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## **NEEDS-BASED APPROACH RE-EVALUATED**

From the very early years of social work profession, human needs have been a very central way of seeing the world. In its time, a very influential approach even in social work was Abraham Maslow's human psychology, based on an idea of hierarchy of needs. From 1940s to 1980s, the needs-approach was used in level of living studies as a foundation for data collecting, and even for policy decisions. Since the 1980s, the interest in needs has somewhat declined, at least in Finland.

Social work management strategies have been concentrating on service-users rights, but not on a meaning that all humans have right to a decent living, but more on a line of rights as customers (timely services; services fitting for the purpose and so on). This approach suits well to the general trend of consumerism even in the social welfare. This leads to a certain departure from Richard M. Titmuss' way of defining what social administration means (there are human needs and societal mechanisms of answering to them).

There are two separate ways of theorizing about needs which both have potentials for radical reconsideration of social welfare policies. Len Doyal and Ian Gough redefined classic universal theory of needs, producing a tool for comparisons of societies according their capabilities in producing wellbeing. Agnes Heller and other radical theorists in Hungary developed the other approach. The aim of this radical school of thought was on radical needs (for example autonomy) and on the process of controlling the needs satisfaction. System of needs are being produced by the society, and they are even controlled by societal actions. Social welfare and social work are part of this process.

This paper considers the possible gains which needs-based approach might give to social administration, especially in a current global crisis of the economy.