

Re-envisioning Basic Human Needs in the AAFCS Body of Knowledge

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Abstract

The American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) is the only Home Economics professional association to have prepared a document called a Body of Knowledge (BOK). This paper discusses the inclusion of the high-level concept of basic human needs in the AAFCS BOK, and shares nine ideas for how this core concept can be re-envisioned using updated versions of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs theory and Manfred Max-Neef's system-based basic human needs approach. It is anticipated that the ideas contained in this paper will inspire and inform other Home Economics professional associations to create BOKs. Such documents will go a long way toward ensuring a well-articulated philosophy and intellectual foundation for home economics practice in the 21st century.

Key words: Body of Knowledge (BOK), basic human needs, well-being, AAFCS, Maslow, Max-Neef, Home Economics

Introduction

Over time, every profession accumulates a collection of key, high-level ideas that come to define the intellectual foundation of the profession. Home Economics is no exception. Informally, this is known as the profession's body of knowledge. Sometimes, professional associations take steps to formalise and codify this knowledge, creating a document called the *Body of Knowledge* (BOK) (Hernandez, 2012). Examples of professions that have articulated BOKs include engineering, accounting, medicine, information science, project management, and architecture.

Roubanis (2013) stated that “because a profession’s body of knowledge is a universal stance on what is important, it provides an ideological blueprint for viewing issues and phenomena in the profession” (p. 47). With such power, it is surprising that the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS), formerly the American Home Economics Association (AHEA), is the only professional Home Economics association in the world with an official BOK document, first created in the early 2000s (to be discussed). Any profession's BOK has to be dynamic so the profession can remain relevant and viable (*Body of Knowledge*, 2014). Baugher et al. (2003) concurred that the AAFCS BOK should be continually refined. Of interest to this paper is AAFCS' inclusion of the high-level concept of *basic human needs*. This paper shares ideas for how this core concept can be re-envisioned and revitalised using updated versions of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs theory, and Manfred Max-Neef's system-based basic human needs approach.

To develop this discussion, the paper begins by defining BOKs and their purpose, clarifying that BOKs are in their infancy in the Home Economics profession. After explaining each of Maslow and Max-Neef's approaches, nine ideas are suggested for revising the AAFCS BOK, ideas that can also inform initiatives in other countries that are interested in creating Home Economics BOKs. To mitigate confusion, the following caveat is shared regarding how the profession is named in this paper; that is, Home Economics, and family and consumer sciences.

The AHEA was formed in 1909. The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) was formed in 1908 (Arcus, 2008). IFHE recently decided to retain the name Home Economics. "Internationally, the field of study has consistently retained the name Home Economics and is recognized both within and beyond the boundaries of the profession" (Arcus, 2008, p. 165). On the other hand, in 1993, the profession in United States eschewed Home Economics and changed its name to Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) (AAFCS, 1993; Vincenti, 1997). The AHEA subsequently changed its name to AAFCS, and American practitioners officially go by the name Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS). Although not widely recognised, the term *science* in FCS is used as Marjorie Brown (1993) intended (Vincenti & Smith, 2004). They explained that science means "a rationally developed body of knowledge and intellectual processes that can be subjected to criticism" (p. 66).

It is now an accepted convention in the United States that anything published in the profession before the name was changed is referred to as Home Economics, and anything thereafter is called family and consumer sciences. This paper uses this same convention, and uses Home Economics when referring to IFHE or the profession at large.

Body of Knowledge

At the core of any maturing profession is the establishment of a Body of Knowledge (BOK), a document that is generated and stewarded by a relevant professional association (Hernandez, 2012; Pomeroy-Huff, Cannon, Chick, Mullaney, & Nichols, 2009). BOKs represent the complete set of agreed-to, high level concepts, terms, principles, attitudes, skills, and activities that make a professional domain (Hernandez, 2012). They reflect attempts to map out the knowledge elements comprising professional competence (Morris, Crawford, Hodgson, Shepherd, & Thomas, 2006). The profession's BOK is its common intellectual ground, shared by everyone in the profession, regardless of specialities, sub-disciplines, or career paths (Institution of Railway Signal Engineers, ca. 2008; Licensors and Qualifications for Practice Committee, 2013). As "distinctive 'competence territory' that members [can] claim as their exclusive area of practice," BOKs are central to the perception of a profession, and indicate a desirable level of maturity within the profession (Morris et al., 2006, p. 711).

Bodies of Knowledge serve several purposes, amongst them: (a) defining the essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the profession (that set the profession apart from others); (b) establishing a baseline for developing, assessing, and accrediting professionals; and, (c) guiding courses and curricula in higher education. They (d) provide foundational knowledge for training and socializing new entrants to the profession, (e) act as a self-help tool for those wishing to maintain and improve their professional competence (professional development), and (f) even serve as a tool for refreshment and updating for members moving from one

career path to another within the profession (Institution of Railway Signal Engineers, ca. 2008; Licensor and Qualifications for Practice Committee, 2013; Morris et al., 2006).

To date, there has been no collective effort within the international Home Economics community to specify a comprehensive Body of Knowledge that defines the profession's domain (see McGregor & MacCleave, 2007). In 2008, IFHE released a position statement about the profession for the global community, but it is not a Body of Knowledge as the concept is understood (IFHE, 2008; Pendergast, 2008). Of the many Home Economics professional associations around the world, the AAFCS is the only organization to articulate a Body of Knowledge for its members (AAFCS, 2001; Anderson & Nickols, 2001), see next section.

Because the core concepts, competencies, and skills (knowledge domains) for any profession change over the years as the profession evolves, the BOK has to be dynamic so the profession can remain relevant and viable (*Body of Knowledge*, 2014). DiBiase et al. (2006) agreed that BOKs should be revisited and revised on an ongoing basis. Baugher et al. (2003) concurred that the AAFCS BOK is continually evolving, and must be constantly refined. In that spirit, this paper focuses on one particular high-level core concept in the AAFCS BOK and how it can be re-envisioned, that being basic human needs.

By way of justification, East (1979) proposed that Home Economists should focus on the home and family for the good of humanity (see also Sekiguchi, 2004). Pendergast, McGregor, and Turkki (2012) envisioned the profession as part of the future of humankind. The concept of basic human needs brings Home Economics closer to a concern for the human condition (Brown, 1993). Anchoring the AAFCS BOK in the high-level concept of *basic human needs* takes the profession a step closer to the human condition (McGregor, 2010a).

AAFCS' Body of Knowledge

Drawing on the Scottsdale framework document (AAFCS, 1993), wherein the American profession changed its name from Home Economics to family and consumer sciences (FCS), AAFCS first generated an official BOK document in the early 2000s (AAFCS, 2001; Anderson, 2002; Anderson & Nickols, 2001; Baugher, Anderson, Green, Nickols et al., 2000; Baugher, Anderson, Green, Shane et al., 2003). The Baugher et al. (2000) version of the AAFCS BOK represented the key elements using a cube, with basic human needs by itself on one side of the cube. The other two sides represented (a) five pervasive themes, and (b) five elements of a common Body of Knowledge (systems theory, lifespan development and individuals, families and community).

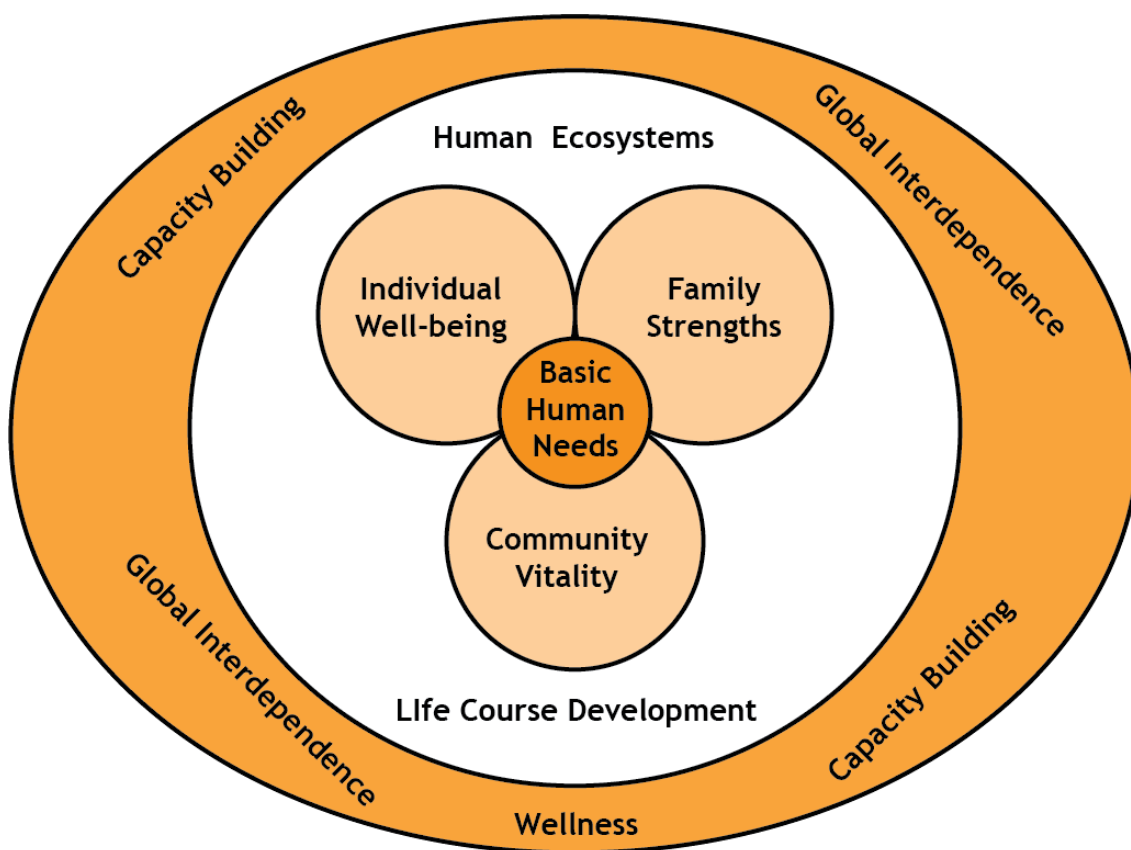
The 2001 AAFCS version (no diagram or visual model provided) revised the BOK so it contained three key concepts: (a) basic human needs (not defined); (b) individuals, families, and communities; and, (c) systems theory and life course development. AAFCS (2001, p. 3) confirmed that "at the center of the Body of Knowledge is the concept of basic human needs." Anderson and Nickols' (2001) version employed a nested-cup/concentric circle representation (see Figure 1, adapted and used with permission). Without defining basic human needs, they repositioned it as *the core* of the BOK, anchoring three other core concepts: individual well-being, family strengths, and community vitality.

In 2009, the concept of basic human needs was finally defined by the architects of the AAFCS BOK as the

components of human existence that must be satisfied for individuals to develop their human capacity for personal well-being and interpersonal relationships that support social institutions and culture. There are both quantitative and qualitative thresholds that determine when basic human needs are met or not met (Nickols et al., 2009, p. 272).

The full Body of Knowledge is reported in a feature article in the Spring issue of the *Journal of Family & Consumer Sciences* (see *The FCS Body of Knowledge*, 2010).

Figure 1 Current version of the AAFCS Body of Knowledge (adapted, used with permission)



In essence, the most recent architects of the AAFCS BOK provocatively asserted that if people cannot satisfy their most basic human needs, they cannot reach their full potential as humans, which in turn negatively affects their personal well-being and their relations with others, rendering people unable to support social institutions that are there to support them. “When basic human needs are not met, individuals, families, and communities suffer” (Nichols et al., 2009, p. 272).

Making basic human needs the core of the AAFCS BOK is a marked shift from the association and profession’s longstanding focus on well-being (see Brown, 1993; McGregor, 2010b;

McGregor & Goldsmith, 1998; Smith, 1997). Perhaps understandably, when conceptualizing basic human needs, Nickols et al. (2009) drew on a human need typology that is framed as *well-being* (used by on the World Bank) (Narayan, Chambers, Shah, & Petesch, 2000). And with another interesting twist, possibly reflecting an alignment of Home Economics' historical adherence to the concept of well-being with the BOK's new focus on basic human needs, Nickols et al. coined the phrase “human well-being” (2009, p. 272, emphasis added). This term is a marriage of human needs and well-being. Of further interest to this paper is their choice of Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of human needs, a revealing departure from the prevailing concept of *well-being*, and a complement to their newer notion of human well-being. These conceptual innovations are to be commemorated, in that they amount to a call for basic human needs for the sake of human well-being within the context of family life. These innovations serve as the inspiration for this paper.

Of particular interest is the BOK architects' longstanding use of the earliest version of Maslow's (1968) theory (comprising five needs), when actually it has been updated to include eight needs (see below). Also, Nickols et al.'s (2009) presentation of Maslow's approach did not include his basic theoretical assumptions or the finer articulations of his theory, a context that would provide deeper insights into why his approach has merit for FCS and for Home Economics. In a respectful nod to the architects of the AAFCS BOK, Dover (2009) noted that, regardless of the discipline in question, few textbooks or journal articles reflect the amendments and additions to Maslow's original theory.

As well, an unrealised opportunity presented itself while analysing the AAFCS BOK, that being the potential contributions from Max-Neef's (1989, 1991, 1992) basic human needs approach, which is predicated on systems thinking rather than a hierarchy. Because systems thinking and interdependence are key components of the current BOK (see Figure 1), an approach to basic human needs predicated on aligned thinking merits consideration.

Maslow and Max-Neef's Approaches to Basic Human Needs

Appreciating there is a range of basic human needs approaches and theories¹, this paper focuses on Maslow's hierarchy of human needs (see Maslow (1968, 1971) and Maslow and Lowery, 1998) as well as Max-Neef's (1989, 1991, 1992) system-based, basic human needs approach. Despite different assumptions for each approach, they offer valuable insights for Home Economics as a profession. Succinctly, Maslow assumed that people *must* meet their lower need(s) before being able to move to the higher levels. In contrast, Max-Neef (1989) eschewed the notion of hierarchy, assuming instead that

¹ Other approaches to basic human needs exist but have not been included in this particular paper: (a) Doyal and Gough's (1991) theory comprising two universal basic needs (health and autonomy) and 11 intermediate, enabling needs; (b) Glasser's (1998) choice theory, which states that five human needs are not hierarchal (belonging, power, freedom, survival, and pleasure); (c) Fromm's (1955, 1997) eight basic human needs and three orientations (biophilia (a life-loving state of being)); love for humanity and nature; and, independence and freedom); and, (d) Murray's (1938) system of 24 universal basic needs (organized by ambition, materialistic, power, affection, and information), based on the assumptions that needs are interrelated and that specific needs are more important to *some people* than to others.

human needs must be understood as a system... . With the sole exception of the need of subsistence, that is, to remain alive, no hierarchies exist within the system. On the contrary, simultaneity, complementarities and trade-offs are characteristics of the process of needs satisfaction (p. 19).

He presumed that human needs are interrelated and interactive, not hierarchal.

After providing an overview of each of these approaches to basic human needs, suggestions are tendered for how the current AAFCS BOK can be re-envisioned drawing on insights from both approaches. As a caveat, while there is relatively little empirical research supporting Maslow's theory (Neher, 1991; Wahba & Bridwell, 1976), his hierarchy of needs is well known and popular, both in and out of psychology. A similar critique and popularity exist for Max-Neef's (1989, 1991, 1992) approach, even acknowledged by himself. "Owing to the dearth (sic) of empirical evidence, it is impossible to state with absolute certainty that fundamental human needs are historically and culturally constant" (Max-Neef, 1989, p. 203). Nonetheless, Max-Neef's approach is still deemed current and applicable (Healy, Martinez-Alier, Temper, Walter, & Gerber, 2013).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs

In his original conceptualization, Maslow (1943, 1954) tendered five levels of human needs: (a) physiological (air, water, food, sleep); (b) safety and security (work, health care, safe community, shelter from environment); (c) belongingness and love (affiliate with and be accepted by others, companionship); (d) esteem (competent, accomplished, social recognition and approval); and, (e) self-actualization (awareness, growth and realised potential).

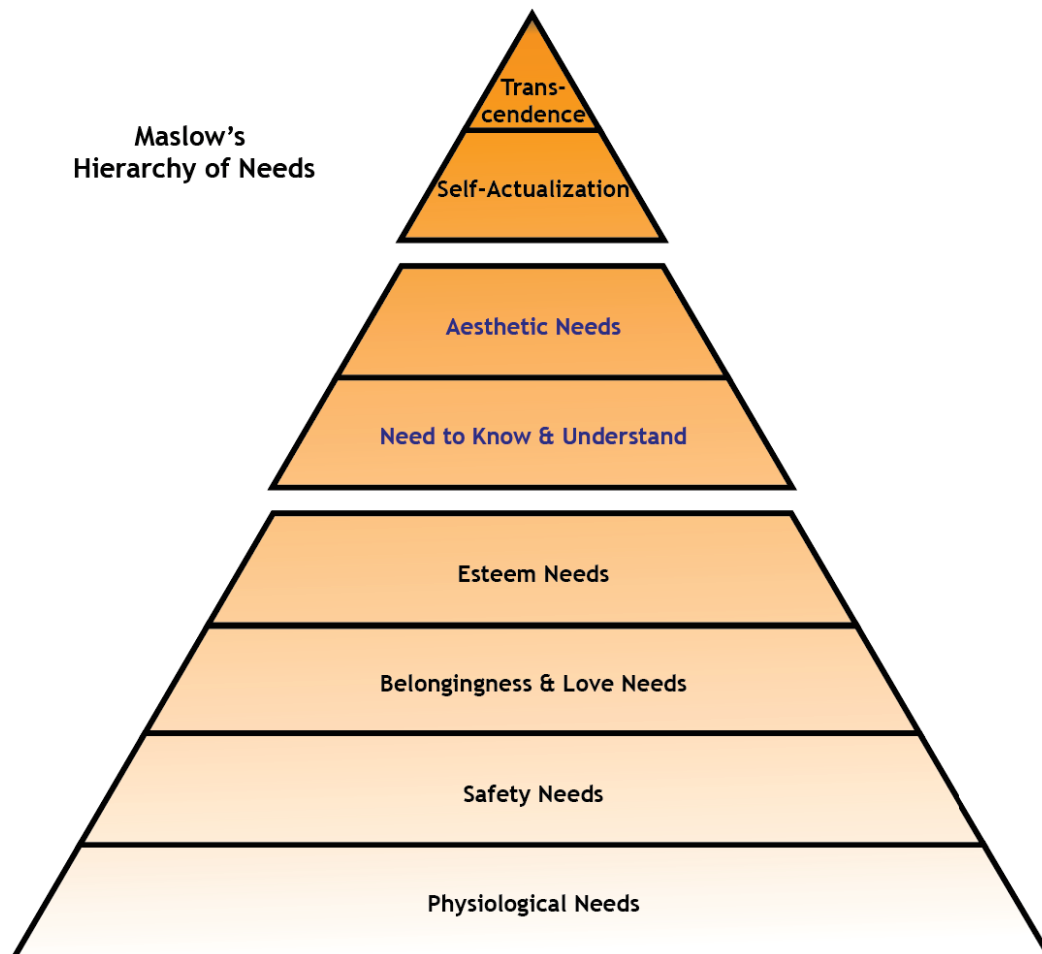
In more detail, Maslow (1943) theorised that until physiological needs are met, all other needs "become non-existent or pushed into the background" (p. 373). The urge to satisfy safety and security becomes dominant when people are driven to prefer routines, structure in their lives, familiar things, and organised religion. At the next level, people feel an urge to connect with others, to belong, and to be accepted. They also feel a need to give love as well as receive it. Maslow (1943) argued that for some people, the need for belonging and love is as intense as their physiological needs. He then argued that it is not to enough belong to a group; people also need to have status within this group, along with respect, a good reputation, prestige and feelings of usefulness. Only when all of the lower levels have been satisfied, does the urge to fulfil one's potential become potent enough to be the primary motivator of behaviour (Maslow, 1943, 1954). Discontent and restlessness will persist until people are doing what they are "fitted for" (Maslow, 1943, p. 382); when this happens, they have a purpose, are courageous and curious, and are comfortable with solitude; they have self-actualized.

In 1971 (published posthumously), Maslow added a sixth level beyond self-actualization, that of self-transcendence, the need to connect with something beyond oneself and the need to help others reach their potential and fulfilment. At this level, people possess the qualities of empathy, creativity, divergent thinking, innovation, humility, and intelligence, and they have a strong tendency towards synergy, the spiritual and the sacred. Maslow and Lowery (1998,

also published posthumously) added two more levels below self-actualization: (a) aesthetic (the need for beauty, symmetry and order), and, below that, (b) cognitive (the need to know, understand and explore, which involves novelty and curiosity), generating eight needs in total (see Figure 2).

Maslow's hierarchy of human needs is conventionally represented as a pyramid (see Figure 2, adapted and used with permission from Huitt, 2007). In this arrangement, the higher levels connote more influence, importance, or authority. The basic premise of this theory is that *only* when the lower order needs of physical, safety, and emotional are satisfied are people free to be concerned with the higher order needs of personal development and growth. Conversely, if the things that satisfy the lower order needs are swept away, people are no longer immediately concerned about the maintenance of their higher order needs; instead, they are too focused on survival (Maslow, 1971). This condition does not mean that the higher level esteem (social needs) and self-actualization needs are not *important* when people's most basic needs are unfulfilled (Tay & Diener, 2011); rather, it means that the higher level needs are not necessarily *achievable* because energy is being diverted to the lower levels.

Figure 2 Maslow's hierarchy of human needs (used with permission)



In more detail, the lower four levels contain *deficiency or deprivation needs*. If these needs are not met, people's well-being is compromised—security, food, shelter, personal safety, air and water, health, and emotional needs (connectedness), all of which are required for existence. The top four levels represent human growth and *actualization needs*; in other words, the quest for knowledge leading to character development. When these needs are met, people experience a greater sense of wholeness and fullness as a human being. Achieving or striving for transcendence leads people to deeper relationships with the unknown and the unknowable. People learn to connect to something beyond themselves, gaining wisdom and enlightenment (Maslow, 1971). In the case of actualization and transcendence, behaviour is not driven or motivated by deficiencies but rather people's desire for personal growth and the need to become all the things they are capable of becoming. He estimated that only 2% of the world's population will ever achieve transcendence of self.

Although not often articulated when people use his theory, Maslow (1954, 1971) actually posited that deficiency and actualization needs are interrelated rather than sharply separated; they are synergistic rather than antagonistic. He also appreciated that different personalities relate differently to these needs, with Huitt (2007) suggesting introverts and extroverts each have different understandings of self-existence, relating to others, and growth. Regardless, Maslow's basic premise is that the lower levels must be satisfied before higher-order needs can influence one's behaviour. It is a hierarchical approach in its truest sense. As one set of basic needs becomes sufficiently satisfied (e.g., physiological), another set soon emerges to take its place (e.g., safety and security). As those needs are satisfied, they fade into the background, replaced by still other needs (e.g., love and belonging), and so on up the hierarchy. The majority of people's activities (their behaviours) are influenced by which level of needs they are trying to satisfy.

Max-Neef's Basic Human Needs

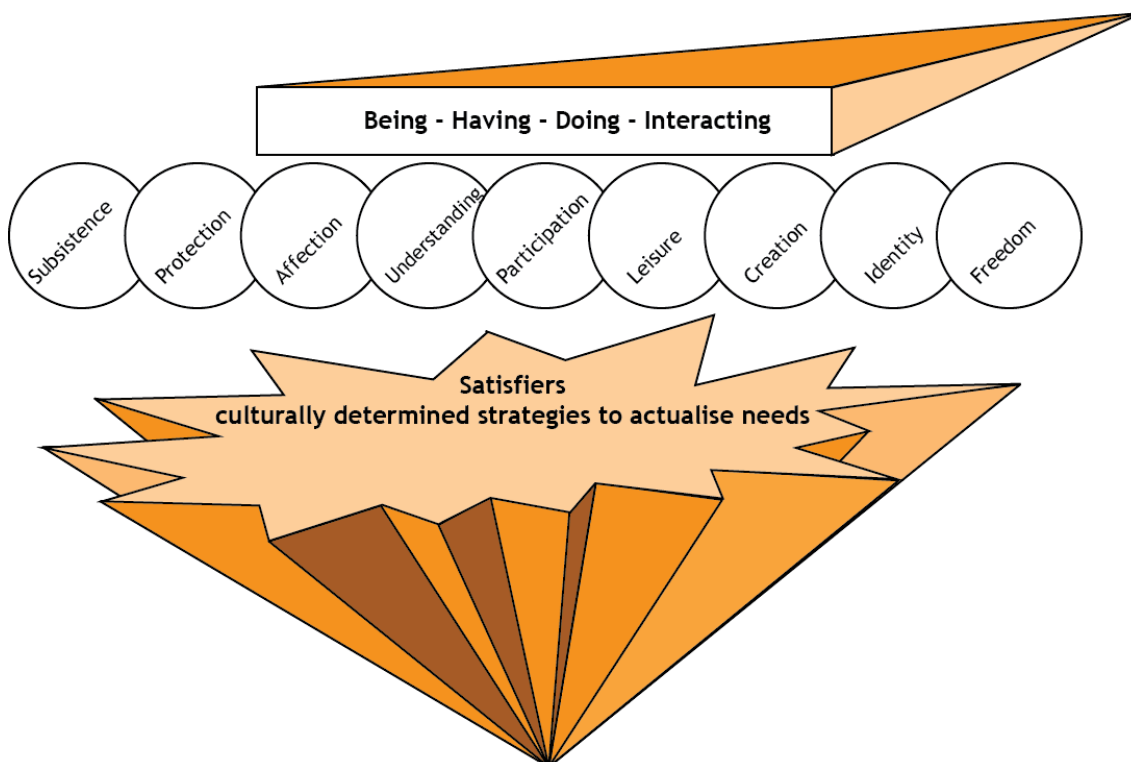
Fifty years after Maslow's (1943) hierarchical theory was developed, Max-Neef (1989, 1991, 1992) eschewed the hierarchical approach, arguing that no need is more important per se than any other, and that there is no fixed order of precedence in the realization of needs. Instead, he offered a systems perspective; human needs are interrelated and interactive. He tendered a taxonomy of nine universal (*axiological*) human needs: subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, idleness (leisure), creation, identity, and freedom. There may be a tenth need, transcendence, but he is not convinced that it is universal.

He further assumed there are four *existential* categories of human needs: (a) being (qualities), (b) having (things), (c) doing (actions), and (d) interacting (settings). Existential needs refer to experiences pursuant to being a human being; in order to *exist*, every human must fulfil their need to be, to have things, to do things (take action), and to interact with others. Axiological needs, on the other hand, refer to values. People will be, do, have, or interact in order to meet a need that they value or believe to be worthy of attaining (Max-Neef, 1989), for example, freedom, participation, or identity.

Max-Neef (1989) also believed that human needs are the same for all peoples; they are universal and constant through all human cultures, and across historical time periods.

Regardless of the culture, fundamental human needs are the same; it is what people *can do to satisfy* the need that is culturally determined, not the needs themselves. Strategies (i.e., satisfiers) for realizing needs are cultural, contextual, specific, and negotiable (Kök, 2007). What changes, both over time and through cultures, are *how* the needs are *satisfied*. Satisfiers are not actual goods or services (e.g., housing or food); rather, they are everything that contributes to the actualization of axiological or existential needs (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 Max-Neef's Basic Human Needs Approach



With this conceptual distinction in mind, Max-Neef (1989, pp. 32-37) tendered a process by which people can meet their basic needs (called *satisfiers* or strategies). Asserting that satisfiers have different characteristics (positive or negative), he developed five types. Destroyer satisfiers (usually imposed by others) address one need while destroying others (e.g., the arms race). Pseudo-satisfiers only *promise* to fulfil needs, creating instead a false sense of satisfaction and even annulling the possibility of satisfying the need they were originally aimed at fulfilling (e.g., a formal democracy seemingly satisfies Participation). Inhibitors satisfy one need while curbing others. Inhibitor strategies often stem from customs, traditions and rituals (e.g., over-protective family or parents). Singular satisfiers (often entrenched in State, private or voluntary sectors) meet one need while ignoring or being neutral towards others (e.g., an insurance system satisfies Protection). Finally, synergistic strategies satisfy one need while—simultaneously—stimulating and contributing to the fulfilment of other needs (e.g., popular education satisfies the need for Understanding and also satisfies the need for Participation, even Identity).

NEEDS 4 Existential 9 Axiological	Satisfiers (entries in the 36 cells)			
	Being (qualities or attributes)	Having (institutions, norms, laws, mechanisms)	Doing (actions and agency)	Interacting (settings, locations, milieus for social expressions)
Subsistence	physical and mental health, equilibrium adaptability 1	food shelter work 2	feed clothe rest work procreate 3	living environment social settings 4
Protection	care adaptability autonomy solidarity 5	social security health systems work insurance family rights 6	cooperate plan take care of cure help prevent 7	social environment dwelling living space 8
Affection	respect sense of humour generosity sensuality tolerance 9	friendships family relations relationships with nature, partnerships 10	share take care of express emotions make love appreciate 11	privacy intimacy spaces of togetherness, home 12
Understanding	critical capacity curiosity intuition discipline rationality 13	literature teachers educational policies 14	analyse study meditate investigate experiment 15	schools families universities communities family 16
Participation	receptiveness dedication sense of humour willingness dedication 17	responsibilities duties work rights privileges 18	cooperate dissent/agree express opinions share obey 19	associations parties churches neighbourhoods families 20
Leisure	imagination tranquillity spontaneity recklessness curiosity 21	games parties peace of mind spectacles clubs 22	day-dream remember relax have fun play 23	landscapes intimate spaces places to be alone free-time 24
Creation	imagination boldness inventiveness curiosity passion 25	abilities skills/processes work techniques 26	invent build design work compose interpret 27	spaces for expression workshops audiences cultural groups 28
Identity	sense of belonging self-esteem consistency assertiveness 29	language, religions, work, customs, values, norms, symbols, habits, reference groups, history 30	get to know oneself grow commit to oneself confront actualize 31	places to belong to everyday settings social rhythms maturation 32
Freedom	autonomy passion self-esteem open mindedness boldness tolerance 33	equal rights responsibilities accountability 34	dissent/disobey choice run risks develop awareness commit 35	ability to come in contact with people at different times in different places 36

Table 1 Matrix of Basic Human Needs and Satisfiers (based on Max-Neef, 1989, p. 33)

Using the nine categories of axiological needs, the four categories of existential needs, and the five types of satisfiers, Max-Neef (1989) developed a 36-cell matrix, filling each cell with various examples of satisfiers (see Table 1). The nine axiological needs are arranged in the left column in order of gradual enlightenment, from subsistence to freedom (akin to Maslow's ordering in his pyramid). To illustrate, Cell 24 represents different ways of Interacting to actualize the need for Leisure. Cell 1 represents different attributes necessary to actualize the need for Subsistence. Cell 18 represents different norms or role expectations for actualizing the need for Participation. Max-Neef clarified that

this matrix is neither normative nor conclusive. It merely gives an example of possible types of satisfiers. In fact, this matrix of satisfiers, if completed by individuals or groups from diverse cultures and in different historical moments, might vary considerably (1989, p. 32).

Max-Neef (1989) maintained that his taxonomy of needs and his matrix of satisfiers allows for in-depth insights into the key problems that impede the actualization of fundamental human needs in homes, communities, and society. He further believed that all human needs are necessary, and all are equal. They can be realised at different levels, with different intensities (depending on time, place and circumstances), and within different contexts (individual, social group and environment) (see also Alkire, 2002). Finally, Max-Neef postulated that perhaps it is inappropriate to speak of needs being satisfied or fulfilled because they are in constant movement. "It may be better to speak of realizing, experiencing or actualizing needs, through time and space" (1989, p. 26). Despite this insight, he still opted to use the term *satisfier*.

Re-envisioning basic human needs in the AAFCS BOK

There is little agreement in the general literature about how to conceptualise basic human needs (Huitt, 2007), but this absence of concurrence does not preclude future architects of the AAFCS BOK from drawing on more contemporary conceptualizations. Although the AAFCS BOK is predicated on the original version of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the definition of basic human needs recently added (see Nickols et al., 2009) does mirror elements of the more contemporary approaches discussed in this paper. This alignment opens a space for dialogue about what is meant by the core of the BOK document, and how it can be re-envisioned.

To reiterate, basic human needs is defined in the AAFCS BOK document as the "components of human existence that must be satisfied for individuals to develop their human capacity for personal well-being and interpersonal relationships that support social institutions and culture" (Nickols et al., 2009, p. 272). The following text focuses on the main elements of this definition, and tenders nine suggestions for how to refine and revise the AAFCS BOK, presented here in bullet form, in no particular order of importance. As noted earlier, these ideas can also inform initiatives in other countries that are interested in creating Home Economics BOKs.

Basic human needs are components of human existence that must be satisfied.

McGregor's (2010a, b) historical overview of the profession's use of the concept of basic human needs revealed that the focus on human existence is a recent innovation for Home Economics. As a suggestion, future architects of the BOK could expand beyond Maslow's (1968) theory to include Max-Neef's (1989, 1991) idea of human needs, namely because it includes *existential* needs, which parallel the BOK's premise that needs are components of human existence. Second, Max-Neef's approach offers the notion of satisfiers, a concept closely aligned with the BOK's current definition—human existence is contingent upon human needs *being satisfied*. He then conceived five types of satisfiers, which, in combination, totally affect realization of basic needs.

Future renditions of the AAFCS BOK could benefit from the idea of satisfiers. If this were to happen, FCS and Home Economics' focus would also include the rich array of nearly 150 satisfiers set out in Table 1. FCS and Home Economics would analyse how well these satisfiers are working, yielding insights into fundamental human problems (e.g., poverty, injustice, freedom, exploitation). Such an approach was advocated by Brown (1993), when she proposed that Home Economists should turn to normative notions of well-being; that is, in addition to *describing* the economic, social, physical and emotional *states* of well-being or conditions of individuals and families, the profession should go further and *interpret* those conditions using such concepts as justice, interests, identity, equity, freedom, rights, responsibilities, and power (interestingly, these norms are scattered throughout Table 1 as satisfiers).

There are both quantitative and qualitative thresholds that determine when basic human needs are met or not met.

A threshold is the point at which something will start or stop happening. Maslow (1968, 1971) assumed that people cannot begin to meet their higher level needs until lower levels are satisfied. If the latter is compromised, the threshold for the higher levels is raised. Right now, the BOK draws on Maslow's (1968) notion of a *hierarchical threshold*. For anyone drawing on Max-Neef's approach, crossing the threshold to meet a need is not dependent upon achieving lower level needs but rather on the type and strength of satisfiers (see above). The BOK's innovation of thresholds would be enriched with Max-Neef's (1989) approach, more so because of his system's perspective.

In more detail, the idea of systems deeply affects how one would conceptualise the process of approaching and crossing thresholds. Max-Neef explained that

each economic, social and political system [Home Economics could add family system] adopts different methods for the satisfaction of the same fundamental human needs. In every system [needs] are satisfied (or not satisfied) through the generation (or non-generation) of different types of satisfiers...

...there is no one-to-one correspondence between needs and satisfiers. A satisfier may contribute simultaneously to the satisfaction of different needs,

or conversely, a need may require various satisfiers in order to be met. (Max-Neef, 1989, p. 20).

Threshold-dynamics inherent in need satisfaction would provide a powerful new lens from which to practice Home Economics.

People cannot develop their human capacity unless their basic needs are realised.

This idea reflects yet another forward thinking innovation from the most recent BOK architects (Nickols et al., 2009). Reflecting this assumption, capacity building is now one of the five cross-cutting themes of the BOK (see Figure 1). FCS practitioners could benefit from a richer conceptualization of basic human needs (other than the five Maslowian needs) as they work to help people to *build their capacity*. From a Max-Neefian (1989) perspective, FCS and Home Economists would help people to *gain the capabilities* to creatively identify and use satisfiers to meet their existential and axiological needs. An example serves to illustrate this conceptual reframing. The rhetoric of ‘families strive to meet the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, family relations, and health’ (e.g., McGregor, 2009) would be reframed from a Max-Neefian approach. Food, clothing, and shelter would not be seen as needs, but as satisfiers of the axiological need for Subsistence. Health care would be viewed as a satisfier of the axiological need for Protection. Family relations would be a satisfier for the axiological need for Affection.

Indeed, the AAFCS BOK might also have to be rethought on another, related level. Currently, families’ basic needs are positioned as specialization threads in the BOK (i.e., food, clothing, shelter, relationships, health, and economic and resource management). FCS are supposed to gain considerable depth in one or more of these specializations (Baugher et al., 2003). What if these *very same* specializations were re-conceived as *satisfiers* of needs? Then, FCS would have to learn about Max-Neef’s nine axiological needs and four existential needs. This shift would be a truly radical innovation in the AAFCS BOK, akin to Brown’s (1993) aforementioned suggestion that FCS should switch from a descriptive to normative notion of well-being.

Social institutions and culture are supported by humans who have reached their full capacity.

That is, people have to reach their full capacity before they can support society. This maturity matters because society also depends upon humans. This reciprocal relationship means FCS and Home Economists must

analyse to what extent the [social] environment represses, tolerates or stimulates opportunities [for people to meet their needs, hence their capacity]. How accessible, creative or flexible is that environment? The most important question is how far people are able to influence the structures that affect their opportunities [to realize their basic needs] (Max-Neef, 1989, p. 26).

The BOK seems to accommodate this reciprocal premise, in that social institutions, cultures and environments are entrenched in the *human ecosystem* construct, presented as one of two

integrative elements of the BOK (Nickols et al., 2009), see Figure 1. One of the fundamental principles of ecosystems thinking is reciprocal relationships, intimating that the BOK currently honours Max-Neef's concern that people must be able to influence the structures that influence their abilities to actualise their human needs.

Personal well-being and interpersonal relationships depend upon the actualization of basic human needs.

This framing intimates that humans cannot possibly experience well-being and healthy relationships *unless* their basic needs are met. It flips Home Economics' historical approach on its head; Home Economics has always been concerned with optimizing well-being, *not* with actualizing human needs. To reflect this new stance, the BOK places basic human needs at the very core, surrounded by well-being (see Figure 1). But, it only draws on Maslow's five original human needs. The Max-Neefian approach offers an alternative model for appreciating *which needs* must be actualized in order to optimise well-being. Most compelling are the *existential* needs of being, having, doing, and interacting (not in the BOK at the present time), let alone the axiological needs of identity, creation, freedom, and understanding.

As well, future versions of the BOK could benefit from a fuller description of Maslow's (1971) actualization needs, especially the need to understand; the need for aesthetics (beauty, order and symmetry); and, the need to transcend, to connect to something beyond the self. These three dimensions of *being human* are not evident in the current BOK and should be considered, especially since two of the five cross-cutting themes pertain to connections to each other and the future (i.e., global interdependence, and sustainability) (see Figure 1). It makes sense to add the need to understand, to have beauty and order, and to connect to something larger than self. From these perspectives, FCS would appreciate that humans have a need to embark on a quest for knowledge, leading to the development of their character (note that moral, ethical, and spiritual development are already listed as cross-cutting threads in the BOK, Baugher et al., 2003). People also have a need to gain a greater sense of wholeness, and to engage with the unknown and the unknowable, sentiments that are currently absent from the AAFCS BOK.

Given Home Economics' longstanding focus on integrated and synergistic practice (McGregor, 2014), it also makes sense that future revisions of the BOK reinforce Maslow's (1971) postulation that the needs in his approach (see Figure 2) are interrelated and connected to each other, not disconnected and separate. Also, they are synergistic (stronger together, than alone), not antagonistic or in opposition to each other. These tenets are often ignored by people who use Maslow's theory (Dover, 2009). Even better, future AAFCS BOK architects could expand the Body of Knowledge document to include Max-Neef's (1989) idea that all human needs are necessary and equal, and work as a dynamic system, in constant movement. Augmenting the BOK with the principles of integration, synergy, and dynamic evolution would provide powerful perspectives from which to practice from a basic human need orientation.

On a final note, the BOK was developed by AAFCS for its members, who are mainly American practitioners, working in the United States. The U. S. population is multi-cultural in nature, meaning the BOK should reflect this reality. Max-Neef's (1989) approach better meets this requirement than does Maslow's (1968). Max-Neef believed that human needs are the same

for all peoples; they are universal and constant through all human cultures and across historical time periods. Regardless of the culture, fundamental human needs are the same; what differs is how people culturally satisfy their needs. With this insight, another opportunity presents itself. Although the professional association (AAFCS) developed the Body of Knowledge for its members, if future BOK architects were to embrace Max-Neef's cultural imperative, it would open the American BOK up to Home Economists practicing in a multitude of cultures around the world, rather than limiting it to American practice.

Conclusion

"The concepts and principles of basic human needs are central to FCS practice" (Nickols et al., 2009, p. 272). "The core concepts of the FCS Body of Knowledge (BOK) combine to target the central concern of meeting human needs" (Harden, Friesen, & Thompson, 2014, p. 29). For these very reasons, it is imperative that the approach to basic human needs employed by AAFCS be comprehensive and avant-garde. To that end, this paper tendered insights gained from applying recent renditions of Maslow's seminal hierarchical approach and Max-Neef's approach to human needs as an interactive system. In some instances, the suggestions for re-envisioning serve to affirm the BOK's current understanding of basic human needs, and in other cases progressive augmentations are tendered for future consideration.

Combined, the ideas in this paper provide insights than can augment and enrich AAFCS' conceptualization of what constitutes basic human needs in its BOK. Even more promising is the potential for fresh and innovative ideas for other Home Economics associations considering the creation of a Body of Knowledge document. Such documents will go a long way toward ensuring a well-articulated philosophy and intellectual foundation for 21st century Home Economics practice. They become "our touchstone for the future... and serve as a foundation for 'adding to knowledge'" (*The FCS Body of Knowledge*, 2010, p.7).

Biography

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