



REVISIONS TO MASLOW'S HIERARCHICAL MODEL OF BASIC PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS

T. Taneva*

Department of Social Sciences and Business Language Education, Faculty of Economics,
Trakia University, Stara Zagora, Bulgaria

ABSTRACT

Maslow's hierarchical model of human needs has been identified by some researchers as one of the most cognitively contagious ideas in the behavioral sciences. This model is the most recognized, the most widely known, and it is the basis for other major content theories of motivation. Scientific discussions in the 21st century about the merits and limitations of Maslow's theory of basic needs have periodically intensified, since human actions cannot be explained, predicted or managed without an understanding of their motives, the main content of which are human needs.

In spite of the controversial attitude towards the theory, it is widely used in management practice because it is coherent, logical, evolutionarily sound and easy to understand. The paper discusses the principle of extreme deficiency as a condition for maintaining the hierarchy of needs, the ideas of architectural extensions of the pyramid, and rethinking the content of some of the major groups of needs in Maslow's model - self-actualization, status, and belonging/love. The enrichment and expansion of Maslow's hierarchy, especially at the highest levels of the needs of self-actualization and self-transcendence, has the potential to increase the predictive power of the model in exploring people's motivation for activity in different contexts.

Key words: hierarchy of needs, Maslow's model, model revisions, self actualization need

INTRODUCTION

Maslow's theory (1) on human motivation is the most widely recognized, most widely known, and is largely the basis for other major motivational content theories. Kenrick et al (2) identify it as one of the most cognitively infectious ideas in behavioural science. It continues to generate research interest despite controversy, both criticism (3 by 4) and support (5-7). For the first time in psychology Maslow proposed a grounded structure of human needs that could be practically tested and refined.

In 2017, a symposium on "Revising Maslow: human needs in the 21st century" was held. In his introductory speech the renowned Israeli psychologist researcher Abulof (8) poses the question "Why do we need Maslow in the 21st century?". The merits and limitations of Maslow's theory have been widely debated, not

only because of the belief that human actions cannot be explained without understanding their motivations, but also because of the resonance of Maslow's theses in contemporary societies and policies (8-10 et al.).

It is known that according to Maslow (1) people are born with a sustainable system of basic needs that do not change significantly throughout their lives and which they strive to satisfy. The main thesis in his theory is that man is "a wanting animal and rarely reaches a state of complete satisfaction except for a short time" (1:24). Within the humanistic paradigm, Maslow developed the idea that basic human needs can be, on the one hand, meaningfully, conceptually grouped, and on the other, hierarchically considered in terms of their genesis, degree of distance from the psychic, and consistency of satisfaction. This theory was among the first to direct the attention of psychologists to needs higher than the physiological and basic psychological needs studied until then.

*Correspondence to: Tanya Taneva, Department of Social Sciences and Business Language Education, Faculty of Economics, Trakia University, Stara Zagora, Student town, tanya.taneva@trakia-uni.bg, +359889848844

In Maslow's theory the need is not the deficiency itself but the perceived lack of something - the lack identifies the need (7). In short, when a certain basic need is satisfied, another, higher in rank, becomes dominant for the individual. Only an unsatisfied need can motivate behavior, with the currently dominant need being the primary motivator. Moreover, behavior at a given time is rarely related to only one dominant need (11). The inability to satisfy a higher-level need often provokes the so-called compensatory mechanisms by which the individual comes to value more highly the lower-level need. According to Maslow, an individual's interaction with the environment, his flexibility and adaptability to changes, are closely related to whether he has had and has the opportunity in his life to satisfy the full range of his needs - physiological, security and safety, love and belonging, status (respect and self-esteem) and self-actualization (11)

LIMITATIONS OF THE HIERARCHY OF NEEDS THEORY - THESES AND COUNTERTHESES

The most commonly discussed limitations of the hierarchy of needs theory, some noted by the author himself, are related to the following:

First, to the universality of needs. Despite the great popularity of this model, according to some authors it is not flexible and adaptable enough, it is not universal for all people who have different priorities, preferences and needs. This is also due to the difficulty of organizations with the same incentives to motivate employees with large individual differences, towards a common goal of companies (12). Maslow himself does not claim universality in the intensity of needs but in their existence insofar as they are biologically predetermined. That is, although they are generally biologically grounded (with exception of self-actualization), basic needs are psychologically reworked through personal experience and socialization, so that their salience and intensity varies individually. Maslow also formulated another underlying hypothesis: the satisfaction of basic needs in early childhood forms increased frustration tolerance. That is, people who have had their basic needs met for most of their lives, and especially in childhood, develop an "immunity" to possible frustration of the same needs, do not fear frustration, and form a strong character because of a built-up basic sense of satisfaction. They are not afraid of judgment,

hardship or trials, they can defy public opinion and conjuncture and they can fight for ideas (1). With exception of the needs for self-realization, understanding, aesthetics, and transcendence which cannot be satiated, the other groups of needs are activated on the principle of deficiency and scarcity, which may explain human aggression (1). Hostility, destructive behavior are reactive, not instinctoid (as Freudians claim) and are due to frustration or dissatisfaction of deficit-aroused needs. They may be physiological, need for protection, safety, security, belonging to family, community, clan, affection, love, respect, self-esteem, reverence, dignity, approval. Thus attitudes and interests are determined by the satisfaction and frustration of needs. Maslow makes an important clarification: it is wrong to see morals, values, and ethics only as social habits. They have a determinant that is beyond environmental forces and these are the effects of satisfying basic needs (1:13). Naturally, there are also gender and age differences as Maslow (1) says, which alter the intensity of needs.

Second, to the validity of the hierarchy and the ordering of needs by importance (13, 14). The continuous dynamics of needs in different situations calls into question their ordering in levels and there is no expansive notion of hierarchy in the simultaneous operation of several needs (13). There is a dependence of the order of satisfaction on the developmental level of the individual, so there is no obligatory ascent, especially in individuals who have deployed the whole system of needs, including self-realization and transcendent needs and awareness of meaning. His idea of hierarchy is not indisputable but it is a powerful and much debated one because it is based on several ideas that build a clear explanatory model for the content of human motivation: 1) Human activity is directed toward the satisfaction of basic needs that can be grouped in meaning, and the groups are hierarchically related to each other; 2) The hierarchy of needs relates to the ontogenetic order of emergence (evidence in age and developmental psychology) and operates primarily under conditions of extreme frustration of any of the groups of needs. Once needs emerge, they may not operate in the same hierarchy. The actualization of any higher-level need contains, to some degree, the subjective satisfaction of lower-level needs.

Maslow (1) explains the hierarchical structuring and intensity of needs on the principle of prepotency, understood as biologically innate intensity, urgency, and priority. The order of their sequence is dictated by the fact that some motives are simply biologically more urgent, that is, more intense than others, and the intensity itself arises from the fact that they have something like an innate priority. This is also why there is no expansive idea of hierarchicality in the simultaneous operation of several needs (15). Hierarchy refers to the fact that when two or more needs are unsatisfied, a person would initially prefer to satisfy the most basic and 'intrinsic' need (1:16). This does not mean that his behaviour would be determined by it alone, because needs are determinants of behaviour, but it is also dependent on the environment and external influences.

Maslow (1:56) also discusses that the hierarchy is not entirely stable and introduces the term 'reversion' of needs. For example, the need for self-affirmation may be stronger than the need for love and this is the most common case of reversion. It is based on the notion that respect and fear of strong and powerful people is perceived as an argument for deserving or receiving more love. Often the frustration of the need for love and belonging is manifested through assertive and aggressive behaviour. Thus, the demonstration of self-esteem is not the final goal but a means to satisfy the need for love. Another case is the need for creativity, which artists satisfy without having their basic needs met, even in spite of them. Reversion of needs refers to conscious desires and drives, since behavior does not always reflect the motives behind it-e.g., in instinctive or conditioned reflex responses. The most striking cases of reversion are those that are related to higher values, social norms and ideals for which the subject may experience deprivation, suffering and even death.

Third, to the number of levels of needs. In different content theories, the levels of needs range from 3 to 10. It can be said that some of the need theories after Maslow's are actually revisions of his. In new theories, his hierarchy is also continuously discussed from different perspectives (16, 17 etc.).

Fourth, the claim that need satisfaction is not a motivator is questioned (13). In fact, the point is that rarely any psychological need is fully

satisfied. Therefore, it is a potential motivator if it is not currently dominated by another, on the principle of biological prepotency (1). Only an unsatisfied need can motivate behaviour, with the currently dominant need being the primary motivator. Moreover, behavior at a given time is rarely associated with only one dominant need (11).

Fifth, a link to real human activity. There is no connection between Maslow's motivational theory claiming universality and the real process of human activity in which the satisfaction of needs is influenced by the specific context of each particular activity, at each stage of it. From this point of view, Maslow is concerned with the instigators of people's initial, incipient motivation for activity but not with the trends and dynamics in the course of carrying out that activity.

A CRITICISM OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF STATUS AND SELF-ACTUALIZATION NEEDS

Maslow's understanding of the status and self-actualization needs generate one of the strongest resistances to his theory, according to the first and second limitations discussed above.

A number of authors interpret these needs as distinctly self-centered, encompassing only the needs of people in modern democratic societies, and primarily of men in these societies, without considering the influence of culture and socioeconomic context, and therefore not encompassing universal human needs (14, 15). Some authors insistently consider self-actualization as a self-perpetuating individualism, sometimes in an asocial direction, by changing socio-political orientation in a radical way, towards different groupings and radicalizing organizations (15).

There have also been claims that shifting the gaze to contemporary women allows one to see that they do not, for the most part, follow the direction of the pyramid but are entangled in the conflicting needs of love and self-actualization, often operating in different directions (18). There are differing views on the level at which the need for love manifests - first, the physiological level (18), third level in Maslow, to the highest level of self-actualisation in Kenrick et al. (2).

Graham (10) concludes that expectations and

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past experiences in phylogeny matter for the experience of self-realization. Burger (19) also discusses results showing that personal experience is closely related to individual attitudes and behaviors. Graham (10) refers to empirical research that shows that minorities in American society (e.g., blacks and Latinos) realize success, incremental and difficult but success in many domains such as education, occupation, and life expectancy. At the same time poor whites in an increasingly stratified society are not only not experiencing success, they are experiencing a downward trend relative to their parents. Using indicators of well-being, Graham (10) attempts to show that stress, insecurity and hopelessness are the high costs of inequality for poor whites. From this perspective she asks how the hierarchy of needs can explain hopelessness and rising rates of suicide mortality among poor whites who are not deprived of security and material goods, but rather lack hope, identity, and opportunity in affluent societies. How are the needs of these groups to be interpreted relative to those of minorities who are more materially deprived but much more optimistic? Whippman (9) even warns that Maslow's pyramid may 'collapse' of its own accord, as the emphasis on self-actualization increasingly neglects basic needs at a time when the middle class is facing serious financial difficulties, with growing doubts about its ability to meet its basic needs, undermining the very foundation of the pyramid (15). In the research of Dupuis and Newby-Clark (20), the experimental challenge of a future economic threat is sufficient to reduce the significance of autonomy and competence needs, explaining a deterioration in the sense of well-being (17). Similarly, the threat of potential job loss comes at a serious cost (e.g., greater burnout) as job insecurity disrupts the satisfaction of basic psychological needs (17, 21).

A better knowledge of Maslow's theory, however, allows one to understand that he himself developed his ideas further, almost to a philosophical level, and provided an answer to the main criticisms. For example, Maslow includes the three additional levels of needs, considered by some authors as levels above self-actualization, namely (22): level six - the need for understanding, level seven - aesthetic needs, and level eight - needs for self-transcendence.

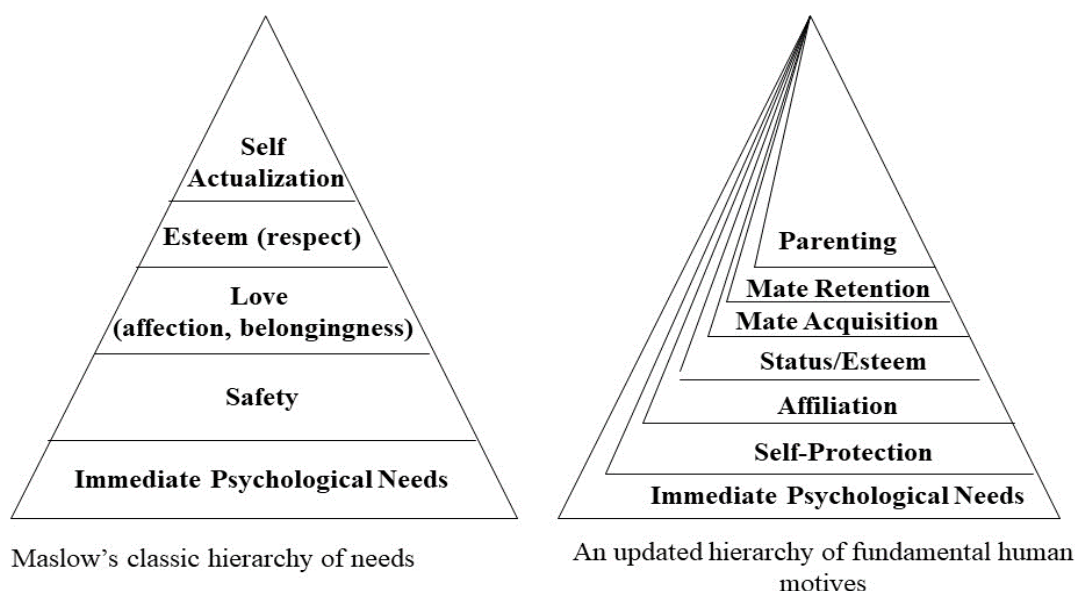
One solution to the resistances to Maslow's hierarchy of needs is attempted by Kenrick et al. (2) in a very interesting publication, in which they argue that more and more people, after achieving their innate fundamental needs, invest their efforts in starting a family, having children and parenting instead of striving for self-actualization. That is, they argue that the basic fundamental structure of the pyramid is worth preserving but needs to be supported by several architectural extensions. In the paradigm of evolutionary psychology, Kenrick et al. (2) argue that Maslow's hierarchy is entirely consistent with later evolutionary views of human motivation. Their general idea is that by updating the design of the pyramid, it can be made relevant to the relationships between basic and higher needs, but also to the situational threats and opportunities of modern times (author's note: giving rise to extreme deficits). To assess the basic needs, Kenrick et al. (2) adopt three different levels of analysis, which, according to the authors, are not clearly distinguished in the works of Maslow (1): 1. The ultimate evolutionary function of needs; 2. The sequence in their development; 3. Their cognitive priority induced by immediate input signals/data from the organism and the environment.

At a functional level of analysis, Kenrick et al. (2) acknowledge the great psychological importance of self-actualization but challenge its status as a functionally distinct human need. Self-actualization is hypothesized to be largely contained in status (esteem), but in addition it manifests in the conscious needs of parenting (2). Therefore, in their new hierarchy, self-actualization has been removed from its privileged place at the top of the pyramid. The developmental sequence presented is based on the biological framework of life-history theory. From this perspective, the top of the pyramid includes three types of goals (author's note: the authors label them as goals rather than needs) that are related to reproduction (2): partner acquisition, partner retention and parenting. What has also changed is the way in which the needs are depicted in the pyramid: not one above the other but overlapping, contained within each other (**Figure 1**), a thesis that, notwithstanding (2), has much merit and has

already been discussed above in the context of the status level in Maslow's original hierarchy. Therefore, (2) add grounds to the assumption that early developmental needs (b.e., from low levels) cannot be completely replaced by later emergent ones but in fact continue to be relevant throughout life, depending on individual differences and environmental conditions. Once a needs-relevant target system is developed, they will be activated whenever relevant environmental cues appear.

In summary, by integrating ideas from developmental life history with Maslow's classical hierarchy, Kenrick et al. (2) update the hierarchy of basic human needs, with added reproductive goals presented in the order in which they are likely to first appear in personality development.

This theory contains interesting hypotheses, can be supported by many real-life examples but repeats two of the limitations of Maslow's theory: 1. It draws information from life in Western societies, where there is indeed a tendency to experience parenthood as a form of self-realization, and after other psychological needs have been met. This is categorically different in other societies, e.g. the Arab world; 2. Concentrates self-realization at the status level, which does not significantly change the original idea of the successful, self-actualized person and does not take into account Maslow's own elaboration of the theory of self-transcendence and self-actualization in love, for example.



Source: Kenrich, Griskevicius, Neuberg a. Schaller (2010)

Figure 1. Hierarchy of fundamental human needs according to evolutionary psychology

Maslow's interpretation of self-actualization as difficult for any person to achieve and as inherent mostly in successful people, does need revision and expansion. The available ideas and assumptions discussed so far provoke the following hypothesis (**Figure 2**): the realization of potentials and abilities can occur in domains that have little to do with success in society as Maslow originally presented it. Rather, self-realization can be achieved and experienced in intimate, personal spheres for the individual, such as love, hobbies, domestic pursuits, and in

roles that carry meaning, value, and creativity. The economic world has long had such conjectures, e.g. projected in advertising messages. Persuasive phrases such as "for the best mother" carry much more meaning than simply satisfying a need for love and affection for a child. These messages focus on a certain type of meaning, self-fulfilment, self-actualisation of the woman as mother. Kenrick et al. (2) seem to have a point.

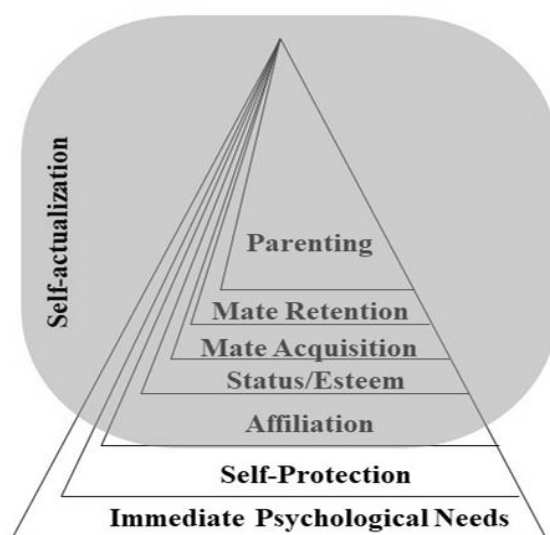
In fact, self-actualization can be seen not as a separate need but as the peak stage at which a person is able to realize talents and feel meaning in activities that satisfy his basic psychological needs for love, affection, and status. That is, if frustration of these needs can potentially trigger activity for the realization of abilities and the discovery of meaning, for the maintenance and peak satisfaction of these needs, self-actualization-sustaining activity is in fact triggered. In cases in which the individual finds meaning in love and affection, he may realize in them his needs for respect and self-esteem, but also for self-actualization and self-transcendence. Maslow himself (1, 23), also in his other work "The farther reaches of human nature", expound at length on his key term "peak experience," during which the subject connects with reality and with himself unintentionally, not because of the benefits he expects, but because of the connection itself, unmotivated. The quest for self-actualization, awareness, maturity and identity can be satisfied at various levels of basic psychological needs, including love, dignity, self-esteem, etc., and is also a condition for health, happiness, and well-being. The path to self-actualization is peak experiences, "...moments of highest happiness and satisfaction" (23:73).

Maslow concludes that there is a crucial difference in the motivational lives of self-actualized people due to a kind of cognition he calls knowledge of being (B-cognition). B-cognition is the cognitive state of complete absorption, surrender, functioning and integration, enjoyment, spontaneity and focused perception, i.e., of peak (24). It carries within it its own reward. Perceptions transcend the ego, are completely devoid of ego, impersonal, selfless and unmotivated, focused on something that has its own independent reality. Maslow can be said to be positing the protoview of intrinsic motivation and the flow theory.

B-cognition is an identification of the perceiver and the perceived, without relation to its value for the observer or its consequences for him. Maslow himself gives the example of the mother's selfless perception of the child, with a love that is whole, complete in its true nature, free of utility and connection.

Therefore, the pyramid can be modified as visualized in **Figure 2**.

An important clarification is that, as previously discussed, in Maslow's hierarchy (1), each of the needs, when satisfied, contains satisfaction of the lower needs to a degree specifically optimal for the individual.



Source: the author - modification of the updated hierarchy of Kenrick et al. (2010)

Figure 2. Possible domain of self-actualization against the updated hierarchy of Kenrick, Griskevicius, Neuberg, Schaller

Etzioni (24), on the other hand, comments that Maslow (1), when going beyond the notion of homo economicus, attributes higher needs to the individual Self, ignoring that people simultaneously make moral choices between good and evil, both on an individual and societal level. Maslow (1) assumes that people are not simply economic creators seeking to maximize their happiness. Misinterpreting morality as a need rather than a value, Etzioni (24) criticizes the hierarchy because it cannot explain the influence of morality on human motivation, as well as instances in which people are able to distinguish moral from immoral, right from wrong, but continue to maintain deviant behavior (24).

The confusion between concepts such as needs, values and goals is evident. On this point, some clarifications need to be taken into account. Morality, as regulating relations between people, cannot itself be seen as a need, but rather as a specific value or system of values, rather instrumental (according to Rokich's understanding), and with different content and meaning in different societies (ancient, medieval, modern) and communities (mafia, religious communities, etc.). So morality has a bearing on the choice of activities to satisfy needs at all levels and is a predictor of the choice of means to achieve goals in activities related to satisfaction of needs. Indeed, moral choices relate to the objectifications of needs and the choice of means, ways and instruments to achieve goals, but morality alone has no grounds to be seen as a basic need.

Abulof (15) has an interesting insight that the need for self-actualization is hindered by an essentialist understanding of "be yourself" as suggesting the restoration and maintenance of some innate, latent core, and thus robs people of the freedom to develop, build, and (re)create the authentic essence of who they are. There is also the doubt "how is it possible for a person not to be themselves?" (15).

The later Maslow also answers these questions with his idea of the relationship between individualism and altruism. Studies of very healthy people show that they are both extremely individualistic and healthily selfish and extremely compassionate and altruistic" (1:68). These qualities go together and the dichotomy is understood in self-actualizing people. The apparent error of viewing them as

polar degrees of one continuum needs to be corrected (1:199). Mentally healthy people have no need to have power over other people.

Self-actualizing people may appear conventional and conformist and accept most states of affairs that they consider unimportant, secondary to themselves, or unchangeable. In fact, however, it is more a matter of casual and superficial conformity in order to conserve energy from unimportant things (1). Differences in preferred music, for example, may be taken as something annoying but understandable and not worthy of attention or effort to change. For many people, therefore, it would also not elicit purposeful activity towards change (1:172).

Maslow finds confirmation of some of his theses in the studies of Goldstein, Jung, Adler, Angyal, Homey, Fromm, May, Buhier, Rogers, etc., who discuss the existence of a growth tendency in the individual, and this tendency from within urges him toward fuller development. That is, if, according to the paradigm, a healthy organism has its basic needs met, then it is "freed for self-actualization," and develops from within through intrinsic growth tendencies, rather than through forces from without, as in the behaviorist tradition (1:68). The environment is primarily a means for the self-actualizing person to achieve true psychological freedom. Failure to meet basic needs can be a source of pathology and of expecting basic needs to be met by others. Thus the person becomes more dependent on others, less autonomous and self-determining (1). A consequence of these assumptions in Maslow's theory are the contemporary theories developed in the basic psychological needs theory (BPNT).

CONCLUSION

The goal of critical analyses in contemporary readings of Maslow is not to deny his theory but to revise it so that it can be useful for the future development and application of motivational theories. The pyramid needs to be enriched by knowledge of the mechanism of action of the hierarchy under different configurations and strengths of needs. The ultimate negation is most often due to the absolutization of hierarchy in the satisfaction of needs or in the limited understanding of their content.

Despite all the criticisms, Maslow's hierarchical theory had a great influence on the development of theories of human motivation in the future. It is widely used in management practice in almost all fields because it is lean, logical, evolutionarily sound and easy to understand. It builds on the physiological and basic psychological needs discussed in psychology at earlier stages, with higher needs for status (respect, self-esteem and prestige) and self-actualization (self-realization). Much of the criticism of the hierarchy is due to the narrow interpretation of the theory and especially to Maslow's own insufficient conceptualization of the development of the theory subsequently, especially with regard to self-actualization and transcendent needs. It is evident from contemporary extensions of his theories that there are no significant contradictions between it and other research that challenges it as inapplicable in different cultural contexts. E.g. in Islamic societies - it is probably not the needs that are of a different order but the intensity, grouping and meaning invested in each of them is different, i.e. it is not the needs but the means and spheres of satisfying them that are different, depending on the context.

Further refinements and extensions of Maslow's theory are necessary to enable it to be applied as a plausible and authentic research, explanatory model of the human needs that initiate motivation, drive and sustain human activity. Although instrumentally unsupported by the author himself, the model allows to a considerable extent the development of specific instruments tailored to the set of needs but also to the nature of the specific activity.

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