

# Individual's Potential to Perform 'Fair Action' in Business Life: J. Rawls and A. Sen

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**Abstract:** We witness a period in which individuals and societies demand justice, but injustices occur at the highest level. Numerous theories suggesting the fair action to eliminate injustices have been produced from Aristotle's time to the present. However, it is seen that these theories do not fully correspond to practical life. The longing for justice becomes a universal need, especially in this period, when the utilitarian approach colonizes societies. Thus, capitalist societies compromise many values while realizing their enrichment ideals, the higher the economic growth, and the increase in welfare, the more realization of economic life problems. This situation leads to the intensification of fair action discussions in business life. This study aims to question the potential of the modern individual to take reasonable action in such an environment where mainstream economics prevails. The study's scope is Rawls and Sen's works, which are essential studies in this field. According to the researches, assumptions of Rawls, who is considered a vital justice theorist of the twentieth century in the West, are seen as inaccessible or transcendent. The thoughts of the famous Indian economist Sen can be considered as more practical solutions. On the other hand, the ideas of both philosophers reveal important data in terms of determining individual's potential of reaching fair action.

**Keywords:** Fair Action, Economic Justice, Rawls, Sen, Rationality.

**JEL Classification:** A14. B00. N00.

## Bireyin İş Hayatında 'Adil Eylem'i Gerçekleştirme Potansiyeli: J. Rawls ve A. Sen

**Öz:** Her bireyin ve toplumun adalet istediği ancak adaletsizliklerin hat safhada yaşandığı bir döneme tanıklık ediyoruz. Aristot'dan günümüze adaletsizlikleri gidermek amacıyla adil eylemi öne süren sayısız teori üretilir. Ancak bu teorilerin pratik hayatta tam anlamıyla karşılık bulmadığı görülür. Özellikle faydacı yaklaşımın toplumları kolonize ettiği bu dönemde adalet özlemi evrensel bir ihtiyaca dönüşür. Çünkü kapitalist toplumlar zenginleşme ideallerini gerçekleştirirken pek çok değerden ödün verirler. Bu nedenle ekonomik büyüme ve refah artışı ne derece yüksek olursa iktisadi hayattaki problemler de o derece artış gösterir. Bu durum iş hayatında adil eylem tartışmalarının yoğunlaşmasına yol açar. Bu çalışmanın amacı; ana akım iktisadın hüküm sürdüğü böyle bir ortamda modern bireyin adil eylemi gerçekleştirme potansiyelini sorgulamaktır. Çalışmanın kapsamını bu konuda önemli isimler olan Rawls ve Sen'in eserleri oluşturur. Araştırmalara göre yirminci yüzyılın Batı'daki en önemli adalet teorisini kabul edilen Rawls'ın varsayımları ulaşılmaz ya da aşkın olarak görülür. Hint kökenli ünlü iktisatçı Sen'in düşünceleri ise daha çok pratik çözümler olarak değerlendirilebilir. Diğer yandan bu iki düşünürün görüşleri; bireylerin rasyonelite çizgisinde adil eyleme ulaşma potansiyellerini açığa çıkarma açısından önemli doneler sunar.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Adil Eylem, İktisadi Adalet, Rawls, Sen, Rasyonellik.

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Çamlı, A. Y. (2021). Individual's Potential to Perform 'Fair Action' in Business Life: J. Rawls and A. Sen. İş Ahlakı Dergisi, 14 (1), ss. 63-85.

Research Paper

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DOI: 10.12711/tjbe.2021.14.1.0171  
İş Ahlakı Dergisi, 2021  
isahlakidergisi.com

Başvuru : 07.05.2020  
Revizyon : 19.01.2021  
Kabul : 02.04.2021  
Basım : 06.2021

## Introduction

One of the main problems of the modern economic system is the enrichment which increases poverty. The increased gap between the rich and the poor leads to many socio-pathological diseases becoming chronic and widespread for individuals and communities. The most developed countries even witness the humanitarian drama in the twenty-first century, in which rapid developments are experienced in terms of technique, knowledge, capital, and equipment. The events that terrify people take place more and more dangerously day by day. The deeper the gap between the social classes is, the more various problems in social life are. Considering the instabilities in the socio-economic structure, it can be expressed that the income distribution is unfair, the insufficiency of the income distribution practices, the monopolization of the capital, the share of the rich from the income day by day, the increase and spread of poverty and the frequency of the crises. Accordingly, it is subjected to consequences such as a decrease in demand, production, investment, and employment in the economy. As a matter of course, socio-psychological problems such as social segregation and opposition, a certain minority having a voice, the damage of social assistance and solidarity, spreading laziness, and stress and pessimism surrounding society occur relatedly.

For this reason, politicians, theologians, theorists, sociologists, and economists, as always, bring up the principle of justice. Justice is a virtue, principle, or value that humanity has ever tried to reach but cannot be fully reached due to the lack of balance between self-interest and social interest. Also, there are lively discussions about what fair action is and how it will be applied in business life in the historical process. Some argue that they can only reach reasonable effort by following religious calls, while others argue that they can reach them with formal rules of law to be established by reason.

Also, the issue of economic justice, which means that everyone participating in the process and wants to join in the process from all activities and activities in the economic life, gets the right to participate, is crucial for the person's life. Although there are some fundamental differences (such as the issue of interest), Western economic and legal systems are in consensus in terms of general scope contract terms, fair prices, unfair advantage of asymmetric information, and supply and demand balance in the markets.

In the study, the potential of the individual to take fair action is questioned. At the beginning, it is assumed that the individual whose fair action potential is

questioned, acts rationally. This rationality corresponds to utilitarianism as it is known in the classical economics doctrine. Utilitarianism is based on the principle of profit and utility maximization. The study will explore the possibility of fair action taking place or the possibility of veiling fair action in such a doctrine. The concept of fair action, which is the basis of this motivation, is read from the perspective of economic thought. In other words, this rationality is questioned over the concept of fair action against the rationality at the centre of utilitarianism, which is defended by the classical approach in economic thought.

Why is the concept of fair action emphasized? This concept has not been directly and completely questioned in economics, politics and other disciplines. The concept has been approached through focal points such as what the individual does, behave fairly; in which situations justice will be provided; and what features a behavior includes, is fair. Especially in the economic thought, this trend is rare. On the other hand, it is seen that those who search the concept indirectly act in accordance with their own ideology. In this direction, the rationality in classical economic theory is wanted to be revised with the rationality in modern economic theory, and this effort will be conceptualized as fair action. The aim for this effort is that utilitarian approaches reduce just action to only the utility parameter, and the theories produced in this direction are disconnected from reality. Also, there is no tangible argument in utilitarian approaches to reduce economic injustices. To be filled this deficiency, the concept of fair action, which is the fundamental of the research, will be read with rationality. The phenomenon of rationality will be interpreted as an alternative to utilitarianism.

So, what is the power of the modern individual to perform fair action in this chaotic environment? What are the possibilities and motivations to reveal this power or potential? Answers to such basic questions are sought in the case of Rawls and Sen. Rawls is regarded as the thinker who initiated the economic justice debates in the modern period. Amartya Sen stands out as the economist who struggles against inequalities in the discipline of economics. In this context, the main topics such as fair action concept, the understanding of fair action of the West, the means of reaching justice, the socio-political environment and conditions of the fair subject will be critically examined.

### **Fair Action Concept**

As in almost every discipline, there are various studies and debates on justice in economic thought. On the other hand, the main deficiencies identified are as

follows: How to raise a fair individual and define fair action. The first subject is handled in part in Aristotle's works. Later, the famous Islamic philosopher Farabi examines this issue in detail. The second issue is the focus of this study. While there are many studies on the need for an individual to behave fairly, it is seen that the subject of fair action is not adequately and directly addressed (Duran, 2019, p. 1). The (fair) individuals who can establish justice must take fair action, but the starting point of the problem seems uncertain. In fact, this issue is linked to the raising of the fair individual. If the individual is unfair, how can he take fair action and achieve justice? This is one of the basic questions to be answered in this study. Using various disciplines, the definitions that indicate fair action, albeit indirectly, will be transferred in terms of forming the theoretical basis of the study.

Plato sees giving everyone what they deserve as fair action. He states that fair action can be performed by philosopher kings. According to him, fair action includes knowledge, will and virtue (Platon, 2015, p. 182). According to Aristotle, if action is virtuous, rational, correct, measured, moral and good, it can be fair. Aristotle states that not everyone can act fairly. One of the most important conditions of fair action is education (Aristotle, 1906, pp. 1-16). According to Thomas, the action that activates the virtues is fair (MacIntyre, 1988, p. 181). Hutcheson states the action motivated and controlled by moral sense is fair (Hünler, 1997, pp. 202-203). "... Thus self-interest is the original motivated to the establishment of justice: but a sympathy with public interest is the source of the moral approbation, which attends that virtue." According to Hume, the controlled personal takes out. Self-interest should be adjusted to the benefit of the other party or society (Hume, 1978, pp. 499-500). Locke states that being equal is fair action (Locke, 1988, pp. 273-274). Bentham points out that the act that provides the highest utility and highest happiness is fair (Bentham, 1983, p. 59). Mill tries to frame Bentham's view in a more acceptable framework. "Justice is the name given to certain moral requirements that are collectively observed, that are at the top of the scale of social utility and therefore have more obligations than anything else" (Mill, 2019, p. 99). Say uses the phrase that a successful entrepreneur must be moral and fair: "requires a combination of moral qualities, that are not often found together. Judgement, perseverance, and a knowledge of the world as well as of business...the art of superintendence and administration" (Say, 1971, pp. 330-331), but does not mention fair action. Proudhon points out fair action by saying that mutual interests should be considered and treated with equal rights (Proudhon, 2014, p. 114). "Live dignified, do no harm to anyone, give everyone their share". This is how Kant expresses justice. According to him, just action is a rational and virtuous action

that is done according to moral values, the good is preferred because of the good (Kant, 1886, pp. 8-19). Weber did not enter into the fairness of action debate. According to Habermas Weber points to the concept of practice-rationality and fair action. He regards a principled, rational and values-oriented action just by definition (Weber, 1978, p. 424; 1950, p. 55, 71, 77; 1946, p. 284; Habermas, 1984, p. 250). Practical-rational action is located at the opposite pole of interest-oriented purpose-rational action (Weber, 1978, p. 64; 1950a, p. 76; 1947, p. 106; Habermas, 1984, pp. 253-254). Habermas considers fair action as communicative-rational action. He suggests rational communication for fair action. According to him, in the simplest terms, principled, consensual and rational action is fair (Habermas, 1984, p. 86). Siebert finds it fair that Habermas's communicative action is of a theological nature (Siebert, 1985, p. 373). According to Hayek, for an action to be fair, it must be done freely and consciously (Hayek, 1995, p. 57). According to MacIntyre, for an action to be fair, it should be an action that is virtuous, includes moral values and rises on the concept of practice (MacIntyre, 1988, pp. 362-365). In Nozick's opinion, you get what you give, signifies fair action. (Nozick, 1974, pp. 151-155). Singer expresses fair action with the statement that you should choose the best for everyone who will be affected by the outcome of my action (Singer 1997, pp. 586-587). According to libertarians, if individuals make their choices freely and fully voluntarily, they behave fairly (Sandel, 2012, p. 138; 2009, p. 17). Walras develops his economic theory for a fair economy (Walker, 2001, p. xviii), but he does not express an opinion on fair action. He identified justice only in goodness (Walras, 2014, p. 18). According to the utilitarian approach, which is the dominant economic paradigm, the individual should choose the option that will maximize the benefit (give the best result) while taking an action, making a decision or making a policy. This preference is considered to be rational as well as fair in the economics literature (Naqvi, 2018, p. 46). On the other hand, why and how should the individual choose fair action in a situation that does not suit his or her interests or would be harmed? There are two factors, one of which is negative and the other positive, which make individuals more attractive to behave fairly. The negative factor is that the negative consequences of injustice and injustice in the social structure are deeply felt by individuals hating such behaviours. The positive factor is that, fair role models are appreciated by individuals and taken as examples (Duran, 2018, p. 44). In line with these statements, the potential of the rational individual to perform a fair action will be tried to be revealed in the thoughts of Rawls and Sen.

## Questioning Fair Action in John Rawls' Thought

Before questioning the potential for fair action in Rawls, it is necessary to discuss the basic principles of the utilitarian approach and Rawls' basic criticisms of this approach briefly. Utilitarianism argues that good action is the action that brings happiness, that is, the benefit of the majority of society. Accuracy depends on the individual's actions. The evaluation is made according to the benefit resulting from this action. Human nature wants to escape from pain and has pleasurable things, so the most valuable action is the one that brings the highest pleasure and benefit. If there is a benefit as a result of the action, the action is moral. Utilitarianism also justifies the violation of the rights and freedoms of the individual for the common good. There is no universal moral law, as a single action cannot benefit all at once. According to Rawls, the immunity of every individual should not be violated, even if it is in the general good of society. Therefore, violating the rights and freedom of the individual for the sake of the general benefit of society is not suitable for a fair system. In this context, utilitarians cannot treat human beings as equals and instrumentalize some people for the happiness of some people. Another criticism of Rawls to utilitarians is the view that each act giving pleasure is moral. The nature of the action is insignificant, it does not care whether it harms the rights and freedom of the individual. The individual is insignificant for utilitarians, there is no human autonomy, individual difference is not given importance. Advancing along the Kantian line, Rawls attaches importance to human autonomy. Rawls sees utilitarianism as a teleological doctrine. Being a teleological doctrine means a direct independent definition of the good. But Rawls is after a deontological understanding of justice that places right over good first. Good is subjective and varies from person to person. In the understanding of justice based on the good, the rules are arranged according to the good of a certain community, which is something that should not happen according to Rawls. The principles of justice should always be arranged according to the truth. Utilitarians aim to produce the best, but according to Rawls, this is possible only by chance. In utilitarianism, principles are regulated with the priority of the good, and this leads to injustice in society. It is only considered how the action affects the overall majority. In the theory of justice as fairness, individuals' own good are left out and principles are chosen by prioritizing the concept of right (Demir, 2012, pp. 51-58).

Rawls's world of thought provides motivation from classical (not modern) liberalism. He puts the rational and free individual, the rights and freedom of the individual at the centre of his thought. However, in order for these values to be

meaningful and functional, it highlights facts such as equality of rights, equality of opportunity, economic equality, fair distribution, and the level of welfare. Can his criticism of Rawls be regarded as a critique of liberalism?

First of all, it can be expressed that Rawls positions the rational individual against utilitarianism. Rawls's rational individual can be seen as a revision of the rational individual in purely utilitarian understanding. The rational individual is based on modern liberalism or modern economics rather than the formal equality of classical liberalism or classical economics doctrine. In other words, the rationalism targeted by Rawls means the regulation of social and economic inequality in classical liberalism.

Rawls not only develops an alternative to utilitarianism, but also presents a moral view (Gorowitz, 1994, p. 270). However, he does not address the role of religious principles and values in building a well-regulated society. This determination can be put forward as one of the most important deficiencies in regulation (Naqvi, 2018, p. 165). Then what is the difference principle? The primary dimension of the principle of providing justice is the difference principle. Accordingly, social and economic inequalities can only be accepted when they benefit individuals with the lowest income. A state of inequality, the most it can be seen as legitimate for the benefit of the bad. The essence of the principle is simple and its attractive thought is: social and economic inequalities, in terms of how well those who are in the worst should be evaluated. According to Rawls' solution, the slightest interests of the poor cannot be dispensed with for the great interests of the rich. The first criterion in institutional analysis is to increase the welfare of the poor (Naqvi, 2018, p. 64; Miller, 1994, p. 220; Bilgin, 1996, p. 215). Nozick's Rawls opposition is shaped around the principle of utilitarianism and difference principle. There is a tension between Nozick's utilitarianism and Rawls' concept of difference principle treating inequality (Kukathas and Pettit, 2007, pp. 59-60). One of the positive features of the difference principle is that it takes into account the welfare of the least privileged people in society when evaluating the current situation, that is, when questioning whether it is good or not.

However, according to Naqvi, Rawls does not have a specific plan on how the wealthiest will behave if the economy progresses in a different process. Rawls did not make any predictions as to how wealth or wealth would be managed. While it is about increasing the welfare of the poor in theory, the quantitative reduction of the poor is not expressed (2018, p. 64). What is Rawls' answer? The individual does not favor himself and his acquaintances in the division of rights and responsibili-

ties and gives whatever he has right to express justice. However, the feelings of the modern individual make it dysfunctional. Rawls submits a transcendental design because he is aware of the contemporary individual's situation. He advocates that the community of fictional individuals can achieve justice principles, which include rights and responsibilities among themselves. According to Rawls' design, the situation of individuals is expressed with the concept of 'Veil of Ignorance' (Rawls, 1999, p. 119). Individuals are unaware of their knowledge and characteristics, such as race, color, class, gender, proficiency, physical power, economic power, and moral values. Individuals in the community should be isolated from the emotions and characteristics that can direct their preferences (Fabre and Miller, 2003, p. 9; Altham, 2009, p. 76). In his view, the ideal individual is just reached in this way. Ideal-fair individuals are rational individuals that free from the influence and direction of all animal instincts. The determination of the principles of fair distribution of income and wealth can be accomplished by these subjects (Maffettone, 2010, p. 25-52). "But if this is so, the contractees will certainly not decide upon a strategy such as "no advantage to me is acceptable unless it is to the advantage of those worse off." For, while this may be reasonable in a situation of uncertainty, it is not reasonable in a situation with information. In the latter case, a rational egoist will adopt a new strategy that will maximize his interests alone" (Choptiany, 1973, p. 149). According to Sandel, individuals should adopt their own common good, not deontological correct principles. Nothing contrary to the prevailing practices and the existing sense of loyalty and obligations can be built on an adopted moral principle. Uncovering these principles requires questioning who the person is, how they are, and what is good. The aim here is the search for the common good for society (Sandel, 2009, p. 62).

Rawls' rational-ideal individual is not a subject which is equipped with worldly ambitions. Rawls evaluates this as just a hypothetical situation. Those who criticize it accept this hypothetical subject as the subject of the real world and criticize it. However, Rawls recognizes that the real life individual cannot be like that. On the other hand, Rawls does not suggest any ideas about how to raise individuals fair to rights and responsibilities in economic life. Instead of this, he mentions the characteristics that an ideal individual should possess to establish economic justice.

### **Free (Ideal) Individual and Rational Subject**

Rawls states that individual's economic actions must first be free to be fair. In this respect, he excludes Kant's pure practical intellect and numerical subject thought because they are metaphysical facts, although he mostly refers to Kant in his thou-

ghts. Instead, it substitutes an empirical hypothetical-ideal fair model. This subject is a raw subject abstracted from all his instincts with veil of ignorance in the original position (Rawls, 1971, p. 18; 1999, p. 77, 127; Naqvi, 2018, p. 64; Duran & Bayrak, 2020, p. 51). Assumptively, people fall into two categories: ideal-hypothetical human and average human (Sandel, 1998, p. 32). The ideal individual has a free and equal identity. One can feel freedom if he sees himself as the source of valid claims and agrees to take responsibility for the consequences of his actions (Rawls, 1993, p. 33). Rawls refers to Kant again here. Kant also defends that man is an autonomous entity (Kant, 1997, p. 47).

Moreover, Rawls expresses that in the original position, the principles to be determined by the community of subjects are those that correspond to Kant's (1997, p. 47) categorical imperative principle. This is due to the free and equal rational nature of the person. This principle predicts that the person's moral behavior is not due to the phenomenal situations such as satisfying certain desires or fulfilling their goals, but only sense of mission (Rawls, 1999, p. 222; Eryılmaz, 2019, pp. 18-20; Yücel, 2015, pp. 82-86).

Rawls makes a sharp distinction between one's self and their natural qualities and abilities. In his thought, one's self occurs before their natural qualities, values and purposes. Furthermore, the self is not affected by subsequent changes. It is man's essence that determines the values, beliefs and goals of man. For this reason, the personality of the subject has to be before the goals and beliefs determined by him. Natural qualities of individuals such as intelligence and abilities are distributed arbitrarily by nature and social life. Since these belong to society, not to individuals, they are seen as society's common values (Rawls, 1999, p. 514).

According to Rawls, handling of human personality and natural qualities and values are very important in terms of achieving economic justice. Since these qualities are arbitrarily distributed, no one can claim their achievements. What needs to be done is evaluating them useful for lower income groups (Rawls, 1999, p. 62; Duran, 2018, p. 41).

In other respects, Rawls' thoughts are severely criticized by most. For example, according to Nozick, the human view that is not affected by the values, beliefs and goals mentioned above undermines the individual's immunity and the immunity of the distinction between individuals. In the same way, this view is against to Kant's tradition (Nozick, 2006, p. 293). "John Rawls has used premises drawn from Kant's moral philosophy to justify egalitarian distributional policies, while Robert Nozick has used equally Kantian premises to defend radical libertarianism" (Fleischacker, 1996, p.

379). According to Sandel, Rawls develops this idea so as not to include a transcendent and metaphysical thought in his theory. On the one hand, the subject is different from his goals and beliefs in this thought, but on the other hand, he is concerned with his goals and beliefs to manage his goals. In this case, the moral question is what purpose I should choose, not who I am. According to Sandel, it is not the question of how to choose its goals, but how to distinguish between 'I' and mine if its goals and values determine the self (Sandel, 1998, p. 58-59).

The limits of self are not fully understood. Self and goals in Rawls' theory mean two things, not one thing. One is that, the self differs from goals, and the other is that the self is in relation with the goals. The self, which differs from its aims, aims us towards radical bodiless; the self which is fused with their goals leads to the impasse of radical phenomena (Sandel, 2009, p. 97). According to Sandel, possession is not a constant and stable but a variable situation. This happens in two ways. The things we have either suddenly or slowly disappear. Or, some of them increase their severity and dominate us. In other words, some of my desires and yearnings become stronger and stick to my identity rather than disappear and colonize my identity. These gradually turn into the things that form my identity and become I instead of mine (Sandel, 1998, p. 65).

According to Sandel, it is important to prevent goals and desires from colonizing the self, as Rawls suggests, and not the separation of the purpose and desires (Sandel, 1998, p. 65). Because the self, which is colonized by its desires like a modern individual, cannot behave fairly and cannot realize virtuous morality. On the other hand, Rawls tries to clarify some of his abstract expressions by considering the criticism. For example, he says that the view that the person's essence is unaffected by the values he chooses and the actions he demonstrates is not generally valid, but only in public life (Rawls, 1993, pp. 30-31).

On the other hand, Rawls argues that the natural and spiritual qualities and values are common as well as their essences are common and integrated (Rawls, 1999, p. 458; Sandel, 2012, p. 79). Nozick asks Rawls the question of how much a self remains when a specific distinction is made between one's self and its natural qualities and abilities (Nozick, 2006, p. 294).

There is a close connection between Rawls's fair subject and the idea of a rational subject. Rawls argues that the rational subject makes it according to the *life plan* where he has a particular good and determines his choice. Rawls, drawing rationality as Max Weber does (Weber, 1950, p. 77; 1978, pp. 64-65; Duran, 2017, p. 13), but does not go into discrimination in the form of utility-oriented purpose-rationality and valu-

e-centered practical-rationality. Even though he makes weak references to the content of moral-rationality, he usually uses rationality as purpose-rationality. Naturally, this approach causes contradictions. In spite of the fact that it sometimes refers to the concept of rational life plan and good, it does not persuade how the rational subject can be a fair subject. For this reason, the rational individual's reaching the potential to provide economic justice is also incomplete.

Considering the intense criticism, Rawls overcomes this confusion and goes to the discrimination of rationality-reasonableness in his later Political Liberalism (Rawls, 1993, pp. 51-52; Maffettone, 2010, p. 190). He says that this difference principle corresponds to the content difference between Kant's hypothetical imperative and categorical imperative. According to him, this rationality corresponds to hypothetical imperative, and reasonableness corresponds to categorical imperative (Rawls, 1993, p. 49-50; Fleischacker, 2004, p. 113). If this is accepted to be true, then rational subject-fair subject identity may only be possible with this revision. However, it should be reminded that this subject is not a real life subject but a hypothetical subject.

### Well-Ordered Community Assumption

It can be said that Rawls steps into real life with the idea of well-ordered society and starts building the social environment of the fair-rational subject. According to him, a well-organized society is a society where everyone accepts the same principles of justice and basic social institutions follow these principles (Rawls, 1993, p. 35). Rawls believes that there is no need for the guidance of religion in constructing such a society and another worldview that compensates for and corrects the inequalities allowed by these principles. In this respect, he attempts to establish a secular fair society and therefore, he progressively moves away from the practical theory of pure reason, the metaphysical content of Kant, which he owes much to (Rawls, 1993, p. 39-53). In other words, he internalizes purposeful-rationality while he does not internalize the understanding of practical-rationality.

Rawls points out that a well-ordered society is a multicultural and multi-religious democratic society in his later works. He states that community members can adopt reasonably comprehensive moral and philosophical doctrines without adopting any very comprehensive moral and philosophical doctrine (Rawls, 1993, pp. 37-38; 2001, p. 233). However, it does not show how such a society will turn into a reality, and according to which principles it can raise a fair individual (Duran, 2019, p. 6). Naturally, the success of the rational-fair individual to achieve real economic

justice remains. Therefore, the idea of fair society, like a fair subject, also preserves its transcendence.

It can be argued that in a well-ordered community, the family or parents' place is critical to achieving justice. Rawls' most reasonable and tangible suggestion for a fair and rational individual is the family institution. He considers the family as an element of a well-organized society (Rawls, 2001, p. 163). He says that the structure of the family should be based on love. This love allows the child to start loving and trusting their parents over time (Rawls, 1999, p. 406; Miller, 1992, p. 559).

However, like many Western thinkers, Rawls does not mention in his theory how capitalist relations deform the family's function. Indeed, with what energy and accumulation the elementary capitalist family can raise fair subjects and how these subjects can establish justice in economic life, it is a subject that needs serious research.

Therefore, Rawls' idea of subject, family and society is criticized by MacIntyre. In fact, MacIntyre doesn't just criticize Rawls' thoughts in related areas. He targets the moral and political culture of the West in a broader sense. According to MacIntyre, the collapse in the moral and political culture of the West begins with Enlightenment philosophers. Kierkegaard, Kant, Diderot, Hume and Smith's efforts to ground morality are unsuccessful attempts. Because they ignore the emergence of moral codes in a particular historical and cultural environment. As it is known, these moral rules are discovered by Aristotle and additions are made through the New Testament and become the dominant principles in the Middle Ages. According to MacIntyre, Enlightenment philosophers neglect the idea of human ultimate purpose (telos) and the fact that human nature can transform from potential to higher reality. When the moral directives take human nature from its original untrained state and heal it, it will naturally be impossible to derive moral principles from the current human condition. Such human nature will probably tend to disobey moral principles (MacIntyre, 2007, pp. 51-52).

On the other hand, communitarians argue that Rawls is in the wrong search: Universal principles. These principles provide solutions for general problems. The issue of political association is problematic at this stage. However, according to communitarians, this should not be the main goal, and Rawls's goal does not coincide with reality. Such important issues require political unity. Therefore, it is not universal principles to focus on. On the contrary, an inner search must be undertaken, revealing implicit meanings in discourse and practice (Walzer, 1983, p. 24).

Can we say that Rawls thinks like a capitalist? According to him, class division is inevitable and natural as capitalist thinkers say. Also eliminating social-economic inequalities is too hard, maybe impossible for Rawls. He works hard on equitable income distribution. It seems the difference between the liberalism's distributive justice and his justice as fairness is that both accept the fundamental system and the rules of capitalism (Miller, 1974: 181-183). Rawls' ideas show the damage caused by inequality less than it really is. Unequal freedoms show the contribution more than it really is (Öztürk, 2007, p. 82). Accordingly, Rawls' subject is social subject far from society and tradition, it is not possible for such a subject to act morally. Therefore, the potential of Rawls' rational individual to attain economic justice in the current system cannot be mentioned.

The most important libertarian criticism of Rawls comes from Nozick. He puts forward Rawls' notion of justice that empowers the theory of justice as fairness. Accordingly, Nozick addresses two main criticisms to Rawls. First, Rawls thinks that goods come to the world unclaimed and must be distributed on the basis of justice. The other criticism is that a state of the kind Rawls envisions constantly interferes with individual affairs. What would Nozick defend in this situation? There are three principles of justice that Nozick has embraced under his libertarian philosophy: the principle of justice in the acquisition of property, the principle of justice in the transfer of property, and the formulation of a principle required by justice to repair past injustices. The important feature of Nozick's theory is that if this scope is operated by principles only against these species, then it represents the historical ideal of justice (Hahnel, 2005, pp. 27-29). In other words, it means whether it is determined by the nature of the allocation or how it has come through history. How is the allocation fair? The allocation is fair only if it has been rightfully obtained from the very beginning and the subsequent transfers are rightfully transferred at every stage. In order for the allocation to be fair, it is not sufficient only that it has been fair throughout the historical process. At the same time, the allocation must be sufficiently realized. Given the second principle of justice, the difference principle, allocation should be better off as those in the worst group would be under a more equitable distribution. Nozick points out two obvious points in Rawls' theory. One of these deficits is directed to the basic assumption of the theory, the other contains its practical implications. Nozick's main objection is that the Rawlsian theory sees goods as sacred goods from heaven. In particular, it looks at goods to which nobody is entitled in terms of original position (Nozick, 1974, pp. 1963-198). Rawls's theory is against the understanding that leaves individual's responsibility to society. It does not accept that the state acts like the mind of the individual. On

the other hand, he gives extreme priority to individual freedom. An excess that ignores everything but individual freedom prevails (Naqvi, 2018, p. 55). This extreme formulation of Rawls attracts primarily Muslim thinkers and communitarians. In fact, the same situation is experienced in Sen, as will be stated later.

On the other hand, Rawls' and Nozick's theories are liberal theories. These theories assume that the good society is the one in which one does not specifically govern with common goals and objectives. What is a good society? A good society is a society in which people have the right and freedom to achieve their personal goals both individually and with other people. This framework is regulated by law. It is a principled society, primarily with the principle of justice. These principles are discoverable and enduring. This view means that in liberal thought there is no single good sense of private life. At this stage, liberalism can be seen as an important philosophical response to others.

In modern societies, people hold a wide variety of beliefs and compete with each other. This diversity and competition is pessimistic in terms of an overall good or common good ideal. Liberals tolerate as many different ways of life and worldviews as possible. The utilitarian approach argues that it is a good choice to reduce the tension between competing thoughts and ideals, which will increase the benefit and pleasure. On the other hand, some libertarians see good and negative freedom as equivalent. Another approach to which Rawls is involved defines the concept of right independently of the good and avoids determining the common good with the participation of everyone. The reason why advocates of this approach behave hypothetically is that a common good cannot be achieved in line with individual goals.

### **Questioning Fair Action in Amartya Sen's Thought**

It is accepted that Sen tends towards the phenomenon of justice and fairness more than all economists in the discipline of economics (Hahnel, 2005, p. 64). Amartya Sen is one of the philosophers that have had a significant impact on economic justice recently. His works, especially on poverty and hunger, are substantial. The Indian economist examines the rational individual's potential and possibilities to reach economic justice from a diverse discipline perspective. From this point of view, it can be argued that it provides partial ethical vitality to the new welfare economy by suggesting striking opinions.

Sen tries to reveal how people can react to the current injustices by examining the events. He sees achieving economic justice as an equivalent of eliminating in-

justices. He thinks that justice can be established if injustice is broken. The reason for prioritizing injustice in reaching justice is the dominance of public injustices that are easy to eliminate. The causes and solutions of injustice in economic life are evident. What needs to be done to create a fair institution or order is controversial. In the cost-benefit analysis between these two, the first way to achieve economic justice is more convenient.

Sen identifies the phenomenon of justice with reality rather than mental design. While doing this, he reveals his thoughts based on Rawls or criticizes him. Rawls is both motivating and critical about Sen's propensity for justice. As it will be seen later, some of Rawls' essential elements are included as building blocks in Sen's formulation. Nevertheless, Sen makes serious criticism of Rawls and many of his thoughts (Enlightenment philosophers). The most important criticism is that the philosophers who advocate this approach are in transcendental institutionalism (Sen, 2011, p. 5).

Those who try to reach justice through institutionalization have the error of perfectionism. They believe that all individuals in the society will accept fair institutions with a contract. They argue that social action will take shape according to the functioning of fair contracted institutions. However, individuals generally do not act according to institutions beforehand plan since this is the basis of injustice in economic life. Contradiction is nothing but defending an unrealistic idea. Here are the daily practices of people that are neglected (Sen et. al., 2020: 12; Holmwood, 2013, p. 1172). Also, pure institutionalists such as Rawls' ambitions to reach pure economic justice with a single agreement in the original position are an incomplete analysis. For instance, various methods can be developed in the initial situation suggested by Rawls. It is unknown that people who are veiled in the veil of ignorance will only choose two principles of justice. Rawls generalizes a possibility. People can also develop different principles using their minds. What will make everyone think the same? Rawls designs an almost homogeneous human model, but this cannot be expected to coincide with reality (Sen, 2011, p. 10).

Sen's idea is more realistic than Rawls' perspective in this way. He tries to find a solution to injustice through his practical approach, not with economics's abstract face. He says that *Realization Focused Comparison's concept* reveals the potential of the rational individual to reach economic justice or the power to eliminate injustice (Sen, 2011, p. 7). He proposes to produce policies and practices in which justice is adopted as a fundamental principle with a comparative process management. He believes that fair methods can be created by comparing the policies success-

fully implemented with current effective practices. Adopting the most effective, accessible and appropriate way among the various alternatives can reduce injustice. According to him, thinkers like Concordet, Marx, Smith, or Mill also act with this method.

Sen argues that the individual must act on the principles of rationality and neutrality to achieve economic justice. However, it does not object to the economic justice of the Western world, which glorifies rationality, and its system of revealing and nurturing all kinds of injustices. Some thinkers say that they put their minds to the fore for their malicious purposes. Sen deliberately or unconsciously ignores the purpose-rational or instrumental intellect dimension, which is especially emphasized by thinkers like Weber, Habermas, Lukacs, Horkheimer and Adorno. He addresses the good or bad use of the intellect without distinguishing the concept of mind like Rawls. He says that the reason cannot be pushed back into the background because of the mentality that brought out Nazism. What needs to be done is using the mind correctly. It is a dynamic mind that ensures the establishment of economic justice. Sen states that justice and mind are in a strong interaction. The mind's leadership leads people to a fair society (Sen, 2011, p. 46).

Sen thinks that economic problems can be overcome with little touches when your mind is used properly. He states that global deaths occur between 5-10 percent due to hunger, focusing on poverty and hunger. The solution to this problem is very simple: Deaths from starvation can be eliminated by increasing the incomes of low-income people and providing food (redistribution) (Sen, 2011, p. 47). However, Sen's contradiction that Western societies have prioritized rationality and achieved remarkable economic success until now could not think of this rational method (Rawls, 1993b, p. 64). Here again, Sen overlooks the instrumental mind that colonizes the individual.

According to Sen, the second principle that the individual will pay attention to achieve economic justice is neutrality. The principle of impartiality requires to act impartially in all areas, not only in economic life, but in political, legal, and moral (Sen, 2011, p. 117). In this respect, the principle of neutrality is divided into two in itself: open impartiality and closed neutrality or impartiality (Sen, 2002, pp. 448-453; Meshelski, 2019, p. 37; Breban and Gilardone, 2020, p. 264). That only neutrality is in question for a particular segment implies closed neutrality. This is the neutrality between a specific group, community, and members of society. It is exact neutrality that represents the generalization of this approach that you want to emphasize. Accordingly, impartiality should be valid for all, without any restric-

tions or limitations. This neutrality opens the door to a universal understanding of justice (Sen, 2011, p. 143).

However, a participatory management approach should be adopted in economics or all fields. One of the most effective ways to eradicate injustice is listening to the voices of all segments. At this point, we come across a social choice theory. Thanks to this method, comparative analyzes can be made, alternatives can be increased, flexible solutions can be produced, various principles of justice can be proposed, different methods of reasoning can be developed, and economic life can also be organized fairly with a participatory democratic structure (Sen, 2011, pp. 108-110).

Focusing on the actions of individuals, Sen criticizes the basic action structure of the new welfare economy as constructive. He suggests that the rational person should not act on the principle of maximum benefit-maximum profit. The rational individual, the main actor of mainstream economics, is based on this basic principle since he already uses his mind. The action's motivations are parameters such as benefit, income, pleasure, success and profit. These people act in this tendency because they already use their minds (instrumental rationality). It is debatable how valid it is for Sen to offer to waive your benefit or profit (Sugden, 1993, p. 1959). Rationality cannot be donated to utilitarian theory. He shows Rawls among those who criticize that utilitarian theory for ignoring rights. His view of justice includes contractual justice based on rights in response to utilitarianism (Sen, 1992, p. 95). However, to explain other types of action other than utilitarianism, it needs rationality and the concept of rationality. Here Sen adopts Scanlon's view of reasonability rather than Rawls. Scanlon talks about the notion that anyone can put forward an opinion on a subject whether the arguments put forward are reasonably acceptable. Different solutions can be developed even under the assumption that only interested parties are allowed to express their opinions (Scanlon, 1998, pp. 4-5). In fact, this approach emphasizes the participatory management approach. Here, the action style is similar to Smith's rational individual thought (Sen, 2011, p. 197).

Another factor that enhances the individual's potential to reach economic justice is the capability of approaching and the concept of fundamental freedom. It is crucial to improve the capacities of individuals and to guarantee their fundamental freedom. Also, there is a need for other factors than just the capacity approach and equalizing freedom to ensure justice (Fabre and Miller, 2003, p. 6). The capability approach emphasizes benefiting from equal opportunities. It is essential in assessing the owned freedoms. Equalizing positive freedoms does not mean achieving

justice on its own. These are like parts of the whole (Deneulin, 2011, p. 791). Whether it is equality, freedoms or fair functioning of institutions or firms, fair design of social organizations, and justice regulation of behavior patterns, the potential to achieve economic justice can be united (Sen, 2011, p. 268).

Sen and Rawls criticize the holistic and unfair welfare perspective of mainstream economics. Both thinkers try to offer alternative solutions. They seek formulas in the framework of redistribution. Sen recommends the weak equity axiom rather than egalitarian redistribution. If we take a type of equality as a criterion, all other theories will appear inequality (Sen, 1992, pp. 12-13). For the weak equity axiom, the person with a lower income should receive more shares in the redistribution stage than the person with a higher income. The practice which is not equal to the principle of equal distribution or the least beneficial is not fair. He refers to Rawls' principle of difference (Griffin, 1981, p. 282). Differences between individuals; the heterogeneity of individuals, environment, social environment, relations, household income and distribution can be examined under the headings (Sen, 1999, p. 71). However, Sen thinks that the difference principle approach can be beneficial with the capacity approach. Because individuals must be compared in some way and their differences must be revealed (Sen, 1999, p. 64). According to Rawls, the theory of justice as equity which puts primary values at the center, can meet this view of Sen. Sen says that even if the primary values are evenly distributed, ignoring capacities can come up with undesirable results. If a person lacks in terms of capacity approach, even if that person has primary values, he will get very little benefit (Sen, 1990, pp. 72-75). Besides, Sen says that the results in the distribution of rights should be taken as data. Basic rights such as health, education, good nutrition cannot be pushed into the background for any freedom such as economic freedom (Sen, 2000, p. 66).

Sen is highly appreciated for expressing the fact of justice in the field of economics and addressing economic inequalities (Hahnel, 2002, p. 185). But those who applaud him also criticize him for his thoughts in *Development as Freedom*. In this context, Sen sees development as an extension of freedom. According to him, all the abilities people can acquire are a result of freedom. Sen exemplifies his thought in an extreme way. He expresses the death rate as the deprivation of freedom to survive (Sen, 1999, p. 31). The source of this criticism points to one of the most important criticisms made to the utilitarian understanding: the ideal of economic freedom. Indexing all useful and good elements to freedom (Seabright, 2001). However, aren't there any good aims that are more important than economic freedom?

Here lies the contradiction of Sen (Hahnel, 2005, p. 89). In the same way, while Sen criticizes the reduction of all good to benefit, he makes the same mistake himself in the work mentioned. Economic freedom is of course a correct goal, but goals such as economic justice should be more comprehensive and prioritized.

## Conclusion

In this study, a rational individual potential to be fair while taking economic action is tried to be revealed in Western thought. The works of the political philosopher, Rawls, who was amazed at the surprise in almost every segment and discipline, are primarily examined to represent Western thought. Then, the Nobel Prize winning economist Sen, who is seen as the conscientious voice of the science of economics with his views on economic justice and which enables the United Nations to be more sensitive to this issue, is discussed. These thinkers sign the works having a great impact in the twentieth century. The views that are put forward by these names are still active today.

As it is known, justice is to give everyone what he deserves. The sanctification of self-interest and benefit in the modern economic system makes the realization of justice as difficult as possible. However, the provision of justice, which is accepted as the highest virtue, is a compulsory need of social life. Accordingly, Rawls develops many concepts to base justice as fairness. He brings concepts such as original position, veil of ignorance, the difference principle, and rationality-reasonableness to the literature to reach the rational individual's fair action potential. In his later works, he tries to embody his theory transcendent characters. He also envisages a broad sense of democratic society and its constitutional institutions that adopt the principles of fair action. He proposes to provide fundamental freedoms in a democratic society. These are constituent liberties, including political conscience and thought, freedoms of not being arbitrarily caught and arrested, and protecting individual integrity and having rights. Rawls' justice project confronts capitalist hegemony with the principles of justice and freedom. However, it cannot be mentioned that his theories are fully embodied in real life.

Sen advocates for a partial substitution of moral-rational action rather than the rational action of mainstream economics. Also, he enables concepts such as capacity approach and positive freedom to gain importance in the welfare economy. According to him, it is possible for decision-making units such as individuals, firms and government to reach economic justice without adopting the principle of cost minimization and profit maximization. It is necessary to increase the capacity le-

vels and the political, economic, and social freedom of individuals. The primary purpose of economic development should be the expansion of human freedom and capacities. Economic justice cannot be mentioned here even if growth occurs in a society where poverty cannot be eliminated. Concepts such as wages and income are not indicators of wealth in real terms. It is also essential to have free access to basic services and opportunities with valuable content such as nutrition, shelter, health and education.

As can be understood, Rawls and Sen incline towards fair action within the philosophical framework of mainstream economics. They try to find the search for a solution to existing injustices by preserving the same system. Therefore, they can be said to be far from decoding the system that ultimately produces injustice, although they produce important ideas. These names' formulas can be described as either inaccessible hypothetical and transcendent theory or as dressing solutions.

Then what is to be done? It must be ensured that moral values that are eliminated by capitalism in economic life produce motivation and meaning again. Internalization of moral principles and values in the economic life will prevent the emergence of injustices. It is necessary to free the modern economic mentality from the oppression of purely utilitarian or prosperous hegemony, to allow cooperation with disciplines such as theology, philosophy, sociology, history, and politics, and realize the production of value and meaning that societies need. For the sake of economic growth, human sacrifice or instrumentalization should be abandoned immediately. Value areas such as socialization, sharing, social security, social justice, meaningfulness, communication, solidarity and belonging also need to be developed. For this reason, the fact that all the macroeconomic policies put forward include decisions that prioritize the socio-economic life and feed on the socio-cultural system, may make it easier for individuals to take fair action in business life or more generally reach economic justice.

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