Humanitarianism and the Quantification of Human Needs

Minimal Humanity

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1 Concepts

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"In this innovative and grounded study, Joël Glasman reveals how it came to be that the smallest unit of our shared humanity—its least common denominator—is neither you nor me, but the calorie, the liter of water, the metrics of our need in our moments of deepest distress. This fascinating work deserves wide readership and demands deep reflection."

— *Gregory Mann, author of From Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel: the Road to Nongovernmentality (2015)*

"Combining a provocative perspective with a meticulous eye for detail, Joël Glasman's insightful history traces humanitarian efforts to define human suffering through an index of vital needs. Minimal Humanity reminds us of the fundamental complexity of apparently simple matters."

— *Peter Redfield, author of Life in Crisis: The Ethical Journey of Doctors Without Borders (2013)*

"This is a fascinating historical study of how and why humanitarian organizations quantified basic human needs over the course of the 20th century. Glasman (Univ. of Bayreuth, Germany) provides an engaging intellectual genealogy of the transition from subjective approaches to evaluating suffering to relying on allegedly objective and universal measurements. Using methods such as measuring the left arms of children for malnutrition allowed humanitarian organizations to claim they avoided politicizing assistance. However, organizations frequently debated how needs should be defined, as Glasman describes in detail with the *Sphere Handbook*, a humanitarian needs manual published in the 1990s. Just as humanitarian organizations claimed to be serving a generic humanity not defined by culture or politics, aid personnel also promoted an idea of consensus between the global North and South regarding needs. The author convincingly argues that this aspirational ideal of a common, measurable set of needs actually obscures the financial and political inequities between North and South, using Cameroon as a case study of the political and economic realities of how needs are measured in a humanitarian crisis. Specialists in humanitarianism should definitely read this book."

— *J. M. Rich, Marywood University, Choice Review, Highly Recommended, November 2020 Vol. 58 No. 3*

"In his insightful and wonderfully jargon-free book, *Humanitarianism and the Quantification of Human Needs*, Joël Glasman delves into the history of what he calls the "bookkeeping of human suffering on a world scale (...) Glasman's book is much richer than can be described here. It is highly recommended for scholars of refugees, humanitarianism, data, and the production of knowledge. Given his extremely readable writing style, the book can also be recommended to those engaged in the humanitarian field who may not have the time or patience to slog through other academic critiques of their work."

— *Brett Shadle, African Studies Review*

1 Concepts

Elements of a genealogy of *needology*

"Impartiality" is now recognized as a paramount principle of humanitarian aid – not only by NGOs, but also by UN agencies and governments.[1] The academic literature, as well as the official documentation of these organizations, traces the notion of impartiality back to its original formulation in humanitarian law in the 1864 Geneva Convention and to the work of Henri Dunant.[2] However, this official version misses an important shift in the definition of "impartiality." For Dunant and the Convention, impartiality was not a rule of distribution – it was a clause of non-discrimination. It was much later that "impartiality" came to be understood as rule of mathematic distribution of good and services. It was Jean Pictet, in the 1940s, who inscribed the idea of "proportionality" in the definition of "impartiality": Aid relief would have to be distributed "according to needs." During the last decades of the twentieth century, the definition of impartiality became increasingly associated with the *quantification* of needs. As the *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs* endorsed by the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response states: "Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone."[3] Any good humanitarian project, it is now argued, should start with a quantitative estimation of suffering – the famous "needs assessment."[4]

How did *needology* – the global bookkeeping of suffering – become the *doxa* of the humanitarian field? This chapter starts with an analysis of "impartiality" within international humanitarian law and focuses on the contribution of Jean Pictet. As a Geneva-based ICRC jurist, Pictet drew on the heritage of international humanitarian law and human rights law, reinterpreting two others Genevans – Henri Dunant and Jean Jacques Rousseau. But the inflection that Jean Pictet gave to the definition of impartiality, and the subsequent formulation of the "according to needs" principle, was preceded by a general shift in the perception of suffering that occurred between the 1870s and the Second World War. During the three-quarters of a century that separated Dunant from Pictet, the perception of needs within industrialized societies changed almost totally. It was a decisive period for the conceptualization of needs – on one side, people increasingly talked about "needs"; on the other side, within a few decades, the quantification of suffering became one of the favorite activities of state bureaucracies and scientists. While Pictet worked on humanitarian principles, everyone was talking about needs and

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their quantification – when Dunant was working on the Geneva Convention, almost no one did.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, two fields of knowledge increasingly addressed the question of sufficiency: One was *political economy*. In this period, the European bourgeoisie was preoccupied with questions such as political order and social cohesion. How could states avoid social protests and maintain order? What was the minimum provision that people should receive to live and work? Those questions fueled an interest in poverty and working-class consumption. Another field of knowledge, *health care*, the definition of biological needs and the quantification of bodily consumption (for instance the quantification of food rations), witnessed increasing attention at the end of the nineteenth century.

Both traditions of thoughts – *political economy* and *health* – diffused a new understanding of needs as individual and quantifiable category. During the two world wars, the quantification of the needs of soldiers and civil populations became a military and strategic matter. Notions like "triage" (i.e. the classification of patients in order of priority) spread throughout military medicine and emergency relief. Questions of minimal provision and sufficiency became a matter of national interest in a global competition among capitalism, fascism, and Bolshevism. Thus, in the 1940s, everyone was talking about needs. One highly influential theory, Abraham Maslow's famous "hierarchy of needs," was formulated at the same moment as Pictet's legal codification. By the end of the Second World War, the idea that needs were quantificable, hiearchizable, and prioritizable had become common sense. The very notion of "needs" had migrated from the field of expert knowledge to everyday language (in the same manner as other words such as "class," "GDP," "crisis," "depression," or "stress," etc.).[5]

While everyone was now measuring needs, it was not about the needs of everyone. Needs could be compared and quantified, but they were not *universal*. The last sections of this chapter address the question of colonial differentialism and the late universalization of needs. In the colonial territories, the quantification of needs only targeted a handful of categories of persons: Soldiers, workers, settlers, etc. After the Second World War, African intellectuals, politicians, and labor unionists increasingly fought against the colonial division of needs in two distinct classes – one for Europeans, one for "native" populations. Moreover it was only in the 1970s, long after the decolonial wave of the 1960s, that international organizations made "basic needs" a key tool for the global commensuration of social distress.

Needs as a legal category: Impartiality, proportionality, entitlement

The principle of "impartiality" is mostly attributed to Henri Dunant and the authors of the 1864 Geneva Convention.[6] But there is often confusion in this narrative between the idea of impartiality as it was used in the nineteenth century and the idea as it is used today. The 1864 Geneva Convention did include a clause that one could describe as an "impartiality clause," but it did not mention

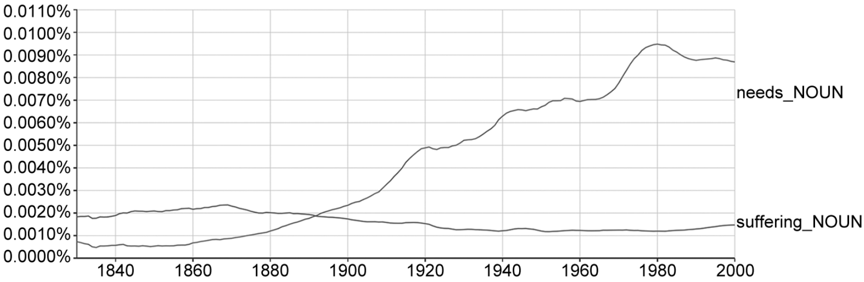

Figure 1.1 The use of "needs" and "suffering" in digitized printed sources (1830–2000). This image shows the use of the word "needs" and "suffering" over the last century and a half, according to Ngram Viewer. This tool is far from perfect.[7] However, it allows a quick exploration of a large corpus. The word "needs" is used more often today than it was in the early nineteenth century. The word "suffering," conversely, was used twice as much as "needs" in the early nineteenth century, and was used four or five times less frequently by the end of the twentieth century. All humans "suffer," and all humans have "needs." However, these terms imply different regimes of action. The language of suffering is fueled by emotion and compassion – the language of needs is fueled by comparison and counting. The language of suffering functions in the "regime of Agapè" described by Luc Boltanksi: a regime of action that calls for direct action but avoids the commensuration of individuals. On the top of this traditional language of compassion, a language on needs has been added, implying comparison, counting, and hierarchization.

a *proportionality* of needs. For Henri Dunant, there was no question of quantity. Dunant described suffering and aid, but he did not bother to render them equivalent. The mode of description he used made calculation obsolete. He described pains that were immeasurable: They could be seen ("The wounds, aggravated by heat and dust and lack of water and care, have become more painful"), heard ("one hears the groans, the muffled sighs full of anguish and suffering, and ragged voices that cry out for aid"), and smelled ("fetid exhalations taint the air").[8] Dunant talked about "serious wounds" and "sores," he evoked "a left shoulder shattered by a cannonball," and he describes "agonies" and "suffering" triggered by bullets and gangrene. One recognizes, in Dunant's story, victims – on one side, "the unfortunates," the "poor soldiers," the "sick," and on the other side "aid," "French surgeons," people "moved by compassion." One witnesses "generous attention," "necessary amputations," "relief," but nowhere in Dunant's text is there a question of *proportion*. Dunant listed services and items ("wooden planks," "straw," "canvas to protect the injured from the sun," "chicken broth," "wine," "biscuits," "bandages,") but nowhere did he *count* them. The "impartiality" clause of the 1864 Geneva Convention was merely a non-discrimination clause:[9] "injured or sick soldiers will be retrieved and cared for, whatever nation they belong to," Article 6 stated. That meant: Care for your friend as well as for your enemy. It did not entail much more than that.[10]

In 1906 and 1929, international conventions extended the principle of aid impartiality to other categories of war victims – no longer only injured soldiers, but also sick civilians, the interned, the deported, evacuated persons, the homeless, the populations of occupied regions, and refugees.[11] The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) frequently debated the principles of humanitarian aid. In subsequent texts published by members of the Red Cross movement (1921, 1928, 1952), new "principles" were introduced, others were abandoned, but the idea of impartiality was always preserved – always in its negative acceptance of non-discrimination.[12]

Jean Pictet, a jurist at ICRC, began to work on humanitarian law during the Second World War. After the war, the then Director of General Affairs of the ICRC Pictet wrote his thesis on the "doctrine of the Red Cross." He outlined seven fundamental principles of humanitarian aid: Humanity, equality, proportionality, impartiality, neutrality, independence, and universality. He fully reworked the principle of "impartiality" by adding to it the principle of the proportionality of aid.[13]

Why did Pictet feel the need to rewrite the Red Cross's principles? After the war, his organization, the ICRC, was harshly criticized for its ambiguous role during the war – and its failure to protect the victims of fascism. One of the most direct attacks, however, came from within the Red Cross movement. The ICRC, together with the National Red Cross Societies and the League of Red Cross Societies, formed the Red Cross movement. But in the aftermath of the war, the League tried to expand its authority at the expense of the ICRC. Traditionally, the ICRC had the moral high ground: It was seen as the "guardian of principles." However in 1946, the General Assembly of the National Societies of the Red Cross assembled in Oxford published its own humanitarian principles.[14] It was clearly an attempt by the Governors of the League to circumvene the ICRC's authority.

Pictet's thesis was the main weapon of the Committee's counter-attack. He formulated the principles in a way that could justify the moral authority of the Committee within both the humanitarian field and the Red Cross movement. One of his major innovations was the reformulation of "impartiality." It was an old idea within the Red Cross movement: "The Red Cross will act without favor or prejudice towards or against anyone."[15] But now, under Pictet's interpretation, it took on new authority and a new legitimacy: It was not only about persons and organizations, but about knowledge as well. Impartiality required a "depersonalization" of charitable action.[16] Impartiality was now justified by objectivity: Impartiality implied "a precise and complete examination of the elements of the problem and an exact appreciation of the values in question," Pictet wrote, and "[it] thus proceeds from objectivity, which consists [of] determination according to facts alone."[17]

Two notions were key to define impartiality: "equality" and "proportionality."[18] "Equality" corresponded to the traditional definition of impartiality: "the Red Cross is ready to provide assistance equally and without any discrimination."[19] Non-discrimination was already found in the 1864 Geneva Convention, and it was refined after the Second World War by other criteria of affiliation rather than simply by nationality. The 1949 Geneva Conventions thus prohibited all discrimination "which would be based on sex, race, nationality, religion, political opinions, or all analogous criteria."[20] But Pictet's "equality" went further. It was not just a negative criterion. The principle of equality eliminated all distinctions that prevail outside of the humanitarian world.[21] At the same time, however, it enabled humanitarian organizations to create their own criteria of distinction: This is where "proportionality" comes in:[22] "Available aid will be distributed according to the relative importance of individual needs and following their order of urgency."[23]

Pictet introduced into international law an idea that, until then, had remained implicit.[24] It worked as a syllogism:

(a) man must be given relief *commensurate to his suffering*;
(b) *resources dedicated to aid are insufficient* in the world to alleviate all of its distress;
(c) thence derives the necessity to call upon *a rule for their allocation*.[25]

In this argument, Pictet combined different concepts. The principles of "humanity" (the Red Cross targets human suffering) and "equality" (for equal distress, rendered services should be equal) had already been established in the doctrine of the Red Cross. The idea of the insufficiency of aid and necessary rationing resulted from Pictet and the Red Cross's experience during the Second World War. His logical conclusion, the rule of allocation, first developed at the 1949 Geneva Conventions, allowed humanitarian organizations to *classify* victims. The Conventions established "permitted distinctions" based on vulnerability: "Those that are based on suffering, distress, or the natural weakness of the protected persons," for example, women, children, or the elderly, but also "captives used to a tropical climate who find themselves in a cold country" or prisoners having suffered "a long captivity."[26] According to the Conventions, these categories of persons should receive particular attention. The Conventions also specified that there could be "a priority in the order of caregiving" (ibid.).[27] Additional motivation was found in military medicine, in the practice of "triage." In army medical corps, doctors cared "first [for] men to whom a delay would be fatal," Pictet explained.[28]

While Pictet saw "non-discrimination" and "equality" as two notions firmly entrenched in universal moral traditions,[29] he saw "proportionality" as a novelty. "Proportionality" required a deeper form of justification. How could one justify the Red Cross's ability to make distinction between humans?

> For the Red Cross, there are distinctions that are licit and even necessary to use among individuals: these are those which are based on suffering, distress, or the natural weakness, and on those alone.[30]

Pictet distinguished "quantitative inequality" ("aid will thus be proportionate to the distress of each") from "temporal inequality" ("the order in which it will be rendered will result from its degree of urgency").[31] Pictet referred here to the military logic of "triage" of the wounded.[32] The history of the Red Cross, born on the battlefields of Europe, chronologically and geographically coincided with the diffusion of military medicine. However, Pictet also appealed to different logics of prioritization of needs – including rationing and medical care in times of scarcity.[33] Pictet eventually rooted proportionality in the widely shared experience of scarcity in postwar Europe, in common sense – and even in the proportionality of taxation.[34]

There is a close link, in Pictet's thought, between post-war globalization and proportionality. In his work, knowledge is key to defining long-distant solidarity that transcends racial and national boundaries. For the sake of attaining solidarity at the scale of humanity, one must be freed from solidarities of proximity, or, as Pictet wrote, "affinities." Humanitarian solidarity was to be distanced from the solidarities of nations (which privileged "nationals"), solidarity of religions (which privileged "co-worshippers"), professional communities (which targeted "colleagues in the same field"), or political groups (which targeted "their sympathizers").[35] The symmetrical opposite of humanitarian solidarity was familial solidarity: "With mutual familial aid, each one worries about those he considers as the closest to [him], as dependent on [him]. Is that not the first sense of the word closest?"[36] Yet humanitarian solidarity is that which addresses the unknown. It transcends ordinary charity. Humanitarianism thus requires a strong principle for the rehabilitation of solidarity.[37]

It is clear from Pictet's work that he considered "impartiality" as a key tool to counter the Red Cross's League's and National Societies's ambitions. The National Societies of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent acted on *national* scales, which did not allow them to be purely humanitarian: "the National Societies of the Red Cross help above all those of their own nationality, which is normal, given the national character of these institutions." The ICRC had the higher moral ground: It could allocate "aid measured solely by the extent of distress."[38] Thanks to the idea of proportionality, the ICRC found itself structurally more faithful to the principles of the Red Cross than the National Societies. The proportionality of needs could justify the ICRC's unique position within the Red Cross movement.

The Red Cross movement used Pictet's principles to justify its specific position within the humanitarian system – just as the ICRC used Pictet's principles to justify its positions within the Red Cross movement.

Pictet's writing gave the ICRC a weapon to retake a hegemonic position, vis-à-vis the League, on the question of principles, and to establish its position at the center of the humanitarian field.[39] In 1961, the Council of Delegates approved Pictet's interpretations. In 1965 the 20th International Conference of the Red Cross officially endorsed the principles – and they were also adopted by the governments of all the parties of the Geneva Convention. The resolutions relating to the fundamental principles were now obligatory and constraining for the organizations of the Red Cross Movement.[40] In this version, the principle of proportionality was subsumed under by the principle of impartiality – and the necessity of a form of knowledge that objectifies needs was entrenched:

> The observation of the principle of proportionality supposes a *deep knowledge* of the miseries of the world. Efficient aid demands as much intelligence as discernment. Charity implies understanding. One should even be *omniscient* to be able to apply the principle in all its rigor.[41]

While the human suffering described by Dunant was local, personified, incarnated, incommensurable, and visible, suffering described by Pictet was comparable, shared, universal, and partly hidden. It was now up to humanitarian organizations to "discover" hidden suffering.[42] The "fundamental principles" of Pictet are largely found in the *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief*, co-signed by 140 organizations, which defined the principle of "impartiality" thus:

> Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.[43]

Countless legal or quasi-legal documents refer to this principle, in particular the *General Assembly Resolutions*[44] of the United Nations and *The Humanitarian Charter* shared by numerous non-governmental organizations.[45] Unlike the principles of "neutrality" or "independence," for example, the principle of impartiality is consensual and rarely debated.[46] Some lawyers today consider it "an integral part of international law."[47] In order to understand how Pictet's formulation of proportionality could become so successful, i.e. how a concept that was originally conceived as a tool for the defense of the ICRC's reputation could become mainstream humantiarianism, one has to understand that by the time Pictet published his thesis, the quantification of needs had become common practice in industrialized nations. Two fields of knowledge especially had turned "needs" into an object of scientific inquiry and bureaucratic quantification between the end of the nineteenth century and the 1940s: Political economy and health care.

Needs as a problem of political economy: Power, population, and contestation

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the quantification of people's needs suddenly became a central matter for academic and administrative knowledge alike. The quantification of workers' consumption particularly became a fashionable topic of bureaucratic inquiries. There had been some inquiries into household budgets before,[48] but nothing like what would happen between 1850 and 1930:[49] 1,500 studies on household budgets were produced, mostly in North America and Western Europe.[50] Economists, bureaucrats, and statisticians met in international conferences to compare statistics and set some rules for quantification and comparison. Standardized guides on household consumption were established.[51]

The notion of "needs" itself obviously had a much older origin within political economy. According to Foucault's seminal texts on biopolitics, the question of populations' "well-being" emerged as a matter of concern for administrative sciences during the seventeenth century.[52] Following the battles of the Thirty Years' War, epidemics and famines resulted in a population drop in Central Europe, and a whole range of publications advised princes to spare their subjects' lives and to start caring about their well-being.[53] Cameralism (*Kameralwissenschaften*) tried to teach princes that "the prosperity of the country or the welfare of its subjects is inseparably bound up with the interest of their leader."[54] This doctrine, formulated by professors, senior officials, and those who drafted administrative regulations, soon became a university discipline,[55] bringing together the topics of economics (science of domestic management), policing (maintenance of order and the administration of the economic life), and public financing. The wellbeing of populations had now become an object of knowledge and government.[56]

The concept of "needs" (*Bedürfnisse*), a word that designated at once a state of lack and the goods capable of satisfying this lack, was key to Cameralism.[57] To maintain control, a ruler should identify the needs of each social rank and the overseeing of their satisfaction.[58] Needs were seen as a source of danger, as well as a potential source of wealth. Unfulfilled needs could give rise to diseases, criminality, or riots that ultimately weakened the power of the prince. But needs were also a driver of economic activity – a source of economic growth and political power.[59]

Needs was already entrenched as a notion of political philosophy during the Enlightenment. In his *On the Origins of Inequality* (1755), Jean-Jacques Rousseau famously argued that each man had a right "to everything he needs."[60] Thomas Paine and the Marquis de Condorcet integrated the notion of relief for the poor into moral philosophy, while for Kant, "needs" allowed critique of the absolutist state: The sovereign who failed to heed the needs of his subjects fails in his responsibility.[61] Karl Marx, in turn, used the notion of needs as a critique of capitalism: Capitalism created new needs without being capable of satisfying them, which provokes alienation.[62] Socialism would be a society in which resources would be distributed not according to social rank, fortune, or status, but as a function of each person's needs: "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs."[63]

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Karl Rau recasted cameral economics and made the notion of needs the touchstone of his new science: Economics was now defined as the study of human needs and their satisfaction.[64] The final goal of economics? The complete satisfaction of needs (*die vollständige Befriedigung der Bedürfnisse*).[65] For Karl Rau however, "needs" were defined in a more individual manner than in the old cameralism.[66] They were no longer the needs of rank (*Stand*) but of persons. The study of needs was crucial, for its understanding permitted the conceptualization of all other notions of economics – value, use, price, etc.[67] By the middle of the nineteenth century, the notion of needs had become central within economy. Even a liberal economist like Frédéric Bastiat wrote that "political economy [has] for an object the man considered from the point of view of his needs and the means by which he fullfills them."[68]

While the notion of "needs" was already firmly established by the middle of the nineteenth century, bureaucrats and scientists lacked a statistical apparatus to compare the needs of different populations. This changed rapidly during the last quarter of the century. Social protests triggered a new interest in the needs of the working class. Europe experienced an economic crisis and a series of urban revolts. The anxiety of the bourgeoisie regarding socialism grew, and state bureaucracies increasingly sought to prevent revolts by protecting workers from the consequences of capitalism's crises. At the core of statistical knowledge on people's needs was the "social question": That is, the question of social peace and the reproduction of the labor force.[69] Statistical surveys served to weigh the cost indices of consumption to avoid the brutal devaluation of workers' salaries and social unrest. Social reformers produced numerous surveys on the living conditions of the urban poor: The challenge was to categorize narrowly the populations of the inferior classes in order to target social interventions.[70] It was about distinguishing "the good poor – recoverable – and the bad – irretrievable."[71] Social classes were largely incommensurable. Bourgeois and working-class consumption patterns were not to be compared (and it did not occur to the researchers to be interested in the budgets of affluent and bourgeois families[72]).

At the turn of the century, sociologists and economists could draw on the statistical material produced by state bureaucracies to compare needs over time and space. A decisive step towards the study of poverty was taken by British sociologist Seebohm Rowntree. In his 1901 study of urban poverty in York, he introduced a minimum threshold of satisfaction. He defined this "threshold"[73] as the minimum that a "normal" family needed to survive during a week. Rowntree called on nutritionists to estimate the caloric and nutritional intake necessary to avoid sickness or weight loss.[74] From this estimate, he calculated the minimum sum of consumables (food, clothing, and lodging), of which he then estimated the prices, according to market prices. He then calculated that 28% of the population of York lived under the poverty threshold, the "poverty line." This definition of poverty was determined by the sum of money necessary for the "maintenance of physical efficiency," a minimal definition that permits the comparison of areas of the city as well as the comparison of poverty over time.[75]

While Maurice Halbwachs' thesis focused on workers' "hierarchies of needs," at the dawn of the First World War. A work largely inspired by Rowntree, he could rely on two large studies on the, one by the Imperial Office of Statistics and the other by a metallurgical syndicate.[76] Halbwachs' statistical comparison however included a constructivist critique of the notion of "needs": He indicated that it was in fact impossible to classify needs in order of importance, because man does not consume "food" or "clothes" but always particular products – meat, bread, spices, sugar – prepared and served in a particular way – at the table, on plates, on a tablecloth – and according to particular routines – as a family, in a group, etc.: "our needs are the work of society," he explained.[77] Nevertheless, his statistical analysis relied on a classification of "needs" in four groups: Food, clothing, shelter, and other expenses.

Rowntree's definition of poverty inspired numerous similar studies in Europe and North America, as well as international comparisons.[78] Rowntree himself duplicated his study in York in 1936 and 1951. He expanded his list of minimal goods (adding goods not strictly necessary for survival: Newspapers, books, radio, beer, tobacco, vacation, gifts), but conserved an absolute definition of poverty.[79] While Rowntree's style of poverty studies diffused widely between the two world wars, it did not yet concern the colonial territories, a point to which we will turn later. In North America and Western Europe, the "poverty line" was harshly criticized after the Second World War. The absolute poverty line distinguished no more than a minimal fraction of the population and stopped being a useful object of intervention. Consumption surveys ceased being limited to workers and the poor, instead concerning the whole population: Economists became less interested in absolute needs than in inequalities.[80] In 1962, Peter Townsend attacked the minimalist definition of poverty founded on the idea of needs that are essentially physiological.[81] In countries of the global North, studies talked more and more about "relative poverty" – about poverty as exclusion (or as a proportion in relation to average income) – whereas in countries of the global South, the definition of a poverty line would come to be very much in use. Before we turn to the tipping point of the Second World War and the diffusion of needs quantification to the global South, let us have a look at another tradition of knowledge, namely health studies.

Needs as a health problem: Ontologization, prioritization, hierachization

When Jean Pictet reworked the principle of "humanitarian impartiality," the notion that needs could be quantified had been well established by political economy and bureaucratic surveys. Another inspiration for Pictet was certainly the broad set of ideas related to needs in public health that developed in various settings prior to the Second World War. A tradition that Pictet explicitly mentioned was the tradition of military medicine that had coined the term "triage." How could a physician know which patient should be treated in priority? The medical term of "triage" (also sometimes called "rationing" and "allocation") referred to this problem of resource distribution: A "process by which a doctor classifies patients in order of priority."[82] The notion of "triage" is now widespread in emergency medicine. For instance, the World Medical Assocation recommends classifying patients in emergency situations into at least four classes: "Red/immediate" are those whose lives are in immediate danger; "yellow/delayed" are those who need urgent but not immediate medical care; "green/minimal" are those who require only minor treatment; and "black/expectant" are those who cannot be saved.

Historians mostly trace its invention back to the chief surgeon of Napoleon's army, who imposed a principle of "rational management of the evaluation of first aid for the wounded."[83] The technique of triage spanned the nineteenth century, and progressively became a technique for the conservation of military personnel. The world wars were a crucial moment for its diffusion. It was, on one side, about saving life, and, on the other, about maximizing the efficient use of armed forces' medical resources.[84] This mode of commensuration of the bodies was well known to Pictet.[85]

Another important source of inspiration was probably the tradition of bodily consumption measurements that emerged during the nineteenth century.[86] Bodily consumption measurements emerged in medical overseeing in closed settings, such as schools, barracks, hospitals, and prisons. What kind of health provision and food rations did pupils, patients, soldiers, and prisoners need? In the middle of the nineteenth century, French physicians introduced scale balances to measure food intake, quantify diets, and estimate their respective nutritive values.[87] At the end of the nineteenth century, nutrition studies emerged as a new science, at the cross road of physiology, medicine, and chemistry. Wilbur O. Atwater revisited Lavoisier's theory of the calorie while sealing one of his students in a "calorimeter" – a device once used to measure the combustive efficiency of explosives and engines. Atwater measured the quantity of bread, beans, steak, milk, and potatoes that his student took, and quantified his labor output, i.e. the heat that he produced while doing physical exercise (weight lifting) and intellectual tasks (studying a physics text).[88] By the end of the nineteenth century, this thermodynamic theory of nutrition had become common knowledge among European and American nutritionists. They established tables linking calorie counts to specific foods and specific tasks. Thus, they invented "caloric bookkeeping" that enabled them to compare individual bodies and food without reference to taste, ethnic tradition, or social context.[89] Caloric accounting became fashionable in the first half of the twentieth century, and fueled the development of a broad network of nutritionists, laboratories, and interest groups. By the 1930s, the League of Nations was able to make international comparisons on the "problem of nutrition,"[90] although, as we will see later, this international comparison largely excluded the colonies.

Techniques such as emergency triage, caloric accounting, and household budget surveys all allowed for a commensuration of needs beyond social and territorial borders. However, it was Abraham Maslow's "hiearchy of needs" that would become one of the main vehicles for the ontologization of needs.[91] In fact, Malsow articulated a biological conception of needs with a definition of personhood. The New York psychologist found nothing less than a "theory of human motivation"[92] that synthetized major psychological, psychiatric, and psychosocial theories of the inter-war period.[93]

At times, Maslow presented his hierarchy of needs as a brand-new theory of human nature. At other times, he spoke of a mere "framework" for research.[94] Maslow recognized that his thesis was not the result of an empirical survey and that he lacked an empirical foundation.[95] "We," he wrote, "know so little about the facts."[96] Nevertheless, Maslow's hierarchy of needs would become one of the most influential models of needs of the twentieth century.

Maslow classified needs in five groups.[97] The base of the pyramid represents physiological needs which are prioritized (hunger, thirst, fatigue, etc.), while the upper levels represent, in order of importance, the need for security (need for resources, physical integrity), the need for love (affection, friendship), the need for esteem (respect, self-esteem), and the need for self-realization (creativity, thirst for knowledge). Not only could needs be classified, they could be ranked. The relative satisfaction of one class of needs permitted the next higher level of need

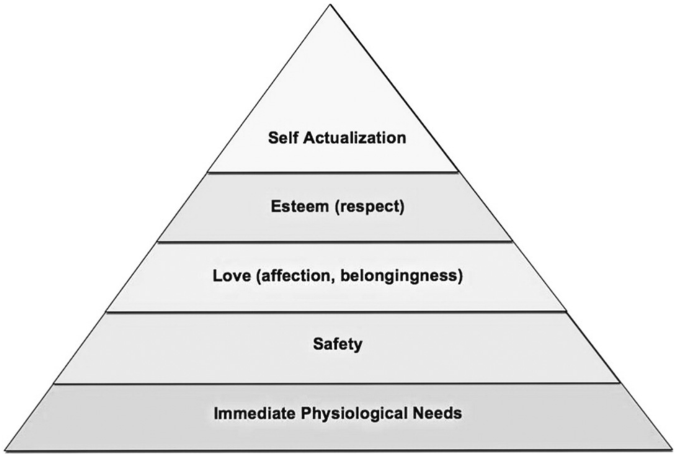

Figure 1.2 Maslow's hierarchy of needs has often been presented as a pyramid.[98]

to be expressed. A man who is hungry is obsessed with food, but once that need is satisfied, it is the need for security that takes over, until that need is relatively satisfied, and so on.[99] Maslow qualified this situation of "pure hunger drive," during which all behavior is oriented toward the satisfaction of a physiological need. A man struck with hunger tends to make this need the principal foundation of all his actions—nothing else has importance for him:

> For our chronically and extremely hungry man, Utopia can be defined very simply as a place where there is plenty of food. He tends to think that, if he is guaranteed food for the rest of his life, he will be perfectly happy and will never want anything more. Life itself tends to be defined in terms of eating.[100]

Maslow thus posed, at the very origins of action, an ontology of human nature. But to uncover human needs necessitates an intellectual inquiry, because the situation of extreme hunger is rare. Normally, needs are all more or less satisfied, so that all the needs are prone to expression, but in varying degrees.[101] Most members of our society are partially satisfied and partially unsatisfied – so that their needs do not emerge in any obvious way. Generally, needs are hidden. Maslow's master stroke was to integrate, in one single ontological model, preoccupations that were at play across very different literature and scientific methodologies. The unity of the whole was given by the unity of the human organism.[102] Needs thus made up part of a whole, and Maslow could thus treat the thirst for artistic creation with the same terminology with which he designates hunger ("hunger," "starvation").

This new concept of "needs" allowed Maslow to refer to heterogeneous phenomena with the same terms: His descriptions of "physiological" needs relied on laboratory experiments carried out on white rats and chimpanzees;[103] his description of "security" needs relied on experiments on anxiety in young children; his description of "love" needs relied on clinical studies; his description of the need for "esteem" relied on studies of trauma victims; his description of the highest needs, needs for "self-accomplishment," relied on illustrious examples of poets, painters, and athletes. The idea of needs connected this long series of cases – white rats, chimpanzees, young children, trauma victims, and poets. Maslow articulated a whole series of ideas ("basic needs," "drives," "wants," "desires," "goals") borrowed from very diverse sets of literature—from zoology to American Romanesque writing.[104]

The genius of his system resides in the fact that he never gave an exhaustive list of needs: Maslow offered a method of arrangement that allows the reader to continue the list for oneself. For Maslow, needs could be arranged in a hierarchy,[105] but they could not be enumerated.[106] His attention to hierarchy distinguishes his work from Freud's theory of drives (*Triebe*). Freud's drives (*life drives* and the *death drives*) were anarchic, in tension with one another. Maslow's needs were neatly ordered: They occurred nicely one after the other. Maslow offered a more accessible, less esoteric, and less erudite model than Freud. He wrote in a simpler style, renounced jargon, and cited Greek mythology less often than ordinary experience.

Maslow's model gave a reassuring image of Western society. According to Freud, the drives (buried, though one may keep them in the depths of the *id*) do not naturally differ according to social class. An artist can sublimate his drives and make a work of art, but nothing distinguishes, in principle, the *libido* of an acclaimed poet from that of a psychiatric patient. The *libido* ignores class differences. In Maslow's model, on the other hand, the *hierarchy of needs* was doubled in a *hierarchy of social classes*. The moral construction of the text rested on a stratified vision of society. Inferior needs – like the need for security – were observed only in the sick and those on the economic and social margins.[107] The highest-ordered needs – like that of self-accomplishment – were best observable in the cultural bourgeoisie.[108]

Maslow thus gave, as a counterpoint to his psychological model, a vision of the moral order of society. He portrayed a tidy society, certainly with room for improvement, but well structured. He aimed less to describe mental pathologies than to draw up the typical profile of that which he called the "average American citizen."[109] Finally, he generalized his typical profile of American society and the adult American male member of the middle class, to a universal model valid across gender, age, and culture:

> *N*o claim is made that it is ultimate or universal for all cultures. The claim is made only that it is relatively more ultimate, more universal, more basic, than the superficial conscious desires from culture to culture, and makes a somewhat closer approach to common-human characteristics. Basic needs are more common-human than superficial desires or behaviors.[110]

In the same way that he reduced the whole of American society to fit the model of the middle classes, Maslow reduced the world to fit the American model, and human nature to that of the average American.[111] But this vision of social organization was also a vision of the organization of scientific disciplines. Maslow articulates information issued from different disciplines, constructing a continuity not only of the *content* of these disciplines, but also their *methods*: Biology and medicine, which studied the base of the pyramid of needs, were epistemologically first; social psychology and literature studied the top of the pyramid and were epistemologically last, that is, at once the noblest and the least essential. "Physiological" needs were studied quantitatively, while "self-accomplishment" needs were studied qualitatively.

The "hierarchy of needs" became one of the most often cited concepts in American psychology; and Maslow has been named one of the ten most influential psychologists of the twentieth century.[112] His model spread during the 1960s and 1970s,[113] both in the literature of *management* (knowing the needs of employees meant better organizing their work and increasing their returns[114]) and in the literature of *marketing* (knowing the needs of consumers makes it possible to direct their choices).[115] Maslow became a "cult author" of the business world.[116]

In today's humanitarian sector, reference to Maslow's model is ambivalent. While implicit references to his model are frequent, explicit quotes are less so. Some organizational and humanitarian experts make extensive use of Maslow, however.[117] Others critique his eurocentrism and his focalization on white American middle-class subjects.[118] On one occasion, however, the Oxford moral philosopher Hugo Slim, a very influential voice in the humanitarian field (and now the Head of Policy of the International Committee of the Red Cross), proposed shaping all humanitarian architecture according to Maslow's model.[119] Hugo Slim sees in Maslow's hierarchy of needs a model for the division of labor of international humanitarian aid, each type of need being assigned to a type of international organization: The "need for security and protection" is the duty of UNHCR, the "need" for food aid and basic health care is the responsibility of WHO and FAO, etc. As we will see in the last chapter of this book, the "cluster model" used by OCHA is not far from this theory. For now, it is worth noting that when Maslow and Pictet were working on their respective definitions of needs, discussion of needs had been made omnipresent by the experience of the two World Wars.

Needs at war: The Second World War, food aid, and the birth of the welfare state

When Jean Pictet started his career as a lawyer, scarcity, disease, and forced displacement were not seen as African problems, they were European realities. The war had killed 50 million, destroyed millions of homes and industries, and put millions on the street.[120] Poverty, emergencies, and epidemics – as well as relief aid – were seen as European questions.

The Second World War, however, had not taken European leaders unprepared. The First World War had already put "needs" on the agenda: It was about whose soldiers and whose civil population would best "endure" the war and maintain the highest "morale."[121] In 1917, Europe had experienced a wave of strikes, mutineries, riots, and revolution that remained a lesson for political and military strategists. Food provision, rationing, and health logistics could make a victor – or a collapsing state. After the First World War, the notion that a government should be able to fullfill its population's basic needs became the cornerstone of European politics.[122] Thus, at the end of the Second World War, it was evident that the question of needs would be central for post-war politics.

The fascist welfare state had eventually collapsed on the battlefield and at home, but its popularity was a warning for the victorious capitalist and Soviet powers.[123] For the Western powers, it was clear that "welfare" would play a central role in the upcoming ideological battle. The Soviet Union came out of the war as victor against the Nazis, with strong moral capital on the international stage. The new welfare state was born out of a "reformism of fear"[124] in face of the internal pressure from organized labor, and the external menace of Soviet communism. In 1942, the Beveridge Report had already broke ground for the renewal of social provisions based on new minimum standards. A general consensus emerged on the duty of the state to fullfill certain social services – a consensus that would have been unthinkable in Dunant's times: Reformists, socialists, communists, social Catholics, and trade unionists all pushed for welfare provisions. Obviously, not everyone agreed on what "welfare" meant. For some, it was *sufficiency* (i.e. a vital minimum for workers). For others, it was about *equality* (i.e. a general fight against inequality).[125] The first position implied merely a "floor of protection against the worst outcomes by affording basic provision," while the second implied "a ceiling on wealth and a constraint on material hierarchy."[126] Both visions, however, implied at least minimal social provisions. Countries as different as France, the USSR, and India now promoted social goals in their constitutions. Entitlements to sufficient provision thus became "a constitutional orthodoxy under both capitalism and communism."[127]

It was, however, not only about "national welfare." It was also about the needs of *foreign* populations. War had fueled new thinking on relief aid. After the First World War, Herbert Hoover had explained to President Wilson that food aid to Central Europe was instrumental to "preserv[ing] these countries from Bolshevism and rank anarchy."[128] Twenty years later, in his State of the Union speech of 1941, Franklin Delano Roosevelt had made the "freedom from want" a war aim. Together with the European government-in-exiles, the British government started planning for relief and reconstruction only a few months after the beginning of the war.[129] War was not only to be fought through battle, occupation, and blockade, but through relief, food aid, and refugee camps.[130] "If we continue to starve the Greeks," a US administrator explained, "we shall undermine the resistance of an ally."[131] Food aid became a weapon against communism. The US occupation governor in postwar Germany explained that failing to fullfill the basic need of Europeans would "pave the way to a communist Europe."[132]

The promotion of "better standards of life" and "social progress" were written into the preamble of the Charter of the United Nations (1945) and "social rights" were inscribed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): The right to health, to work, to various forms of social provision, even the right to rest and leisure. The newly founded World Health Organization promoted a "right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being" while the International Labour Organization established universal "Minimum Standards of Social Security" (including medical care, social security for disability and sickness, unemployment, old age, employment injury, and family support).[133]

United Nations humanitarian agencies have been shaped by this context. The first United Nations agency that coordinated relief on a large scale, fought against malaria, and provided health care, food, and basic services for millions of "displaced persons" (DPs) was the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA, 1943–1946) in Western and Central Europe. In 1944, there were around 60 million displaced persons: Demobilized soldiers, former slave laborers, prisoners of war, liberated concentration camp inmates, civilians fleeing before foreign armies, etc. UNRRA established a wide system of camps stretching from northern Germany to southern Italy.[134] As Liisa Malkki rightly points out, the problem of refugees was first and foremore conceived as a military and strategic question.[135] Even though UNRRA was nominally comprised of 44 countries, in Europe, it worked under the authority of the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF). At the heart of the question of relief, there was a worry for questions of "contagion" – contagion of political ideologies (fascism and communism) as well as diseases (cholera, dysentery, typhoid fever, etc.).

The colonial divide: Racial differentialism and the refusal of knowledge

When quantification became the rule, colonial territories were the exception. In the middle of the twentieth century, international organizations could publish comparative statistics on poverty, migration, or calorie consumption for almost all Western nations, while on the colonial population (at least one-third of the world's population), they barely had anything to offer. The French colonial administration did not produce any regular statistics on poverty for its African territories.[136] The International Labour Organization, which published statistics on migration, could incorporate neither the British nor the French colonial territories in its tables.[137] In the 1930s, when the British administration organized an "African Survey" to ensure a scientific knowledge for the ruling colonial administration, it included long descriptions of African languages, cultures, regions, and customs – but only very limited quantitative data.[138]

Colonial domination, Keith Breckenridge explains, was largely a "power without knowledge." Colonial administrators did not just lack basic knowledge about the needs of the populations they were administrating, they had simply "no will to know."[139] Colonial administrators were often incapable or unwilling to furnish precise information on what people consumed and on their standards of living.[140] They could publicize the number of clinics, schools, railway stations, kilometers of railways, the number of vaccinated persons, that is the "performance" of colonial services, but not the needs of populations. In the eyes of colonial officials, poverty, hunger, and vagrancy impacted Africans in an undifferentiated manner: As a "race," as a mass, but not as groups or individuals. The colonial administration therefore worked with very general categories ("African," "indigenous," "peasant," "worker," etc.), but there were only rare attempts to identify specific needs, vulnerable groups, etc. As Vincent Bonnecase shows, colonial knowledge relied mainly on descriptions, not on quantification. In 1936, while the French governor of West Africa was required by his minister to give information on the social situation of his administrees, he had barely any statistics to offer: He just described the "precarious life" of the "indigenous population" in general terms. "The native fights hard for his daily bread, against [the] climate, against locusts," he wrote. "He is poorly clothed, even during the cold nights."[141] While poverty studies à la Rowntree were already well established in Europe, they did not take place in the colonies before the late 1940s.

Calorie counting is a case in point. In Western Europe, the estimation of food intake and viability was a matter of public health and, soon enough, of general government. Since Rowntree's study of 1901, it became common to measure caloric consumption as an estimation of household budgets and overall poverty. But in the colonies, the quantification of calories was introduced mostly as a question of workforce management. After the First World War, the shortage of labor force, both in "quantity" and "quality," was seen as the primary obstacle to colonial development. Administrators subscribing to the *mise en valeur* of the colonies turned their efforts into the "fortification of the African races." Malnutrition was "discovered" by colonial administration primarily as a problem for labor and colonial development.[142] Thus colonial bureaucrats experimented with different "ration types" (made out of millet, corn, rice in the Sahel zone, and cassava, yams, and plantains in the forest zone) – they estimated the amount of calories, fats, protein, and vitamins needed by different groups of workers. In French Equatorial Africa, the Inspector General of Health Services established an ideal ration for African workers, while a French private company calculated a standardized ration containing an ideal proportion of "nitrogen, amino nitrogen, mineral salts and sodium chloride" for each individual.[143] These experiences prefigured the invention of "ready to use therapeutic foods" that would be developed for developing countries in the 1990s.[144] In any case, the notion of caloric consumption entered the colonies through the angle of workforce mobilization – not through an interest in the general quantification of a population's living standards.

The question of "needs" was framed by the colonial and racial divide. When the League of Nations published its report on the "problem of nutrition" in the 1930s, it aimed at international comparisons.[145] League experts gathered nutritional information on 25 countries and established an often-quoted international standard of 2,500 kcal per day for a laboring adult.[146] However this survey included only one African country, South Africa, and distinguished between the needs of "whites" and "Bantus."[147] British nutritionists in colonial India did not only distinguish the nutritional requirements of "whites" and "natives," but also between different "Indian races," for instance "martial" and "sedentary races."[148]

An official report of the US administration studying worldwide daily requirements unsurprisingly put the needs of the "native laborer" of the Congo at the bottom (2,812 kcal) and the American athlete at the top (4,510 kcal).[149]

After the Second World War, however, international organizations attempted to enter the colonies to assess the living standards of colonial populations. In 1949, the first international conference on food and nutrition in sub-Saharan Africa was held in Dschang in Cameroon. The FAO considered all the world as being in a "food crisis." "But this 'entire world' now also included Africa," Bonnecase explains.[150] In 1952, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) published its first report on the "social situation across the world" including information of nutritional ration for the Belgian Congo (1,930 kcal), Tanganyika (1,980), and French West Africa (2,070).[151]

In the 1950s, "welfare" had made a sudden entrance into colonial politics. European colonial Empires underwent a "crisis of legitimacy" that obliged them to rethink needs:[152] First, a wave of social protest challenged colonial domination: Workers' strikes in Dakar, on the railways of French West Africa, in the port of Mombasa, in Nigeria, and other places.[153] Second, a new ideology of "development" was founded, following the British "Development and Welfare Act" of 1940, and the French FIDES of 1946 (Fonds d'investissement pour le développement économique et social). Finally, the UN demanded statistics from the colonial powers: The UN Charter, adopted in San Francisco in June 1945 (Chapter XI, article 73) required the colonial powers to submit information on the populations' standards of living.[154] In 1952, the UN "Preliminary report on the world social situation, with special reference to standards of living" set itself the goal of defining "indices, fully quantitative, on needs whose existence is universally recognized."[155] France and the United Kingdom had to accept the idea that "there was a minimum standard of living below which no-one should fall."[156]

The definition of a "vital minimum," however, remained differentialist. This became obvious in the calculation of the minimal wage. In 1950, the French Minister of Labor asked a group of trade union leaders, employers, and experts to establish a standard for minimum wages, and define a budget type, a monthly budget for the lowest paid French workers.[157] This minimum wage commission struggled regarding the minimum needs. Employers, trade unionists, and scientific experts in each group used different figures from nutrition studies to argue for a lower or higher minimum wage. However it was not only about calorie and protein requirements, but also on the list of items that this "minimum" should include: Leisure, vacations, newspapers, wine, coffee, tobacco, etc. (the SMIG commission excluded tobacco, but endorsed the human person's need for wine, counting 17 liters of wine monthly (nearly a bottle a day) for each French wage earner).[158]

This definition, however, only applied for the French *metropolitan* worker – and European workers in the colonies. For colonial subjects, colonial officials negotiated another "vital minimum" to calculate the minimal needs of *African* workers which would then allow definition of their minimum wage.[159] These "minimal costs" of African workers included ten categories of spending: Combustibles, lighting, cooking and sleeping equipment, clothing, rent, hygiene and pharmacy, interment, entertainment, and taxes.[160] But African trade unionists did not accept that African living standards should be distinct from European ones. They claimed "equal pay for equal work" and struggled for African workers' salaries and indemnities to be aligned to Europeans'.[161] Papa Jean Ka, leader of the Dakar commercial workers' union, was not ready to accept the colonial administration's argument of a low African "vital minimum" defined by "scientific" methods. He protested "European methods of calculation" and refused the idea of an African way of life – an assumption unquestioned in the separate calculation of minimum wages.[162] As Frederick Cooper argues, France and Great Britain withdrew from empire when they understood that they could not reduce the demand for equality of treatment, which they were not ready to provide.

"Two innocent words": The rise of "basic needs" in international aid

In the 1960s, "development" still meant primarily "economic growth." Ten years later, this would now mean "meeting basic needs." The president of the World Bank mentioned "the most essential human needs" in 1972. Within a couple of years, everyone – USAID, the Third World Forum, the International Labour Organization, and several more – spoke of "basic human needs," "essential needs," "core needs," "minimum needs," or "fundamental needs."[163]

In the 1960s, the accent was put on the "trickle-down effect": Industrial development would ultimately result in a decline of poverty.[164] The World Bank lent money at low interest rates to countries that were not in a position to borrow money at the market rate and expected the rest to just happen. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Bank financed mostly infrastructure projects: Bridges, roads, ports, or hydraulic dams. But the bank had to reconsider its plans. At the end of the 1960s in fact, the critics of the world economic order had become more vocal. Political leaders in Africa, Latin America, and Asia made the fight against poverty a national priority.[165] Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere had promised "freedom from hunger, sickness and poverty," while Ghana's president Kwame N'krumah had declared that his "first object [was] to abolish [. . .] poverty, ignorance and disease."[166]

For them, however, welfare was not only about minimal provision or sufficiency, it was about development, as well as about a change in the international order. Many argued for stronger intervention of the state to reduce inequality, an intervention that could include the limitation of wealth accumulation. Julius Nyerere's vision was one of mass equality at a certain level of sufficiency, not risky luxury that seemed unethical: "We have to work towards a position where each person realizes that his rights in society (above the basic needs of every human being) must come second to the overriding need of human dignity for all."[167] Postcolonial leaders however did not stop their call for political voluntarism within the borders of the nation states. The Non-Aligned Movement initiated a broader critique of inequality at a world scale. Within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the New International Economic Order (NIEO, 1974), they made the case for global equality and redistribution.[168]

Thus, the new international emphasis on "basic needs" was, at best, a late reaction to an old demand. At worse, as some argued then, it was a planned reaction of the World Bank against NIEO demands, a tool to circumvent the postcolonial leaders' claim for global equality. By the late 1970s, several voices argued that the "basic needs strategy" was a hypocritical substitute for growth, modernization, and industrialization, a way of keeping the Third World dominated. While industrialization had brought wealth and power to the North, the NIEO countries argued that the North attempted to prevent developing countries from following the same path. "Basic needs" were thought to slow down growth in the Third World, while containing contestation through minimal provision. In the most critical analyses, "basic needs" were presented as a kind of neo-colonialism, an instrument to enlarge the First World's market in the Third World (one could imagine transnational corporations making "basic needs packages" containing food, textiles, drugs, and some education material invading a local market with or without the agreement of national authorities). This strategy would legitimize external intervention; the introduction of basic needs criteria could lend itself to the violation of national sovereignty and of the autonomous setting of development priority. While the NIEO argued that poverty was the result of exploitation by the rich countries and the international system, the World Bank implied that it was a result of bad national governance and inefficient administration.[169] For NIEO proponents, McNamara's new approach to development was meant to divert the public opinion's attention from the New International Economic Order – a way to sidetrack the real issue of international economic justice.

In fact, "acceptance of global inequality," the historian Samuel Moyn writes, "was the beginning of wisdom": The inauguration of a "subsistence ethic for an unequal word."[170] One of the lead economists of the World Bank, Mahbub ul Haq, called for the abandonment of the pursuit of elusive present-day Western standards as "the gap will continue to widen and the rich nations will continue to become richer," Haq explained. Thus, the focus on global sufficiency was the best remaining hope.[171] "Unlike 'closing the gap,' " McNamara explained, "reducing poverty is a realistic objective, indeed an indispensable one."[172] For NIEO, development was about global power relations, dependence, and inequality. In the language of the World Bank, this became a moral obligation of providing sufficient minimum and preventing political disorder. Short-term realistic targets were preferred to egalitarian horizons. This use of basic needs as a palliative to NIEO demands was obvious for some contemporary observers. Human rights lawyer Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit explained that "the basic needs strategy has been used as an excuse to imply that the only problem of developing countries is providing a minimum necessary for subsistence."[173] Thus, a "commitment to sufficiency" was a "consolation prize" in response to claims of global equality.[174]

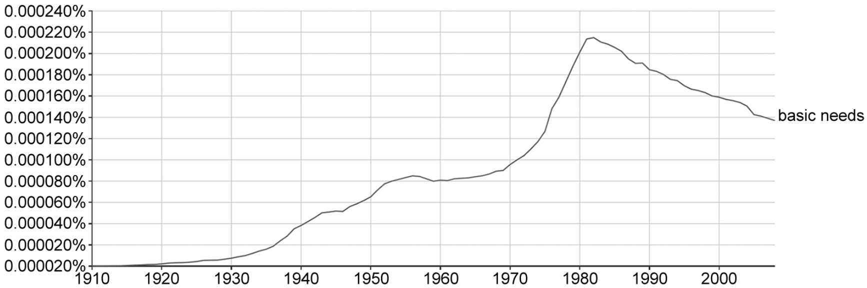

Figure 1.3 The use of "basic needs" in digitized printed sources (1910–2008).[175]
Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer

In its "First Things First" report, the World Bank's economists seemed to reactivate the debate of cameralists and liberal economists from 150 years earlier: To prosper, should one bet on work and profit, or, conversely, on consumption and the satisfaction of fundamental needs? Faced with the conventional approach, which allowed for an increase in productivity and growth to lead to an increase in revenue and consumption ("trickle-down"), McNamara's team relied on the primary satisfaction of basic needs, the only thing capable of maintaining the work force and development ("trickle-up").[176] A former US Secretary of Defense at the time of the Vietnam War, Robert McNamara was more about political authority than about economic orthodoxy.

It is not about equality, the World Bank explained: Increased revenues are not always a sign of good economic health as they are not always well-disbursed, instead they are sometimes used for conspicuous spending rather than for the satisfaction of physiological needs. Also, approaching the issue through the question of revenues neglects certain categories of populations – the sick, the injured, the elderly, or children – who do not necessarily profit from increased revenues. Thus, one must reverse the order of priorities, and start with basic needs before getting involved in labor. In any case, even the "quality of the labor force" is essentially dependent on the preliminary satisfaction of fundamental needs.[177] McNamara's team thus invited its reader to abandon the fight against inequality:

> Meeting basic needs is more important than reducing inequality for three reasons. First, equality as such is probably not an objective of great importance to most people other than utilitarian philosophers and ideologues. Second, this lack of concern is justified, because meeting basic human needs is morally a more important objective than reducing inequality. Third, reducing inequality is a highly complex, abstract objective, open to many different interpretations and therefore operationally ambiguous.[178]

Many, including voices within the World Bank, were highly critical of the new concept: It was a “hair curling reform,” “a superfluous new idea,” “a slogan,” and a “mistake.”[179] “Basic needs” was seen as a bad “trade-off”: The children of today trade an immediate improvement in their living conditions against later augmentation of their income (loss of earning potential). But for McNamara’s protegees, “Basic needs” were simply two “innocent, five-letter words.”[180] They offered a “pragmatic response” to the problem of world poverty: It was politically easier to call upon the generosity of Western public opinion to satisfy fundamental needs rather than to finance infrastructure projects. “Food aid is politically easier than finance.”[181] Consequently, the focus on extreme poverty could enhance the image of the World Bank, focusing on spots with a strong “moral and political appeal.”[182]

“Basic needs” offered a new paradigm for universal quantification. As the Director-General of the ILO put it, it was the “dethronement of Gross National Product (GNP)” as a unique indicator of development.[183] GNP and GDP were not the only indicators of development anymore. It the coming decades, it would be flanked by a whole new series of indicators targeting societies through the prism of their “basic needs” – the poverty line (by the World Bank), the Human Development Index (HDI) by the United Nations Development Programme, the Gender Related Development Index, Gender Empowerment Measure, Human Poverty Index, etc. Human needs were now universally commensurable. It allowed the ILO to describe the “reference man” who could serve as a standard: He consumed 3,000 kcal and 17 grams of protein per day:

> He is between 20 and 39 years of age and weighs 65 kg. He is healthy, that is free from disease and physically fit for active work. On each working day he is employed for eight hours in an occupation that usually involves moderate activity. When not at work, he spends eight hours in bed, four to six hours sitting or moving around in only very little activity, and two hours walking, in active recreation or in [. . .] household duties.[184]

The new numerical universalism of aid was linked to a governmental project on the subject of the “Third World”: The *labor force* was supposed to be significantly improved by the decrease in malnutrition, sickness, and the progression of education. The *demographics* should be improved by the reduction of infant mortality, the education of women, and care in the case of sickness or old age, which leads to a “lower fertility rate.”[185] Finally, citizens of the South should be taught to better *consumption patterns*: They should learn to eliminate their consumption expenses that were not aimed at the satisfaction of fundamental needs, whereas their middle classes should reduce their conspicuous consumption.[186] Eventually, the World Bank had succeeded in putting “poverty” and “needs” at the forefront of international aid. The concept gave rise to a whole new series of global social indicators, but also entrenched the ideology of sufficiency at the expense of equality. The 1970s opened a new period for the individualization of the basis of well-being.

Conclusion

Dunant did not define humanitarian impartiality in the language of the hierarchy of needs. Pictet did. Between Dunant and Pictet, various institutions and scientists had produced vast bodies of statistics, concepts, and theories of needs. Sometimes for scientific purposes, sometimes for bureaucratic, political, or military reasons. Karl Rau made needs the foundation of economics, Atwater calculated caloric consumption, Rowntree defined a poverty line based on minimal needs, Maslow built a hierarchy of needs at the center of his theory of motivation, and Beveridge made the provision of minimum standards a duty of the welfare state. All of them shared the conviction that basic needs were key to human behavior, and that they constituted an object of knowledge. Needs – unlike suffering – were hidden. They had to be uncovered, by theory and by empirical research.

One of the reasons for the success of the notion of needs was its malleability. This may be why elementary needs were so easily able to become, starting in the 1970s, the new doxa of the humanitarian field: The language of needs gives humanitarian agencies a common language while enabling different diagnoses. Needs assessment enables both consent *and* competition within the field: All agencies can, with some legitimity, argue that they are acting "according to the needs" of the beneficiaries, while producing very different analyses of what those needs actually are. The malleability of the notion results from the different layers of history that it subsumes, as well as from the different spheres of knowledge that it has been shaped by. The "basic needs" of political economy are neither those of health care nor those of international law. Agencies and NGOs engaged in humanitarian aid can thus cherry pick the definition of needs that best fits their own objectives: Those focusing on "development" may refer to poverty or unemployment, those focusing on "health" might refer to nutrition and diseases, while those focusing on "protection" might refer to human rights law, each tradition offering, in turn, a variety of definitions of "needs."

A key part of thinking about needs has been the conceptualization of their articulation. How do needs relate to one another? Household budgets, "triage," and "social rights" were different answers to this question. During the Second World War, Maslow theorized a "hierarchy" of needs that would become very influential. As emergency relief is concerned, however, it was Pictet's definition of "proportionality" that enjoyed the greatest success. After the Second World War, the notion of a "vital minimum" was both accepted and contested. The anticolonial fight against a differentialist definition of what was to include in the "living wage" played a significant role in the decolonization process. In the 1970s, international organization such as the World Bank introduced a new conception of "basic needs" that was both *universalist* and *minimalist*: It allowed for broad comparisons on a world scale while circumventing the question of global power relations and inequalities. When the UN institutions for the coordination of emergency aid were founded (Emergency Relief Coordinator and OCHA) in the early 1990s, they could rely on broad consent of UN agencies and NGOs that needs were universally measurable, commensurable, and prioritizable. Even though it came from a place far away from emergency aid, the introduction of "basic needs" in the 1970s enabled the constitution of the new doxa, already transforming the dream of a welfare world into the global accounting of individual entitlement to sufficiency. According to Samuel Moy, this codification of "social rights" as international norms had only very little impact and "low visibility," and played a marginal role in the political language of the post-war decades because these international norms were way below the concurrent promises of emerging welfare states.[187] While many called for distributive equality and dreamed of a "welfare world," the Universal Declaration only guaranteed a bare social minimum. Thus, the Declaration "failed to capture a strong contemporary impulse to social equality" and was at best a "modicum of basic individual entitlements" that could not contribute to frame the welfare agenda of states.[188]

Notes

1 For NGOs, see the long list of signatories of "The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief" (Steering Committee of Humanitarian Response, SCHR 1994). For the United Nations' understanding of impartiality, see Resolution 46/182 of the 1991 General Assembly of the United Nations (A/RES/46/182), establishing an international aid coordination body (the future OCHA) (a resolution that recalls the principle of impartiality). For an example of governmental definitions of humanitarian principles, see France/Ministère de l'Europe et des affaires étrangères. *Stratégie humanitaire de la République Francaise 2018–2022*. Paris, 2018; Deutscher Bundestag. *Bericht der Bundesregierung über die deutsche humanitäre Hilfe im Ausland 2014 bis 2017*. Drucksache 19/5720, 2018–11–12, Berlin: Bundestag 2018.

2 See later in this chapter for the Geneva Convention.

3 Steering Committee of Humanitarian Response, *The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief*, SCHR 1994.

4 This is the quantification of "people in need" as the first step of the "project cycle," which included five steps. On this point, this Chapter 6. For a critical overview of needs assessment practices, see Darcy, James and Hofmann, Charles-Antoine. According to need? Needs assessment and decision-making in the humanitarian sector: ODI. *Humanitarian Policy Group Report* 15 (ODI, 2003): 1–80.

5 Young, 1995; Jurk, Charlotte. *Der niedergeschlagene Mensch: Depression- Geschichte und gesellschaftliche Bedeutung einer Diagnose*. Münster: Verlag Westfälisches Dampfboot, 2008; Haller, Lea, Höhler, Sabine, and Stoff, Heiko, Stress – Konjunkturen eines Konzepts, *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 11, no. 3 (2014): 359–381; Chassé, 2013.

6 In 1864, five years after the battle of Solferino, a diplomatic conference called in Geneva and convening delegates from 16 countries signed the "Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field."

7 This image is the result of a count, by Google Ngram Viewer, of how often the words "needs," and "suffering" occur in digitized sources available in the corpus (out of the total corpus of 30 million books of Google Books, the corpus of Ngram includes 8.1 million, of which ca. 4.5 million are in English). The graph represents the results in proportion of the total number of words ('unigram') for a specific year. For instance, the word "needs" represents ca. 0.002% of the total number of words digitized for the year 1800 in the corpus. Ngram Viewer allows for a distinction between verbs

(_VERB_) and nouns (_NOUN_). The corpus of Ngram includes books such as fiction and non-fiction books, booklets, legal books, etc. but does not include documents that are difficult to scan, for instance, it excludes maps, posters, and newspaper articles.

8 Dunant, 1862: 31 and 47.

9 In the example of Henri Dunant's description of suffering at Solferino, one recognizes the description of the "state of love" or "Agapè" described by Luc Boltanski. In this regime of action, there is no place for equivalences and quantification; see Boltanski, Luc and Porter, Catherine. *Love and justice as competences: Three essays on the sociology of action*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012: [original: 1990] 110–113.

10 "On the basis of need alone," "according to need," or "in proportion of need," according to the most-used formulations.

11 The revision of the Geneva Convention of 1906, then the Geneva Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war in 1929.

12 At the turn of the twentieth century, at least 20 different "principles" co-existed (Palmieri, Daniel. *Les principes fondamentaux de la Croix-Rouge: Une histoire politique*. 6 juillet 2015: 4. www.icrc.org/fr/document/les-principes-fondamentaux-de-la-croix-rouge-une-histoire-politique [Accessed 2017-10]).

13 An idea that was the subject of discussions with his thesis director Max Huber during the war. The minutes of the ICRC indicate that the question of "proportionality" of aid was addressed by the organization for the first time in 1942 (the coordinating commission: Meeting of 6 March 1942, at 10 a.m.: Max Huber suggested that a coordination commission examine the problem of the proportionality of aid given to prisoners of war). I thank Daniel Palmieri, archivist of the ICRC, for this information.

14 Palmieri, 2015.

15 Pictet, Jean. Les principes de la Croix-Rouge (III). *Revue Internationale De La Croix-Rouge* 37, no. 442 (1955): 633–640. Here p. 633.

16 Pictet, 1955 [III]: 638.

17 Pictet, 1955 [III]: 635.

18 Pictet's "proportionality principle" should not be confused with the proportionality principle known today in international human rights (sometimes under the name "Martens Clause," introduced in The Hague Convention of 1899), which deals with the proportionality of military attacks.

19 Pictet, Jean. Les principes de la Croix-Rouge (II). *Revue Internationale De La Croix-Rouge* 37, no. 441 (1955): 559.

20 Pictet, 1955 [II]: 561.

21 "The principle of equality prohibits, in particular, all objective distinction between individuals." *Ibid.*

22 Pictet, 1955 [II]: 561.

23 Pictet, 1955 [II]: 568.

24 Pictet recognized that the proportionality principle was implied in the doctrine of the Red Cross (Pictet, 1955 [II]: 569). He attributed to Max Huber, his thesis advisor, an outline of codification: Huber, Max. Principes d'action et fondements de l'œuvre du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge 1939–1946. *Revue Internationale De La Croix-Rouge* 29, no. 337 (1948): 10.

25 Pictet, 1955 [II]: 568.

26 Pictet, 1955 [II]: 570.

27 Article 12 of the first Convention of 1949 establishes this point.

28 Pictet, 1955 [II]: 570. See later in the chapter for the notion of "triage."

29 To justify the principles of equality and non-discrimination, Pictet cited (a) the "general law": Citizens are equal before the Law; (b) the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that forbid discriminations; (c) the "medical deontology" codified in the Declaration of Geneva established by the World Medical Association; and (d) "different moral systems," notably Christian, with the commandment

"love your enemy" and the parable of the Good Samaritan. (Pictet, 1955 [II]: 560–563).

30 Pictet, 1955 [II]: 569. He would return to this point in his commentary on the fundamental principles of the Red Cross in 1979 (Pictet, 1979).

31 Pictet, 1955 [II]: 569.

32 Pictet recognized a limit to the proportionality principle: The necessity of concentrating aid. If one has a single dose of serum for two sick people, one does not divide it between them, because neither will be cured. Assistance must be "effective." It is thus not always desirable to "divide aid" (Pictet, 1955 [II]: 573).

33 Another source of inspiration for Pictet was the priority of care in medicine, priority that could be linked to social or cultural values (Pictet, 1955 [II]: 564). In a subsequent commentary, Jean Pictet cited Sir John Kennedy, vice-president of the British Red Cross, declaring in 1946: "there is only one rule for the Red Cross: The greatest help to the greatest need" (Pictet, Jean. The fundamental Principles of the Red Cross. *International Review of the Red Cross* 19, no. 210 (1979): 130–149).

34 Equity does not demand that everyone pays the same tax. Pictet, 1979.

35 Pictet, 1955 [II]: 571.

36 Pictet, 1955 [II]: 571.

37 A specific role in the advent of a new humanity was thus conferred to humanitarian organizations – and to the Red Cross in particular – because suffering was at the center of the definition of the human. That which constituted the foundation of humanity, and the universality of the Red Cross, was the universality of human suffering. It was "the fight between suffering and death" that constitutes the principle of humanity (Pictet, 1955 [I]: 496), not just in the sense of philanthropy, but equally in the sense of a human community. As Catherine Le Bris shows, the notion of humanity was taken up by international law after the Second World War, as a reaction to suffering. "Humanity" entered into law at the moment of the realization of its mortality. The demographic bloodbath, genocide, and the atomic bomb brought about a "humanism of humility" that recognized the mortality of the human species (Le Bris, 2012: 4). The idea of humanity was thus indexed to the idea of suffering. According to the UN's San Francisco Charter, people were assigned the task of "sav[ing] succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our life-time has brought untold sorrow to mankind" (cited in Le Bris, 2012: 5).

38 Pictet, 1955 [II]: 571.

39 Pictet voluntarily recalled, in his writings, that the structure of the Red Cross allowed the ICRC to be as close as possible to humanitarian principles. Pictet, 1979.

40 The notion of impartiality was also strategic because, in the Geneva Conventions, the rights and special responsibilities were conferred upon "impartial humanitarian organizations" (article 9 of the Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field. Geneva, 1949.). In his comments on the Geneva Convention, Pictet explained this idea of impartiality: "he is guided in his choice by the apparent gravity of the wounds, making no distinction between friends, allies and enemies. The ideal would be to be able to base the distribution of relief entirely on the actual needs" (Pictet, 1952: 109).

41 Pictet, 1955 [II]: 573. [My emphasis] As Haug agreed in his analysis of the impartiality principle: For Haug, only "factual" and "objective" criteria could justify an unequal distribution of aid. Haug, Hans. *Humanité pour tous. Le mouvement international de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge*. Bern and Stuttgart: Institut Henry-Dunant and Haupt, 1996: 460.

42 Pictet, 1955 [II]: 573.

43 Steering Committee of Humanitarian Response, *The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief*, SCHR 1994. The Code of Conduct was supported by the Red Cross Movement and a large collection

of NGOs (Caritas Internationalis, Catholic Relief Services, International Save the Children Alliance, the World Lutheran Federation, Oxfam, etc.). The definition of impartiality was inspired by the "fundamental principles" adopted by the Red Cross in 1965.

44 OCHA defined impartiality in a way explicitly inspired by the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross: "Humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinions" (OCHA on Message: Humanitarian Principles 2011).

45 On the Sphere Project, see Chapter 4. The Sphere *Humanitarian Charter* notably indicated in point 6: "Any such assistance must be provided according to the principle of impartiality, which requires that it be provided solely on the basis of need and in proportion to need," whereas, among four great principles of protection, the second point indicates the objective: "Ensure people's access to impartial assistance – in proportion to need and without discrimination. People can access humanitarian assistance according to need and without adverse discrimination." Sphere Project. *Humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response*, 3rd ed. Geneva: The Sphere Project, 2011.

46 Pechayre, Marion. Impartialité et pratiques de triage en milieu humanitaire. Le cas de médecins sans frontières au Pakistan. *Les Cahiers du Centre Georges Canguilhem* 1, no. 6 (2014): 125–142, here p. 125.

47 Haug, 1996: 448. The principle of impartiality is found, in a different formulation, in the Geneva Conventions of 1949, which conferred it a particular weight in international humanitarian law (Mackintosh, Kate, *The principles of humanitarian action in international humanitarian law*, HPG Report 5, Overseas Development Institute, 2000: 13). The principle of "impartiality" figures in the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross adopted – by the represented nations as well – during the international conferences of the Red Cross in 1965 and 1986.

48 The idea of a household budget was older than the nineteenth century, however. Some noble and bourgeois families had produced family budgets for their own private purposes in the seventeenth century. At the end of the eighteenth century, some inquiries were conducted in Great Britain in a sporadic fashion on the budgets of peasant and working-class families: 136 families studied by David Davies in 1795, 86 families studied by Frederick Eden in 1797, etc. See Fischer, Hendrik K. *Konsum im Kaiserreich: Eine statistisch-analytische Untersuchung privater Haushalte im wilhelminischen Deutschland*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag GmbH, 2011: 67–78.

49 Le Play, Frédéric. *Les ouvriers européens*, Vol. 6. Tours, 1855 (2nd ed.: 1877–1879); Ducpetiaux, Edouard. *Budgets économiques des classes ouvrières en Belgique*. Brussels: M. Hayez, 1855; Engel, Ernst. Die Produktions- und Consumtionsverhältnisse des Königreiches Sachsen. *Zeitschrift des Statistischen Büreaus des Königlich Sächsischen Ministeriums des Innern* 3, no. 8/9 (1857 [reprinted 1895]). Ernst Engel is known for his "law" that indicates that the poorer a family is, the more it spends for food in proportion to the total outlay. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the inquiries by household were monographic: Le Play and his disciples choose families that they consider "typical."

50 Of which 75 are from Great Britain, 100 from France, and more than 200 from Germany. Fischer, 2011: 76. Uwe Spiekermann has another tally but confirms the rapid growth of this kind of inquiry: Spiekermann, Uwe. Household budgets as sources of food history: A methodological overview. In *Current research into eating practices: Contribution of social sciences*, Vol. 10, Feichtinger, Elfriede and Köhler, Barbara (eds.). Frankfurt a.M.: AGEV, 1995: 88–90.

51 A document reproduced in the "Bulletin de l'Institut international de statistique." Fischer, 2011: 75.

52 Foucault, Michel. *Sécurité, territoire, population. Cours au Collège de France: 1977-1978*. Paris: Gallimard/Le Seuil, 2004; Foucault, Michel. *Naissance de la biopolitique. Cours au collège de France: 1978-1979*. Paris: Gallimard/Le Seuil, 2004.

53 Reinert, Erik S. A brief introduction to Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff (1626-1692). *European Journal of Law and Economics* 19, no. 3 (2005): 221-230.

54 Quoted in Hull, Isabel. *Sexuality, State and Civil Society in Germany: 1700-1815.* Cornell University Press, 1997: p. 158.

55 Frederick William I of Prussia created the first chairs of cameral sciences in Halle and Frankfurt/Oder (1727). Other chairs were introduced in German and Austrian universities (Leipzig, Iena, Göttingen, Vienna, Prague, Innsbruck, and Klagenfurt). See Tribe, Keith. *Governing economy. The reformation of German economic discourse, 1750-1840.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988; Laborier, Pascale. La 'bonne police': Sciences camérales et pouvoir absolutiste dans les Etats allemands. *Politix: Revue des sciences sociales du politique* 12, no. 48 (1999): 7-35; Garner, Guillaume. Territoire et espace dans la théorie économique en Allemagne: 1750-1820. *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine 2*, no. 48 (2001): 25-50; Garner, Guillaume. *État, économie et territoire en Allemagne: L'espace dans le caméralisme et l'économie politique 1740-1820.* Paris: Éditions de l'EHESS, 2005. The aim of cameralism was to construct an economic theory and to train administrators to apply it.

56 A well-policed nation is easier to govern: The sovereign shall protect the population from famines, catastrophes, and plagues.

57 Garner, 2005: p. 108.

58 Justi, Johann Heinrich Gottlob von. *Staatswirtschafts oder systematische Abhandlung aller ökonomischen und Kameralwissenschaften, die zur Regierung eines Landes erfordert werden.* Leipzig: Bernhard Christoph Breitkopf, 2nd ed., 1758 [1st ed.: 1755]; Sonnenfels, Joseph von. Grundsätze der Polizey—Handlungs- und Finanzwissenschaft 2. Vienna: 3rd ed., 1771-1778. [1st ed.: 1765-1771]. See Garner, 2001 and Garner, 2005.

59 Bielefeld, Baron de. *Institutions politiques, ouvrage où l'on traite de la société civile: Des loix, de la police, des finances, du commerces, des forces d'un etat; et en général de tout ce qui a rapport au gouvernement.* Duchesne, 1762: p. 57, quoted in Laborier, 1999: p. 18.

60 Moyn, Samuel. *Not enough: Human rights in an unequal world.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018: p. 20.

61 Garner, 2001: p. 39.

62 Heller, Agnes. The theory of need in Marx. *Science and Society* 43, no 3 (1979): 349–355.

63 German: "Jeder nach seinen Fähigkeiten, jedem nach seinen Bedürfnissen!" Marx, Karl, *Kritik des Gothaer Programms*, Berlin: Verlag Neuer Weg 1946 [1875]: 21.

64 Historians of German political economics agree on this point: See Garner, 2001; Tribe, 1988: 149-182; and: Bowler, Richard. Mediating Creative Nature and Human Needs in Early German Political Economy. *History of Political Economy* 40, no. 4 (2008): 633-669. For Garner, the notion of "needs" was central to this economic discourse, because it reconciled two approaches: One ethical approach, and one individualist approach (Garner, 2001: p. 45). German national economics took a different path from those of the British liberal economics of Adam Smith (founded on the laws of work, "ponocracy") and of French economics (founded on the laws of nature, "physiocracy").

65 Rau, Karl Heinrich. *Grundriss der Kameralwissenschaft oder Wirthschaftslehre für encyklopädische Vorlesungen.* K. Groos: 1823: p. 17, §35.

66 For a similar definition of the national economy, see Jakob, Ludwig Heinrich von. *Grundsätze der National-Oekonomie, oder Theorie des National-Reichthums*, 3rd ed. Halle: Friedrich Ruff, 1825: 46-47.

67 Tribe, 1988: p. 191.

68 A liberal economist like Bastiat could thus list needs that have "a real importance" (*une importance réelle*) and prioritize them: Breathing, food, clothing, housing, conservation and recovery of health, locomotion, safety, education, entertainment, a sense of the beautiful. (Bastiat, Frédéric. *Œuvres complètes de Frédéric Bastiat: Sophismes économiques. Petits pamphlets II. Guillaumin,* 1863: 62-92). The text of Chapter 3, "Des besoins et des hommes" ("Of needs and men") was published for the first time in 1849.

69 With Lucien March in France, Ernst Engel in Germany, Caroll Wright in the United States, and Kiaer in Norway. Desrosières, Alain. *Gouverner par les nombres. L'argument statistique II*, Paris: Presses de l'Ecole des Mines. 2008: p. 13.
70 Social type, a description, an explanation, and a proposal of tiered action were associated. (Desrosières, 2008: p. 18).
71 Desrosières, 2008: p. 16. According to the typology proposed by Alain Desrosières, the "classic liberal state" at the end of the eighteenth century is distinguished from the "providential state" at the end of the nineteenth not just by a general objective (to ensure market transparency to facilitate exchange and concurrence in the first case; to protect salaries from the consequences of capitalism in the second case), but also by a statistical instrumentation (the study of agricultural prices being characteristic of the liberal state, the study of the spending of working-class households being characteristic of the providential state). (Desrosières, 2008: 9-14).
72 Desrosières, 2008: p. 20.
73 Rowntree, Benjamin S. *Poverty: A study of town life*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1901.
74 On nutrition studies, see later in the chapter.
75 Lollivier, Stéfan. La pauvreté: Définitions et mesures. *Regard croisés sur l'économie 2/4*, (2008): 21-29; Lepenies, Philipp. *Armut: Ursachen, Formen, Auswege*. CH Beck, 2017.
76 Halbwachs, Maurice. *La classe ouvrière et les niveaux de vie. Recherches sur la hiérarchie des besoins dans les sociétés industrielles contemporaines*. PhD diss., Paris: Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Paris, 1912. Halbwachs showed that needs were divided in "four essential categories," all the while specifying that this classification was not natural but rather the "work of society" (Halbwachs, 1912: p. 19).
77 Halbwachs, 1912: 6-42, here p. 42.
78 Lollivier, 2008.
79 Rowntree, Benjamin S. *Progress and poverty: A second social survey of York*. London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1941; Rowntree, Benjamin S. and Lavers, George Russell. *Poverty and the welfare State: A third social survey of York dealing only with economic questions*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1951.
80 The method of representative, then random samples therefore replaced monographs. Desrosières attributes a precursory role to the Norwegian Anders Kiaer, who proposed representative samples on the whole population to the International Statistical Institute in 1895. See Desrosières, 2008.
81 "One mistake has been to narrow attention largely to the preservation of physical efficiency, whatever that may mean, and by implication to assume that the physical efficiency of individuals can be divorced from their psychological well-being and the organization and structure of society. Another has been to draw up a list of basic necessities, translate them into a certain income, and call this 'subsistence.' All students of poverty . . . have tended to write as if their subsistence standards consisted of a list of absolute necessities which could be applied irrespective of time and place." Townsend, Peter. The meaning of poverty. *British Journal of Sociology* 13, no. 3 (1962): 201–227, here pp. 218–219. Cited in Lepenies, 2013: 9.
82 Lachenal et al., 2014: p. 2.
83 *Ibid.*
84 Lachenal et al., 2014: p. 5.
85 Foucault, Michel. *Naissance de la clinique*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963. Quote by Lachenal et al., 2014.
86 For historical accounts of early quantification of demography and health, see Rusnock, Andrea. *Vital Account. Quantifying Health and Population in Eighteenth-Century England and France*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. On the emergence of mortality statistics in the seventeenth century, see Le Bras, Hervé. *Naissance de la mortalité. L'origine politique de la démographie et de la statistique*. Paris: Gallimard/le Seuil, 2000.
87 Simmons, Dana. *Vital Minimum: Need, science, and politics in modern France*. University of Chicago Press, 2015: 33-39.

88 Cullather, Nick. The foreign policy of the calorie. *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 2 (2007): 337-364.

89 *Ibid.*

90 Barona, Josep L. *The problem of nutrition: Experimental science, public health and economy in Europe 1914-1945.* Brussels/New York: Peter Lang, 2010.

91 Although the representation as a pyramid was not Maslow's, but didactic explanation of Maslow's idea by his German colleague Werner Cornell.

92 Maslow subscribed to a tradition of motivational studies (from *movere*, to move); that is, studies of the origin of human conduct: What compels individuals to act?

93 He tried to reconcile the varied works of the functionalist theory (James and Dewey), with holism and the Gestalt theory (of Wertheimer and Goldstein) as well as dynamic psychology (which he associates with Freud and Adler).

94 Maslow, Abraham H. A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review 50*, no. 4 (1943): p. 371.

95 He talked about "questions raised" and of "a very serious lack of sound data." Maslow 1943: p. 371 and p. 383.

96 Maslow, 1943: p. 385. The empirical weakness of the hierarchy of needs did not escape his peers: "The theory is widely accepted, but there is little research evidence to support it. (. . .) It has almost become a tradition for writers to point out the discrepancy between the popularity of the theory and the lack of clear and consistent empirical evidence to support it." See Wahba, Mahmoud A. and Bridwell, Lawrence G. Maslow reconsidered: A review of research on the need hierarchy theory. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance 15*, no. 2 (1976): 212-240, here p. 212. Indeed, Maslow was not very preoccupied with confirming the empirical bases of his theory, and numerous studies have contradicted his hypotheses, without affecting the theory's development.

97 "There are at least five sets of goals, which we may call basic needs. These are briefly physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. . . . These basic goals are related to each other, being arranged in a hierarchy of prepotency" (Maslow, 1943: p. 394).

98 This picture is from Kenrick, Douglas T., Griskevicius, Vladas, Neuberg, Steven L., and Schaller, Mark. Renovating the pyramids of needs: Contemporary extensions built upon ancient foundations. *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 5, no. 3 (2010): 292–314.

99 "For the man who is extremely and dangerously hungry, no other interests exist but food. He dreams food, he remembers food, he thinks about food, he emotes only about food, he perceives only food and he wants only food" (Maslow, 1943: p. 374).

100 Maslow, 1943: p. 374.

101 "The average member of our society is most often partially satisfied and partially unsatisfied in all of his wants" (Maslow, 1943: p. 395). "In actual fact, most members of our society who are normal, are partially satisfied in all their basic needs and partially unsatisfied in all their basic needs at the same time. A more realistic description of the hierarchy would be in terms of decreasing percentages of satisfaction as we go up the hierarchy of prepotency. For instance, if I may assign arbitrary figures for the sake of illustration, it is as if the average citizen is satisfied perhaps 85 per cent in his physiological needs, 70 per cent in his safety needs, 50 per cent in his love needs, 40 per cent in his self-esteem needs, and 10 per cent in his self-actualization needs" (Maslow, 1943: 388-389).

102 "The integrated wholeness of the organism must be one of the foundation stones of motivation theory" (Maslow, 1943: p. 370).

103 As well as on medical works on homeostasis (the body's natural tendency to maintain a constant state of blood flow).

104 The ambiguity maintained by Maslow on the contours of the idea of "need" was noted by Wahba and Bridwell: "The most problematic aspect of Maslow's theory,

however, is that dealing with the concept of need itself. It is not clear what is meant by the concept of need. Does need have a psychological and/or physiological base? Does a need come to existence because of deficiency only or does need always exist even if it is gratified? How can we identify, isolate and measure different needs?" (Wahba and Bridwell, 1976: p. 234).

105 "Human needs arrange themselves in hierarchies of pre-potency. That is to say, the appearance of one need usually rests on the prior satisfaction of another, more pre-potent need" (Maslow, 1943: p. 370).

106 "Thus it seems impossible as well as useless to make any list of fundamental physiological needs for they can come to almost any number one might wish, depending on the degree of specificity of description" (Maslow, 1943: p. 372).

107 "If we wish to see these needs directly and clearly we must turn to neurotic or near-neurotic individuals, and to the economic and social underdogs" (Maslow, 1943: p. 379).

108 The musician, the artist, the poet, the inventor – even if the "ideal mother" and the "athlete" made a short appearance (Maslow, 1943: 382–383).

109 ("the average American citizen" [374], "the average child in our society" [378], "the healthy, normal, fortunate adult" [378], "average citizen" [388], "the average person" [388], "the average member of our society" [395], etc.) Maslow specified that the hierarchy of needs could find itself inverted in people who were situated furthest from the American average, (a) those who, having had all their needs satisfied from childhood, were particularly "strong" and capable as an adult of channeling a superior need (for example the defense of a value) before a physiological need or at the price of a risk to their security and (b) those who, since they had been used to food deprivation since childhood, were accustomed to hunger and could control it.

110 Maslow, 1943: p. 390.

111 In a corrosive article, the psychologist Joseph Henrich and his colleagues showed how American psychology was constructed on an empirical foundation essentially based on experiments on North American subjects from the middle- or upper-classes, and in particular on studies effected on first-year psychology students, who were the captive population for laboratory experiments. According to them, American psychologists considered their models to be universal, even though the North American population represented less than 5% of the world population, and even though the students from the first and second years represented less than 0.2% thereof. It is therefore on the "weirdest" ("weird" also being an acronym for "Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic") of subjects that these theories, which have universal pretensions, have been constructed (Henrich, Joseph, Heine, Steven J., and Norenzayan, Ara. The weirdest people in the world? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 33, no. 2–3 (2010): 61–135).

112 Haggbloom, Steven J., et al. The 100 most eminent psychologists of the 20th century. *Review of General Psychology 6*, no. 2 (2002): 139–152.

113 On the continuation of Maslow's ideas in psychology, see Alderfer, Clayton P. An empirical test of a new theory of human needs. *Organizational Behaviour and Human Performance* 4, no. 2 (1969): 142–175; Tay, Louis, and Diener, Ed. Needs and subjective well-being around the world. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 101, no. 2 (*2011): 354-365.

114 *The Economist* review considers Maslow a management "guru." His "hierarchy of needs" figures in the pantheon of management ideas (Hindle, Tom. *Guide to Management Ideas and Gurus*. London: The Economist in Association with Profile Books LTD, 2008: p. 101 and pp. 267–268).

115 Some of Maslow's ideas have been cherished in marketing theories, especially the idea that one can sell a good that might seem superfluous if this good is linked, on a deeper level, to a basic need. One example given by Maslow – that of the ice cream cone – prefigured the script of many advertisements: "A desire for an ice cream cone might

actually be an indirect expression of a desire for love. If it is, then this desire for the ice cream cone becomes an extremely important motivation. If, however the ice cream is simply something to cool the mouth with, or a casual appetitive reaction, then the desire is relatively unimportant. Everyday conscious desires are to be regarded as symptoms, as surface indicators of more basic needs" (Maslow, 1943: 392-393).

116 Boltanski, Luc, and Chiapello, Eve. *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme 10*. Paris: Gallimard, 1999: p. 109. According to Boltanksi and Chiapello, a new problem occurred in the 1960s for enterprises: Salaries and benefits alone could not suffice to motivate highly qualified staff. Thus, Maslow's theory of motivation was attractive and he became a "fetish author" of capitalist management. The "need for security" for instance became "one of the central arguments of the defense of capitalism" in the 1960s and 1970s (Boltanski and Chiapello, 1999: 148–154).

117 Among countless examples of very free adaptations of Maslow's model: World Health Organization (WHO), Reed, Bob, et al. *Technical notes on drinking water, sanitation and hygiene in emergencies*. Geneva: WHO, 2011; see also Wemmers, Jo-Anne M., and Manirabona, Amissi. Defining victims: A proposed typology for victims of war crimes and their need for reparation. *Criminological Approaches to International Criminal Law*, Bantekas, Illias and Mylonaki, Emmanouela (eds.), 316–337, here 329. University of Cambridge, 2014. Veenema, Tener Goodwin (ed.). *Disaster nursing and emergency preparedness for chemical, biological, and radiological terrorism and other hazards*. New York: Springer, 2013: 80–81 and 289–291. The American NGO "Relief International" made its logo from a representation of the classification of needs.

118 This position is also presented in humanitarianism: Certain authors insist on the situated character of priorities and the ethnocentric character of the whole "hierarchy of needs." Beristain, Carlos Martín. *Humanitarian aid work: A critical approach*. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 2006: p. 6: "Our priorities are often different from theirs," explains Beristain: "whether informing the families of fatalities is more urgent than restoring ration cards." For Aptekar, mental health is as important as "basic needs" in Ethiopia, notwithstanding the "ethnocentric scale of values derived by Abraham Maslow." Aptekar, Lewis. Cultural problems for Western counselors working with Ethiopian refugees. In *Counselling Refugees: A Psychosocial Approach to Innovative Multicultural Intervention*, Bemak, Fred, Chi-Ying Chung, Rita, and Pedersen, Paul B. (eds.), 208–221, here 211. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003.

119 Slim, Hugo. *Politicizing humanitarian action according to need*. In Presentation to the 2nd International Meeting on Good Humanitarian Donorship, Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 21–22 Oct. 2004.

120 See later in the chapter for the role of UNRRA for relief in Central Europe.

121 Watson, Alexander. *Enduring the Great War: Combat, morale and collapse in the German and British Armies: 1914–1918*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

122 Weinreb, Alice Autumn. *Modern hungers: Food and power in twentieth-century Germany*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017; Trentmann, Frank. Coping with shortage: The problem of food security and global visions of coordination: c. 1890s-1950. In *Food and conflict in Europe in the age of the two World Wars*, Trentmann, Frank and Just, Flemmin (eds). London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006: 13–48; Collingham, Lizzie. *Taste of war: World War II and the battle for food*. New York: Penguin, 2012.

123 Moyn, 2018: 48.

124 Rosanvallon, Pierre. *La société des égaux*. Paris: Seuil, 2011: 289. On the history of the welfare state, see Kuhnle, Stein and Sander, Anne. The emergence of the western welfare state. In *The Oxford handbook of the welfare state*, 2010: 61–80; Ewald, François. *Histoire de l'Etat providence: Les origines de la solidarité*. Paris: Grasset, 1996.

125 On the difference between sufficiency (how well an individual is doing in relation to some minimum provision) and equality (how far individuals are from one another in the portion of the good things they receive), see Moyn, 2018: 3.

126 Moyn, 2018: 13.

127 Moyn, 2018: 46.
128 Hoover led the Committee for Relief of Belgium. Quoted in Cullather, 2007: 350. On the history of relief in Belgium, see Becker, Annette. *Les cicatrices rouges*. Paris: Fayard, 2010.
129 On governments-in-exile, see Eichenberg, Julia. Macht auf der Flucht. Europäische Regierungen in London 1940–1944. *Zeithistorische Forschungen – Studies in Contemporary History* 3 (2018): 452–473.
130 Relief organizations were established in London (the Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad (COBSRA)) and Washington (Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations (OFRRO)).
131 Collingham, 2012.
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133 ILO. Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention no. 102. ILO, 1952.
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135 Malkki, Liisa H. Refugees and exile: From 'refugee studies' to the national order of things. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24, no. 1 (1995): 495−523.
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139 Breckenridge, 2012; Breckenridge, 2008.
140 Weitzberg, 2015.
141 Quoted in Bonnecase, Vincent. Généalogie d'une évidence statistique: De la 'réussite économique' du colonialisme tardif à la 'faillite' des états africains (v. 1930–v.1980). *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 4 (2015): 33–63.
142 There is a growing literature on this: Hunt, Nancy Rose. 'Le Bebe en Brousse': European women, African birth spacing and colonial intervention in breast feeding in the Belgian Congo. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 21, no. 3 (1988): 401–432; Brantley, Cynthia. *Feeding families: African realities and British ideas of nutrition and development in early colonial Africa*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002; Bonnecase, Vincent. Avoir faim en Afrique occidentale française: Investigations et représentations coloniales (1920–1960). *Revue d'histoire des sciences humaines* 2 (2009): 151–174; Worboys, Michael. The discovery of colonial malnutrition between the wars. In *Imperial medicine and indigenous societies*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017.
143 On this: Bonnecase, Vincent. When numbers represented poverty: The changing meaning of the food ration in French colonial Africa. *The Journal of African History* 59, no. 3 (2018): 463–481, here p. 467.
144 Something which Bonnecase describes accurately. See Bonnecase, 2018: 468. On ready to use therapeutic foods, see: Carémel, Jean-Francois. Mesurer la malnutrition infantile au Niger. Entre révolution thérapeutique et transformations de la métrique des corps. *Ethnologie française* 45, no. 1 (2015): 95–107. See also Scott-Smith, Tom. Sticky technologies: Plumpy'Nut®, emergency feeding and the viscosity of humanitarian design. *Social Studies of Science* 48, no. 1 (2018): 3–24.

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154 According to Article 73 of the UN Charter, adopted in San Francisco in June 1945, the member states "which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government . . . accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost . . . the well-being of the inhabitants . . . and to this end . . . to transmit regularly to the Secretary-General . . . statistical and other information of a technical nature relating to economic, social, and educational conditions in the territories for which they are respectively responsible" (United Nations. *Charter of the United Nations*: Chapter 9, Article 73. UN, June 1945). Cited in Bonnecase, 2015.

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156 Cooper, 1996: 469.

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159 Cooper, 1996: 230–231.

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162 Cooper, Frederick. *Colonialism in question: Theory, knowledge, history*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005: 209. See also: Fall, Babacar. *Le travail au Sénégal au XXe siècle*. Paris: Kathala, 2011: 211–214.

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166 Quoted in Moyn, 2018: 101.
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178 Streeten et al., 1981: 17.
179 Cited in Kapur et al., 1997: 267.
180 "such innocent, five-letter words;" "a pragmatic response to the problem of world poverty" (preface by Mahbub Ul Haq, in Streeten et al., 1981: ix).
181 Streeten et al., 1981: 40. "Internationally, also, there is more concern with ameliorating blatant deprivation than with bringing developing countries up to Western living standards" (Streeten et al., 1981: 18).
182 "meeting the basic needs of the world's poor has stronger moral and political appeal and therefore a higher claim on aid budgets than most other schemes advanced for the promotion of international assistance" (Streeten et al., 1981: 40–41).
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