current usage: (a) needs as positive entitities related to some form of want or desire; (b) needs as requisites for meeting a given end; (c) needs as justified or priority requisites.[1] The set links to Taylor (1959)'s list of meanings of the noun "need", which was used or adapted by several later authors. The first of his four meanings, a need as something required by a rule or law, can be read as a variant of the second, namely a requisite for achieving a given end, where the end is fulfilment of the rule or law. This leaves three major types of meaning.

Starting from the most questionable usage -- the equation of needs with wants (A1) -- Table 1 presents over thirty different observable meanings of the nouns "need" and "needs", grouped under the three generic meanings. The wealth of meanings indicates the potential for misunderstandings and confusion, and for reducing them. The meanings placed together on a row have more or less direct inter-linkages.

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TABLE 1: DIFFERENT MEANINGS GIVEN TO "NEED(S)" AS A NOUN

A. IN DESCRIPTIVE AND EXPLANATORY ANALYSES OF WANTS/ DESIRES/ BEHAVIOUR (Taylor, 1959: #3)	B. INSTRUMENTAL ANALYSES:- REQUISITES for meeting a given end (Taylor, 1959: #2)	C. NORMATIVE ANALYSES:- JUSTIFIED/PRIORITY REQUISITES (Taylor, 1959: #4)
A1. Wants, desires	B1. Requisites for meeting wants	C1. Requisites of approved wants
A2. Those wants felt earlier than others	B2. Requisites for survival B2*. Requisites for "maintenance of human capital" (Pyatt, 1995)	C2. Requisites for survival, when justified
A3. Wants whose non-fulfilment results in (significant) suffering A3*. Strong wants (Friedmann, 1992:61)	B3. Requisites for avoiding suffering B3*. Requisites for lowering of tension	C3. Requisites for avoiding excessive / unjustified suffering
		Requisites for C4. avoiding harm (a different and broader category than suffering) C4*. minimal decency
A5. Behaviour tendency whose fulfilment results in satisfaction A5*. Behaviour tendency whose continued denial results in pathological responses (Bay, 1968; but some criteria for pathology are culturally relative - even death sometimes)	B5. Requisites for satisfaction, fulfilment B5*. Requisites for avoidance of pathology (subject to a similar comment as for A5*)	C5. Justified requisites of desirable satisfactions C5*. Requisites for "flourishing" (whose meaning depends on norms which will be in part culturally relative or otherwise open to dispute; close to C7 below)
	B6. Requisites for participating in a given way of life	C6. Justified requisites of a way of life C6*. Requisites of a justifiable way of life
A7. Human potentials (not all are desirable)	B7. Requisites for fulfilling (a conception of) the human essence (Springborg, 1981:109)	C7. Justified requisites for fulfilment of desirable human potentials
	B8, B8*. Requisites for pursuing very many (or even any) other ends, or many (or even any) ways of life	C8, C8*. Justified requisites for pursuing very many (or even any) other ends, or many (or even any) ways of life (cf. Ramsay, 1992:6)
A9. A political claim for priority use of publically managed resources (Friedmann, 1992)	B9. Requisites for meeting a law (Taylor, 1959: #1)	C9. Requisites that should be ensured by state action C9*. Basic rights; agreed entitlements (e.g. Friedmann, 1992)
A10. Factors ("drives"/ instincts) that (are claimed to) underlie and generate wants		

The general sense in Column B -- needs as requisites for achieving a given end -- is central, in that the other senses can be related to it. When talking of requisites, to say "I need [S]" implies "I need S *in order to do* (or be) something, D", e.g. I need a car in order to get to work, or a drink in order to relax. Both positive and normative statements about derived needs contain such assertions about positive linkages. In the case of a man needing a drink after work, the positive assertion is that he will suffer significantly without it: S, a drink, is the prerequisite for D, avoiding this suffering. A normative or justified need is then something S that one 1. requires in order to do (or be) something else D, which 2. is confirmed as normatively important, for example informed citizenship.

For Barry (1990), justification in terms of needs is thus better seen as justification in terms of the something else deemed of normative importance: be it welfare, proper living, or (as in claims of universal basic needs) "universal human interests" such as survival and health. A further vital qualification concerning column C is that such meanings concern justification and priority within or for some political community, explicit or implicit.

The prerequisites format ("I need S in order to do or be D, which is important for E...") is also known as *the relational formula* (Braybrooke). It already gives three levels. S can be called the satisfier (e.g. bread) that fulfils validated and more basic needs, D (e.g. nourishment) and E (e.g. survival). But in general, all levels in the analysis (S, D and E) are often talked about as needs (often deemed progressively more basic). This is another common source of confusion. The relational analysis also makes clear the great scope for argument: both concerning the linkages -- is S really needed for doing D? (e.g. are certain nutrients really needed for health?); and also concerning values -- is D really a required part of living properly? (e.g. literacy - how much and of what sorts?).

Given the huge bodies of established usage in the other two columns, one cannot claim that column B is the sole legitimate sense. Even if I show that I need S in order to do D, others can say "but do you really *need* it?" (Wiggins, 1985), meaning "is it for something of priority importance?". The mode C usage -- needs as justified requisites for priority ends -- has its own legitimacy. (See also Penz, 1986.)

The link between mode A and mode B usages is more complex. We expect that people will typically want whatever they require in order to survive / fulfil their desires

/ avoid suffering / be fulfilled / satisfy the rules and requirements of the way of life of the group(s) to which they belong, and so on; thus many mode B "needs" will also be wants. However we also know that people do not always know or want what they need in those senses; and that much work is required to understand what determines actual wants. (In Section 3 we refer to some of that work.)

Why do we go beyond the situational logic of "needing" and say "S is a need" - moving from a verb to a noun ? Often as a move from mode B to mode C, and to try to strengthen a claim to resources. One triggering factor is if S, the prerequisite for D, is seen as strongly justified, which may be because D itself is considered a high priority. But the format is manipulable, producing some claims of "needs" for luxurious provision -- to maintain one's wealthy identity and way of life, or, allegedly, in order to attain self-respect in a rich society or milieu. Thus a second triggering factor also interests us: whether the prerequisites are very widely or even "universally" relevant (such as, at the most basic and universal, water), within the given political context of discourse.

We can check the above framework against the analyses of needs concepts by Peter Penz and John Friedmann. Penz (1986:166) omits mode A meanings, and then contrasts what he calls essentialist and conventionalist views. In essentialist views, he says, "needs are identified as [1] what is required for what is quintessentially human and as [2] that without which harm will occur to the individual" (loc.cit.: numbers added). This matches several meanings in our column B ([1]: B7; [2]: B2, B2*, B3, B5*) and corresponding entries in column C. But what brings harm can be quite specific per individual, so the two parts in Penz's definition should be separated; only the first part justifies the name essentialist. In a conventionalist view, needs are "what [a] society agrees individuals should not be without", what it agrees as "necessary" within its own boundaries, not a claim for all humanity. This matches meanings B6, C6, C6*, C9*.

John Friedmann takes a version of the basic needs approach for his (dis-) empowerment model of development (1992:61-6). He presents four senses of "need", but not all are well-formulated.
(1) An intense want. This is one version (A3*) in mode A. Friedmann later mingles it with another version (A3) by adding the feature that non-fulfilment of the want brings frustration or disappointment.
(2) A functional relationship. This is the same as mode B, and also subsumes

Friedmann's extended type (1) since that concerns requisites for avoidance of frustration or disappointment.

(3) A political claim, "made by a group on resources that are managed in the common interest of a political community" (p.61). But: i) not all claims of this sort use the label "need"; ii) of those that do use it, some would not justify the label - e.g. a claim for golden handshakes for all white civil servants in South Africa; iii) the remaining claims that talk of need are intelligible under the headings of my modes A and C.

(4) A customary right, a politically accepted and institutionalized entitlement. This partly matches variant C9* in Table 1; but again, not every right or entitlement rests on the grounds of need - e.g. rights to inherit property do not.

Friedmann then declares that *basic* needs should be viewed under sense (3), with a link to sense (4): "basic needs are essentially political claims for entitlements" (p.66). Normative basic needs claims are indeed claims of priority title to resources within a community. But while all needs claims are claims, not every claim, nor every right, represents a need claim, and not every need claim is defensible as a need. Friedmann's senses of "need" appear either subsumable within my tripartite framework or mis-stated.

Corresponding to the three sets of meanings, one finds three modes of "needs" theory and research. The first consists of *positive theories for explaining behaviour which posit forces called "needs" which drive our actions* (as in A10 in Table 1). Maslow's theory can be read on these lines (though it also includes considerable reference to cognition and choice). Such theories have been superseded or qualified in most of psychology, as unable in isolation to adequately capture the bulk of human behaviours which are both intelligent and socially embedded. Ideas of (basic) needs as being underlying urges or drives, general to the human species, have limits when faced with the remarkable variety of cultures and the reality of people as culturally moulded, thinking decision-makers. Explanatory "needs" analyses sometimes downplay the quintessential human activity of cultural construction of identities, meanings, values, and societies.

The second area contains positive work analyzing satisfactions, as in "the psychology of happiness" literature, that tries to identify what makes people fulfilled, happy or content (B5) (see e.g.: Argylle, 1987; Scitovsky, 1992). Maslow's contributions might better be seen as such work; similarly for Manfred Max-Neef's. More generally, this area covers *identification of prerequisites for various types and*

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levels of capacity or functioning, e.g. the requisites of physical and mental health (see also e.g. Dasgupta, 1993; Dreze & Sen, 1989).

The third area concerns *normative/ethical "needs" theories and arguments about which prerequisites carry a priority status, i.e.* establish claims that the relevant political community should ensure are met. The influential book by Doyal & Gough, for instance (winner of the 1992 Isaac Deutscher and Gunnar Myrdal prizes), is called a theory of need, rather than of needs: it focuses on a normative criterion and its implications, not on supposed universal behavioural traits. They and others like Braybrooke agree that argumentation on justifiable needs does not require a full psychological theory. Psychological and cultural-theoretical critiques of needs theories concern area A rather than area C, the ethical theories of need. Normative-needs analysis still relies though on positive analyses from area B, concerning elements of human functioning and which methods better further needs-fulfilment. Doyal & Gough for example make much use of literature on the determinants - and components - of physical and mental health, as do Dasgupta (1993) and Sen (e.g. Dreze & Sen, 1989). Much work -- for example, some of the work influenced by Maslow -- is unclear on which area it concerns, or tacitly oscillates between areas and presumes that all three senses can apply at once.

2.3. "Basic" needs - the issues of levels and criteria

Within each of the three areas of work there are occasions when certain needs are referred to as basic or more basic; thus there are several common meanings of "basic need". All mean more fundamental needs, in some sense, positive or normative: e.g. if certain positive needs are felt first or certain normative needs are deemed the most justified. The different senses are often not distinguished, leading to some ambiguous and questionable usages, as with the term "need" itself.

A common sense of "basic need" in positive analysis is: (i) more fundamental or general urges/forces (A10), that underlie particular felt needs and wants. (See for example Baxter's books on psychology and economics; 1988 & 1993.[2]) We might call this sense *source needs*. Since humans largely lack highly specific animal instincts, these general needs (if they exist; e.g. perhaps needs for showing and receiving affection and esteem) would be actualized and specified differently in different situations, as *particular* needs and desires. Some actualized needs-cum-desires could reflect a distortion or frustration of the more basic needs. Linking this sense of basic

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need to the prerequisites format gives three levels for positive analysis: (1) Source need; (2) Actualized need, the concretization of the source need in a given context; and (3) Satisfier, a means to fulfil an actualized need in the given context. This three-level hierarchy has some usefulness but also problems, for the "source need" notion is a rough summary for causes and sources which are complex and plural. (See e.g.: Lederer, ed., 1980; Lea et al, 1987.)

Other senses of "basic need" form a separate family or families. They include (ii) *survival needs* (B2 in Table 1), which are often also: (iii) *prepotent needs*, i.e. felt before any others (A2). Survival needs are part of *prerequisite needs* (our mode B), those which must be satisfied in order to do other things; e.g. good health is a prerequisite for much else. (iv) Fundamental prerequisites are those required for very many or all activities (B8, B8*), or prerequisite for fundamentally valued outcomes (e.g. C2, C3, C4*, C7, C8, C8*). In a minute we will consider possible criteria for fundamental value. Two final senses are: (v) the highest priority needs, and (vi) needs that a government or society must (i.e. is morally obliged to) try to ensure are satisfied (C9).[3]

In response to the question "basic for what?", *criteria* of fundamental normative importance proffered by work in area C include:
(i) To be able to participate adequately in one's society's way-of-life; but this does not suffice as a normative criterion if no exclusions are set concerning what is unacceptable as a way-of-life, e.g. slavery or genocide.
(ii) To be able to fulfil or pursue one's life-project; again this is too permissive a criterion if it gives no attention to what is unacceptable as a life-project.
(iii) To avoid "serious harm" where serious harm may mean death or abnormal/deranged functioning or failure to achieve (mental and physical) health and autonomy (Doyal & Gough); or inability to fulfil basic social roles (e.g. "parent, householder, worker, citizen", according to Braybrooke).
(iv) A "fulfilling life", "human flourishing", or "full development of positive potentials". Here Braybrooke warns that consensus on the meaning of such criteria will often be too little. He advises that needs ethics should not try to cover all of life, but limit themselves to providing a basis and complement to other ethics.
No such criterion of priority will be both totally clear and fully accepted; yet there can be significant influence and areas of consensus, plus acceptance of different criteria as relevant for different cases. We return to this in Section 4.3.

Some authors say there is no universal pattern underlying ways-of-life or life-projects or notions of harm, health and flourishing; ideas about proper living vary profoundly over time and place, and (normative) needs are mutable and merely whatever a particular way of life requires (e.g. Miller, 1976). If this relativist claim is true, needs remain a vital category but completely specific to a way of life. But basic needs theorists claim to identify important shared elements and universally necessary preconditions, within and across different ways of life.

Multi-level analysis gives a way to think about both unity and variety, whether in explanation or prescription (4.1. below). Distinguishing levels amongst values helps us think about continuity-in-change within a culture; and some needs theory aims further to analyse variation across cultures. Thus positive needs analyses (of our mode A type) seek generalizations about sources, not over-generalizations about concrete cultural features and behaviours. The multi-level approach is compatible with enormous variation of behaviour, and thus with cultural analyses; yet goes beyond just asserting that needs are whatever a culture declares.

This section's "grammar of need" has highlighted three important and different modes of needs discourse:- explanatory, instrumental, and normative. In addition it introduced the theme of different levels of need in each of these modes, and the different ways in which claims of being "basic" are grounded. Part of the allure of terms like "need" in political discourse often comes from eliding such distinctions, and employing them in a rhetoric of advocacy that alternates between different meanings as convenient, trying to draw in the favourable associations of each in turn:- the experiential weight of mode A, the principled idealism of mode C, and the how-to-do-it practicality of mode B. Such rhetoric can get applied towards innumerable different conclusions. Applying the distinctions above is important for communication and cumulative discussion. I have not claimed that (fulfilling) an experiential mode A need may not also be a mode C normative priority; nor that the positive-normative distinction is absolute or always clear-cut. The distinctions are tools for thinking, not Berlin Walls in discourse. By being alive to them (and their limits) we can identify overlaps, try to clarify areas of agreement and disagreement, and promote reasoned exchange.

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3. EXPLANATORY ANALYSES IN TERMS OF NEEDS

3.1. Proposed substantive needs: material needs and human needs

In Section 3 I want to comment on the nature, contributions and limits of positive "needs" discourses in mode A and to a lesser extent those in mode B, and some implications for policy discourse.

Behavioural science contains many listings of proposed types of need, sometimes very long. Maslow's list of 1943 is short and widely used. It is a positive theory about urges/drives (Mode A) *and about* requisites of personal fulfilment (Mode B); I suggest that it does better in the latter role. Maslow proposed five sets of basic need (in the *source-need* sense):- physiological needs, safety needs, affective needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. The last of these requires more explanation. It includes needs for activity, expression, use of one's potential, and so on; which can be fulfilled through serving others or a cause, not merely through self-orientation. The first two sets, physiological and safety needs, together comprise the needs of physical life sustenance: food, water, clothing, shelter, etc. Survival needs comprise these *and* a modicum of "*enhancement* needs" from the remaining three sets: including some stimulation, meaning, esteem, exercise of curiosity, friendship, belonging, and self-determination. Humans can die or go mad from total isolation, monotony or restriction, and can risk death to avoid them. It remains valid though to say that survival is a need, as a working rule concerning general motivation and justified requirements. For enhancement needs, those beyond physical sustenance, advice and training may be necessary to raise vague urges to the level of directed consciousness and to learn how to use potentials.

In other words, using Hirschman's terms, people have "passions" as well as "interests", i.e. other concerns than material well-being.[4] This emphasis distinguishes the Basic Human Needs (BHN) approach from that of Basic Material Needs (BMN) (Green, 1976; Hettne, 1990). The BHN approach considers for example participation and employment as felt needs, and as policy ends not only as means; indeed as important policy ends and means because they are major motivators for individuals.

Humans further seek systems of explanation and justification for their experience, including their constraints and frustrations. They need and look for meanings, "significative values", that sustain and are compatible with their performative values,

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their activity-choices; and vice versa.[5] Maslow thus extended his theory later to cover "meta-needs" (higher needs). These systems of meaning come in large part through inherited cultures. The popular option in needs theory of treating "cultural needs" as a separate set, that require attention only at a later stage than material needs or at higher income levels, is fundamentally mistaken. Culture is pervasive rather than supplementary. Each general need requires and receives more concrete specification in light of local culture and circumstances (Nussbaum, 1995; Gasper, 1995).

Maslow's theory must also respond to the objection that we cannot plausibly argue that a religious ascetic really wants productive work, considerable consumption, sex, and solidary relationships with others. In Maslow's terms the ascetic's wants are still understandable as particular concretizations of affective-, esteem-, self-actualization-, and transcendence-needs. Such an interpretation can be enlightening; a danger remains though that purported needs could be invoked *ad hoc* and *ad infinitum* to rationalize observed behaviour.

While many authors offer lists of needs, each is different (e.g. Max-Neef gives nine categories).[6] There is no perfect list: any will be a simplification. But for understanding behaviour or satisfactions, BHN theories give a better start than "economic man"/ *homo oeconomicus* (Weigel, 1986; 1989): the theory or presumption that i) individuals each have a set of personally specific preferences, exogenously fixed, but ii) everyone is mainly interested in income, wealth and security and, in some versions, status; and, typically, iii) individuals unerringly know and choose their own good. BHN analysis seeks a middle path between this pre-social "economic man" and the infinitely malleable "plasticine man". It also helps explain part of the attractiveness of liberal societies, in terms of their satisfaction of -- some -- *non*-material needs. Whether BHN explanatory analyses are deeper and more adequate than other alternatives from social theory (e.g. Etzioni, 1988) is open to question; but they have proven usable with many different audiences. They provide a step forward that can be readily grasped by economists and others who might be beyond the reach of much cultural and psychological theory. We look next at one example.

3.2. A reinterpretation of limitless demand

The never-ending extension of "needs" which Marx is often said to have propounded would be better translated from German (and French) as concerning "wants" or "desires" (Braybrooke, 1987). But are wants limitless, and if so why? Economics usually assumes yes, and further interprets this as meaning wants for comfort-giving commodities. Basic human needs theories suggest a different sort of answer. Limitless demand for commodities may be a misguided response to the neglect of emergent needs that can be only poorly satisfied by commodities, and/or the result of habituation to "comfort"-satisfactions at the expense of "stimulation"-satisfactions. The "Easterlin paradox" -- that people in rich countries do not appear happier than those in poor ones, despite commodity abundance -- could indicate that new needs have emerged with which the affluent are now struggling (Kamarck, 1983); but also -- for why do they *struggle* with them, why are they not even somewhat happier? -- that commodity abundance achieved in current ways undermines the fulfilment of other needs (see e.g. Fromm, 1978). Let us consider these answers in turn.

Maslow hypothesized a needs hierarchy marked by *prepotency*: some needs are felt first, and others only become strongly felt when the earlier ones have been largely satisfied. First may come physical sustenance needs, later the affection and esteem needs, then self-actualization needs, finally "meta-needs" of transcendence. This principle of prepotency occurs in many earlier positions, from Buddhism on. It is compatible with a range of evidence, including the Easterlin paradox. Prepotency is not clearcut. There are not exact target levels after which one urge or requirement disappears and the next suddenly appears. Needs are more complementary, and transition may be gradual. Besides, many like Goulet argue that needs of meaning and self-actualization are in fact the most fundamental, not late starters. The "passions" for meaning are not the sole preserve of the rich. This is the opposite claim to Maslow's, whose hierarchy could partly reflect lacks voiced by the affluent in anomic commodity-focused milieux. Research has indeed found much co-occurrence of felt needs, and so far little support for five different levels, but does suggest two or three, not only one; e.g. 1. physiological and safety needs, 2a. affective needs, 2b. other needs (Lea et al, 1987; Baxter, 1988).[1]

While a Maslowian interpretation of the Easterlin paradox may face some problems because of its stress on prepotency, Scitovsky (1992) has offered a resolution which fits better with co-occurrence of needs. He refers to neurological research which

physically located two types of pleasure system. Satisfaction in the primary system depends on relation to an optimal level of arousal, and can be called "*comfort*". Satisfaction in the secondary system relates to change and variety, and can be called "*stimulation*".[#] Success in a need-satisfaction search restores comfort; plus the search itself gives pleasurable stimulation, both during the mobilization phase and, after success, during the phase of declining arousal, disappearing pain, and relaxation. A habit of immediately removing pain and discomfort and reaping primary pleasure will be at the expense of losing great satisfactions from stimulation and of probably creating deeper frustrations.

Scitovsky defines "luxury needs" as the felt-needs or urges to obtain comfort (in the exact sense noted above) beyond the needs of survival. This psychological definition does not give a sharp dividing line between different consumption-acts but still establishes a significant transition. In contrast economics defines luxuries as products whose share in consumption rises with income. This makes them relative to time and place. The list of such "luxuries" varies with income level and social habits: in economists' terms, tobacco may be absent and unlamented in some societies, a "luxury" good in others, and a "necessity" with near-satiated demand in others. (Similarly we can look behind variation in habits for possible commonality of urges; tobacco may be one satisfier of universal urges for arousal and displacement activity.)

Luxury urges to obtain comfort are indeed "needs" in one sense (felt needs; A3 in Table 1), for they are real urges linked to real discomforts. If other things are equal, meeting them is legitimate. But there is a tendency to over-indulgence, from neglect of implications (including environmental costs) and from habituation to immediate removal of discomfort. This habituation is at the cost of activities that bring temporary discomfort but stimulation and/or delayed pay-offs (e.g. exercise, education) and of attention to needs of other types. People may acquire a habit of using material luxuries to try to satisfy these other needs, but there are typically better ways to do so. To remove such ineffectual habits requires unlearning and relearning. Similarly, the proposal of Andre Gorz (1989) and other Greens to reduce working hours would not only reduce unemployment but could increase satisfaction better than through the endless generation of commodities. For it provides more time for attention to other needs, and for less alienated forms of community care and solidarity than via exclusive reliance on a bureaucratic welfare state.

Economics-dominated policies have neglected enhancement needs. Scitovsky's

argument for rich countries has wider relevance: enhancement needs can compete for attention with comfort, and can be neglected because of habituation to immediate comfort restoration. In Max-Neef's terms, there is much provision of pseudo- and inhibiting satisfiers: products which tend in the medium term to annul the possibility of satisfying the need they were originally aimed at, or to seriously impair the possibility of satisfying other needs. The behaviour that is referred to as showing limitless wants can be reinterpreted as the unending alternation of temporary consumerist novelty and subsequent dissatisfaction -- inevitable when other, non-comfort, needs are being neglected. It is the needs of activity and signification, not of comfort, which are less limited (and can also take forms with less environmental impact). Indeed here the appetite can grow with the eating, since interesting experience may add to the interest of later experience. The precondition though is the partly painful acquisition of skills to express capacities and make new things meaningful.

The sort of arousal-and-drive theories that Scitovsky draws on have some conceptual problems (Lea et al, 1987). His argument remains suggestive rather than established, and is better read in mode B, concerning requisites of satisfaction, than in mode A for explanation of behaviour. It remains an advance on mainstream economics, which presumes a single type of satisfaction, a single psychic currency (or that all types are smoothly commensurate). To upgrade the psychological presumptions in mainstream economics requires forms of evidence and conceptualization that can speak to and persuade mainstream economists. Here Scitovsky's work has considerable value.

In Section 3 I have suggested that some available lists of purported mode A needs (factors that generate wants or otherwise underlie behaviour) or mode B needs (requisites for health[1] or satisfaction) offer a worthwhile advance on the presumptions in much everyday and economistic discourse. These lists are undoubtedly marked by major simplifications and limitations if they attempt to cover all human behaviour and functioning. They can be read as on-the-whole generalizations, generally helpful maxims whose application requires judicious selections and mixes, and awareness of the ever-present possibility of exceptions. But they arm us with a set of pointers -- "remember X", "watch out for Y" -- that at least give a starting-point in analysis superior to "economic man". This "watch out for factor Y" role seems especially to match mode B's work on requisites for health and satisfaction, which provides us with relevant background for policy planning.

4. NORMATIVE ANALYSES IN TERMS OF NEEDS

4.1. Levels and a framework for normative analysis

Moving to attempts to prepare policy recommendations we enter normative analysis. Normative theories of needs have a distinctive structure and rationale: they focus on drawing out the requirements implied, at various levels of generality, for fulfilling specified normative priorities. The reference "universe" varies between versions, from a nation (such as South Africa), to a group of nations (e.g. some refer. to Europe and the Americas), to all humanity. As we will see, some versions can offer linked but varied specifications for these different frames of reference, through systematically distinguishing levels of means and ends.[10]

Means-ends chains are often very extended -- for example: S is a means/satisfier (say a car) towards D (say travel to work); D in turn is the specific activity which I must do in my specific situation, in order to carry out an important activity A (say, paid work), which I must carry out in order to fulfil many basic human needs B (e.g. have self-respect, independence and a family,...). Chains can be far longer than this. Any workable general theoretical schema will aim only to represent key distinctions rather than closely describe all cases.

Sen has provided a nuanced but workable interpretation of such levels of "need" (Sen, 1985; Crocker, 1995). He adds the categories "capabilities" and "functionings" to the three levels generally distinguished in economics (income-commodities-utility). We want i) *income* not for itself but in order to buy ii) *commodities* (e.g. books). We want the commodities not for themselves but in order to use, because of iii) their *characteristics* (e.g. the books contain specific information). Usually, different sets of commodities can supply the same characteristics. Even the characteristics (e.g. the information) are not wanted just for themselves or to provide generalized "satisfaction", but also (or first) to enable us to possess iv) certain more general *capabilities* (e.g. mobility or independence), which we then may or may not use for v) certain *functionings* which will affect (and partly constitute) vi) our *well-being* or utility.

Attention in normative analysis to capabilities and functionings, more than to income, consumption and subjective well-being, follows for several reasons. Income and consumption can mislead: we are interested in them only because of what they allow people to do and be; sometimes more of them is worse; and with the same

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income or consumption as others, people with greater needs and lesser capacities can do and be less. Subjective well-being can also mislead. People may be content in a situation of deprivation, due to indoctrination, ignorance of alternative possibilities, or adoption of resignation or cheerfulness as means of survival. But finally, if we are given the opportunity and capability to do something, it can remain our responsibility to do it; if we don't (e.g. because we give priority to some non-basic interest), our unfulfilled needs at the levels of consumption and felt well-being will not establish an obligation on other people.

Sen and others criticized 1970s basic needs theory as too focused on the commodities level. While he shifts the discourse to the higher levels, especially capabilities, his remains perceptibly a needs theory (Penz, 1991; Crocker, 1995). This is explicit in the work of Doyal and Gough (1991), who use Sen's framework to distinguish five levels in analysis of justified needs, listed below. Subjective well-being is not one of the five levels, for the reasons just mentioned. Similarly, the Doyal-Gough version is unmistakeably normative; for while the Sen framework can also be used in description and explanation, the capabilities category was devised for normative work.

1) A level of universal human interests: as we saw earlier (2.3), possible specifications here include "minimally impaired functioning" or "avoidance of serious harm", which can mean a basic ability to participate as a member of one's society. A grander specification sometimes used, including by Doyal & Gough, is "human liberation"; and beyond that, "human flourishing".

2) A level of "basic needs" required for the universal goal(s). These basic needs are posited by Doyal & Gough as health (physical and mental) and autonomy, and correspond to Sen's "capabilities" level. Autonomy in action is a requirement of social participation; autonomy also in values and critical capacity corresponds to the ideal of liberation.

3) "Intermediate needs", i.e. certain sets of "characteristics" (e.g. shelter) necessary for fulfilment of level 2's basic needs/ capabilities. For basic participation the intermediate needs are suggested as:- nutritional food and clean water; protective housing; a non-hazardous work environment and physical environment; appropriate health care and education; security in childhood; significant primary relationships; physical and economic security; safe birth control and child-bearing. This level matches most lists of "basic needs" in development policy.

4) Specific satisfier commodities (inputs) to fulfil the intermediate needs; these will

vary according to culture, context, and the persons concerned.

5) Societal "preconditions" (or "conducive factors") for the provision and use of the required satisfiers that fulfil the above. Relevant material preconditions concern: i) production conditions, which affect the nature of satisfiers produced; ii) distribution arrangements, which affect to whom the satisfiers go; iii) the effectiveness of transformation of the satisfiers into satisfactions, which depends on how they are used; iv) arrangements for material re-production. Doyal & Gough draw here on Stewart (1985).

Such work by Sen, Doyal & Gough, Braybrooke and others has established a systematic frame for talking of "needs", in a non-arbitrary way that shows both commonalities and variations, and that links needs discourse to other empirical and theoretical work. Table 2 extends Doyal & Gough's framework, to highlight how different criteria will imply different hierarchies of need, and that within a given political, cultural and economic context, indicators and targets may be specified for each level of the hierarchy. The most interesting levels for measurement are 2, 3 and 5:- functioning at level 1 is perhaps our own responsibility once we have the necessary capabilities; and the volume of goods and services at level 4 has no value independent of what it is used for.

Differences in the criteria at level 1) will give different conceptions of needs. This was clear too from Table 1 on meanings of the term "needs". Needs for (a) bare survival are less than needs implied for (b) decency or basic levels of participation in a given society, which are less again than the needs implied by (c) critical participation or, the most encompassing, (d) some conception of human flourishing.

For levels 2, 3 and 5, Doyal & Gough concretize and enrich the theory through reference to empirical measures drawn from the work on social indicators. They further address operationalization in terms of political and social process and organization, to handle disagreements over the best satisfiers and over the relative priority of different groups and needs. Satisfier commodities, and indicators and target levels, will be variously specified in different political communities according to their own culture, resources and decision processes. But in each case a similar logic of needs discourse applies.[11]

TABLE 2: A FRAMEWORK FOR NORMATIVE NEEDS DISCOURSE & POLICY
(for a particular political community deciding for a particular reference group)

1. CRITERION OF REQUIRED FUNCTIONINGS	Criterion 1: "Avoidance of serious harm"	Criterion 2: "Human liberation" [Criterion 3: "Human flourishing/ fulfilment"]	INDICATOR CONCEPT (nature of proxy)	OPERAT-IONAL INDICATORS	TARGET LEVELS
2. Implied REQUIRED CAPABILITIES ("Basic needs" in Doyal-Gough)	Health, autonomy of agency (Doyal & Gough, 1991)	Health, autonomy (both agency- & critical-) [& belonging, explaining..]	See e.g. Table 3 below	See e.g. Table 3 below (for bracketed examples)	
3. Implied REQUIRED SATISFIER CHARACTER-ISTICS ("Intermed-iate needs")	Food & water; housing; secure envir-onment & work; health care, education; childhood security, &c.	Plus: additional education [& additional medical care, etc.....]	Ditto	Ditto	
4. Implied REQUIRED SATISFIER COMMODITIES					
5. Implied REQUIRED SOCIETAL CONDITIONS	[Conditions - production - cultural transmission	concerning: - reproduction - political authority]	Ditto	Ditto	

In contrast to the hierarchy in explanatory analysis which we criticized earlier (Section 2.3), with its talk of source-needs, the Sen-Doyal-Gough hierarchy in normative analysis does not claim to describe a real structure; rather it provides a frame-for-work in arguing intelligently about priorities. It does not require a commitment to controversial grand theories of behaviour or satisfaction like Maslow's. Nor does it posit that a single great mind or a set of technocrats could in isolation adequately specify need-types, indicators and targets for a society; they never could (Hodgson, 1988:244-5; Gough, 1994).

The hierarchy avoids too the dangers mentioned earlier, of seeing culture as an add-on rather than as pervasive. Nussbaum's related "thick vague theory of the good" explicitly faces the challenge of variation between cultures, to propose a set (hence the adjective "thick") of human capabilities which are universally considered desirable and taken as a normative definition of humanness. The theory is however vague "in a good

sense, for... it admits of much multiple specification in accordance with varied local and personal conceptions. The idea is that it is better to be vaguely right than precisely wrong" (Nussbaum, 1992:215). As in positive analysis, a good general guideline provides a starting point, whether one finds its generality and incompleteness of definition a limit or a virtue.[12]

Similarly the approach avoids imposing needs specifications without reference to people's own priorities. Participation in defining one's *own* needs is consistent with a universalistic approach, once we distinguish conceptual levels of need. Thus the BHN approach leaves open for context- and culture-relative decision both the precise interpretations of general statements about needs and what are acceptable and effective means to fulfil more general needs; and further, typically aims to provide opportunities without enforcing their use.

4.2. Empirical analyses within a normative-needs framework

Miles (1985, 1992) illustrates how the sort of needs framework described above both organizes and is strengthened by research on human development indicators. Doyal & Gough themselves marshal a wealth of indicators for levels 2, 3 and 5 (1991). The roles and relationships of different indicators become clear through their organization into levels.

Gough & Thomas (1994) go further and employ a set of indicators available for the whole world in the late 1980s, to test a reduced-form model of selected influences on need satisfaction. Causality in the model runs from left to right in Table 3 (rather than from bottom to top as in Table 2). In each case the factors listed in a column are hypothesized to influence the set of factors listed in the next column to the right. [13]

They propose that the available data supports the model and the underlying Doyal-Gough theoretical frame: "The applied model appears robust and generates some interesting results... level of economic development, national dependency and world position, historic paths of societal development, state capacities and dispositions, democracy and human rights, and gender equality [i.e. all the factors in the first two columns] all have significant and independent but linked effects on cross-national differences in need satisfaction" (1994:716).

TABLE 3: EMPIRICAL MODEL OF IMPORTANT DETERMINANTS OF NEED SATISFACTION
(Indicators in brackets. Source: Gough & Thomas, 1994.)

TEMPORALLY PRIOR SOCIETAL FACTORS/ "PRE-CONDITIONS"	OTHER SOCIETAL FACTORS / "PRECONDITIONS"	Performance re "INTERMEDIATE NEEDS" / SATISFIER CHARACTERISTICS	Performance re "BASIC NEED" / CAPABILITY INDICATORS
	GDP per head (log. of purchasing power parity)	Access to safe water (% of population)	Birth weight (% of births at low weight)
Dependency and world position (Snyder-Kick index)	Rights (human rights index)	Health services use[14]	Life expectancy (at birth)
Independence by 1945 or not	Taxation (tax/GDP ratio)	Education - 1: adults' mean years schooling	Adult literacy (rate for 15+)
	Social spending (expenditure/ /GDP ratio)	Education - 2: primary school completion rate	
	Women's position (gender equality index)		

This work on indicators and the modelling of causes of need-satisfaction are not normative analyses; the causal modelling is clearly mode B work. But they occur within a framework established for normative analysis and form part of its operationalization and corroboration to qualify it for policy application. The Gough-Thomas study provides support for the premise of a series of levels, in which specifiable societal conditions are significantly associated across all countries with the levels of intermediate need satisfaction, which in turn significantly affect levels of basic need satisfaction. "The concept of "[intermediate needs, i.e.] universal satisfier characteristics that in all cultures and social settings contribute to final levels of welfare is supported" -- in other words, the successor of the concept of "basic needs" as it was traditionally used in development planning -- "insofar as we can model these relations with the data at our disposal" (p.744).

Next and finally, we will see how the now more refined understanding of "basic needs" might satisfy, in addition to the operational and empirical requirements for having an impact in policy that we just discussed, also certain political and ideological requirements.

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4.3. The role of normative theories of basic needs

Braybrooke (1987) and Penz (1986, 1991) show how a priority to fulfilment of *basic* needs (in the sense of fundamental prerequisites) can attract or demand support from a wide range of political positions. Unlike many other ethical views, *basic* needs ethics do not try to provide a full ordering of possible actions or states of the world. They simply seek to establish a minimum level of capability to which all community members have claim; beyond that level basic needs ethics hand over to other types of ethic. They are deliberately restricted in scope, in order to obtain sufficient consensus· in a plural society. And those other ethics -- including the various possible ethics of individualists and hierarchists -- require a basic needs ethic in order to be plausible. A deserts ethic which says people should be rewarded in proportion to what they contribute, or a libertarian ethic which says that people are entitled to whatever they obtain through legal voluntary transactions, require as a starting point that people are in a position to make contributions or to transact in an informed and capable way -- which implies that they have at least a basic education and the conditions for a certain minimum level of physical and mental health. Similarly, we can find a basic needs approach present both in a sensitive conservatism, concerned to hold society together (Gray, 1993), and in an economistic utilitarianism which sees basic needs as the requisites for maintenance of "human capital" (Pyatt, 1995). While Gray argues partly in terms of requirements-of-justice, and Pyatt in terms of requirements-of-growth, for both sets of ends a basic needs approach not only fits but is logically required.

Basic needs ethics are thus designed to face the challenge of plurality. They offer an area of potential consensus between otherwise conflicting positions. Braybrooke and Stewart both warn that this feature can be lost by other needs ethics which try to cover all or most of life, e.g. by extending their criterion of required functionings beyond survival or minimal decency or "avoidance of serious harm" (the first criterion in our Table 2), to cover "liberation", "human flourishing" or "human fulfilment" (the second and third criteria). While possibly attractive in other ways, these extended needs ethics can no longer serve as an area of consensus between divergent positions. Each also faces difficulties in practice in choosing between the innumerable, competing requirements generated by its ambitious criterion.

We can see this in the most ambitious recent essay on needs. Doyal and Gough's "A Theory of Need" achieves an impressive theoretical and practical synthesis. At a theoretical level, it rigorously defends a normative sense of needs as universalizable

requisites for fundamental human interests; and thereby derives an integrated, not ad hoc, list (or lists) of proposed human needs. It deliberately distances itself from mode A behavioural theory, given the controversial status of claims such as Maslow's; but it makes extensive use of mode B evidence on determinants of achievement for its proposed needs. And we have seen that it is operationalized in terms of indicators and decision procedures. Yet by still not fully separating different purposes of needs analysis it drifts towards a version that may not satisfy any of them.

The formal prioritizing of health and autonomy matches the authors' backgrounds in health policy and medical ethics. Does the single-mindedness of their approach bring a too parsimonious ("somewhat puritanical and limited" - Soper 1993:119) list of basic and intermediate needs? It excludes even sex (Doyal & Gough, 1991:158) since some people do very well without that! Even their broader variant (Criterion 2 in our Table 2), which includes critical ("liberational") autonomy as a basic need, hardly covers all major human concerns. (And in their Fig. 8.2 it seems to imply no additional substantive needs/satisfiers except cross-cultural education.) Many matters, such as political participation, are included only under their heading "procedural preconditions for improving need-satisfaction" (p.262); i.e. on the grounds of bringing more effective decision-making. But at various later points, their concerns seem to exceed these bounds; for example, an "aesthetically pleasing landscape" is mentioned as a need (p.234); and p.189 puts together "critical liberational autonomy and the satisfaction of Maslow's 'highest' need for self-actualization", though the latter goes beyond the scope of their theory.[15]

A narrow definition of need combined with a broad span of concern is not a problem, but becomes one if we assume that needs ethics must govern all of life. The real issue, as pursued for example by Braybrooke or Barry or Walzer, is how to marry needs and other relevant principles. Even if one's version of needs theory broadens to cover the requirements of "human flourishing" (Criterion 3 in Table 2), the issue is still present; and certainly so if one has opted for greater specificity and consensus by restricting oneself to a rigorous interpretation of the requirements of "avoidance of serious harm" (Criterion 1). Doyal & Gough sometimes proceed however as if their needs-analysis is sufficient for most or nearly all of life. Ch.12 on different countries' records in terms of their various indicators is titled "Charting Human Welfare", as if basic-needs satisfaction exhausts the content of welfare; "Charting Societal Health" would fit better. In contrast, Ekins and Max-Neef (1992, Ch.8) give a similar but more satisfactory survey of welfare and welfare indicators, based on a broader

conception of needs.

Part of Doyal & Gough's over-reach involves an insistence that the needs which they define bring rights to "as much need-satisfaction as is practically possible" (p.300), or to "optimal" fulfilment (e.g. p.298), meaning the best performance in a country of similar affluence.[16] So targets for the British Health Service should be taken from performance-levels in Sweden, and include use of "the best available techniques" (p.202). But should all such social targets be called needs or rights, even in the physical health arena? Braybrooke warns that modern medicine, which can sustain very old people at vast cost, brings a breakdown for the concept of justified needs seen as the requirements of health and survival. Indeed such "rights" are not proposed as absolute by Doyal & Gough, and are of course subject to resource constraints; but the theory offers no more guidance here than that the responsible democratic institutions should balance the "rights" against other priorities (pp.302-3). The approach of Braybrooke and others in setting target-levels for rights -- viz. to set Minimum Standards for Provision -- seems more sensible than such setting of maximum standards.

Another possible over-reach is inclusion of "critical autonomy" as a *basic* need: the ability to not just act effectively within given social rules but to critically assess and choose between alternative rules. It may not match the requirement of "avoiding serious harm" (sometimes it even increases the risk of harm!). Soper suggests (1993:121) that Doyal & Gough here cover what they think is desirable rather than what is really necessary by the criterion. Alternatively viewed, they switch to the wider concept of need derived from criteria of "liberation". Cultures disagree over such criteria's implications. "Critical autonomy" is seen as narrowly individualistic by many communitarians and traditionalists, who reject some of the types of participation that Doyal & Gough propose as necessary, for example for women. Even if they accept equal rights for women they may dispute Doyal & Gough's presumption that equal rights must be defined as access to the same opportunities as men.[17]

We thus see Doyal & Gough drawn towards a broader conception of needs than seems implied by a criterion of avoiding serious harm. They formalize this by the extension to include critical autonomy, and their theory then has two versions, narrower and broader. More generally we should accept that there are various criteria possible in needs discourse (see 2.2, 2.3 and 4.1 above), each of which may be appropriate for different purposes. For pursuing a consensual priority to minimum

requirements for decency, a narrower picture of needs is more appropriate than when trying to explain human behaviour or prescribe for "human flourishing" or "the good life".

Failure to stress the plurality of criteria may mean that in the end Doyal & Gough do justice neither to the requirements of basic decency nor those of flourishing or the good life. Too extended an interpretation of the requirements of basic decency will undermine, as Braybrooke warned, the political consensus required to legitimize and implement the claimed needs, and may well politically endanger the very idea of "basic needs". And too narrow a view of human personality and potentiality (and too little attention to positive theory) may rob the picture of human flourishing of its plausibility and motivating force. Both these major policy roles of needs analysis will be weakened by not clearly distinguishing between them. Identifying ideal levels of provision for optimal health/autonomy in a world community, or for the requirements of a fuller human flourishing, are very different exercises from negotiating a politically feasible set of welfare minima in a given, plural, society within the given, plural, world.

5. CONCLUSION

I have argued that we must distinguish three modes amongst work on needs: A - positive discussions of wants and behavioural drives; B - instrumental discussions of requirements for fulfilment of specified ends; and C - normative discussions of priorities. Corresponding to the three modes are three streams of work and three distinct families of meanings of "needs". We noted more than thirty current meanings, and considerable terminological confusion, which this three-fold categorization should help to reduce.

The confusion stems not only from multi-modality. Within modes B and C, and thus in most usage, "needs" are the purported requisites for obtaining something else, so "needs" vary according to both what is the something else and what it really requires; each requisite has in turn its own prerequisites, each of which is liable to be called a "need"; and normative needs further depend on whether the something else is a justified priority. Clarity thus calls for distinguishing chains and levels of prerequisites, as well as different modes and streams of work.

Each stream of work is established, legitimate, and relevant for those concerned with "human development". Stream A, trying to explain wants and behaviour by reference to asserted universal human traits, is more problematic, but provides a counter weight to the reductionist "economic man" assumptions seen in much free-market ideology. Stream B, identifying requisites and determinants of physical and mental health and well-being, is useful background for the practical concerns of stream C, the attempts to specify justified priority requisites.

For example, Maslow's popular theory of needs -- with its posited just five or six sets of urges/drives behind human behaviour, or differently read, sets of requisites for satisfaction or well-being -- may: cruden the interplay of environment, learning and in-born factors; be used to provide ad hoc "explanations" of behaviour, and to downplay unusual cases and cultural variation; and exaggerate the degree of prepotent sequence in how the sets of needs manifest themselves. But it provides a way accessible to a wide audience of raising several vital issues, including:- the importance in motivation, happiness and well-being, of "passions", concerns for meaning, activity and identity, not only material "interests"; and the danger of attempting to fulfil all needs through material acquisitions, which can result in an unending cycle of acquisition, temporary novelty and stimulation, subsequent boredom and frustration, and new acquisition -- the "limitless demand" assumed by orthodox economists. This role of positive needs theories, to provide warnings and maxims counter to the assumptions of "economic man", is important, provided the theories are recognized as simplifications and overgeneralizations, to be used with caution.

Within stream C, normative analysis, I stressed first that a normative distinction between priority needs and (other) wants/desires is firmly based in everyday language, and essential, even though there are inevitable areas of dispute as to exactly where to draw such boundaries (just as in applying any other political principle). Second, the rationale of normative theories of need differs from that of explanatory theories of needs and does not depend on acceptance of Maslowian theory or another such system; they do lean however on mode B type means-ends analyses.

Third, the logic of normative needs analysis as indicated by Braybrooke, Sen and others -- viz., drawing out the implied requirements at various levels of generality for fulfilling specified reasoned normative priorities (such as survival to a certain age, or ability to participate normally in one's society) -- allows for considerable variation in specifying priority needs according to different cultural and material contexts, but

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within a shared and systematic framework. The levels indicated by Sen are: income-consumption-characteristics-capabilities-functionings-utility, of which functionings and especially capabilities have greater significance as policy ends, whereas the other levels have been the traditional foci. Doyal and Gough turn this into a five-level hierarchy for debate and planning, that proceeds from ends to means:- 1. criterion of universal human interests / required functionings, 2. required capabilities, 3. required satisfier characteristics, 4. required satisfiers, 5. required environmental factors. Available data provides support for this premise of a series of levels, in all countries and cultures, such that specifiable societal conditions are significantly associated with the levels of fulfilment of certain satisfier characteristics, which significantly contribute in turn to levels of capability and welfare.

Fourth, different criteria of human interests (e.g. survival; minimal participation and decency; critical participation; flourishing) lead to different sets of needs. We should clearly distinguish theories of genuinely basic needs (such as generated by the first two criteria), since they may generate the degree of consensus required for some joint action by proponents from a range of otherwise inevitably differing viewpoints. A narrow definition of need is not a problem; it becomes one if we assume that needs ethics must govern all of life. The real issue is how to marry needs and other relevant principles. Failure to stress this plurality of criteria may mean that even the outstanding recent theory of need by Doyal & Gough does not in the end best serve any of the criteria.

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NOTES

1. Fowler advised that while the word *"'requirement'* may perhaps always be substituted for *'requisite'"*, *'requirement'* can also mean the given end, whereas *'requisite'* more clearly suggests the means to that end (1965:519), and so we use it here for that purpose.

2. Baxter focuses on mode A, though he never distinguishes modes and is sometimes obscure. He sketches the structure of various theories of motivation: (i) Instinct theories, in which a combination of inborn factors and learning generate a source need, from which stems a psychic pressure or energy, in turn producing an aim to satisfy the need/instinct; (ii) Drive theories, in which physiological needs generate a drive impelling behaviour in a certain manner; (iii) Cognitive theories, in which images of the future provide motives; the images themselves might partly derive from needs as well as from learning and creative thought. He cites Petri (1981): "a single theory could not hope to explain all motivated behaviour. Increasingly it appears that motivation is multiply determined; some behaviours are programmed into the organism, while others are learned or depend upon social interactions or environmental conditions." His own working model (1988:41) is: Person, with inborn features, plus Environmental influences —> Needs, plus further Environmental influences —> Wants/Desires —> Choice and use of Satisfiers —> Effects on the person.

3. Penz argues that adding questions of degree of normative priority puts the wants-needs distinction in a new light. "The distinction really conflates two distinctions: (a) wants versus (more or less objective) interests, and (b) necessity versus luxury wants/interests... [and neglects] the important category of necessity wants" (1989:96). By "interests" Penz means what is good for a person. I interpret and elaborate his remarks as follows:-

	NORMATIVE NECESSITIES / BASIC NEEDS	LUXURIES
NON-INTEREST WANTS	[Null category]	5
WANTED INTERESTS	1	3
NON-WANTED INTERESTS	2	4

Priority status might run from 1 down to 5. Methods for fulfilling category 1, wanted interests, can be very different to those for category 2, non-wanted interests.

4. The meaning given here to "interests" - as more material concerns - differs of course from the normative meaning used by Penz (note 3), i.e. what is good for a person.

5. I have here followed the argument but modified the terms used by Goulet (1985), preferring "performative values" to his "normative values".

6. Max-Neef's nine axiological categories of needs are: subsistence; protection; affection; understanding; participation; leisure; creation; identity; freedom. His schema is further distinguishes within each of those categories according to four existential categories: being, having, doing, interacting - thus avoiding an implicit preoccupation with only the having mode.

7. Can Goulet's claim handle the following ancient Greek tale? - a student declared he could see no reason for living; but he still struggled when the philosopher ducked his head under water. Did the student struggle despite himself because of a basic drive for survival, or instead because of a passion to still find a meaning in life? Another test is that what the central nervous system selects for attention might indicate a prepotent hierarchy of organismic needs; for our nervous system automatically focuses attention (which is always selective) on whatever is currently identified as most urgent or threatening (including sometimes by waking us up; Scitovsky, 1992). But we find that group culture and individual experience and personality also influence the selections.

8. This comfort-versus-stimulation contrast may match Sen's contrast between the achievement of well-being and the exercise of agency.

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9. *Some aspects and indicators of health are universally consensual and hence we can treat them in mode B; but others are not and therefore require an explicit move to mode C. This qualification was included in row 5 of Table 1.*

10. *Important differences are between: (A) authors like Doyal & Gough who argue that there are universally relevant normatively required functionings, from which we can derive implications about required capabilities, characteristics and commodities (each situationally and culturally relative); (B) authors who argue that only this type of format is universal (universally accepted/ acceptable/ relevant) and that different normative stances on required functionings of course generate different views of needs; (C) others like Braybrooke, who do not make explicit claims for the format itself beyond the Euro-American culture area. However each of positions A, B and C is a needs ethic.*

11. *Similarly, in Sen's approach, "weights to be attached to different capabilities... is instead a process involving public argument and deliberation. The argument would, in fact, be about what capabilities are of greatest importance in achieving a good life within the society in question" (MacPherson, 1992:301).*

12. *In a later study (1995), Nussbaum provides, like Doyal and Gough, two versions, but vaguer and giving less of a spectrum than those we noted. She proposes sets of: (a) requirements for living a minimally human life - e.g. for surviving in more than a "permanently vegetative condition"; so this exceeds the requirements of mere survival, but whether it equates to the requirements of decency in a given society is ambiguous; (b) requirements for a good life, which seems to differ from our two distinct criteria, of full critical participation in society and of human flourishing.*

13. *To avoid problems of multicollinearity, Gough & Thomas go beyond simple correlation and multiple regression analysis, and develop a causal model linking a set of social conditions to indicators of basic and intermediate need satisfaction. They tried and rejected Principal Components Analysis (p.739). For the causal path analysis, see their pp.739-43. They select variables and indicators according to availability of the data in sufficient countries.*

14. *Gough & Thomas take a Borda ranking (sums of rank scores of nations on the individual indicators) of 1. population per doctor, 2. percentage of births attended by trained personnel, and 3. proportion immunized.*

15. *Similarly, p.304 seems to follow Ignatieff in treating "fraternity, love, belonging, dignity and respect" as needs.*

16. *Indeed these target levels are sometimes used to define the needs (p.146).*

17. *Women's "strategic needs" as defined by Caroline Moser et al. roughly correspond to "critical autonomy"; and their "practical needs" very roughly to Doyal & Gough's basic needs for health and agency-autonomy.*

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