

Abstract

Purpose

The concept of basic human needs, though diversely interpreted, remains a policy and practice approach to combat poverty and improve wellbeing. Meanwhile, defining locally sensitive basic needs to support context-specific improvement is still an essential requirement. The paper examines basic human needs fulfilment in the context of effective improvement strategies and proposes a Basic Human Needs Glossary, a definition framework and tool for understanding needs pursuits and helping to streamline responses towards establishing their potential.

Design/Methodology/approach

The proposal for basic needs and development by the economist Manfred Max-Neef is examined from an operative point of view, including the role that the actualization of needs-centred goals performs in the pursuit of prosperity. The paper then adopts, adapts, and defines the basic needs proposed by Max-Neef and outlines Basic Terms of Pursuit (BToP) for these through qualitative content analysis.

Findings

It is possible to breakdown the basic needs concepts into smaller subsets of traits, which are framed within the interrelated dimensions of personal and social interactions of people, and of people and environment (natural and man-made).

Originality/value

Enabling capacities for progressive needs fulfilment is, in theory, key to facilitating paths to prosperity, especially in intervention processes to improve vulnerable communities, like slums. A deeper clarification of needs pursuit presented by the glossary adds rigor to this task and to enhancing wellbeing standards overall. Thus, it can play an important resource role in urban practice.

Research limitations/implications

The glossary with BToP is not conclusive, however. There is still potential to advance and further refine these through further content, qualitative, and ethnographic research.

1. Introduction

Improving wellbeing for people through addressing their basic needs has played central roles in urban policies and planning for some time. Wellbeing here meaning overall life satisfaction on a multidimensional – personal, social, economic, and environmental – sphere, and can be attained through enhancing prosperity (see UN-Habitat, 2013). An example of early engagement with the concept of basic needs is seen in Aristotle's discourse on a *core generic sense of necessity* in his *Metaphysics* (1015), 'that which cannot be otherwise' (Reader, 2006, p. 339). During the late 19th to early 20th century, Rowntree's works in New York and York sought to re-align the

Towards a human-centred approach for enhancing place prosperity: defining and operating within the basic human needs

poverty policy debate to consider families' basic needs – of income and nutritional needs, as a pre-requisite for productive efficiency (Glennerster, 2004).

Needs were not theorized, however, until the middle of the 20th century starting with two publications from the field of psychology, one of which was the 'Theory of Human Motivation' by Abraham Maslow (Maslow, 1943).¹ In the coming decade, the Indian planning commission developed the concept of minimum needs as a channel for establishing minimum standards of living (Grondona, 2015). Following on, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conceived – with input from the United Nations (UN) and World Bank – a basic needs development strategy that stems from their world employment program of 1969 (Rimmer, 1981); the basic needs are stated in terms of food, clothing, housing education and public transportation, with employment and participation being both means and end. The ILO argued that though these aspects will vary with location dynamics, it is possible to define global targets following essential minimal levels of requirements to maintain standard of decent living especially for the vulnerable and deficient groups (Rimmer, 1981; Streeten, 1981). Its focus sat well with the outlook of the UN and International Monetary Fund (IMF) at the time and, emerging projects like that of the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation (Dag and Hammarskjold Foundation publication, 1975). These are some of the first translations of the early theorization of needs into operative terms.²

We are now at a point where concern for and strategies to maintain people's and the planet's wellbeing and sustainable development for now and the future has never been more prominent, with impactful advances made. The New Urban Agenda (NUA) for instance, is one of global approaches adopted at the United Nations Conference (Habitat III in 2016) to guide inclusive, sustainable, and resilient urbanization and growth. It follows in the context of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and one of its commitments is to ensure all basic needs of people are met. The conceptualization of needs is (still) interpreted differently and theoretically contested between disciplines. Debates and evolutions are not only concerned with critiquing and defending its epistemology and qualifying terms for it, but also about its subjectivity, objectivity, validity, implementation, and also integration within design and planning of both rural and urban development (Horner, 2019; Watson, 2013 ; Caprotti, 2018; Donovan, 2010; Francis *et al.*, 2012; Salama and Wiedmann, 2013). Key to this paper is also the new emerging role for the fulfilment of the basic human needs in the pursuit of prosperity, which theory is summarised in Abubakar et al. (2019).

Following on, a review of relevant theoretical perspectives on human needs beginning with the proposal by Abraham Maslow are discussed, analysing their strengths and key limitations. Theories are useful in forming logical representations (see Udo-akang, 2012) of needs, the rules and principles that govern them, providing a framework from which to operate in any discipline. In section 4, the paper follows on to find, in the proposal by Manfred Max-Neef, a more comprehensive, flexible, and functional approach for basic needs and human development. This analysis then ties into a proposal for prosperity for people and the role of fulfilling basic needs at its vanguard. Thus, further signifying the relevance of having a universal, yet flexible frame for understanding and working within an agenda to meet basic human needs. In section 6, the paper then proposes a glossary that adapts and breaks down the basic needs proposed by Max-Neef within a general framework of people (mental,

¹ The other publication was on *Explorations in Personality* by another American psychologist Henry Murray in 1938, which was generally focused on examining human emotions and behavioural reactions.

² As Rimmer (1981) notes, the ILO's focus on basic needs spearheaded a post-World War II counter-revolution of sorts to a presiding GDP focused approach.

Towards a human-centred approach for enhancing place prosperity: defining and operating within the basic human needs

psychological, social) and people-environmental dimensions. In this way, adding rigor to the understanding of and active response to basic needs requirements in practice. An activity framework that shows how stakeholders focused on improving prosperity in place can streamline their intervention approach to respond to and enable basic needs potential is then proposed in section 7. The conclusion highlights the usefulness of the glossary with activity framework as tools for advancing urban prosperity as well as potential for further work.

2. What are the human needs and why are they relevant?

For Spirkin (1983), our ultimate goal as humans is social development, which requires creating the appropriate conditions for self-expression. For people, this entails a continuous interaction between human qualities that are biological, personal, inherited, natural (with nature and environment) and social to acquire such development goals, bringing into context motivational behaviour. Understanding the motives that guides the pursuit of goals therefore, requires an understanding of needs and how they award potency to such goals (Deci and Ryan, 2000). There is a wide glossary of needs related to human motivation, the most prominent of which are the universal and basic needs, which are sometimes used synonymously (Dover, 2010; Hartley, 2010). **Universal needs** stem from being human and what is needed to fulfil humanity, while **basic needs** refer to what are required for basic survival and the avoidance of harm and are innate to every individual. Notably, they are goals which must be achieved if an individual is to achieve any other goal, 'however idiosyncratic or culturally specific those other goals are' (Doyal and Gough, 1984, p. 10). In short, therefore, for every set objective, is some form of need(s) at its helm.

At the time it was proposed, Maslow's (1943) theory on human needs and motivation was an attempt to reconcile the lack of valid theory that infuses certain relevant theoretical aspects of psychology, and sound data. In this way, overcome limitations then for policy and strategy debates that were centred between developing social strategies and meeting peoples' essential service, material, and psychological needs (see Dover, 2010). In addition to Maslow, there have followed other relevant perspectives on human needs with some degree of philosophical influence.

3. Evolution of Needs theories: the proposal by Maslow and some relevant works that follow

Maslow proposes five needs domains: (1) physiological needs to sustain the body's homeostasis and appetite to survive come first, driving a person's behaviour to fulfil them before any other; these are followed by (2) security needs, both explicit and implicit; (3) the love needs are indicative of affection and belongingness, rather than sex, and widely analysed in psychology; (4) the need for esteem with regards to both oneself and that of society come next; (5) lastly, there is the need for self-actualization, which is concerned with the achievement of some targeted personal specialty, entailing basic satisfaction – '[I]n one individual it may take the form of the desire to be an ideal mother, in another it may be expressed athletically,' (Maslow, 1943, p. 377). If self-actualization is the pinnacle of the 'needs' hierarchy, then its outcome should ultimately encompass all others. However, in Maslow's theory it does not seem to (figure 1). According to Maslow also, self-actualization is used in a limited fashion in the theory,³ and the needs hierarchy can be responsive to behaviours and perceptions of need

³ Later in life, Maslow, would engage himself with qualitative studies on people and self-actualization, trying to establish meaningful conclusions.

Towards a human-centred approach for enhancing place prosperity: defining and operating within the basic human needs potency. Another limitation includes how natural and man-made environments have not been considered, while they remain a relevant spatial medium of existence that impact us and vice versa. Still, Maslow's theory sets the trend for prevailing research on human motivation and needs, whether in extension of it, arguments and critiques regarding its limitations, its validation, or re-assessment of the basic concepts.

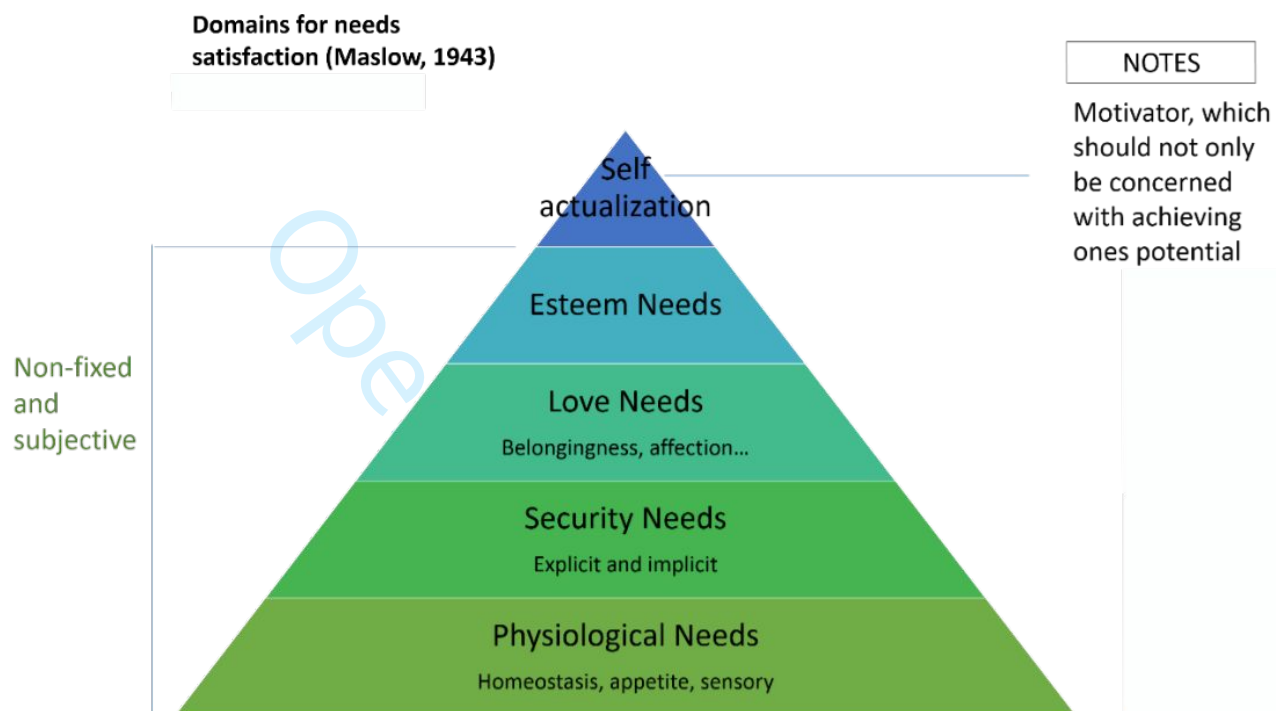


Figure 1: Maslow's basic needs pyramid with notes. Adopted from Maslow (1943). Source: Author

Maslow himself was one of those who sought to re-assess the concept of needs, suggesting a modification with regards to deficiencies and continued growth motivations (Maslow, 1962). Alderfer (1969) collates several other earlier proposals all focused on needs intensity, and himself proposes an alternative theory – a threefold concept of existence, relatedness to other people, and personal growth or development. Another relevant proposal is by economist Ian Gough (Gough, 2004, 2014)

In collaboration with Doyal (Doyal and Gough, 1984, 1991), Gough considers human needs as an objective conception of human welfare, and introduce the concept of need satisfiers as distinct from basic needs. This paper takes a deeper look at needs satisfiers in the following section 4. Gough (2004, 2014) identifies **health** – above mere survival – and **autonomy** – innate quality for making informed choices – as universal prerequisites. He then proposes 11 hierarchical universal satisfier characteristics (USCs) that include adequate nutritional food, water, adequate protective housing, non-hazardous work and physical environments, appropriate health care, security in childhood, significant primary relationships, physical and economic security, safe birth control and childbearing, appropriate basic and cross-cultural education, to meet the above universal prerequisites. These, for him, are culturally universal and relevant for future use, and their interpretation is socially, culturally, and historically influenced. Having defined list of USCs, however, makes them appear prescriptive and finite in a world where diversity and change is a norm. Indeed, Gough prompts continued improvement of their approach.

While the above experts approach needs differently, they each, however, fundamentally recognise the primacy of the need for subsistence and survival and, the fact that while needs do overlap and even contribute to each other, one cannot be substituted for the other. Max-Neef re-assess and expands on the above perspectives and,

for this paper, presents a more functional overview that more appropriately captures the flexible nature of needs satisfaction.

4. The Max-Neef perspective on human needs and why it stands out

For Max-Neef (1992, see also 1991), our needs as humans are structured in two parts – (a) the **basic**/value needs that we are motivated to fulfil relative to self, social relations, and wider environment, and (b) **existential**/axiological needs. The basic needs are innate, consistent, universal yet attributable to human evolution, and must be met to maintain our *human* potential, and include nine domains: subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, creativity, identity, leisure, and freedom. All these exist in a simultaneous and complimentary manner with trade-offs interspersed apart from the need for subsistence, which takes primacy when it is threatened. So, the needs are better placed as a *wheel* (figure 2), rather than a hierarchical pyramid.

The second part, the existential needs, include *being, having, doing, and interacting*, motivations that remain innate, same and common to every individual irrespective of time, locale, or culture (figure 2). These are domains within which we strive to fulfil basic needs by contextualizing the appropriate **satisfiers**. That is: for us to fulfil a basic need (e.g. subsistence), there are particular states/conditions we need to '*be in*' (physiological, mental, and psychological), certain tangible and intangible assets we need to '*have*' (institutions, mechanisms, tools, forms etc.), things we need to '*do*' (passive and active actions), and third party '*interactions*' that need to happen (between locations, time, different social and environmental spaces). Hence, satisfiers can be multiple per and replicable between needs, and are choice and context-specific, change with time, and are, therefore, inexhaustible. Also, as Migotti (1992) notes, they emphasize our natural capacity for self-expression, which plays a critical role in making practical decisions.

A critical aspect of Max-Neef's needs framework is the ad hoc role that satisfiers can take while fulfilling a basic need. They can be synergic – set to satisfy one need and by doing so stimulate the satisfaction of other secondary ones, destroyers – set to meet a need while impairing the ability to meet another, pseudo-satisfiers – simulating a false sense of satisfaction that in the long run can be counteractive, and inhibitors – those that over-satisfy one need while essentially impairing the potential to satisfy other relevant ones. We may, in a practical sense, further surmise that satisfiers can further perform *active and catalytic, violative, latent, and inhibitive* roles.

Towards a human-centred approach for enhancing place prosperity: defining and operating within the basic human needs

*The three universal milieus
for needs centered motivation*

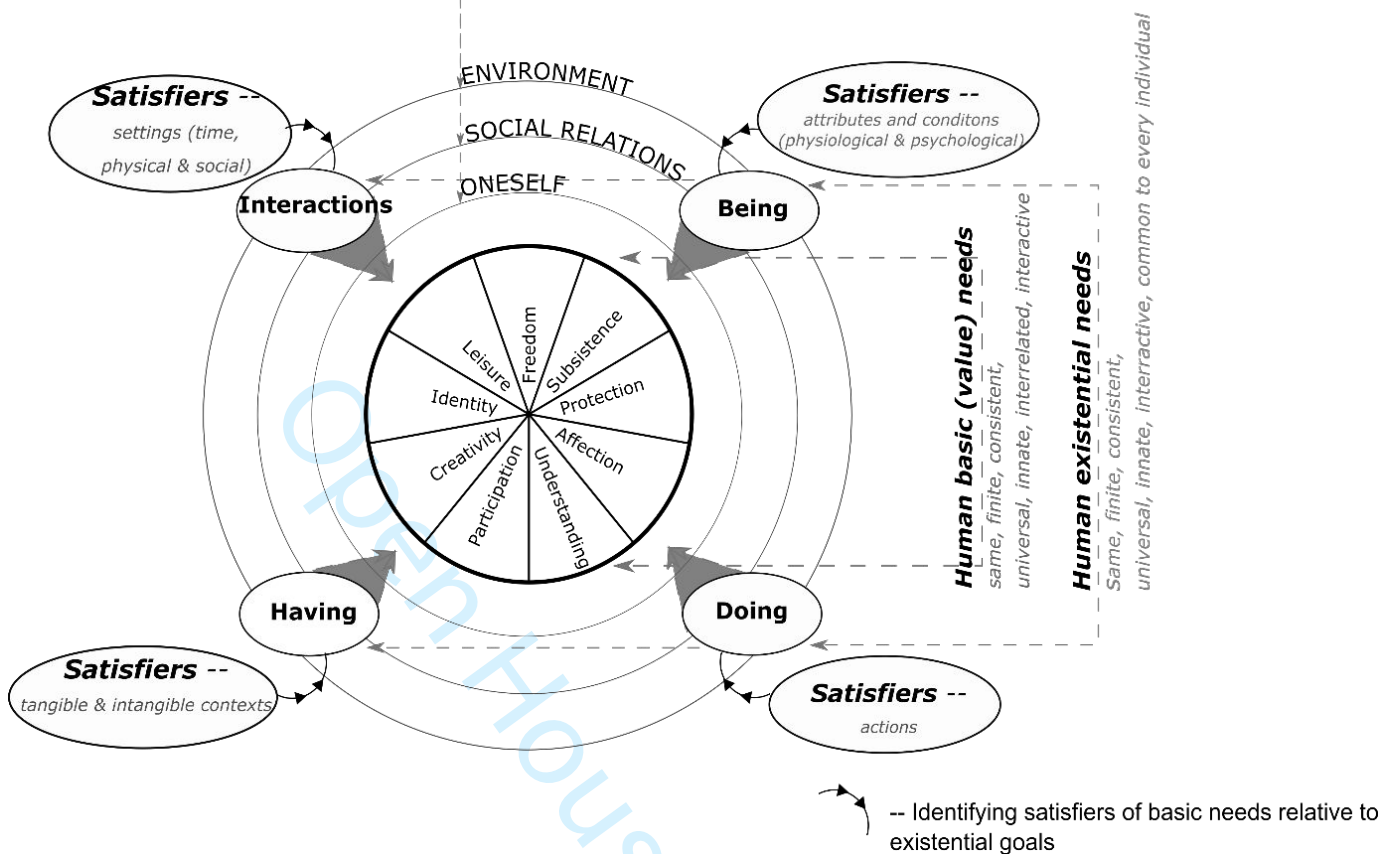


Figure 2: The human needs wheel and process adapted from Max-Neef (1992). Source: Author

The Max-Neef needs framework, especially when viewed from a design and development perspective, strongly reflect the **complex** and diverse nature of human settings, our interdependencies and interactivity with selves and environment, and the dynamism and progressiveness (to change). Thus, platforming a flexible approach to refining place specific needs. **Place** is a loaded person/people-centred concept that comprises the comprehensible and meaningful settings (tangible and intangible lived **spaces**) that people exist and interact within (see Tuan, 1977). The above functional analysis of basic needs ties well with theses in Lefebvre (1991), and Ellin (2013), and also considers a theoretical aspect that Maslow (1943) argued for – how motivational behaviour can simultaneously focus on many basic needs. Hence, making it possible for Abubakar (2019) to link the fulfilment of needs to the establishment of prosperity.

5. Needs fulfilment in the bigger picture of prosperity

Prosperity has become such a universal term, with a recent and intensive re-assessment of the concept seeing a shift from an economic to a more interdisciplinary monopoly. While perceptions still vary, a theoretical gap for a standardized (non-economic) and operative meaning of what it means to prosper also remained, which Abubakar (2019) sought to fulfil. Here, prosperity is proposed as a process of development and thriving, and it takes a universal and human-centred approach, building on how people exist in place and the progressive pursuit of goals. As earlier discussed, each endeavour/goal in our lives has as its background a driving need. In the prosperity process, the actualization of any such need-centred goal, whereby appropriate and adequate satisfiers (contextualized elements of our lived spaces) and resources are applied to initiate beneficial change, leads to development. When development is sustained and adequately adapted through changes in ourselves

Towards a human-centred approach for enhancing place prosperity: defining and operating within the basic human needs

and our evolving needs, and in our spaces, resilience ensues, allowing for thriving and prosperity. A summarized theory can be found in Abubakar et al. (2019). As such, in the practice of place improvement, identifying needs gaps within the condition/quality of people's lived spaces and supporting their fulfilment facilitates prosperity. The contrary entails deprivations or poverties, which manifest pathologies (see Max-Neef, 1992 & Orcutt, 2004).

To be able to identify needs gaps where they exist in a place's character, in order to appropriately respond, one needs to have a breakdown of what the needs entail, a conceptual definition. Max-Neef (1992) did not define the basic needs, however, and it is towards this gap that the paper now turns.

An Approach to defining the basic human needs

This paper adopts and adapts the Max-Neef (1992) basic human needs domains and defines them through a framework of traits or **Basic Terms of Pursuit (BToP)**. Pursuit is a key word that implies transformation, dynamism and progression, aspects that are characteristic of normal human existence. The basic needs domains are slightly amended, removing 'freedom' and adding 'transcendence,' thus listing: (1) subsistence, (2) protection, (3) affection, (4) understanding, (5) participation, (6) creativity, (7) identity, (8) leisure, and (9) transcendence. Max-Neef did consider transcendence⁴ as a domain that with time can manifest to become universal. For this paper, transcendence, as will be discussed, is perhaps one the most universal of the needs due to its role in spurring the will to advance. While freedom is revised as a more generic socio-cultural principle for the pursuit of needs and living. It is external to the person, whilst autonomy/critical autonomy of agency serves to augment our motivational behaviour (Del Gandio, 2012; Gough, 2004). Maslow (1943) also considers freedom⁵ as an objective of esteem, and an aspect of security.

The nine needs domains were defined through qualitative content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005), and validated as part of a wider framework for place/slum improvement and prosperity. Overall, over 60 sources, including Maslow (1943) were analysed and range from encyclopaediae, dictionaries, books, journals, and websites. The thematic analysis focused on the domain concepts, what they mean in basic language terms, theoretical positions, what it means to pursue them, and aspects that help explain how they manifest. It is from this that the BToP for each need and some adverse conditions or outcomes that can manifest when the need potential is not fulfilled, are conceived (figure 3). The BToP will be conditions or contexts, which can be internal to persons or external and in relation to others and environment. When these are evidenced, it indicates the potential fulfilment of basic need they characterise, and conversely a limitation or gap to same. The research structures the BToP into two dimensions: (a) people – personal and mental, psychological, and social, and (b) people and environment – man-made and natural (figure 3). These are essentially the milieus within which we exist (see section 4) and furthermore, provide a logical frame within which to comprehend where strengths and/or vulnerabilities lie in a place setting (Abubakar, 2019) and, as such, an applicable guide for practice. The dimensions are not mutually exclusive with diffused borders, as people impact environments and vice versa.

⁴ Transcendence was not explicitly proposed by Max-Neef, but he considered it in his discussions with Alastair McIntosh of the Scottish centre for human ecology (Max-Neef, 1992, pp. 203, 214).

⁵ Further supporting this view is a discussion by the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman ("Talk to Aljazeera: Interview with Zygmunt Bauman", 2017) on the importance of complimenting security with freedom – 'security without freedom is slavery, and freedom without security is chaos.' It was also not included in the wheel of needs version developed by Verene Nicholas and Alastair McIntosh of the Scottish centre for human ecology.

Towards a human-centred approach for enhancing place prosperity: defining and operating within the basic human needs

Indeed, even mental activities are conducted in a given place and time. The definition framework with BToP – the Basic Human Needs Glossary, are outlined in the next section.

6. The basic human needs glossary: basic needs and what their pursuit entails

The Basic Human Needs Glossary with Basic terms of Pursuit (BToP) for them

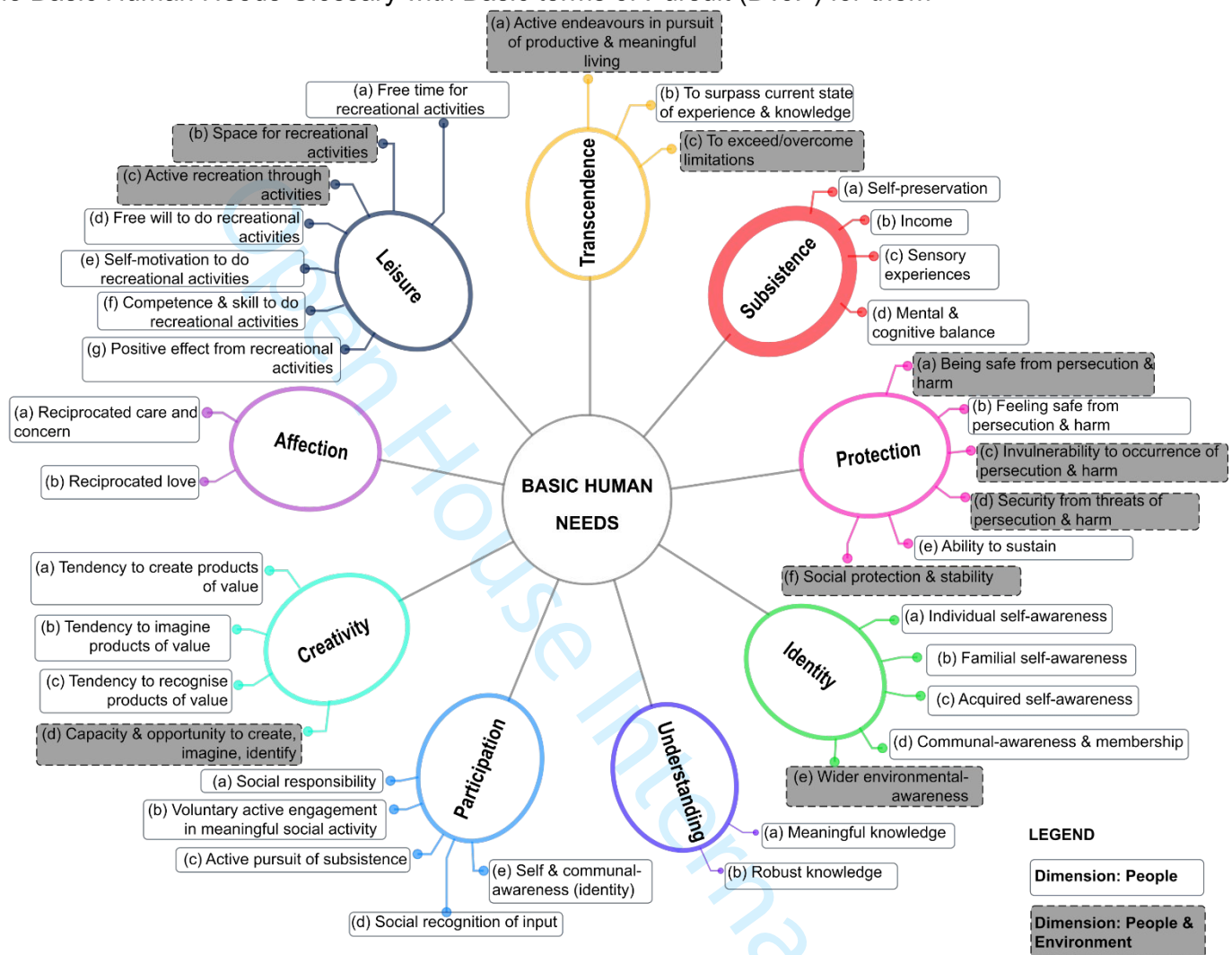


Figure 3: Exploding the basic human needs wheel: outline of the Basic Terms of Pursuit (BToP) for the adapted basic human needs of Max-Neef. All exist in simultaneity, apart from subsistence (shown in deeper circular impression) that takes primacy when it is threatened but can be undermined by lack of protection and safety. Source Author.

Subsistence

Derived from Latin 'subsistere', this is what is needed to remain alive at the basic minimal level, or to subsist, and reflects Maslow's physiological needs (Bertram, 2017; Maslow, 1943; Sharif, 1986; Yagisawa, 2014).

The BToP proposed here include: (a) *self-preservation*, which takes the greatest share of subsistence pursuit and entails satisfying hunger, thirst, clothing and shelter, and fuel; (b) *income*, all dimensions of, in its role as a means to maintain standards of self-preservation; (c) *sensory experiences* of taste, smell, sight, stroking etc.; and (d) *mental and cognitive balance* derived from pursuit of activities like sleep, rest, leisure, maternal responses etc; indeed, the ability to process and implement varying degrees and contexts (sensory, motivational, emotive etc.) of information that is supported by mental and cognitive efficiencies is an essential aspect of human functioning (Samsel, n.d.).

Towards a human-centred approach for enhancing place prosperity: defining and operating within the basic human needs

Adverse outcomes of repressing the potential for subsistence can include appetite or hunger, which is especially true for self-preservation disrupting the persons normal, stable, and constant chemical state; others include various forms of physiological, social, and psychological debilitation, and also death.

Protection

This can be related to Maslow's safety needs, and it describes the condition of being safe and secure from the occurrence of harm and persecution (Heugens, 2010; Polonko, 2010; Wikipedia contributors, 2017a).

The BToP proposed here include: (a) being safe from harm and persecution; (b) feeling safe from harm and persecution, which are subjective aspects; (c) invulnerability to occurrence of harm and persecution, which depicts absence of fear and capacities to control and limit the occurrence and threats of, effects and severity of impact and vulnerability to harm and persecution; and (d) security from threats that cause harm and persecution. Others include: (e) the ability to sustain subsistence, which is strongly linked to and can be undermined by lack of safety (Heugens, 2010; Maslow, 1943; Max-Neef, 1991); and, (f) social protection and stability, which can be depicted by loving parents, familiar environments and scopes, insurance, social services etc.

Adverse outcomes of repressing the potential for protection can include endangerment, social, physiological, and psychological instabilities, lack of true freedom, and death. Indeed, these are counter-notions associated with safety and security and are aspects of human rights and justice. Social and physical (and environmental) support mechanisms for these are vital to urban systems.

Affection

This is concerned with the reciprocal conditions of love, devotion, fondness, or liking between people or living things (Maslow, 1943; Rhodes, 2007; de Sousa, 2013).

The BToP proposed include: (a) reciprocated care and concern for the wellbeing and happiness of others; (b) reciprocated love, and this can appear in six forms (Al-Khalili *et al.*, 2012; Bertram, 2017; Helm, 2017): (i) self-love, (ii) passionate love and desire for another, (iii) stable and mature love that can involve commitment, understanding, compromise, and goodwill, (iv) deep respect, friendliness, and fondness for family, community, business partners etc. for instance, (v) unconditional humanitarian love that seeks to create value and reflect eternal love, and (vi) compassion, motivated by the need to relieve suffering without compromising one's subsistence.

Notably, reciprocity and belonging – giving and reception, is a vital aspect of affection, making it distinct from emotion. It can be customarily characterised by restrictions and inhibitions both ways (Maslow, 1943). At times, people would want to attain affection more than anything else. It creates value in people and between them that is worthwhile (Homiak, 2015). Adverse outcomes of repressing the potential for affection can include emotional and social instability, lack of self-worth and value, and maladjustment and psychopathology cases.

Creativity

This is a mental characteristic that describes the tendency to generate or create in order to change an existing domain into something new, different, or better, and is considered a distinguishing factor for humans and other organic beings (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Franken, 1993; Weisberg, 1993; Wikipedia contributors, 2017b). It is

Towards a human-centred approach for enhancing place prosperity: defining and operating within the basic human needs

1 tied to our ability to see alternatives that are unique to situations and relate this to our thinking, flexibility, and
2 adaptability and, most of all anticipation of the unknown.
3

4 The BToP proposed include: (a) the tendency to create, (b) tendency to imagine, (c) tendency to recognise acts,
5 ideas, possibilities, alternatives, novelty, concepts etc. in any domain that develop tangible and intangible
6 products of value. These products can be useful for solving problems, conquering challenges, communicating
7 ideas, values etc., or just for the sheer satisfaction of it. This can be associated with Maslow's (1943) self-
8 actualization, where persons will tend to express themselves relative to a personal urge or a specialty they are
9 fitted for. Another BToP is the (d) capacity and opportunity to create, imagine, and identify products of value.
10 Creativity can arise from an instance of insight, but the most creative accomplishments are those due to
11 substantial effort, hard work, and focus and within fostering and educative, stimulating, and supportive
12 environments.
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18 The adverse outcomes of repressing the potential for creativity can include lack of societal value, lack of life
19 satisfaction, and lack of identity.
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22 **Understanding**

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24 To understand is a mental process tied to knowledge of aspects of the real world, which remains a difficult and
25 ambiguous concept to define (Changing Minds, 2016; Heick, 2012; Ip, 2003; Lim, 1999). Learning to know or
26 knowing is not the same as understanding as will be highlighted.
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30 The BToP proposed include: (a) meaningful knowledge, whereby one does not only know – in whatever capacity
31 – but is able to explain it, interpret it, gain insight from it, cohere it to other propositional or objective knowing,
32 and use it towards some purpose or goal. This is the bridge tying knowledge and understating. Second is pursuit
33 of (b) robust knowledge, because for knowledge to be meaningful, both the procedures and principles that
34 underline it are essential to grasp. This does not remove the factive nature of understating – one can possibly
35 understand something and yet lack true belief in the proposition.
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40 In all, understanding entails generating value from knowledge (Pritchard and Turri, 2014). The adverse
41 outcomes of repressing the potential for understanding can include lack of expertise, lack of clarity, cognitive and
42 mental decline, reduced capacities for autonomy, reduced capacities to exert authority, and reduced capacities
43 for valuable participation.
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48 **Identity**

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50 This is a psychological, biological, and sociological concept influencing the way we think, reflect and rationalise,
51 act, and in building community (Lewicka, 2008; Olson, 2015; Oyserman *et al.*, 2012; Shoemaker, 2015). It can
52 be understood from two scopes of the person and, the person within the wider social and place context.
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56 The BToP proposed include: (a) self-awareness that is individualistic and innate to persons comprising traits that
57 one considers and believes to be true in terms of self, which can vary with times and place; these traits can
58 include, implicit sense of being (unique in the cosmos), memories, experiences, ideals and beliefs, aspirations
59 and goals, desires and gender. (b) Self-awareness that is innate yet familial with traits and roles that include
60 name, ancestry, inherited and other similarity of character, race, ethnicity, shared memories and experiences

Towards a human-centred approach for enhancing place prosperity: defining and operating within the basic human needs

etc. (c) Acquired self-awareness that include traits and roles which are acquired (one can exist without being them), for instance, culture, religion, occupation, responsibilities, social class, esteem, reputation, and prestige. (d) Communal-awareness and membership with shared or singular ideals, cultural roles and responsibilities, activities, belief, and naming etc.; and (e) wider environmental-awareness, as place contexts are also active in defining identity.

The adverse outcomes of repressing the potential for identity can include lack of self-confidence and self-inadequacy, which are linked to emotional imbalance. Others include communal dysconnectivity, lack of belonging, and reduced social and cultural capital.

Leisure

This is tied to concept of recreation in terms of time, space, and activities that can offer opportunity for enjoyment, personal growth, service to others and the environment, and state of mind (Hurd and Anderson, 2011; Salama and Wiedmann, 2013; Veal, 1992).

The BToP proposed include: (a) free time for freely chosen recreational activities, one which is free from all obligations, self-maintenance, and other tasks. (b) Space and public space for recreational activities, growth, and for discovery. (c) The active recreation through active and passive activities that are conducted during leisure time and include relaxation or idleness (Max-Neef, 1991), enjoyment, diversion, personal, social, or creative development, healthy living, broadening of knowledge, and exercise etc. (d) The free will, (e) competence and skills, and (f) self-motivation to participate in recreational activities; and (g) positive effect depicted by enjoyment and satisfaction from the recreational activity. These last four on the list are tied to persons subjective state of mind with the pursuit of leisure for its own sake and as a valuable end in itself.

The adverse outcomes of repressing the potential for leisure can include lack of recreation, negative effects on intellectual and physiological growth, reduced social vitality, reduced economic vitality, and reduced creative vitality. In all, pursuit of leisure can serve to bind social costumes, and sense of cohesion.

Participation

This is a concept that can apply to various realms of existence – political, economic, community, architectural, democratic, etc. Its definitions are broad and sometimes unclear, but generally considered as a process of active and passive engagement in a socially meaningful activity with the aim of progress, rather than target or outcome of it (Leydet, 2017; Oakley, 1991; Rifkin and Kangere, 2001; Sanoff, 2000). This can be related to Gough's (2004) concept of autonomy.

The BToP proposed include: (a) voluntary active engagement in a meaningful social activity, and this can include collaborating, contributing, organizing, influencing decisions, deliberating and ultimately, making conclusive decisions. (b) Social responsibility that is a passive form of engagement and can include receiving, sharing in, and accountability for the outcomes of social activities. (c) Social recognition of input by relevant others, stakeholders (e.g. those in governance), and the recognised input can include one's views, requirements, preferences, feedback proffered, choices etc.; (d) self and communal-awareness (active identity in the wider social/environmental), and (e) active pursuit of subsistence, which in addition to having the will to live and exist, are seen as a degree of social participation in existence (Treanor and Sweetman, 2016).

Towards a human-centred approach for enhancing place prosperity: defining and operating within the basic human needs

The adverse outcomes of repressing the potential for participation can include inhibited autonomy of agency and freedoms, lack of self-awareness, lack of self-sufficiency and social development, reduced wellbeing, lack of communal and social vitality, reduced rights and citizenship – as participation is core to their convention – and social instability.

Transcendence

In literary usage, transcendence is described as exceeding one's usual limits, or existing, going, rising, or striving beyond ones physical or normal level of knowledge and experiences (Collins Dictionary, 2014; Hawkins and Allen, 1991). In theology and philosophical dialogues, however, transcendence has a much deeper meaning connected to our existence and pursuit of living (Bergo, 2011; Crowell, 2015; Culp, 2017).

Hence, the BToP proposed include: (a) to exceed/overcome limitations in the everyday practice of living that can include social situations, diversities, challenges, conflicts etc. or just to augment something that is amiss; (b) to surpass current state of experience and knowledge in the day-to-day practical engagement towards new forms of comprehension that advances from one progressive stage to another, evolving and surpassing what we are. (c) Active endeavour to pursue productive and meaningful living and livelihood within the possibilities of our mortality; this captures our interaction with the world and what exists within it, whilst being aware of the wider universe and even the divine (some aspects of which are beyond our comprehension). Therefore, even the endeavour to pursue other needs is a basic trait of the need to transcend. The possibilities of human transcendence are infinite and only limited by the human consciousness and considered synonymous with being (Bergo, 2011; Thornhill and Miron, 2017). The pursuit of this publication, for example, can be viewed as the researcher's transcendental nature to surpass certain limits of knowledge and participation.

The adverse outcomes of repressing the potential for transcendence can include inability to improve self and society, and lack of advancement in all social, physical, and environmental spheres.

7. Needs assessment matrix for the systematic stakeholder

The BToP are goals for people and environmental prosperity, while the adverse outcomes can be seen to progress poverties, causing vulnerabilities and disrupting the progress of human societies; violence (an example noted by Max-Neef (1992)) for instance is describing social instability and lack of protection. Iteratively, the task for stakeholders, targeting basic needs development strategies in any place, is to curate conditions whereby needs potentials are enabled and poverties and pathologies are averted. A proposed needs assessment framework matrix (figure 4) can be used with potential for adaptation to support other place improvement approaches. A first layer of actions will include taking a deep look into the character of place for people and its attributes to identify the challenges; then a logical assessment of BToP that are limited. Tenure insecurity in a place for example, can arguably be seen as a condition that can hinder people's *capacities to feel safe and secure* to occurrence of harm and persecution – where loosing home and livelihoods are a constant fear (Gulyani and Bassett, 2010). In turn, it can lead to *inability to sustain subsistence* – in terms of self-preservation. This level of detail can help to inform on the basic needs deprivations in the varying domains of place, and as such, degree of vulnerabilities; in the case of the above example of tenure insecurity, the need for **protection** and **subsistence**. Importantly, though, it helps to collaboratively articulate the appropriate requirements to

Towards a human-centred approach for enhancing place prosperity: defining and operating within the basic human needs

1 establish their potential for people: the tangible and intangible contexts necessary to *have*, activities to *do*,
2 *interactions*, and personal *conditions* that need to be orchestrated.
3

4 Any strategy for action to be taken, however, will depend on an intensive scrutiny and validation of the role of
5 each outlined requirement domain, whether these can become (1) catalytic – synergise other needs fulfilment –
6 so to capitalise on and include an incremental strategy; (2) violative – limiting other needs fulfilment – so to
7 isolate/remove/change, (3) latent – with a false sense of satisfaction – so to change and; (4) inhibitive – will over
8 satisfy while impairing others – to change/remove or make incremental plans. This will allow for a more
9 streamlined and responsive assignment of necessary resources to implement change, which can include other
10 partners and stakeholders, and professionals that will support intended impact. For stakeholders, this proposed
11 process of defining improvement paths will reflect their individuality, experiences, capacities, and variation of
12 background contexts, ideals etc.; responses can be as many and varied, and specific. Hence, the glossary
13 should essentially be a background for collaborative and participatory processes to pursue impactful goals.
14 While the examples of some adverse conditions that can manifest when basic needs potentials are not
15 supported provide an overview of how things can be or already are, an impetus for action so to say.
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Towards a human-centred approach for enhancing place prosperity: defining and operating within the basic human needs

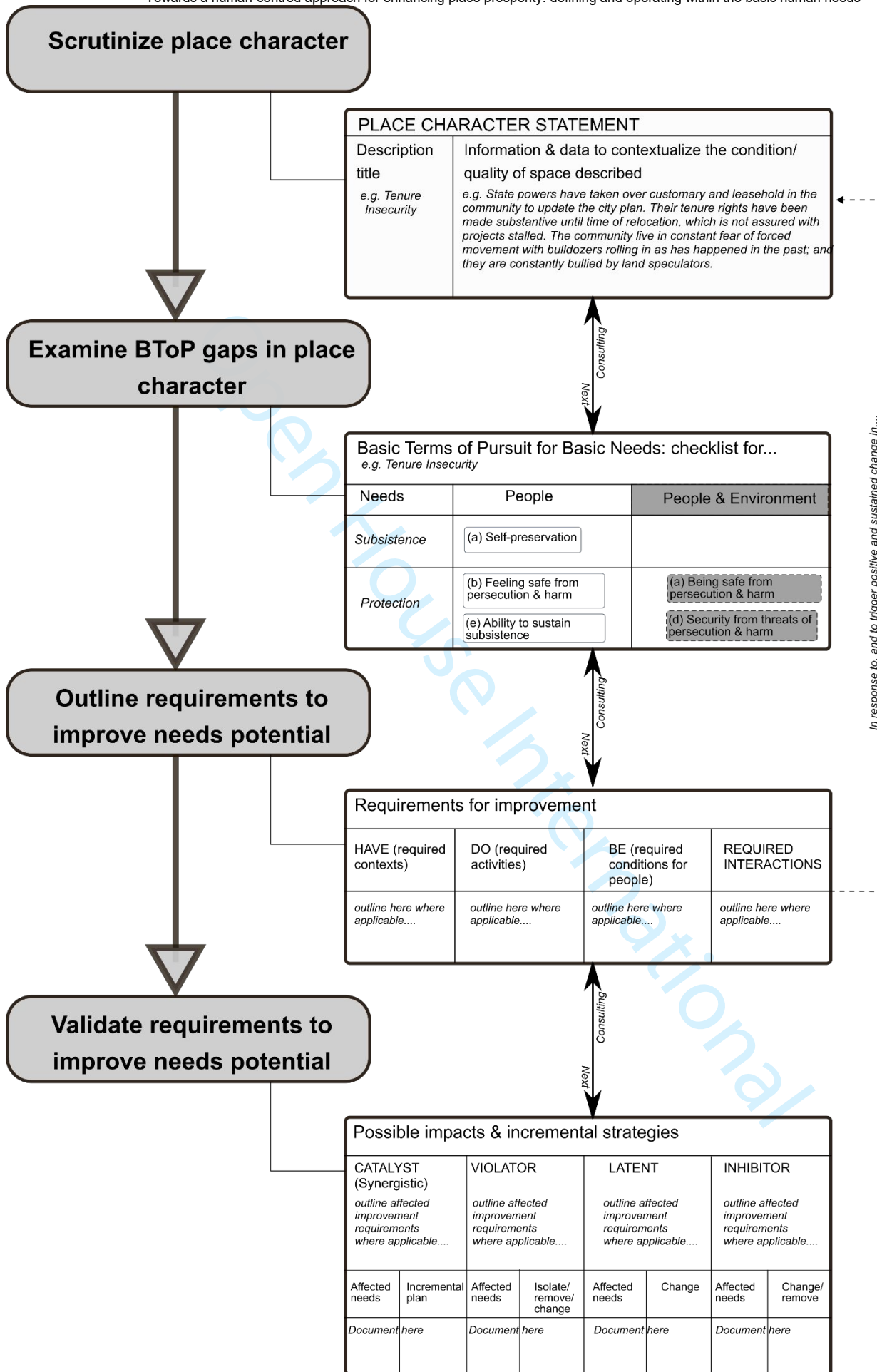


Figure 4: Needs assessment activity framework and matrix. The example shown here is drawn from data associated with Abubakar (2019). Source: Author.

8. Conclusion

This paper argues for a further rationalisation and clarification of the basic human needs so their implementation in practice will be better calibrated to and collaborative with places and people and what are required to enable prosperous societies. It sought to examine the key role that the basic human needs have played in driving urban policy approaches for improvement for a long time. The philosophy that surrounds universal and basic human needs and the motivation to fulfil these for people, since the mid-20th century continues to evolve and transcend disciplines, as their fulfilment is seen to tackle poverty and enhance wellbeing. The objective remains to consolidate operative and flexible frameworks for facilitating needs that are appropriate and recognise people and place complexities. As Gough (2004, p. 2) once noted, '[t]he idea that all humans share characteristics and capacities in common is well-founded yet remarkably difficult to conceptualise and operationalise.' Following on from an analysis of relevant theories and conceptualizations of needs, the paper then focused on the framework of development and human needs proposed by Max-Neef (1992). This proposal maps a more comprehensive, functional, and flexible approach to fulfillment via our basic needs-centred motivations that logically interplay with our existential objectives, and on establishing key satisfiers to fulfil them. The paper then further examined how his conception theoretically depicts a first step to modelling prosperity in operative terms, tying the actualization of needs to the active pursuit of place prosperity in whatever dimension. The basic needs (Max-Neef, 1992) are, however, lacking in terms of definitional content through which to comprehend what they are and what their pursuit entails so to support effective responses to their potential for societies.

The paper then adapts the proposed basic human needs by Max-Neef to define their Basic Terms of Pursuit (BToP) and highlight some adverse outcomes of limiting their fulfillment in a proposed Human Needs Glossary. The needs that are defined include subsistence, protection, affection, creativity, understanding, leisure, identity, participation, and transcendence, and for each, the BToP are lists of traits that characterize them. This exercise also further validates the simultaneity and interactions that exists between the basic needs. For instance, awareness of self and community and the roles that come with it, which fulfil the potential for identity, and the active pursuit of subsistence are also forms of participation for people. While having the ability to sustain subsistence is a potential for safety and security. The BToP are also avenues through which places can be examined to identify strengths or on the contrary, needs gaps presented. Furthermore, to deliberate on the potential to fulfil them with regards people, and in their interactions with others, natural, and man-made environments. A needs assessment framework matrix is also proposed following on, and in association with the definition framework proposed provides a flexible platform for streamlining, reviewing, revising, and recalibrating responses and strategies for place improvement to ensure effective outcomes. Notably, enabling and building capacities for progressive needs fulfilment is key to enhancing pursuit of prosperity, especially in intervention processes to improve vulnerable communities like slums. Hence, these are tools proposed in a broader framework for slum and city prosperity improvement, which is currently applied to a case study in Africa, with plans to refine its applicability and expand its uptake.

The basic Human Needs Glossary is not proposed as prima facie, however. The basic needs are also broad concepts with established, and at times complex and overlapping philosophical backgrounds. While this research has sought to frame what they entail as simply to aid application, there is potential to investigate and further contextualize the BToP through qualitative research that infuses wide participation and experiential

Towards a human-centred approach for enhancing place prosperity: defining and operating within the basic human needs knowledge. In this way, perhaps also advance the approach to their interpretation and articulation of the appropriate contexts and resources by stakeholders set on enhancing their potential to advance wellbeing overall.

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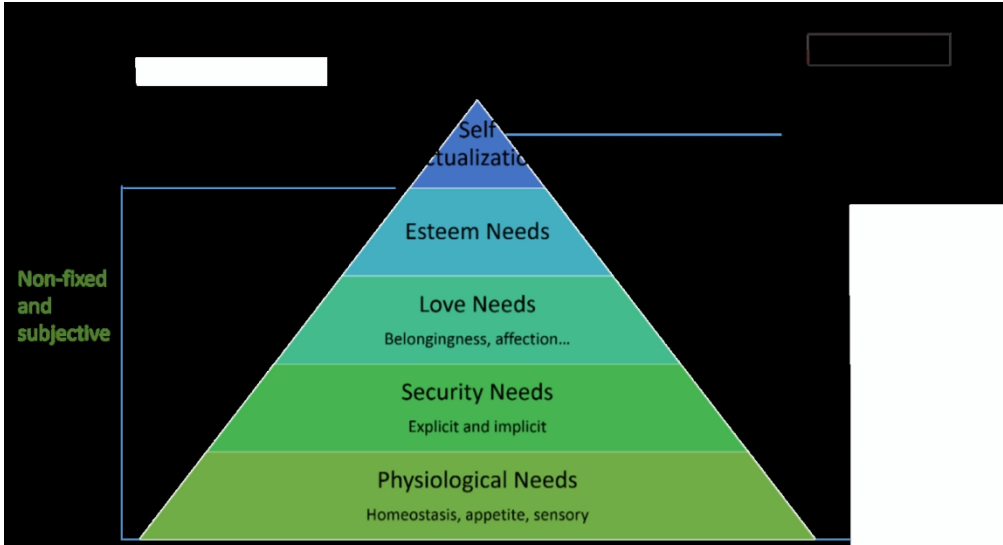
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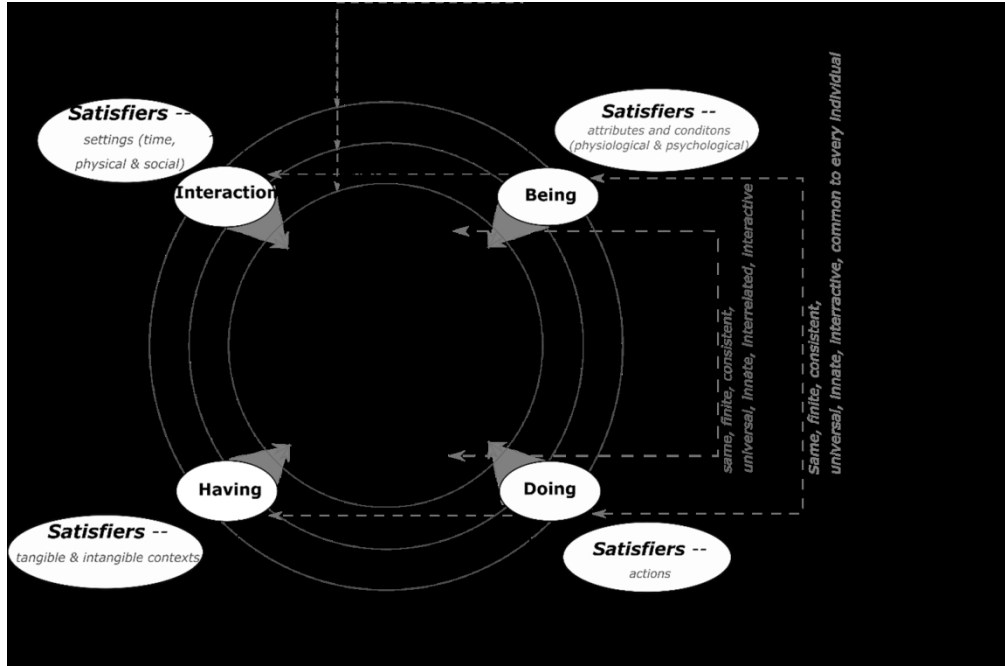
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Maslow's basic needs pyramid with notes. Adopted from Maslow (1943).

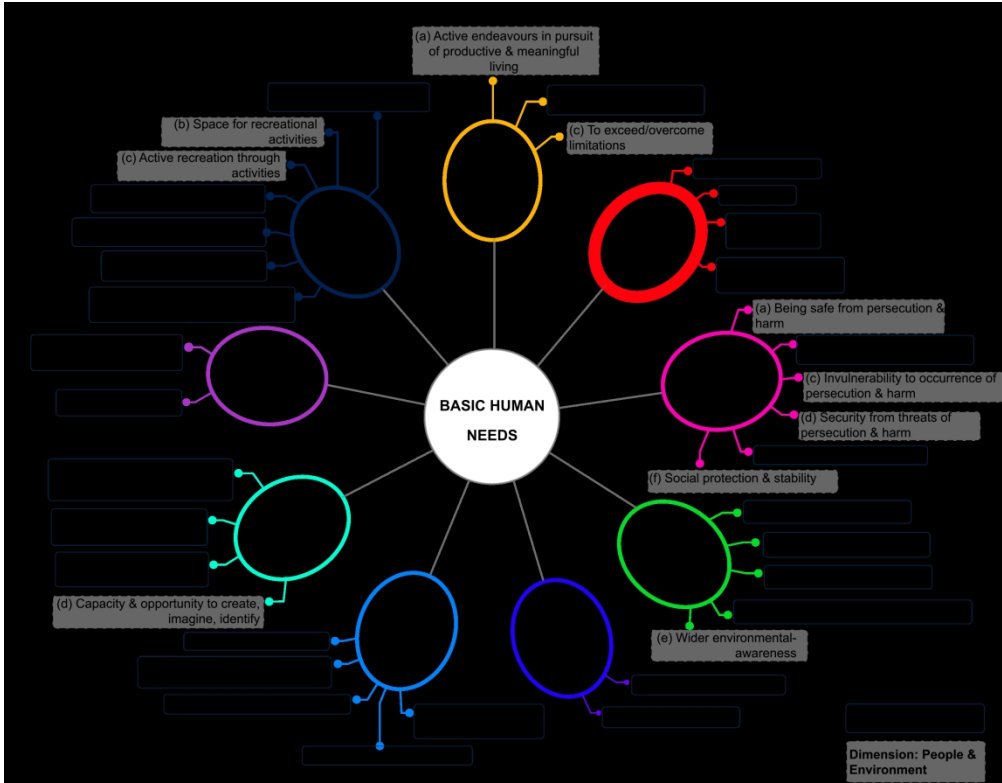
Towards a human-centred approach for enhancing place prosperity: defining and operating within the basic human needs

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The human needs wheel and process adapted from Max-Neef (1992). Source: Author

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Exploding the basic human needs wheel: outline of the Basic Terms of Pursuit (BToP) for the adapted basic human needs of Max-Neef. All exist in simultaneity, apart from subsistence (shown in deeper circular impression) that takes primacy when it is threatened but can be undermined by lack of protection and safety. Source Author.

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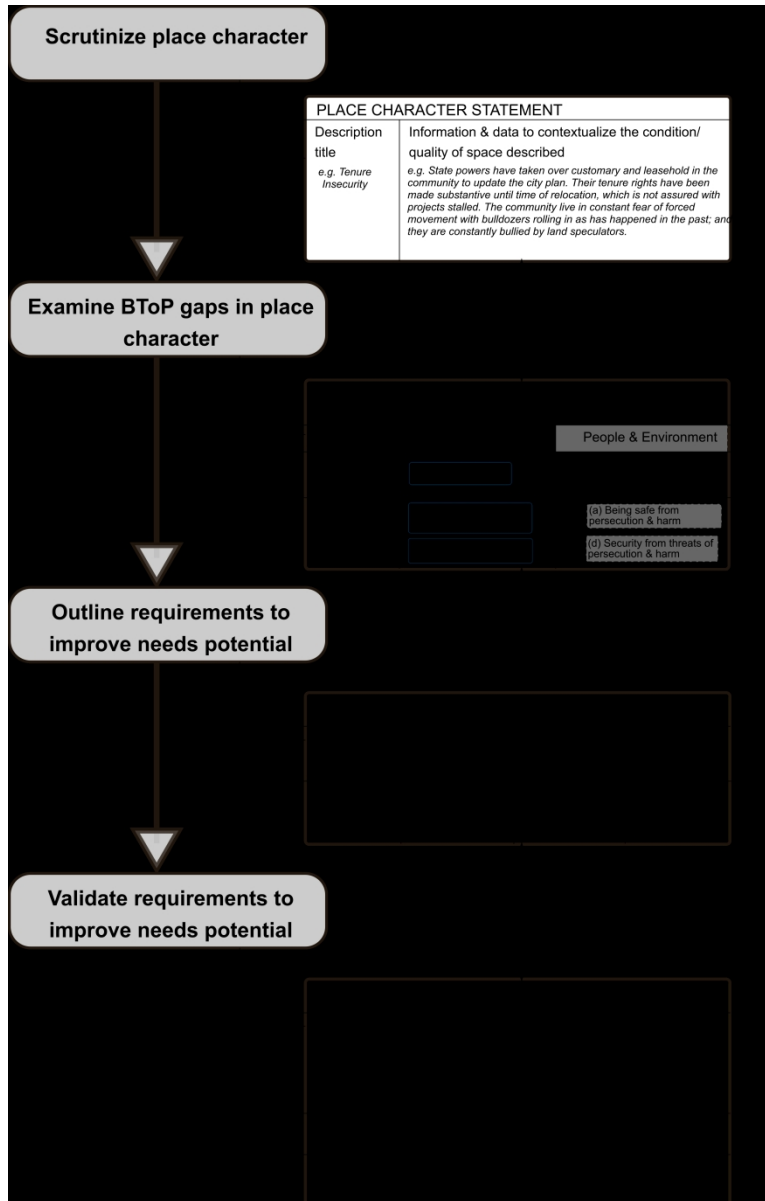


Figure 4: Needs assessment activity framework and matrix. The example shown here is drawn from data associated with Abubakar (2019). Source: Author.

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4 *Aisha Abubakar is currently a Research Associate at the Department of Architecture, University of*
5 *Strathclyde, Glasgow.*

6 *Her work focuses on in-depth place (slums) assessment and characterization, and on building*
7 *appropriately targeted, dynamic, and collaborative intervention sequences that enhance*
8 *effectiveness. She has interest in theory and practice of urban prosperity, the character of places and*
9 *their sociology, the social structure of organisations in effective urban practice, people-environment*
10 *interactions, and community participation in theory and practice. Aisha received Her PhD from the*
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