

IMPARTIALITY AND OBJECTIVITY IN NORMATIVE ECONOMICS:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IN
ADAM SMITH'S THEORY OF MORALS AND AMARTYA SEN'S THEORY OF
JUSTICE

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OF JUSTICE**

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis aims to examine the decision-making processes described by Amartya Sen's theory of justice and Adam Smith's theory of morals. It primarily appraises Sen's dichotomy, i.e. his distinction between transcendental and comparative theories of justice, and the Smithian notion of impartial spectator to explore the roles of transcendental principles of justice and the voice of the public in ensuring that decisions within the scope of normative economics are objective. To this end, the way Sen incorporates the impartial spectator to his work *The Idea of Justice* and his claims that dismiss the role of transcendental theories in comparative assessments are inspected. These findings are compared and contrasted with Smith's ideas on general rules of morality and the transcendental components of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. It is shown that both Smith and Sen attempt to establish strong ties between impartiality and objectivity and emphasise the crucial position of behavioural requirements of justice. Further, Smith's and Sen's views on the influence of one's pursuit of self-interests on the impartiality and objectivity of judgements are revealed

and scrutinised. The results of these discussions are used to pinpoint the relative weaknesses and strengths of the decision-making processes described by Smith and Sen.

Keywords: objectivity, impartiality, normative economics, Adam Smith, Amartya Sen

ÖZ

NORMATİF İKTİSATTA TARAFSIZLIK VE NESNELİK: ADAM SMİTH'İN AHLAK KURAMI VE AMARTYA SEN'İN ADALET TEORİSİNDE YER ALAN KARAR VERME SÜREÇLERİNİN KARŞILAŞTIRILMALI ANALİZİ

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Bu tez Adam Smith'in ahlak kuramı ve Amartya Sen'in adalet teorisinde anlatılan karar verme süreçlerini ele almaktadır. Aşkınısal adalet ilkelerinin ve kamu tartışmalarının normatif iktisat kapsamında yer alan kararların nesnellliğini sağlamadaki rolleri, Sen'in aşkınısal ve karşılaştırmalı adalet kuramları arasında gözettiği ayırım ve Smith'in tarafsız gözlemci kavramı üzerinden incelenmiştir. Bu amaç uğruna Sen'in tarafsız gözlemci kavramını *Adalet Düşüncesi* isimli eserine dahil etme biçimi ve aşkınısal adalet kuramlarının karşılaştırmalı değerlendirmelerdeki rolünü reddeden fikirleri analiz edilmiştir. Bulunan sonuçlar Smith'in genel ahlak kuralları üzerine düşünceleri ve *Ahlaki Duygular Kuramı* adlı eserinin aşkınısal içerikleri ile karşılaştırılmıştır. Hem Smith hem de Sen için tarafsızlık ve nesnellik arasında sıkı bağlar olduğu gösterilmiş ve her birinin kuramında adaletin davranışsal gereklerinin kritik bir konumda olduğu vurgulanmıştır. Ayrıca Smith ve Sen'in bireylerin kişisel çıkarları peşinde koşması halinin fikirlerinin tarafsızlığı ve nesnelligi üzerindeki etkisine dair görüşleri değerlendirilmiştir. Bu tartışmaların sonuçları her iki

düşünürün de ayrıntılarıyla incelediği karar verme süreçlerinin görece güçlü ve zayıf noktalarının belirlenmesinde kullanılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: nesnellik, tarafsızlık, normatif iktisat, Adam Smith, Amartya Sen

To Nergis Demirel and Necati Sirmaci

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Both Adam Smith and Amartya Sen are deeply concerned with the living standards of individuals in society and they emphasise the critical roles of impartiality and objectivity in enhancing citizens' well-being through securing justice. In this thesis, I aim to examine Smith's and Sen's writings to explore their answers formulated in the quest for justice to the following question which is of great importance for normative economics: *How to choose the best social state from a given set of feasible alternatives?*¹ Posing this question, I suppose that selecting the best alternative is equivalent to presenting an objective justification for the superiority of the chosen social state(s). Hence, our question essentially asks how an individual or a society can offer an objective justification for her, or its, preference. Seeking an answer for this, I analyse the ideal decision-making processes described by Smith and Sen while intending to investigate the connections they attempt to establish between normativity and objectivity. To this end, I mainly address Smith's accounts in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* and Sen's writings on his capability approach and his book *The Idea of Justice*. I explore Sen's motivation behind his appeal for public deliberations and inspect Smith's decision-making method involving the human within. Observing the differences and similarities between these decision-making methods advocated by Smith and Sen, I try to discover their relative strengths and weaknesses and the issues on which they agree. In a nutshell, I aim to search for the roles of public appraisals and general

¹ It should be noted that this thesis will not deeply examine the technical aspect of making choices in economics. For example, the importance of the accuracy of economic models that shape policy-makers decisions will not be scrutinised.

principles of justice and morality in decision-making processes through the accounts of Smith and Sen.

I believe that the findings of these inquiries are not only relevant for the inquiries of philosophy of justice; they may also help us to formulate the right decision-making process for studies within the scope of normative economics. Before defending this position, I need to clarify what is meant by the term normative economics. In this thesis, I accept Philippe Mongin's definition of normative economics which is as follows: normative economics is an area of economics whose task "is to investigate methods and criteria for evaluating the relative desirability of economic states of affairs." (Mongin 2006) In this definition, the word desirability may refer to many different kinds of values. Presumably, the extent to which an economic state fulfils the requirements of justice would affect its degree of relative desirability. Indeed, one may benefit from other criteria, such as the ones that measure efficiency, feasibility or the fulfilment of aggregative demands, whilst evaluating the relative desirability of economic states of affairs. However, it may be said that the degree by which a social state conforms to the principles or requirements of justice are among these measures of desirability. Hence, I strongly believe that Smith's discussions on morality and Sen's views on justice may be illuminating for the purposes of normative economics.

In *The Idea of Justice*, Sen attempts to identify the shortcomings of an approach in philosophy of justice that he calls transcendental institutionalism. He aims to construct a new theory of justice that would not pose any of these shortcomings and refers to the Smithian notion of impartial spectator believing that Smith's theory of morals is not susceptible to these deficits. (Sen 2011, 70) One must note that Sen has been mostly interested in the collective decision-making processes whereas Smith has been concerned with those of the individual. This may be one of the main differences that cause them to go after different types of objectivity when formulating their theories and yet, the types of objectivity they value are very interdependent and closely related to another epistemic virtue, namely, impartiality. Sen frequently appeals to the Smithian notion of the impartial spectator whence he obtains additional means to support his arguments on the significance of impartiality in the decision-making process.

Although it is true that both Smith and Sen emphasise the importance of impartiality for choice, I will argue that they suggest utterly different methods to tackle the diversity within individuals' values and preferences. While one may contend that Smith holds that one should primarily rely on the supreme moral conscience of the spectator, for Sen there may be multiple plausible rankings of values and agreements to be reached through public discussions. To grasp the contrast between the perspectives of the two, one may consider the following claims that can be deduced from their writings: (i) According to Smith (2002, 235), an individual who has been exposed to immoral yet standardised conduct throughout his life can potentially realise that this common conduct is in fact morally wrong despite the indifference of his surroundings, (ii) according to Sen's framework, people have conflicting priorities and one may not be able to reject any of these priorities based on reasonable grounds. (Sen 2011, 201) As I will elaborate further below, it appears that Smith's theory provides a window into the effectiveness of absolute or universal principles of justice in the decision-making process whereas that of Sen mainly goes against the notion that transcendental principles may be of some use. On the other hand, I believe that Smith's discussions on casuistry reveal that he would oppose the complete reliance on transcendental criteria in every comparison of social states, as he considers divine principles of justice to be too complex to be reduced to general timeless principles. Moreover, it is apparent that Smith was aware of the "problem of induction,"² a problem which was extensively studied by his friend David Hume. Smith would prefer virtuous individuals to invoke the human within in each comparison than rely on the general principles of morality derived inductively through the aid of the impartial spectator. He believed that for those who cannot connect with the human within, the general rules are of crucial importance and should be obeyed at all times. This provides an overview of the content of the third chapter of this thesis.

The fourth chapter will examine Sen's argument that public scrutiny plays a crucial role in ensuring justice, a view that Smith would support believing that public discussions may effectively invoke the human within. Notably, both believe that

² The problem of induction refers to the idea that it is often impossible to rationally justify inductive conclusions derived from patterns within one's observations.

collective deliberation is effective only if participants can impartially assess others' opinions. According to them, to be able to conclude that some are inherently prejudiced and skewed by self-love, the opinions of all should be taken into account first. Hence, a theory of justice ought not to enforce any rule or truth in advance; such statements should be initially validated by the proper method of scrutiny outlined by the theory. In other words, for both, a theory of justice should justify all statements that it proposes. Asserting that there is no need for a theory of justice to justify seemingly obvious statements, one would unintentionally argue that we do not need theories of justice to validate our common-sense beliefs or to supply us with weapons to persuade these people to admit the contrary view.³ They argue that impartiality of all towards all is important for resolving conflicts. In the eyes of Smith and Sen, the efficacy of public discussions is contingent on participants' behavioural patterns. Given their extensive writings on self-interest, I have chosen to examine how the pursuit of personal aspirations affects the impartiality of one's judgments taking Smith and Sen as my guides. Presumably, this investigation is valuable for setting realistic expectations regarding public scrutiny. Exploring this topic reveals that, according to *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* certain personal ambitions can promote impartiality, while others, especially the ones Smith elaborates in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, can impede it. According to Sen's discussions, commitment can help individuals develop more impartial opinions.⁴ Finally, in the

³ It may be said that the desideratum of a theory of justice to justify seemingly obvious truths about justice has been undermined by some authors, such as Valentini, who have been sceptical of the effectiveness of Sen's approach to justice. According to Valentini (2011), "a society in which people are arbitrarily arrested is *obviously* more unjust than one in which, all other things equal, they are not. Similarly, a society in which women are subjugated is clearly more unjust than one in which, all other things equal, they are not. No account of perfect justice is needed to make these kinds of judgements... Problematically, however, Sen seems to ignore that no theory is needed to formulate such judgements in the first place."

Following Valentini's point of view, we would need some other theory and deeper philosophical scrutiny to prove our judgement method reliable. To ask ourselves why we strongly believe that a society in which women are subjugated is unjust is a step taken to comprehend the essence of justice. Instead of taking them for granted, we must be aware of and inspect our "sentiments upon propriety" to justify general rules of morality. (Smith 2002, 188) There is always a chance that one reaches a correct result through faulty reasoning and prejudices yet the repeated application of a defective thought mechanism will surely implant untruthful beliefs in our minds. In any case, the unfortunate reality is that not every human being feels concerned about the repression of women or other situations that we deem unjust. Asserting that there is no need for a theory of justice to justify seemingly obvious statements, Valentini unintentionally argues that we do not need our justice theory to validate our common sense or supply us with any weapons to persuade these people otherwise.

⁴ Kenneth Arrow's Impossibility Theorem, a supposedly unpleasant finding of the social choice theory, can be regarded as another source of motivation behind my investigation:

conclusion, I discuss the implications of the findings of this thesis for normative economics.

Given a set of feasible alternatives of social states, Arrow and Maskin (2012, 23) seek to obtain a mapping, which is called a “social welfare function,” producing a single ranking of these alternatives that reflects the collective choice by taking the preferences of all individuals into account. This output of the social welfare function is called a “social ordering.” Given the preferences of all individuals, the social welfare function cannot produce a social ordering arbitrarily; it has to follow a certain set of criteria. For example, a condition that a social welfare function needs to obey in Arrow’s construction is that no member can act as a dictator; this means that nobody’s preferences can always correspond to the social ordering produced. (Arrow and Maskin 2012, 30) A different condition, namely the Pareto condition, ensures that if all individuals agree that alternative A is better than alternative B, then, within the social ordering produced by the social welfare function A will be ranked higher than B. (Arrow and Maskin 2012, vii) The Impossibility Theorem presents a logical proof that there is no social welfare function that satisfies all the conditions formulated by Arrow and these conditions include the two I have just mentioned. (Arrow and Maskin 2012, vii)

In *Collective Choice and Social Welfare*, Sen (2018) identifies some ways of escaping this impossibility by examining Arrow’s framework and conditions imposed on the social welfare function and attempts to reformulate the requirements of social choice. Arrow’s framework demands that the rankings of all individuals are complete (each alternative is compared with all the others) and are transitive (An individual’s preference is considered transitive if given that he prefers A over B and B over C, he must also prefer A over C). (Arrow and Maskin 2012, 13) It, however, does not deal with the message an individual ranking conveys; for example, it does not eliminate any individual ranking from the domain on account of its being unacceptably immoral. Smith’s theory of morals can make one question the practice of considering all individual preferences regardless of their content by suggesting that universal moral principles exist and making us rethink the implications or framework of Arrow’s impossibility theorem. On the other hand, Sen’s ideas on democracy, his discussions on the effectiveness of public scrutiny in the decision-making process and his criticism of transcendental institutionalism can offer reasons to favour social choice theory’s common practice of regarding the rankings of all individuals.

CHAPTER 2

PRELIMINARIES

2.1. A Short Introduction to Adam Smith's Theory of Morals

The purpose of this section is to present a compact review of the Smithian theory of morals. Sympathy is the central concept of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and it refers to the ability of gaining access to and sensing others' sentiments. According to Smith, sympathising is a more complicated process than putting oneself in someone's shoes; to truly sympathise, one is obliged to identify herself with the other person by leaving aside her own values, culture, understanding and, broadly speaking, reality.

But though sympathy is very properly said to arise from an imaginary change of situations with the person principally concerned, yet this imaginary change is not supposed to happen to me in my own person and character, but in that of the person with whom I sympathize. (Smith 2002, 374)

Hence, a distinction has to be made between the following questions: (1) "How would I feel if I was in his situation?" and (2) "How did he feel going through this situation?" As suggested by the sentence cited above, to sympathise in the Smithian sense is to find an answer for the latter.

Smith (2002, 182-3) observes an inclination in humans to trust the immediate sentiments evoked by thoughts and events whereas in reality, these types of sentiments tend to be deceitful. According to him (2002, 182-3), self-love, when in excess, can cause one to feel these untrustworthy sentiments. Smith's mission is to explain the mental pathway through which one approaches only the reliable moral sentiments and he deems that sympathy is a key component of it. Based on Smith's theory, by sympathising with others, we encounter different perspectives and our enriched awareness invokes "the human within." The human within, also called "the impartial

spectator,” is an abstract figure with an excellent moral conscience and it is thought to reside in each of our minds and hearts.⁵ The concept of impartial spectator resembles that of an inner sage, yet its dictates on morality are communicated not through moral statements but by moral sentiments. On the other hand, in Smith’s theory, “the human without,” or “the real spectator,” represents a human being who lacks the supreme moral conscience of the human within, yet likewise the human within, she is attentive, although perhaps not equally, to the opinions of all. Invoking the human without often facilitates the process of getting access to the sentiments of the human within.

In solitude, we are apt to feel too strongly whatever relates to ourselves: we are apt to over-rate the good offices we may have done, and the injuries we may have suffered: we are apt to be too much elated by our own good, and too much dejected by our own bad fortune. The conversation of a friend brings us to a better, that of a stranger to a still better temper. The man within the breast, the abstract and ideal spectator of our sentiments and conduct, requires often to be awakened and put in mind of his duty, by the presence of the real spectator: and it is always from that spectator, from whom we can expect the least sympathy and indulgence, that we are likely to learn the most complete lesson of self-command. (Smith 2002, 178)

Among all sentiments, one can merely rely on those of the impartial spectator in judging the propriety of a conduct and forming impartial and accurate moral statements. Henceforth, perceiving the sentiments of the human within serves for

⁵ I acknowledge that there are some scholars who propose a different reading of Smith’s theory than this. These scholars, such as Haakonssen (2002), fundamentally argue that Smith’s impartial spectator does not hold an absolute moral conscience. They believe that in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith accentuates the impact of one’s background on their evaluation of conduct and hence, these scholars claim that impartial spectator’s judgement is, to some degree, influenced by culture. The following passage from *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* may be considered as proof that cultural relativism is to some extent embedded in Smith’s theory of morals:

“The different situations of different ages and countries are apt, in the same manner, to give different characters to the generality of those who live in them, and their sentiments concerning the particular degree of each quality, that is either blamable or praiseworthy, vary, according to that degree which is usual in their own country, and in their own times. That degree of politeness, which would be highly esteemed, perhaps would be thought effeminate adulation, in Russia, would be regarded as rudeness and barbarism at the court of France. That degree of order and frugality, which, in a Polish nobleman, would be considered as excessive parsimony, would be regarded as extravagance in a citizen of Amsterdam. Every age and country look upon that degree of each quality, which is commonly to be met with in those who are esteemed among themselves, as the golden mean of that particular talent or virtue. And as this varies, according as their different circumstances render different qualities more or less habitual to them, their sentiments concerning the exact propriety of character and behaviour vary accordingly.” (Smith 2002, 239)

The reader may notice that in this thesis I mostly argue against the claim that Smith proposes a mostly relativistic theory of morality. While I acknowledge that Smith presents empiricist and psychological explanations for moral behaviour, I think that the impartial spectator described by Smith, at least in some cases, can dictate absolute truths on morality. One may encounter several pieces of evidence for this claim throughout the thesis, especially in the section “The Coexistence of the Transcendental and Comparative in Smith’s Theory.”

understanding the requirements of morality by enabling us to become aware of the influence of excessive self-love on our opinions and impulsive sentiments.

Perceiving the sentiments of the impartial spectator, however, is not a trivial task; it requires individuals to have a matured capacity to sympathise and the aid of other faculties of the mind. Thus, an ample amount of sections within *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* discuss the mechanisms that activate sympathy and ways of improving this capacity. Everyone holds the potential to detect the fairest conduct or the most appropriate responses of parties but to this end, one has to become conscious of the impartial spectator's sentiments by aptly employing the memory, imagination and reason. In Smith's framework, memory enables one to attach particular sentiments to specific actions and situations. Imagination, the backbone of sympathy, permits us to identify ourselves with others and experience events from different perspectives. It should be noted that this process demands some information on the people to be sympathised with, their surroundings and the event. (Smith 2002, 150) When reason, too, is applied, this procedure lets one make empirical observations on the consequences of actions, which helps with constructing tentative criteria of morality and justice, and strengthen the skill to sympathise. The more one exercises these faculties and is exposed to different opinions, the more impartial one's views may become. Consequently, one can perceive the sentiments of the impartial spectator with a more refined dexterity. Then, the human within, may share the most reliable sentiment and direct the individual to the right decision to make.

Without the aid of the impartial spectator, although we would be able to recognize the effects of events on different people's sentiments, we would have no information on the feelings these events *ought to* arouse in a person. This is because the typical reactions and sentiments they evoke need not correspond to those that are morally appropriate. According to Smith, the sentiments of moral approbation and disapprobation are ultimately founded upon the judgement of the human within. (Smith 2002, 20-8) Hence, perceiving the sentiments of the impartial spectator, a conscientious individual may sense the indecency of some of the most standard behaviours, social norms and cultural practices.

Those, on the contrary, who have had the misfortune to be brought up amidst violence, licentiousness, falsehood, and injustice; *lose, though not all sense of the impropriety of such conduct*, yet all sense of its dreadful enormity, or of the vengeance and punishment due to it. They have been familiarized with it from their infancy, custom has rendered it habitual to them, and they are very apt to regard it as, what is called, the way of the world, something which either may, or must be practised, to hinder us from being the dupes of our own integrity. (Smith 2002, 235; emphasis added)

Even though Smith states that morally wrong conduct may be commonplace, it seems that he does not doubt that universal principles of morality condemning standardised yet indecent conduct exist and these principles may be disclosed through the aid of the impartial spectator.⁶

The principles of the imagination, upon which our sense of beauty depends, are of a very nice and delicate nature, and may easily be altered by habit and education: but the sentiments of moral approbation and disapprobation, are founded on the strongest and most vigorous passions of human nature; and though they may be somewhat warped, cannot be entirely perverted. (Smith 2002, 234)

For him (2002, 182-8), a general rule of conduct should be confirmed by the human within before it can be rightfully seen as a general rule of morality.

Smith verifies the existence of the impartial spectator and discloses the forces motivating human beings to reach the ultimate moral sentiments through a rigorous system of metaphysics. According to him, nature, or a benevolent deity, has intelligently endowed humans with particular skills and dispositions serving meaningful purposes. He undertakes, also in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, the task of revealing nature's plans by comprehensively observing the beneficial mechanisms and consequences of human behaviours in the social domain. When the issue is to discover nature's intentions, however, it may not be possible to get the whole picture. One can only formulate hypotheses about these intentions relying mostly on empirical data and Smith (2002, 345) admits this constraint: "The reasonings of philosophy, it may be said, though they may confound and perplex the understanding, can never break down the necessary connection which Nature has established between causes and their effects." Nevertheless, the impartial spectator, "the great demigod within the breast" (Smith 2002, 151), acting as an

⁶ For instance, in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith (2002, 246-7) argues that infanticide was a common practice among the ancient Greek nations and he states that it was mostly exercised without any proper justification and only for expediency. Through this example, he aims to demonstrate the necessity of the aid of the impartial spectator in understanding the requirements of morality. He mainly argues that the standard behaviour cannot serve as an effective criterion of morality.

intermediary between humans and the deity, bridges the gap between the divine and human minds by conveying, through sentiments, the requirements of justice and morality. As there is no other intermediary channel, accessing this information without the aid of the impartial spectator would not be possible: “That precise and distinct measure can be found nowhere but in the sympathetic feelings of the impartial and well-informed spectator.” (Smith 2002, 346) The existence of the human within confirms that the benevolent deity “has made man the immediate judge of mankind.” (Smith 2002, 150)

Based on Smith’s views, it may be argued that nature bestows at least two kinds of qualities and desires on the human disposition. The first kind of human characteristics encoded by nature are those that are immediately agreeable according to all; their positive effects on the society are easily appreciated by common sense. Benevolence, industriousness, self-command, prudence and the desire to be praiseworthy are examples of these virtues. The second type of qualities, on the other hand, are not as directly associated with being virtuous; their impact on the society may be negative in imaginable ways. The love of the self, the desire for praise and upward mobility, the admiration for greatness and wealth are some examples of these second endowments. One might find some of these traits repulsive, especially when in excess. Smith wisely suggests that satisfying the urges created by these traits does not bring happiness or make life more worthwhile in a direct manner. Still, humans follow these drives due to their nature which makes them perceive beauty not only in useful pursuits, or things that promise utility, but also in those that appear to be useful. (Smith 2002, 209-18) According to Smith (2002, 212), the idea of becoming wealthy and famous, for instance, is appealing for many but, neither the acquisition of wealth nor fame brings the peace of mind or contentment. Hence, individuals often pursue objectives that are not truly useful but give the “appearance of utility.”

Likewise, the secondary traits serve to realise nature’s plans concerning the progress of society, though uncovering the mechanisms by which these traits promote progress is not a straightforward task. It requires first, a definition of the term progress and second, a social theory. Smith had a certain concept of progress in his mind and formulating it he was mostly inspired by comparisons of the feudal and the commercial

societies. His understanding of progress constitutes an important part of his contributions to normative economics. Since I will discuss this topic in the sections below, it is enough for my current purposes to give two examples of these favourable mechanisms induced by secondary traits. First, it may be said that Smith had a very famous account on the role of self-love in the growth of markets. Here, it will not be improper to quote his well-known sentences:

But man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only. He will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favour, and shew them that it is for their own advantage to do for him what he requires of them. Whoever offers to another a bargain of any kind, proposes to do this. Give me that which I want, and you shall have this which you want, is the meaning of every such offer; and it is in this manner that we obtain from one another the far greater part of those good offices which we stand in need of. It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. (Smith 1981a, 26-7)

Hence, the satiety that a labourer gets through a loaf of bread is an “unintentional consequence” of the baker’s love for the self. Smith argues that people’s consideration for self-interests is one of the driving forces of trade and the economy.⁷

Secondly, Smith also extensively argued that the desire to better one’s condition advances the society:

The uniform, constant, and uninterrupted effort of every man to better his condition, the principle from which publick and national, as well as private opulence is originally derived, is frequently powerful enough to maintain the natural progress of things toward improvement, in spite both of the extravagance of government, and of the greatest errors of administration. Like the unknown principle

⁷ So far, the reader might have realised that Smith’s accounts draw attention to two conflicting forces within human nature. On the one hand, Smith argues, in *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, that humans are driven by self-interests and on the other, he, in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, highlights their ability to sympathise with others and their capacity to reach the perfect moral conscience. This duality is referred to as “The Adam Smith Problem” and Göçmen (2007, 2) summarises it as follows:

“The main question is whether Smith’s work contains two fundamentally different concepts of human nature, two contradictory anthropological views. What is the explanation for this apparent duality? Were there fundamental changes in Smith’s anthropological views? Did Smith employ a dualistic methodological approach in developing his concept of human nature?”

His answer to these questions is:

“My main claim is that there is only one concept of human nature in Smith’s work, but that it consists of two complementary elements. The first is a general normative view of human nature. The second and more specific is an account of the human situation in commercial society. There is indeed a contradiction between these two aspects of Smith’s anthropological view. Unlike many scholars, however, I suggest that this contradiction should not be ascribed conceptually to Smith. Rather, it is a real problem arising from social relations in commercial society, which is both embedded and critically considered in Smith’s work.” (Göçmen 2007, 2)

I will be briefly addressing the implications of the Adam Smith Problem in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

of animal life, it frequently restores health and vigour to the constitution, in spite, not only of the disease, but of the absurd prescriptions of the doctor. (Smith 1981a, 343)

Although the means by which this desire serves social progress will be investigated in the upcoming sections, it may be meaningful to introduce Smith's well-known concept of "the invisible hand" beforehand. The invisible hand is an abstract force within the market mechanism that to some extent promotes fair commodity distribution by ensuring that the luxury consumption of the affluent helps to elevate the living conditions of the disadvantaged. The insatiable desire of the rich for luxury generates continuous demand for the produce of the arts and this does not only safeguard the poor against unemployment as it also makes sure that the commodities that the rich find unfashionable are handed to the poor.

The rich only select from the heap what is most precious and agreeable. They consume little more than the poor, and in spite of their natural selfishness and rapacity, though they mean only their own conveniency, though the sole end which they propose from the labours of all the thousands whom they employ, be the gratification of their own vain and insatiable desires, they divide with the poor the produce of all their improvements. They are led by an invisible hand to make nearly the same distribution of the necessaries of life, which would have been made, had the earth been divided into equal portions among all its inhabitants, and thus without intending it, without knowing it, advance the interest of the society, and afford means to the multiplication of the species. When Providence divided the earth among a few lordly masters, it neither forgot nor abandoned those who seemed to have been left out in the partition. These last too enjoy their share of all that it produces. In what constitutes the real happiness of human life, they are in no respect inferior to those who would seem so much above them. (Smith 2002, 215-6)

Many examples, such as these, show that Smith's idea of a benevolent deity, his views on human nature together with his social theory declare a mutually agreeable relationship between humanity and nature in which nature has endowed human beings with qualities through which they unintentionally promote progress and necessary skills to gradually understand her profound vision. In the third and fourth chapters, I analyse the influence of this metaphysical claim on Smith's ideas regarding normative economics.

2.2. A Short Introduction to Amartya Sen's Theory of Justice

In *The Idea of Justice*, Sen attempts to point out several deficiencies in theories of justice framed within what he terms "transcendental institutionalism" and introduces his own framework. His aim is to contest not the findings of but the method adopted

by transcendental theories and replace it with a sound one. A second group of theories of justice falls under what Sen calls the “comparative approach.” Sen’s classification is not entirely clear-cut as some “conglomerate theories” of justice that fall into both classes may also exist. (Sen 2011, 16) Before delving further into the subject, it has to be said that to fully support or falsify Sen’s classification is not one of the main purposes of this thesis. Rather, the emphasis is on uncovering why Sen was motivated to introduce this classification and how it influences his approach to normative economics.

Transcendental institutionalism denotes a philosophical approach to inquiries about justice that aims to identify the characteristics of a perfectly just society. Another objective of transcendental theories is to determine the most suitable institutional framework for achieving the state of complete justice. In this context, the quality of being perfectly just does not correspond to that of being flawless; it only describes a society that functions justly despite some irresolvable adversities and constraints. A perfectly just society may violate some rights or deprive its citizens of liberties and capabilities yet this happens only when a value of greater importance is at stake. According to Sen’s writings, many philosophers, including John Rawls and all contractarians such as Hobbes, Rousseau and Kant, have chosen to stand by this approach. (Sen 2011, 5)

It might be useful to provide as an example an overview of a social theory which is transcendental from Sen’s perspective. In his essay “Discourse on Political Economy,” Rousseau attempts to outline the ideal structure of a society. His primary objective can be summarised as creating a society that operates in alignment with “the general will,” thereby necessitating that the political economy also conforms to it. The general will includes all aspects that contribute to societal benefit, although Rousseau (1997, 8) also claims that it may not always agree with ideas perceived as beneficial by the majority of citizens. The distinction between the general will and majority preference lies in the fact that majority preference often lacks resilience against the influence of private interests which may bear detrimental effects to the society.⁸ Rousseau proposes

⁸ The influence of private interests on the judgements will be examined in the fourth chapter.

a formula to transform majority preferences into the general will by promoting an education system that fosters the love of the fatherland. A notable feature of Rousseau's philosophy is its premise that there exists a set of principles that inherently benefit all citizens at any given time and on specific issues under the condition that all individuals possess the love of fatherland and are free from personal interests. Thence, Rousseau believes that in essence, given optimal conditions, internal conflicts can be avoided within a nation. Therefore, it is understandable why Rousseau (1997, 13) defines virtue as prioritising the general will over personal interests. Virtue, in Rousseau's theory, eliminates potential sources of conflict by embodying the collective will. What makes Rousseau's theory count as a transcendental framework is that, first of all, it aims to depict the qualities of an ideal society and secondly, it outlines a series of institutional structures to reach this ideal.

As exemplified by Rousseau's accounts, Sen uses the adjective transcendental mostly to signify the pursuit of unveiling the ideal society. Transcendental theories aim to move beyond, or transcend, current circumstances and social infrastructure to envision an ideal state without being constrained by the status quo. According to Sen, this leads to a disregard for the practical feasibility of theoretical findings. Sen observes, for example, that transcendental theories often rely on social or behavioural premises that are theoretically sound but impractical to achieve in reality. It may be said that Rousseau's proposal that every citizen will love of the fatherland and prioritise collective welfare exemplifies such a premise. According to *The Idea of Justice*, Rawls's assumption that people's behaviour perfectly complies with the requirements for the proper functioning of institutions in a perfectly just society is another example. (Sen 2011, xi) The investigation of the perfectly just society or institutions may be done for its own sake and in this case, Sen would not disapprove the transcendental project. For him, the problematic aspect is the belief that the findings of these investigations are useful in comparative assessments, i.e. the selection, with respect to the requirements of justice, of the best social state out of all available alternatives.

Those who defend the effectiveness of transcendental findings in comparative assessments mainly argue that transcendental investigations can provide "rankings of departures from justness in terms of comparative distances from perfection." (Sen

2011, 98) To use Valentini's (2011) words, a transcendental theory delivers "a metric to evaluate which social arrangements are furthest away from the ideal and what improvements would bring them closer to it." These evaluations of deviations from the perfectly just society, therefore rank the extent to which a given set of social conditions meets specific criteria of justice. One may wonder how this information may be derived from inquiries on the entirely just society or institutions. In other words, how do transcendental institutional theories formulate their comparative metrics? I intend to argue in the upcoming sections that Sen's treatment of the subject implies that the metrics of transcendental institutional theories are often constructed upon descriptive closeness to the ideal state and value rankings which arrange values such as rights, liberties and capabilities in the order of intrinsic importance. It is important to note that Sen does not dismiss the role of value rankings in comparisons and in fact, he believes that their guidance is very much needed. (Sen 2006, 24) He is rather against the practice of declaring a single value ranking the definite guide of all comparative assessments.

In a similar vein, in *Inequality Reexamined*, Sen (2006, 43) argues that discussions on inequality require an evaluative basis which indicates which values are desired to be equalised among people. While one evaluative basis could focus on income equality, the other can favour the equality of utilities. In this sense, studies of inequality, too, should rely on some sort of value rankings. Unsurprisingly, Sen does not welcome frameworks that adopt only a single evaluative basis for its intrinsic and everlasting superiority.

In addition to such orderings of patterns in a *given space*, even the broader exercise of the choice of space itself may have clear links with the motivation underlying the demand for equality. For example, in evaluating justice, or social welfare, or living standards, or quality of life, the exercise of choice space is no longer just *formal*, but one of substantive discrimination... the claims of many of these spaces can be forcefully disputed once the context is fixed. Though this need not lead us to *one* precise characterization of the demands of equality that is important in every context, this is far from a real embarrassment. In each context, the demands of equality may be both distinct and strong. (Sen 2006, 24-5)

For him, fulfilling the requirements of justice and inquiries on inequality necessitate the selection of distinct value rankings and evaluative bases in different contexts.

The central example examined to illustrate the shortcomings of transcendental institutionalism in *The Idea of Justice* demonstrates that a fundamental component of

Sen's criticism is the rejection of the use of a single predetermined value ranking in comparative assessments. In this illustration, there are three children, namely, Anne, Bob and Carla and yet only a single flute to be distributed. Naturally, the issue is to select the child that should receive the flute based on the requirements of justice. The difficulty is that the flute may be given to any of the children for perfectly sound reasons: Anne seems to deserve it because she is the only person within the group who knows how to play the instrument, Bob, currently, has no toys to play with and Carla has made the flute herself. The outcome may depend on the value ranking embraced by the decision-maker. A person who prioritises the equal distribution of goods would pick Bob and some other who is more concerned with property rights could be inclined to pick Carla. (Sen 2011, 13-4) This plurality of outcomes is surely a problem in comparative assessments and according to Sen, it is caused neither by unfalsifiable nor justifiable claims of transcendental theories. In his eyes, no personal judgement can establish the superiority of one value ranking over another, and no transcendental theory can definitively prove its superiority. (Sen 2011, 14)

For Sen, the second class of philosophical works on justice comprises those adopting "the comparison-based approach." They are distinguished by their attention to evident injustice and, therefore, their focus on comparative evaluations. (Sen 2011, 7-8) They lack transcendental theories' precise focus on institutional arrangements and, without describing the perfectly just society, they examine how injustice may be eradicated. (Sen 2011, 7-8) According to Sen, the works of Smith, Condorcet, Wollstonecraft and Marx are comparative theories of justice. (2011, 7) Sen (2011, 8) openly states that he intends to follow only this approach in *The Idea of Justice*.

Sen claims that there are some fundamental shortcomings of transcendental institutionalism that comparative-based works do not naturally possess: (1) their criteria are inadequate for comparative assessments, (2) they do not tackle the issue of social realisation, (3) they tend to insist on obtaining a ranking involving all possible alternatives, i.e. they ask for the total-ordering⁹ of choices, (4) ignoring the opinions

⁹ An example can help clarify the meaning of the term total-ordering. Let us take three different choices regarding one's preference concerning her possible activities for the evening as an example:

of semi-stakeholders or outsiders, they cannot properly promote impartiality and objectivity. In addition, Sen is sceptical of transcendental theories' focal interest in institutional arrangements. Although he definitely has proposals regarding institutional structures, his theory, concentrating on the relationship between individual judgements and public decisions, mostly discusses not these proposals themselves but the positive influence of some specific institutional arrangements on public evaluations. For him, a theory of justice ought to pay attention to the behavioural aspect of justice and he aims to comprehensively study all the factors that may enhance the quality of judgements instead of solely examining the institutional aspect.

Sen attempts to construct a new theory of justice that would not raise any of the problems of transcendental institutionalist theories and incorporates into his discussions the notion of impartial spectator believing that the Smithian theory may not be susceptible to these deficits. "We need to examine the respects in which the Smithian line of reasoning, involving the impartial spectator, may be able to take note of possibilities that the social contract approach cannot easily accommodate." (Sen 2011, 70) Nevertheless, Sen does not fully integrate the device of impartial spectator to his theory; he does not suggest that decisions should be made through the employment of the human within. In *The Idea of Justice*, Smith's theory rather stands on behalf of comparative frameworks that do not impose the weaknesses of transcendental theories. According to Sen (2011, 70), the device of impartial spectator would allow one to make comparative assessments, pay attention to the aspect of social realisation, utilise partial-orderings and evaluate the opinions of all. He frequently appeals to the Smithian notion of the impartial spectator whence he obtains additional means to support some of his arguments, especially those in which he emphasises the importance of impartiality.

1) Sleeping 2) Exercising 3) Reading. In a total-ordering, every option must be compared to the others. For instance, if we have the order $1 < 2 < 3$, it means that option 1 is considered less preferable than option 2, option 2 is less preferable than option 3 and option 1 is less preferable than option 3. Alternatively, in a partial ranking like $1 < 2$, the relative positions of option 3 compared to both 1 and 2 are unspecified. Similarly, in a partial-ordering such as $1 < 2, 2 = 3$, the relationship between the choices 1 and 3 remains unspecified, i.e. we do not know if the person prefers sleeping over reading or vice versa.

2.3. The Capability Approach

The goal of this section is to present a brief overview of Sen's Capability Approach and outline what he means by the term "capability." In Sen's Capability Approach, a functioning refers to a favourable condition that individuals actively or passively take part in. (Sen 2000, 75) Some examples of functionings include having the freedom to avoid premature morbidity, taking upward social mobility opportunities, living in an environment free of gender bias, having access to higher education services, achieving career goals, getting adequate rest and making time for physical exercise. As suggested by these examples, a functioning may stand for the state of enjoying an essential freedom or that of practising a non-vital capacity or anything in between. The crucial point is that there should be people who have objective reasons for valuing the condition described by the functioning.¹⁰ The numerical values attributed to functionings gives a sense of the degree by which an individual attains the corresponding desirable condition. Naturally, the values of some functionings may be interdependent: it is often possible to increase the value of a functioning at the cost of having that of some other(s) decreased or an increase (decrease) in the value of some functioning may cause that of some others to increase (decrease) as well. For example, an idealist might choose to make considerable sacrifices that decrease the values of his functionings only to pursue a single goal or optimise the value of a particular functioning. Moreover, in some contexts, it might be difficult to speculate the effects of a change of a functioning's value on that of others. (Sen 2000, 74-81)

Given a chosen set of valuable and ordered functionings, one may form tuples¹¹ whose i^{th} entry corresponds to the value of the i^{th} functioning at a certain point of time. The capability set of an individual is a set whose members are such tuples that the individual can afford to, or has the freedom to, select. If the life conditions of one do not permit her to attain the functioning values demonstrated by a tuple, then, that tuple will not be included in her capability set. This means that tuples that describe life standards that are infeasible for her will be excluded from the capability set. Indeed, the tuple that the individual currently enjoys is by definition included in her capability

¹⁰ Sen's understanding of objectivity will be discussed in the third chapter.

¹¹ Sen (2000, 74-81) calls these tuples functioning vectors.

set. The capability framework may be best illustrated through a simple example of mine. Consider below the capability set of three individuals A, B and C enjoying various degrees of three functionings. The first functioning stands for the capability to get adequately nourished, the second for the capability to have access to health services and the third is the capability to get access to higher education. The entries of the tuples respect this order. Based on the definition of capability set, these individuals can choose between any of the tuples in their own capability sets, which are demonstrated below by the letters A, B and C. Their final preferences are indicated with the leftmost tuple, which means that currently, they are enjoying the functioning levels described by the leftmost tuple. In this example, each functioning was assigned an integer value from one to five yet in other scenarios more refined rankings could be used.

$$A = \{(2,5,5), (3,5,5), (4,5,5), (5,5,5), \dots\}$$

$$B = \{(4,5,3), (3,5,5), (2,5,4), (1,5,5), \dots\}$$

$$C = \{(5,1,3), (4,1,4), (3,2,5), (1,2,5), \dots\}$$

The goal is to show through this example that capability sets of the individuals disclose much information on the relative standing of each in terms of the quality of life. If not the capability set but merely the preferred tuple was known, one could claim that among all individuals, A is the worst-off since he does not even meet the basic need of nourishment. In reality, the inclusion of the bundle (5, 5, 5) in his capability set proves that he has enough resources and freedom to ensure that his body is well-fed and yet for some unknown reason, such as fasting, he chooses not to take the available opportunity. Like A, the individual B has no problem with accessing health services; however, it seems that she cannot escape a trade-off between her degree of nourishment and her ability to access higher education. C is currently very well-nourished and, like B, can support his quality of education by compromising his need for nourishment. However, apparently, whatever sacrifices he may make, he cannot gain much access to health services. As suggested by these conclusions, a capability set can give a lot of information on the life quality of individuals and may enable us to

make interpersonal make interpersonal comparisons¹² and observe the sacrifices an individual has to make in order to enhance the value of some of her functionings.

Sen believes that ideally social decisions should aim to enlarge the capability sets of individuals so that their hard-work can be rewarding and their life may be considered worthwhile. Within Sen's Capability Approach lies the core idea that public policy should serve individuals so that all can "live the way they have reason to value." (Sen 2018, 24) This approach to public policy is significant as instead of asserting a rigid identification of what people would or should value, it considers the ability of individuals to fulfil their needs and achieve their desires. Given this, one may notice that Sen's Capability Approach is deeply rooted in the assumption that freedom is an intrinsic value for all, and in *Development as Freedom*, Sen (2000, 244) emphatically acknowledges this.¹³

Sen and Foster (1973) clearly express that Smith's writings on fundamental necessities are highly relevant to capabilities. Sen frequently addresses the Aristotelian distinction between means and goals justifying his capability approach which greatly resembles Smith's contrast between utility and the appearance of utility in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.¹⁴ Both Smith and Sen advocate that wealth is only a means to attain a life we have reason to value and Sen further argues that the concerns of economists and policymakers should not be confined to a particular metric such as the value of the gross domestic product. Sen's concern for capabilities enables him to derive a profound understanding of poverty and welfare in which the Smithian capabilities such as the ability to appear in public without shame are also considered. The ability to appear in public without shame is mentioned in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes*

¹² Based on Sen's work on social choice, a reason why interpersonal comparisons may be of utmost significance is that the integration of information on intrapersonal comparisons enables us to escape Kenneth Arrow's Impossibility Theorem. (Sen 2018) I briefly introduced Arrow's Impossibility Theorem in the fourth footnote of the first chapter, or the introduction.

¹³ Sen's universalist assumptions are especially prominent in his capability approach. In fact, he states: "It will not have escaped the reader that this book is informed by a belief in the ability of different people from different cultures to share many common values and to agree on some common commitments. Indeed, the overriding value of freedom as the organizing principle of this work has this feature of a strong universalist presumption." (Sen 2000, 244)

¹⁴ I briefly touched upon Smith's contrast in the first section of the second chapter, or Preliminaries.

of Wealth of Nations and in the following passage Smith claims merely possessing goods that are essential for sustenance is insufficient for a person's well-being.

A linen shirt, for example, is, strictly speaking, not a necessary of life. The Greeks and Romans lived, I suppose, very comfortably, though they had no linen. But in the present times, through the greater part of Europe, a creditable day-labourer would be ashamed to appear in publick without a linen shirt, the want of which would be supposed to denote that disgraceful degree of poverty, which, it is presumed, no body can well fall into without extreme bad conduct. Custom, in the same manner, has rendered leather shoes a necessary of life in England. The poorest creditable person of either sex would be ashamed to appear in publick without them. In Scotland, custom has rendered them a necessary of life to the lowest order of men; but not to the same order of women, who may, without any discredit, walk about bare-footed. In France, they are necessaries neither to men nor to women; the lowest rank of both sexes appearing there publickly, without any discredit, sometimes in wooden shoes, and sometimes bare-footed. Under necessaries therefore, I comprehend, not only those things which nature, but those things which the established rules of decency have rendered necessary to the lowest rank of people. All other things, I call luxuries; without meaning by this appellation, to throw the smallest degree of reproach upon the temperate use of them. Beer and ale, for example, in Great Britain, and wine, even in the wine countries, I call luxuries. A man of any rank may, without any reproach, abstain totally from tasting such liquors. Nature does not render them necessary for the support of life; and custom no where renders it indecent to live without them. As the wages of labour are every where regulated, partly by the demand for it, and partly by the average price of the necessary articles of subsistence; whatever raises this average price must necessarily raise those wages, so that the labourer may still be able to purchase that quantity of those necessary articles which the state of the demand for labour, whether increasing, stationary, or declining, requires that he should have. (Smith 1981b, 870)

CHAPTER 3

AMARTYA SEN'S CRITICISM OF TRANSCENDENTAL INSTITUTIONALISM THROUGH ADAM SMITH'S PERSPECTIVE

Due to their conceptual essence, Sen's discussions on transcendental institutionalism and the comparative approach reflect the philosophical foundations of his perspectives on social choice and normative economics. Only after closely studying these foundations would it be possible to detect the Smithian influence and reflections, and analyse the compatibility between the findings of Smith and Sen on these topics. Hence, in this section, I aim to carefully examine Sen's criticism of transcendental institutionalism and his theory of justice to reveal their inherent presuppositions, especially the ones that do not conform to the conventional practices within philosophy of justice or normative economics. I wish to pinpoint the insightful concepts in Sen's writings that shed light on the requirements of the decision-making processes and argue why certain ideas may not hold this clarity, examining both the defence and critique of his dichotomy and his criticisms of transcendental institutionalism. Finally, I intend to investigate Smith's influence on Sen's ideas on the decision-making methodology and see if Smith's writings can provide different perspectives or further support.

3.1. The Redundancy and Insufficiency Claims

The main shortcomings of transcendental institutionalism, according to Sen, are that the findings of its central investigation of the principles of the perfectly just society is completely unnecessary (redundant) and insufficient for the purpose of making comparative assessments. The claim for redundancy seems to be stronger than that for insufficiency as the latter does not fully dismiss the role of transcendental theories in

facilitating the progress of comparative discussions. To illustrate his argument for redundancy, Sen (2011, 102) provides a couple of analogies, one in which the task is to compare the heights of Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount McKinley. He, then, asks the readers to consider the nature of the task and question the relevance of the fact that Mount Everest is the tallest of all. His goal is to challenge the idea that one needs to refer to the qualities of the ideal to be able to compare the desirability of two social states. For Sen (2011, 102), rational evaluation does not require one to refer to a conception of the ideal whilst making comparative assessments. Notably, this view is not only worthwhile for its implications for the studies of philosophy of justice. If Sen's redundancy claim should be accepted, then transcendental theories may be unnecessary for assessing the comparative desirability of social states in normative economics as well. To put simply, scrutinising the redundancy claim one either learns how one *should not* weigh the relative desirability of social states or concludes that transcendental theories have to be incorporated in comparative assessments.

To the redundancy criticism, many authors, such as Ege, Igersheim and Le Chapelain (2012 & 2016), Valentini (2011) and, Hirsch (2011), responded by arguing either for the effectiveness of the application of transcendental metrics measuring the distances between alternative social states and the ideal or the indispensability of transcendental queries in comparative inquiries. Even those, such as Drydyk (2012), who believes that Sen's dichotomy is mostly well-founded, argued for the invalidity of some of Sen's arguments for redundancy. The following sentences summarise the general line of argumentation adopted by some of these authors and indicate that Sen's metaphor may be of low strength:

[T]o play on another of Sen's metaphors, it is not as though transcendental theories merely tells us that Mount Everest is the highest mountain, which is admittedly useless for determining whether Kilimanjaro is higher than Mount Rainier (Sen 2009, 102). They do not merely do this, since they must, like all other theories of justice, tell us *which way is up* so far as justice is concerned. (Drydyk 2012)

Two statements may be offered to examine this view. First, it places trust in the capability of transcendental theories to formulate their metrics, Sen does not discredit this. As argued before, he thinks that such a metric can indeed be built upon a given description of the ideally just society. Secondly, the view relies on the belief that

metrics can accurately indicate “which way is up.” Sen has two reasons to mistrust this ability. We may examine a relevant passage of *The Idea of Justice* to analyse both.

We may, of course, be tempted by the idea that we can rank alternatives in terms of their respective closeness to the perfect choice, so that a transcendental identification may indirectly yield also a ranking of alternatives. But that approach does not get us very far, partly because there are different dimensions in which objects differ (so that there is the further issue of assessing the relative importance of distances in distinct dimensions), (Sen 2011, 16)

Then, to determine “which way is up,” Sen believes that it is necessary to find the right maps (metrics) for the mountain one would like to climb (the comparative assessment at hand). For him (2006, 102-7), different comparative assessments may require one to adopt distinct metrics and even distinct, to use Sen’s terminology, evaluative spaces.¹⁵ If the metric employed is unsuitable for the nature of a comparison, then, it is unlikely to obtain a ranking of social states respecting the requirements of justice.¹⁶ Transcendental theories, says Sen, neglect this necessity.

Sen’s argument continues as follows:

and also because descriptive closeness is not necessarily a guide to valuational proximity (a person who prefers red wine to white may prefer either to a mixture of the two, even though the mixture is, in an obvious descriptive sense, closer to the preferred red wine than pure white wine would be). (Sen 2011, 16)

Thus, Sen, secondly, challenges the usefulness of transcendental metrics in comparative assessments by rejecting the idea that the descriptive closeness to the ideal society is always a reasonable criterion for preferability. He would not disagree that the social state A is descriptively nearer to the ideal than social state B if the descriptive distance between the ideal and A is two units whereas that between the ideal and B is five. However, he does not see any reason in this context to assert that the social state A should be preferred to B. To grasp Sen’s viewpoint, let us further develop the scenario and imagine that in social state A, everything appears identical to the ideal situation except for one significant detail. In social state A, people experience more freedoms, opportunities for upward mobility, etc., compared to those in state B, yet their social expenditures are partially financed through imperial foreign

¹⁵ Sen defines the term evaluative space as follows: “The identification of the objects of value specifies what may be called an evaluative space” (Sen 2006, 43)

¹⁶ This view will be extensively deliberated in the section in which I discuss the infeasibility claim.

policies. Because the descriptive metric does not account for how a particular social state deviates from the ideal and focuses on to what extent it does so, A will be perceived as closer to the ideal in descriptive terms. However, it seems to me that due to this significant detail, many would argue that social state A should not be preferred over B, unless imperial policies also prevail in B. I believe this may illustrate the essence of this part of Sen's argument.

This position of Sen should be analysed very carefully as it points out two different sources of shortcomings. First, the limitation at hand may be about relying merely on a single measure of closeness, in this case the descriptive one, when there are various metrics to consider. For instance, even a very simple transcendental model which defines the perfectly just society as a society where each citizen has equal income would urge one to address several types of metrics in most of the comparisons. It is known that there are several measures of economic inequality such as the Gini coefficient and the Hoover index. The social state A may turn out to be fairer than B with respect to one measure and the opposite can be the case as for the other. As a result, to compare two societies, one may need to identify the relative strengths of these measures and the relative standing of alternative societies with respect to each measure. (Sen 2006, 132) In Sen's example, white wine would be deemed a closer option to the ideal drink, i.e. red wine, than the mixture if the chosen metric measures closeness in terms of the purity of the drink, given that the selected ideal has this property. White wine is a pure drink as the red in the sense that both have not been mixed with any other beverages, but the mixture is indeed not.

Since one may end up with conflicting rankings suggested by different metrics of closeness, the next question is whether she will be able to conclude in the end that white wine is better than the mixture.

The ideas underlying the discipline of measurement vary greatly among the different measures, and while many of these ideas have good reasons behind them, they often conflict with each other. Different features of basal equality can, therefore, suggest different rankings of particular situations. Sometimes the plurality arising from these sources may be reduced through scrutinized exclusion of the claims of particular elements in the initial plurality. At other times the plurality can be lessened through 'combining' or 'uniting' the considerations by some procedure of evaluative weighting. But even after all these reductions are carried out, there may remain some residual plurality, with consequent ambiguities in the ordering (Sen 2006, 132-3)

Hence, Sen hints that this limitation may not be resolved through the considerations of different metrics of closeness and this passage points out at the existence of an even more stubborn constraint on comparisons. Precisely, due the plurality of closeness measures one may not be able to compare each pair of options and acquire a single linear ranking of all alternatives. Hence, a transcendental identification may not be enough to formulate or justify rankings it suggests, this summarises Sen's claim for insufficiency.

3.2. The Relationship Between Normativity and Transcendence

Secondly, the limitation remarked by Sen in the passage on beverages may not be only about the plurality of metrics of closeness but also about having comparisons rest upon a conception of the ideally just society. Sen believes this limitation intrinsically prevails in the transcendental institutionalism approach. Admittedly, one inevitably needs to refer to some concept of ideality or preferability to assert that "X is better than Y", as it is inconceivable how comparisons may be made otherwise. It was argued in the preliminaries that Sen acknowledges the necessity of a point of reference or an evaluative space in comparative assessments. Nevertheless, his mountain analogy and redundancy claim show that he does not see transcendental findings as capable of entailing proper reference points. He clearly refuses to make comparisons in reference to a conception of the ideal society. According to Ege, Igersheim and Le Chapelain (2016), this refusal is ill-founded since a transcendental point of reference is indispensable due to the strong ties between normative assertions and transcendental investigations.

[O]ne cannot frame judgments of the form "society X is more just than society Y" without having any idea of what society Z, i.e. a just society, should be. For instance, it seems to us that one cannot assert that serfdom is more just than slavery without believing that in a just society all individuals should be free. (Ege, Igersheim and, Le Chapelain 2016)

Hence, these authors claim that prescriptive claims coexist with their transcendental equivalents. That is to say any referential basis of a comparison has to have a transcendental component. They (2016) argue that by asserting that one has to prefer serfdom to slavery because freedom is an intrinsic value, for example, one implies that freedom is an intrinsic value of the perfectly just society and such a society protects

the freedom of its citizens. Similarly, when one says that in case of a pandemic, people's right to leave their houses should be suspended, she means that an ideal society does so. This outlook rests on the assumption that there is a natural one-to-one correspondence between claims about *what ought to be done* in particular instances and the principles of a perfectly just society. For them, the transcendental inquiry may encompass all the relevant dimensions of normativity and rightfully reduce the multitude connotations of ideality to a particular and comprehensive one. Consequently, in their eyes, Sen's claim for redundancy shows that he has failed to notice the imminent presence of transcendence in normativity.

3.3. The Coexistence of the Transcendental and Comparative in Adam Smith's Theory

Throughout his discussions, Sen adheres to his claim that there are clear distinctions between the goals and tasks of the two approaches despite recognising some overlap in their findings. To further scrutinise the legitimacy of Sen's dichotomy, it may be asked whether Smith's theory, which is a great source of inspiration for *The Idea of Justice*, is truly constructed upon a purely comparative framework as Sen asserts. According to Ege, Igersheim and Le Chapelain (2012), the rigidity of Sen's dichotomy has caused him to overlook the transcendental ingredients of Smith's theory and incorrectly conclude that *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* merely follows the comparative approach. For them (2012), Smith's endeavours to discover some patterns within the judgments of the impartial spectator and to disclose the universal rules of morality exhibit a neglected transcendental aspect of his investigation. The human within the breast is bestowed the supreme moral conscience and it is thanks to this endowment that one can discover general rules of morality through experiences. A person who observes a murder victim, for example, learns that murder is wrong through the repeated disapprobations of the impartial spectator or "the detestation" which "necessarily arise in his own breast, at the thought of this, and every other particular action of the same kind." (Smith 2002, 185) Hence, the principles of morality cannot be grasped without the transcendental knowledge of the impartial spectator. Likewise, based on Smith's theory, one has to call upon this transcendental knowledge to make comparative moral assessments.

In *The Idea of Justice*, one finds a lack of interest in Smith's discussions on general rules of morality and the internal mechanisms that shape the judgement of the human within. While Sen extensively focuses on the roles of the human without and one's experiences in advancing the quality of judgments, he bypasses the discussions in which Smith attempts to identify the patterns within the impartial spectators' evaluations. Moreover, forgetting that the impartial spectator has the supreme moral conscience, Sen often attributes the reliability of the human within not to its transcendental moral knowledge but only to its impartial stance. He seems to forget that in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith often suggests that absolute morality is ingrained in the heart of all human beings and experience is only a means to access it:

Indeed, this 'consciousness' and 'reason' which the moral subject holds within, under the guise of the impartial spectator, and the obligations to which he is bound by his inner tribunal, are not dispositions he acquires from the outside by comparison, imitation or experiments. These qualities exist inherently in his heart, though the subject is not immediately aware of them in his ordinary existence. Experience and interaction with other subjects are needed to make him aware of them. But this awareness is not the same as embracing an observed behavioural pattern, imitating an external model or assimilating learned knowledge. It is an experiment through which the moral subject discovers the transcendental dimension that has been residing within. However, Sen pays little attention to the interiority of Smith's impartial spectator. As a result, he tends to reduce the problem of the impartial spectator to a simple question of experience and knowledge. Thus, when one attempts to understand the philosophical significance of the problem, it becomes evident that a certain Rawlsian influence is also present in Smith's inquiry. (Ege, Igersheim and Le Chapelain 2012; my translation)

In the end, Sen keeps his distance from Smith's inquiries on general rules of morality, upon examining which he could have observed the transcendental qualities of Smith's theory, and prefers to stand by his dichotomy and criticism of transcendental institutionalism. In any case, Sen's lack of appreciation towards the transcendental aspect of Smith's inquiries has some ramifications. Due to this disregard, Sen does not employ the Smithian tool in the intended manner; it appears that he and Smith sometimes hold distinct intentions whilst invoking the impartial spectator. On the one hand, Sen (2011, 404) is claiming that "the device of impartial spectator is used by Smith to open up questioning rather than close down a debate with a formulaic answer allegedly derived from the impartial spectator seen as a definitive arbitrator" and on the other, there is Smith (1982, 104) who attempted to justify capital punishment through the impartial spectator he has discovered. According to extensive evidence within *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, the original human within is sometimes meant to

be “a definitive arbitrator” as it has the supreme moral conscience and, thus, is an excellent decision-maker. For example, believing that the severity of the punishment should be based on the level of resentment felt by the victim, Smith (1982, 104) argues that the impartial spectator helps in determining the appropriate legal punishment for a criminal. Likewise, Smith (1982, 17) refers to the sympathy of the spectator to posit that property acquired through occupation should be safeguarded by laws.

The varying objectives they consider when invoking the impartial spectator are not the sole reason why Sen’s reinterpretation diverges from Smith’s theory. Some authors highlight additional ways in which Sen’s neglect of the transcendental aspect of the device makes the two theories incompatible. According to Bréban and Gilardone (2020), for instance, Sen’s conception of the human within does not correspond to Smith’s notion of the impartial spectator yet it much resembles the Smithian concept of human without. As I did, these authors (2020) argue that Sen’s overemphasis on the role of experience and his neglect of the impartial spectator’s supreme moral conscience disclose a source of incompatibility. Furthermore, they (2020) maintain that, unlike Smith’s, Sen’s impartial spectator is not an abstract but a real being and it does not serve as “reference point regarding judgments about justice” or as “an ‘arbitrator’, telling the group what would be the fairest decision.” Consequently, they (2020) conclude that in *The Idea of Justice*, the impartial spectator loses each of its transcendental characteristics. In their analysis, Bréban and Gilardone (2020) also note that Sen would go against the dichotomy that he attempted to establish between the transcendental and comparative approaches in the beginning of his book if he appreciated these transcendental characteristics of the impartial spectator. Considering Sen’s appraisal of transcendental theories, his indifference to the interiority of the impartial spectator is rather unsurprising.

In the end, since *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* may not be an example of a theory that merely follows the comparative approach, it cannot reinforce the dichotomy Sen has tried to establish by itself. So far, I have argued that Sen’s accounts fail to prove the existence of solid boundaries between the two approaches. Therefore, additional examination is required to assess the meaningfulness of Sen’s dichotomy. Only then can the precise role of transcendental theories in comparative assessments be

determined. In the next section, I aim to explore some worthwhile aspects of Sen's controversial rationale behind introducing his dichotomy. I believe that the following inquiry can be helpful for gaining a deeper understanding of the proper decision-making processes not only for comparative investigations in the philosophy of justice but also for those in normative economics.

3.4. The Infeasibility Claim, Transcendental Principles of Justice and Total-Orderings

Indeed, Sen's critique of transcendental institutionalism cannot be completely dismissed due to the adverse consequences of his neglect of Smith's transcendental discussions. As mentioned earlier, Sen's redundancy claim aims to contend the irrelevance of the findings of transcendental theories, even that of a successful one that exposes a complete list of the principles of the perfectly just society, to comparative assessments. I have already addressed the works of authors who claim that Sen's theory has failed to support this claim. On the other hand, his claim for infeasibility, which I believe is philosophically richer compared to others, evolves from the idea that no single formulaic recipe, however multifaceted and complex it is, can disclose all requirements of justice and hence, serve as the single supreme point of reference in all comparative matters. Therefore, a central claim of *The Idea of Justice* is that transcendental theories can never provide what they promise. It should be noted that, even if a transcendental theory cannot act as the ultimate reference point in comparative evaluations, this does not mean that they have no role in comparisons. This is because, by accepting the infeasibility claim, one could still contend that different comparative evaluations might require separate transcendental reference points, although this is not the approach Sen adopts. The infeasibility claim only states that one cannot claim that any given transcendental theory is by all means better than the others without asserting that transcendental theories are of no use in comparisons. For instance, it argues that Rousseau's concept of an ideal society should not serve as an ultimate referential criterion in every comparison.

Arguably, Sen's stronger criticisms of the transcendental institutionalism approach stem from his philosophical presuppositions behind his disbelief in the existence of a superior and complete transcendental theory. In this section, I aim to uncover some of

these inherent suppositions. The argument for the infeasibility attempts to demonstrate the incompetence of the transcendental approach by claiming that there is no supreme description of the perfectly just society. According to Sen (2011, 57), the first issue one would encounter doing comparisons based on the suggestions of transcendental principles therefore stems from the plurality of descriptions of the perfectly just society. As these descriptions supplied by transcendental theories may be equally sound¹⁷, it is not possible to select a single theory believing that given any comparative task, its guidance will be superior to that of others. (Sen 2011, 201)

Then, the main problem is that these equally sound descriptions may produce very dissimilar rankings of alternatives. (Sen 2011, 10) Sen (2011, 200-1) believes that a transcendental theory cannot offer more than one description of the ideally just society to resolve this problem, it can only endorse a single set of principles as it has to promote a single institutional structure. Just as a transcendental theory, by nature, rests on a single set of principles of justice, it may be said that many theories of justice and social theories are built upon frameworks in which a particular value is prioritised or values are arranged in the order of importance. Rawls's lexicographic priority of liberties over equal opportunity and Nozick's emphasis on liberties are examples of such value rankings and pre-established priorities. (Sen 2011, 274 & 300) In a similar manner, Bentham's theory of utilitarianism rests on the desire to maximise what is in Bentham's eyes the superior value, the total sum of utilities. (Sen 2006, 13) Sen is aware of the necessity of invoking a value ranking in a comparative assessment as he acknowledges the essentiality of setting an evaluative space. To resolve dilemmas encountered in comparative assessments, some theories naturally recommend decision-makers to be attentive to a superior value or remain loyal to a value ranking.

¹⁷ One might wonder what the term "soundness" signifies in *The Idea of Justice*. Although Sen does not clearly define this term, it can be suggested that he evaluates the soundness of a claim based on its level of impartiality. In some sections of his book, he states that there are several equally sound descriptions of an ideally just society, while in others, he mentions that there are multiple impartial transcendental criteria. The following sentences seem to verify the claim that Sen deems soundness, impartiality and objectivity to be interrelated concepts: "Going beyond all that, it can plausibly be argued that if others cannot, with the best of efforts, see that a judgement is, in some understandable and reasonable sense, just, then not only is its implementability adversely affected, but even its soundness would be deeply problematic. There is a clear connection between the objectivity of a judgement and its ability to withstand public scrutiny – a subject I have explored from different perspectives, earlier in this book." (Sen 2011, 394)

Evidently, there is an equivalence between accentuating a supposedly superior value or value ranking and recommending a unique set of justice principles. Indeed, guiding any comparison, transcendental theories endorse a unique set of value ranking schemes, namely the one that reflects the priorities of the perfectly just society they portray.

Concerning infeasibility, Sen claims that transcendental theories' predetermined sets of justice principles and value rankings are inflexible and rigid; they cannot enclose the heterogeneities within reality and fulfil the demands of justice in each scenario. Sen aims to explain this shortcoming of transcendental institutionalism through his illustration involving the three children, Anne, Bob and Carla, and a flute.¹⁸ Reading this illustration, one feels that the decision that has to be made is a tough one; it may even be regarded as a trilemma. However, theories of justice emphasising the greater significance of particular values cannot deal with the complexity of the case and thus, for Sen, they directly announce the child that has to get the flute without producing a comprehensive justification. As stated in *The Idea of Justice*, a purely utilitarian person would promptly choose Anne, an economic egalitarian would favour Bob and a libertarian would select Carla. (Sen 2011, 13-4) Despite these clear-cut suggestions, neither of the three advocates would suggest why the value that they defend, namely, utilities, economic equality and property rights, should be prioritised in this particular scenario. In this sense, they ignore the fact that diverse and multi-dimensional real-life circumstances necessitate us to adopt a very flexible ranking of virtues and values to meet the requirements of justice. The nature of one comparative assessment may demand that our concerns for liberties should prevail over distributional ones and the other may request the opposite, yet according to Sen, transcendental theories never pay attention to the nature of comparison and the demands of particular instances.

Sen's empirical examinations of the causes of famines¹⁹ also highlight this necessity of attending to the demands of a particular scenario: Although Sen (1988) believes that

¹⁸ This illustration has been detailed in the second chapter.

¹⁹ Throughout this thesis, I refer to some examples involving famines as Sen has conducted extensive research on them and on poverty. In his book *Poverty and Famines*, he (1981) studies causes of famines

property rights are intrinsic, he does not mean that in case of a famine these rights cannot be or should not be violated. Sen seems to suggest that insisting on the guidance of predetermined value rankings in comparative assessments may cause us to ignore the most urgent matter of the day. According to him (2011, 221), if one is interested in identifying the most significant value or problem of the day, public voice is more suggestive than any predetermined set of transcendental principles.

The ontological and epistemological grounds of Sen's various arguments reveal the basis for the assertion that selecting the best transcendental theory is infeasible and explicate his antipathy for the practice of making all comparisons based on a single set of justice principles or value rankings. Sen's reflections on some widely accepted ideas concerning the nature and requirements of justice offer some justification for the dismissal of the practice of citing a single value ranking or set of principles of justice in all comparisons. I will shortly be discussing that an example of a commonly accepted idea concerning the nature of justice is that a profound understanding of the essence of justice allows for the comparison of every feasible social state. The ontological side of Sen's line of reasoning shows how erroneous views on the nature of some concepts, such as justice, choice, well-being and inequality, can set misguided or unrealistic expectations for social theories, theories of justice and normative economics. Sen (2011, 395) believes that the insistence on having a single description of the perfectly just society as the principal evaluative basis and also the aspiration on obtaining total-orderings of alternatives is based upon misconceptions on justice.²⁰

and starvation in relation to entitlement systems and measures of poverty. His findings on these topics may have inspired him to introduce the transcendental vs. comparative debate. For example, his discovery that famines are mostly caused by the impoverishment of a social group must have made Sen believe that property rights should not be at all times considered as sacred. This, indeed, gives the impression that general principles of justice, which in the eyes of many include the principle that property rights should be secured, may be, or even should be, disregarded and violated in some particular instances.

²⁰ In the following passage Sen argues that a theory of justice ought to take into account different reasonings: "The plurality of reasons that a theory of justice has to accommodate relates not only to the diversity of objects of value that the theory recognizes as significant, but also to the type of concerns for which the theory may make room, for example, on the importance of different kinds of equality or liberty. Judgements about justice have to take on board the task of accommodating different kinds of reasons and evaluative concerns. The recognition that we can often prioritize and order the relative importance of competing considerations does not, however, indicate that all alternative scenarios can always be completely ordered, even by the same person. A person may have clear views on some rankings and yet not be sure enough about some other comparisons." (Sen 2011, 395)

Here, one can easily see the connection between the insistence on acquiring total-orderings and the fascination with submitting all assessments to a supposedly supreme set of transcendental criteria. First of all, a static and complete description of the ideal society and ranking of values may supply a complete ordering of social states. However, if one could demonstrate that different comparisons require special and different reference points, this result would complicate the process of achieving a complete ordering of social states at hand. For this reason, according to Sen, unlike comparative theories, transcendental frameworks promise the ability to create total-orderings of all alternative social states. This notion is also reinforced by Sen's view that transcendental theories aim to present a complete picture of the ideal and incomplete depictions cannot properly serve as transcendental theories.²¹ More crucially, in Sen's theory, the focus on total-orderings extends beyond just the ordering of social states and Sen's accounts on total-orderings concern the rankings of transcendental theories as well. This latter involves identifying the most comprehensive and accurate set of transcendental criteria or, to put it differently, comparing transcendental theories to find a superior one. Naturally, to be able to select the best social alternative using transcendental theories, one must pinpoint the best transcendental criteria in advance. Thus, the insistence on total-orderings is twofold as not only the chosen social state but also the selected criteria should be the ultimate best among all. In fact, the infeasibility claim mainly argues that total-ordering of the latter, or of the transcendental criteria, is not attainable, which directly implies that identifying the best social state through transcendental principles is also not possible. Hence, Sen's objections to total-orderings should address not only the selection of the best social state but are also applicable to rankings involving transcendental criteria as alternatives.

According to Sen, there is a lack of insight on the natures of justice, equality and choice, which causes the collective outlook to presuppose the existence of a supreme transcendental theory and, consequently, the attainability of definite total-orderings.

An approach that can rank the well-being of every person against that of every other in a straightforward way, or one that can compare inequalities without any room for ambiguity or incompleteness, may well be at odds with the nature of these ideas. Both well-being and inequality

²¹ This point was discussed in the section "The Relationship Between Normativity and Transcendence."

are broad and partly opaque concepts. Trying to reflect them in the form of totally complete and clear-cut orderings can do less than justice to the nature of these concepts. There is a real danger of overprecision here. (Sen 2017, 48)

While discussing the depth of the nature of well-being and equality, Sen (2017, 49) draws attention to how the ambiguous natures of these concepts can render two alternatives of social states incomparable and this is what he calls the “fundamental reason for incompleteness.” According to Sen’s discussion in *The Idea of Justice*, the fundamental reason for incompleteness is also applicable to ordering social states according to requirements of justice and to ranking different transcendental theories of justice.

Due to the presence of “enough ambiguity and fuzziness” in the ideas of justice, well-being and inequality, epistemic tools may fail to provide complete orderings. In addition, according to Sen (2006, 46-9), this condition might persist even when all relevant background information is provided. For example, in *The Idea of Justice*, Sen claims that an exhaustive application of the faculty of reason²² by an individual or each of the members of a society need not guarantee the comparability of two alternatives (of social states or transcendental criteria) or lead to a unanimous community decision. He explains this situation in the following way:

[W]e have different types of competing reasons of justice, and it may be impossible to reject them all with the exception of just one set of complementary principles that cohere nicely and entirely with each other. Even when a person does have a clearly favorite priority, such priorities may vary from person to person, and it may be difficult for someone to reject altogether possibly well-defended reasons to which others give priority (Sen 2011, 201)

It must be noted that according to Sen (2011, 70), the human within, as described by Smith, would not insist on having complete orderings. One must note that Sen’s outlook is entirely consistent with his idea of rationality, which will be discussed in

²² Indeed, Sen is referring to his own definition of rationality, rather than the concept of rationality accepted by Rational Choice Theory, when he claims that the faculty of reason may remain inadequate to provide total-orderings of social states or transcendental theories. Sen’s understanding of rationality is detailed in upcoming chapters yet it may be meaningful to introduce it shortly at this point. For Sen, “rationality cannot be entirely captured by the systematic pursuit of given goals and does require some kind of critical scrutiny of the goals themselves, then the approach of ‘rationality as maximization’ must be, on its own, seen to be an insufficient characterization of rationality, even though it may be taken to be necessary. Reasoned scrutiny of one’s goals can, of course, involve some complexity, and yet that may well be a part of what rationality definitely does demand.” (Sen 2004, 40) He believes that a human being is rational if she scrutinises her goals and after outlining them and her priorities, she acts to ensure that she achieves them.

the next chapter. According to these sentences, it is essentially the diversity within non-rejectable prioritised values that cause the idea of justice to contain some ambiguities. Apparently, Sen does not believe that there can be some meta-justice theories which tell us whether people's priorities are suitable for a comparative assessment or not. It will be discussed in upcoming sections that he believes all priorities surviving public scrutiny should be taken into account instead. In a nutshell, the infeasibility claim and the arguments against total-orderings rest on the idea that reasoning cannot always lead to unanimous agreements about which values need to be prioritised in a given comparative assessment.²³

Consequently, Sen's claim of infeasibility actually signifies two different kinds of infeasibility: (i) the infeasibility of the identification of the supreme transcendental theory or, equivalently, the best set of principles of perfectly just societies and, (ii) that of the selection of a suitable transcendental criteria given a particular comparative task. The uselessness of transcendental criteria in comparisons is hinted only by the infeasibility of the second choice. In the next section, we discuss whether Smith's theory agrees with the idea that these two kinds of choices are infeasible.

3.5. Adam Smith: From Infeasibility to Unattainability

Unlike Sen, I believe Smith would not doubt the existence of a supreme transcendental theory of justice; in fact, as argued before, it may be claimed that the human within is informed of all morality principles and supposedly, she would also know all qualities of the perfectly just society. However, this does not necessarily mean that individuals can gain access to the totality of this transcendental knowledge of the spectator and deduce all absolute moral principles. Hence, while Sen's infeasibility claim originally denotes an issue concerning *the existence and uniqueness*, Smith's theory transforms

²³ Sen criticises Rawls, whose ideas are briefly introduced in the fourth chapter, for assuming that through reasoning parties in his thought experiment can obtain unanimous agreements on the principles of fairness: "There can be serious differences between competing principles of justice that survive critical scrutiny and can have claims to impartiality. This problem is serious enough, for example, for John Rawls's assumption that there will be a unanimous choice of a unique set of 'two principles of justice' in a hypothetical situation of primordial equality (he calls it 'the original position'), where people's vested interests are not known to the people themselves. This presumes that there is basically only one kind of impartial argument, satisfying the demands of fairness, shorn of vested interests. This, I would argue, may be a mistake." (Sen 2011, 10)

this claim to a matter of *attainability*, *completeness* and even *expressibility*. In the Smithian framework, examining the possibility of obtaining a complete transcendental theory would be equivalent to asking the following question: “Is it possible to fully perceive all judgments of the human within?” or more generally, “To what extent can we resonate and identify ourselves with the impartial spectator in order to determine, as much as possible, the general rules of morality?”

According to *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, the interactions between the human within and an individual can become more continuous, or less interrupted, as the human within is not a device one activates only to decide upon the most appropriate conduct in a real scenario. Smith’s writings on the formation of general rules of morality show that we may contact the impartial spectator to deduce general principles on justice and morality as well. Further, we do not arrive at these general rules necessarily by generalising the spectator’s responses to particular instances within our life experience; the human within can also expose moral principles by reacting to imaginary events and thoughts. According to Smith, the individuals with the greatest virtue maintain close connections with the human within and decide on the most suitable conduct even if they are going through experiences that are unusual for them:

He [The virtuous human] has never dared to forget for one moment the judgment which the impartial spectator would pass upon his sentiments and conduct. He has never dared to suffer the man within the breast to be absent one moment from his attention. With the eyes of this great inmate he has always been accustomed to regard whatever relates to himself. This habit has become perfectly familiar to him. He has been in the constant practice, and, indeed, under the constant necessity, of modelling, or of endeavouring to model, not only his outward conduct and behaviour, but, as much as he can, even his inward sentiments and feelings, according to those of this awful and respectable judge. He does not merely affect the sentiments of the impartial spectator. He really adopts them. He almost identifies himself with, he almost becomes himself that impartial spectator, and scarce even feels but as that great arbiter of his conduct directs him to feel. (Smith 2002, 169-70)

Hence, in the eyes of Smith, it is definitely possible to *almost fully* identify with the impartial spectator. Nevertheless, the extent by which one can resonate with the human within exactly to decipher the supreme transcendental theory is, at this point, still uncertain. The goal of this section is to present some evidence from Smith’s writings that one cannot fully reveal the general principles of justice or morality by identifying with the impartial spectator and hence, from Smith’s point of view as well, a single transcendental theory cannot describe the whole structure of the ideally just society. Nevertheless, I believe it is possible to infer from Smith’s writings that thanks to

generational advancements and refinements in social structure, the descriptions provided by transcendental theories may slowly converge in time to that of the ideal.

Before dwelling on this investigation, the way Sen calls upon Smith's theory to reinforce his claim may be tentatively examined. To support his infeasibility claim, Sen refers to a passage from *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* showing that Smith is essentially sceptical of the willingness of philosophers to explain all phenomena "from as few principles as possible:"

Adam Smith complained more than two hundred years ago about the tendency of some theorists to look for a single homogeneous virtue in terms of which all values that we can plausibly defend could be explained:

'By running up all the different virtues to this one species of propriety, Epicurus indulged a propensity, which is natural to all men, but which philosophers in particular are apt to cultivate with a peculiar fondness, as the great means of displaying their ingenuity, the propensity to account for all appearances from as few principles as possible. And he, no doubt, indulged this propensity still further, when he referred all the primary objects of natural desire and aversion to the pleasures and pains of the body.' (Sen 2011, 394)

Indeed, for Smith, bodily pains and pleasures cannot be the sole objects of natural desire; he deems there are multiple independent objects that appeal to human nature. In the last chapters of his book, Smith extensively discusses and criticises other views which associate morality with a single and supposedly superior virtue such as benevolence or prudence. Hence, it appears that he is critical of those who examine phenomena through a single lens. Sen believes that there is some resemblance between Smith's outlook on this reductive tendency and the claim for the infeasibility of a unique transcendental agreement. He addresses this resemblance to further support his criticism of transcendental institutionalism: as a single virtue cannot be the ultimate source of morality, a single set of transcendental principles cannot fully describe the ideally just society. However, a deeper scrutiny may show that this resemblance may be questionable. This is because Sen draws attention to the dangers of relying on a single theory whereas Smith highlights the incompetence of theories which reduce multiple casualties of phenomena to a single one. Smith does not disregard the fact that a morality theory or theory of justice may be better than the rest in all means and here and he does not defend an eclectic method for finding the truth. In fact, in the final chapter of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, he aims to demonstrate that his philosophy of morals is superior to other competing theories. That being said, the issue

of attainability introduced in the paragraph above still remains to be discussed.

There is some evidence in Smith's metaphysical writings and accounts on casuistry that comprehending the timeless and universal principles of justice is not a task that one can get done with. It rather seems to be one of the epistemic tasks that are appointed to the whole of humanity and each generation. It is apparent that Smith believes perfection is an attribute of the divine and hence, a complete idea of virtue can only exist in the mind of the deity. To see this, one must recall that the impartial spectator, or "the great demigod within the breast" (Smith 2002, 151) acts as a channel between humans and the deity to gradually communicate the essence of morality to human beings. Thus, determining all principles of the entirely just society is equivalent to reaching the divine moral knowledge. In Smith's words, "the wisdom of man, ... in reality is the wisdom of God". (Smith 2002, 102) Furthermore, whilst describing the endeavours of the wise and virtuous to attain the perfect virtue, Smith (2002, 291-2) claims that their attempts may be rewarding; their toils may actually give them a more precise idea of the requirements of virtue. However, at the same time, he emphatically states that their inquiries on the essence of virtue are destined to remain incomplete.

The wise and virtuous man directs his principal attention to the first standard; the idea of exact propriety and perfection. There exists in the mind of every man, an idea of this kind, gradually formed from his observations upon the character and conduct both of himself and of other people. It is the slow, gradual, and progressive work of the great demigod within the breast, the great judge and arbiter of conduct. This idea is in every man more or less accurately drawn, its colouring is more or less just, its outlines are more or less exactly designed, according to the delicacy and acuteness of that sensibility, with which those observations were made, and according to the care and attention employed in making them. In the wise and virtuous man they have been made with the most acute and delicate sensibility, and the utmost care and attention have been employed in making them. Every day some feature is improved; every day some blemish is corrected. He has studied this idea more than other people, he comprehends it more distinctly, he has formed a much more correct image of it, and is much more deeply enamoured of its exquisite and divine beauty. He endeavours as well as he can, to assimilate his own character to this archetype of perfection. *But he imitates the work of a divine artist, which can never be equalled. He feels the imperfect success of all his best endeavours, and sees, with grief and affliction, in how many different features the mortal copy falls short of the immortal original.* (Smith 2002, 291-2; emphasis added)

Even though the wise and the virtuous may not be able to completely fulfil the requirements of virtue, they may at least sense that their conduct is not near the ideal. Their understanding of virtue can never be sufficiently refined for them to continuously convey the perfect conduct. Presumably, the same situation persists when the issue is to portray an entirely just society and to outline the general requirements of justice.

Secondly, although Smith believes that general principles of morality are of great utility, he (2002, 188) says that they are especially useful for those who cannot properly identify with the human within and he (2002, 267) simultaneously cautions against relying completely upon a set of inductively derived general principles in all occasions. He advises one to invoke the impartial spectator, whose judgement can always be trusted, at each comparison instead of directing her conduct upon general rules which may be misleading when they are not verified by the spectator or the situation at hand is complex and multifaceted. I believe that Smith's account against the use of casuistic rules may unveil a reason behind his reluctance to submit all comparisons to a set of general transcendental criteria which were verified by the human within in many occasions.

When those different beneficent affections happen to draw different ways, to determine by any precise rules in what cases we ought to comply with the one, and in what with the other, is, perhaps, altogether impossible. In what cases friendship ought to yield to gratitude, or gratitude to friendship; in what cases the strongest of all natural affections ought to yield to a regard for the safety of those superiors upon whose safety often depends that of the whole society; and in what cases natural affection may, without impropriety, prevail over that regard; must be left altogether to the decision of the man within the breast, the supposed impartial spectator, the great judge and arbiter of our conduct. If we place ourselves completely in his situation, if we really view ourselves with his eyes, and as he views us, and listen with diligent and reverential attention to what he suggests to us, his voice will never deceive us. We shall stand in need of no casuistic rules to direct our conduct. These it is often impossible to accommodate to all the different shades and gradations of circumstance, character, and situation, to differences and distinctions which, though not imperceptible, are, by their nicety and delicacy, often altogether undefinable. (Smith 2002, 267)

One may sense a similarity between Sen's belief that transcendental criteria may not be able to encompass all the heterogeneities of real-life scenarios and Smith's (2002, 267) claim that a casuistic rule may not be able to "accommodate to all the different shades and gradations of circumstance." Still, one must exercise caution when broadening Smith's warning to include transcendental principles of justice. I believe by demonstrating that Smith has a broad understanding of casuistry, it is possible to justify extending his warning to also refer to general rules of justice.²⁴ In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith reveals the fundamental desideratum of casuistry while

²⁴ Haakonssen's following note in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* makes a suggestion on the meaning Smith attributes to the term casuistry: "While Smith uses 'casuistry' in a general sense to mean any moral theory based upon the study of individual cases, it was an approach to moral theology developed from the high middle ages to the Counter-Reformation, especially by Jesuit thinkers." (Haakonssen 2002, 389)

comparing it with that of jurisprudence and argues that “[i]t is the end of casuistry to prescribe rules for the conduct of a good man.” (Smith 2002, 390) According to him (2002, 390), people cannot be forced through laws to act virtuously and hence, simply adhering to jurisprudential laws is insufficient to portray exemplary conduct. Casuistry outlines a series of general principles of morality referring to particular instances and generalising particular findings.

Since, likewise casuistic rules, transcendental criteria are also derived through inductive reasoning in Smith’s framework, I believe he would prefer that we minimise dependence on strict rules and hierarchical and rigid value systems as much as possible, even if we believe that we outlined these transcendental principles reaching the human within. To understand that transcendental criteria are derived inductively, it may be meaningful to recall Smith’s example in which he explains how one comes to the conclusion that murder is immoral. Based on Smith’s accounts, one formulates this general principle by observing that in each instance and thought of a murder scene, the spectator strongly disapproves of the conduct of the murderer. (Smith 2002, 185) Nevertheless, Smith’s ideas that support the death penalty indicate that this principle should not deter one from considering capital punishment as an option, which shows that transcendental principles, too, should not be regarded as absolute. This, however, does not contradict the ability of the impartial spectator to act as the definite arbitrator or its possession of the absolute moral conscience. It rather hints that one’s capacity to derive general principles out of the judgments of the human within is naturally constrained by the fact that these rules are formulated through inductive reasoning. It is not due to the unreliability of the judgement of the human within but because of the insufficiency of our capacity to accurately extract general principles that we should reevaluate these principles before directly applying them in comparative assessments. Moreover, here, one should remember that by reaching the human within, one taps into divine knowledge and then, attempts to explain it using worldly means.²⁵ Hence,

²⁵ In her paper “Adam Smith: Virtues and Universal Principles,” Carrasco (2014) analyses the standing of rigid principles of justice and excellent conduct in Smith’s theory. She (2014) mentions that there is extensive evidence that Smith treats justice as a special virtue and he believes that one should continuously rely on inflexible rules when the issue at hand concerns justice. On the other hand, she also says the following:

the general notion is that there may be a discrepancy between the divine knowledge of the spectator and the limited capacity of humans to comprehend this knowledge.²⁶

As a result, a secondary reason why a transcendental theory may not be able to give a complete list of the principles of entirely just societies is that it might not survive the scrutiny of new generations and become outdated. This further dimension of the problem of infeasibility, which remains undiscussed in Sen's writings, is discussed by Drydyk (2012) as he shares some of Sen's concerns on the use of transcendental theories in comparative assessments. Referring to Marxian idea that historical circumstances frame people's views of the ideal,²⁷ he (2012) suspects that all transcendental theories have the potential to eventually become timed out. One may also encounter in Smith's writings ideas echoing the Marxian view that people's understanding of the requirements of justice is extensively shaped by the infrastructure of the society. For example, in *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, Smith (1982, 16) argues that the laws and system of jurisprudence of a country is inevitably influenced by the civilization phase that the society is in (the age of hunters, shepherds, agriculture and commerce). He (1982, 49-58) argues, for instance, that primogeniture laws were accepted and commonplace in feudal times for plausible reasons; they settled disputes that occurred over land heritage that led to wars. Yet, in the age of commerce, one can hardly think of primogeniture laws as beneficial. (Smith 1982, 49) Imaginably, the impartial spectator is already aware of the effect of historical circumstances on the views of requirements of justice as it knows the everlasting principles of justice, the essence of morality and the context-relative requirements of justice. Hence, it may be

"This notwithstanding there are also several elements in the TMS that speak against... and show that Smith's proposal has the theoretical means to 'bridge the abyss' from the empirical to universal. The TMS simultaneously justifies virtue ethics' ideals of excellence and universal mandatory duties; it articulates within the same ethical framework context-relative rules of thumb for positive virtues with some universally binding obligations."

²⁶ Recalling the following quote, given in Preliminaries, from *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* may be meaningful at this point: "The reasonings of philosophy, it may be said, though they may confound and perplex the understanding, can never break down the necessary connection which Nature has established between causes and their effects." (Smith 2002, 345)

²⁷ Drydyk (2012) refers to the Marxian perspective in the following passage: "Justice 'can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby'...thinking about institutions and distributive patterns for a just society is invariably limited by presuppositions about which sorts of interactions are normal within that society...these presuppositions will function as ideological blinkers, excluding from view different institutions and patterns that are feasible only with further social and economic development."

claimed that humans hold the potential to notice the influence of infrastructure on their views of justice, yet building this awareness is indeed a complicated task that may be successfully undertaken only by the few.

So far, I have discussed that the divine rules of justice and human perception of the requirements of justice exist in separate realms. Nevertheless, it must be noted that Smith's metaphysical system hints that human beings are slowly acquiring a better understanding of the essence of justice. According to this system, societies progress in their natural state (Smith 1981a, 377-8) and humans have a strong drive to protect the society by eradicating injustices. (Smith 2002, 103) Nature and human beings hold the same ultimate objective of promoting "the order of the world, and the perfection and happiness of human nature." (Smith 2002, 196) Consequently, human understanding is intended to refine the laws of societies and cultivate a purer grasp of the requirements of justice.

Remaining faithful to Smith's accounts, one could hold that for him formulating a complete transcendental theory of justice is not possible. Indeed, one does not have to agree with Smith's metaphysical ideas which frequently refer to the influence of a benevolent deity. In any case, even if all transcendental theories are obliged to remain incomplete due to some epistemic limitations, depending on the degree of its incompleteness, a transcendental theory that is close enough to the best may still aid in comparative assessments. I believe that, at its core, Smith's theory implies this, while also advising against an overreliance on strict transcendental principles which may cause people to disregard the necessity of invoking the impartial spectator in comparative assessments.

3.6. Impartiality, Objectivity and Public Scrutiny

After pinpointing the shortcomings of transcendental institutionalism, Sen attempts to introduce a decision-making method that does not make use of transcendental findings. His theory of justice suggests that public scrutiny is necessary to comprehend the demands of justice in comparative assessments. The goal of this section is to examine Sen's writings on the role of public scrutiny in eradicating injustice so that later, the

conditions under which the outcomes of public deliberations may be reliable may be investigated. For these purposes, one first needs to examine Sen's outlook on two significant epistemic values: impartiality and objectivity. In *The Idea of Justice*, the arguments on effectiveness of public scrutiny in the decision-making process rest on Sen's ideas on these epistemic values.

As one can infer from the previous discussions, the idea that there may exist plural valuations with non-rejectable justifications is a milestone of Sen's theory of justice; it extensively shapes Sen's views on objectivity and impartiality. Relying on this idea, Sen attempts to establish strong ties between the two epistemic values and explicate the crucial roles of democracy and public scrutiny in the decision-making process. Since objectivity is an umbrella term that can connote various types of epistemic values, it is, first of all, essential to determine the type of objectivity that Sen is interested in. He (2011, 118) emphatically states in *The Idea of Justice* that he is mostly concerned with "objective acceptability" which requires different parties to confirm the reasoning behind each other's prescriptive claims. For instance, in his illustration involving the three children and a flute, objective acceptability would require the utilitarian, the egalitarian and the libertarian to give credit to reasonable arguments of others' rationale.

Given that Sen believes that conflicting prescriptive claims can survive reasoned scrutiny, one can promptly understand why he embraced this understanding of objectivity. Sen could not say, without contradicting his criticism of transcendental institutionalism, that an evaluation is objective if and only if it can offer a rigorous justification for the overall superiority of the selected single option. As stated above, for him, the selection of the single best alternative through reasoning is often not possible. The pre-eminent indicator of objective acceptability according to Sen's accounts is the ability of normative claims to survive public scrutiny. (Sen 2011, 122) For this reason, Sen believes that democracy²⁸ and public discussions are indispensable for settling debates on comparative issues.

²⁸ Sen is in favour of government by discussion rather than representative democracy.

Hence, Sen aims to replace the transcendental decision-making process, which appeals to the principles of the ideally just society, with a system based on public choice that calls upon public discussions and democratic selections. He believes that holding public discussions is the most effective way to identify the most pressing issue of the day. Democracy is not only a fundamental element of Sen's theory of justice but it is also central to his capability approach. Sen believes that public scrutiny is necessary for the identification of the most important capabilities for a given scenario. Consequently, leaving the decision concerning the evaluative basis to the will of the public, he refrains from proposing even tentative lists of the most critical capabilities.²⁹ (Nussbaum 2003) Moreover, Martha Nussbaum (2003) states that it is also not possible to extrapolate any general principles concerning the relative importance of capabilities from Sen's writings. To put it differently, Sen avoids offering statements as follows: *If condition A holds, then, capability x should be prioritised over capability y.* He claims that this decision should be made by the public. Sen's unwillingness for proposing such statements and supplying a list of the most important capabilities can be traced back to the dichotomy he wanted to endorse.

One may ask whether securing the procedural objectivity attained through public discussions is sufficient for fulfilling the requirements of justice. To question the reliability of public reasoning, one may go along with an example within *The Idea of Justice* and imagine a society in which the majority of people despise gender equality and misogynistic perspectives dominate public discussions. In this scenario, it does not appear as the demands of justice have been met through public appraisal. One feels that a transcendental intervention that endorses a general rule reinforcing the

²⁹ In her paper "Capabilities as Fundamental Entitlements: Sen and Social Justice," Martha Nussbaum (2003) searches for proposals of tentative rankings or lists of the most critical capabilities within Sen's writings and expresses the difficulty with extrapolating rigid principles out of Sen's ideas. Suggesting that a ranking of capabilities is necessary, she introduces a set of capabilities that have greater significance for people's welfare and argues that the civil government is responsible with ensuring that people can enjoy these capabilities.

"On the one hand, he [Sen] speaks as if certain specific capabilities are absolutely central and nonnegotiable. One cannot read his discussions of health, education, political and civil liberties, and the free choice of occupation without feeling that he agrees totally with my view that these human capabilities should enjoy a strong priority and should be made central by states the world over, as fundamental entitlements of each and every citizen (although he says little about how a threshold level of each capability would be constructed)." (Nussbaum 2003)

importance of gender equality may be needed. Then, precisely, *why and to what extent should we trust public scrutiny while searching for the demands of justice?*

To figure out why Sen has faith in public scrutiny, one first needs to investigate the significance of impartiality for his theory of justice. Since, in the eyes of Sen, distinct priorities reinforced in a comparative assessment may all be justified by sound reasoning, the only issue cannot be the objectivity of values themselves but also the impartiality of people evaluating these values. In *The Idea of Justice*, Sen distinguishes between two types of impartiality that may be valued by theories of justice. The first is “closed impartiality” which stands for the impartiality one exercises towards a restricted group of people. (Sen 2011, 123) Practising closed impartiality, one will be indifferent to how outsiders will be affected by her decisions. “Open impartiality,” on the other hand, requires that we are impartial towards all, even those who will surely not be affected by the consequences of our decisions. (Sen 2011, 124-52) According to Sen, although many transcendental theories tend to reinforce closed impartiality, it is the exercise of open impartiality that is essential for meeting the demands of justice. One can infer from Sen’s theory that there is a reciprocal relationship between open impartiality and the quality of public discussions. Individual evaluations should be impartial as much as possible to ensure that the decision-making process is objective; otherwise, prejudices can distort judgments and misguide public deliberations. In return, hearing different voices in public discussions can make one’s views more impartial. This reciprocal relationship indicates that in Sen’s framework, a requirement for objectivity is the *impartiality of all towards all*.

In *The Idea of Justice*, Sen cherishes the Smithian device mostly because it promotes open impartiality and consequently, objectivity as well.

If Rawls presents one way of thinking about objectivity in the assessment of justice, Adam Smith’s invoking of the impartial spectator provides another... In seeking resolution by public reasoning, there is clearly a strong case for not leaving out the perspectives and reasonings presented by anyone whose assessments are relevant, either because their interests are involved, or because their ways of thinking about these issues throw light on particular judgements... Adam Smith was also concerned with the need to broaden the discussion to avoid local parochialism of values, which might have the effect of ignoring some pertinent arguments, unfamiliar in a particular culture. Since the invoking of public discussion can take a counter-factual form (‘what would an impartial spectator from a distance say about that?’), one of Smith’s major methodological concerns is the need to invoke a wide variety of viewpoints and outlooks based on diverse experiences from far and near, rather than remaining contented with encounters – actual or counterfactual – with others living in the same cultural and

social milieu, and with the same kind of experiences, prejudices and convictions about what is reasonable and what is not, and even beliefs about what is feasible and what is not. (Sen 2011, 44-5)

The reciprocal relationship between the quality of public discussions and impartiality in Sen's theory may remind one of the feedback between the human within and human without in Smith's. The real spectator articulates various perspectives through sympathy and this enables one to act with respect to the requirements of morality by invoking the impartial spectator. Similarly, Sen's theory tells us that if people are mindful of others' opinions, the public can produce objective evaluations of values. The implications of this resemblance will be discussed in the next section.

3.7. The Efficacy of Public Discussions

Now, I may return to the discussion concerning the reliability of the outcomes of public discussions. So far, it has been argued that for Sen, open impartiality ensures that public discussions yield objective outcomes. In the light of this fact, one may reconsider the previous example in which a misogynistic society is studied. According to Sen, such a society would fail to meet the demands of justice because of the underrepresentation or negligence of opposing views. (Sen 2011, 168-9) Therefore, in Sen's eyes, the actual drawback in this scenario is more behavioural or institutional than methodological. Analysing this point of view, one may realise that unlike Smith, Sen does not put forward an account that explains the intellectual or psychological processes by which paying attention to the opinions of others can shape our ways of thinking. Therefore, certain authors, such as Shapiro (2011) and Bréban and Gilardone (2020), have argued that Sen's theory is not articulate enough to explain how exactly impartiality can help individuals to transform their opinions for better: "[Sen's] repeated assertions to the effect that considerations from elsewhere will 'enrich our thinking' never generate a reasoned case about why this enriched thinking will take us to the destinations that he believes we obviously should reach" (Shapiro 2011) In other words, Sen does not explain how listening to the opinions of repressed women and advocates of gender equality can urge the misogynists to notice that gender equality is an important value.

While Bréban and Gilardone (2020) agree with Shapiro, they also suggest that by integrating the Smithian concept of sympathy, Sen can fill this gap concerning the

possibility of and mechanism behind opinion transformation within his theory.³⁰ Although I agree that, in theory, incorporating Smithian sympathy may compensate for this deficit of Sen's arguments, I believe different supplements to Sen's theory may be more preferable. This is because, as previously argued, there is a fundamental incompatibility between Smith's and Sen's theories, stemming from the transcendental-comparative dichotomy Sen sought to establish in *The Idea of Justice*. Furthermore, even if we overlook this incompatibility between the two theories, the strong presence of metaphysical foundations and references to the deity in Smith's theory suggests that directly incorporating the Smithian notion of sympathy into Sen's theory may be inappropriate due to the absence of such references in Sen's writings.

Still, one should take into account the promising similarity between the theories of Smith and Sen showing that both consider open impartiality a prerequisite of

³⁰ Bréban and Gilardone (2020) propose that the effectiveness of public scrutiny can be validated through the impartial spectators residing in human beings' minds. Before explaining their findings, one has to recall that according to Smith, although in varying degrees, each human being holds the ability to sympathise. In their paper, Bréban and Gilardone (2020) initially draw attention to Smith's idea that moral approbation occurs as a consequence of sympathy and moral disapprobation takes place when one cannot sympathise. The gist of their argument is that sympathy may effectively change our opinions on a subject because while sympathising with someone, one inevitably identifies herself with the human within and hence, does not get a chance to ignore its sentiments:

"Now, with sympathy, Smith does not limit himself to the explanation of the origin of moral judgment. He also endeavours to explain how the spectator's judgment is likely to influence the person principally concerned so that her point of view may evolve. And it is here that his analysis can supplement Sen's. In Smith's system of sympathy, not only does the spectator identify with the person principally concerned, but the latter also identifies with the former. She imagines what she would have felt if she were the spectator on her own situation, and this leads her to adopt the spectator's point of view on her own situation. But Smith insists that the adoption of the spectator's point of view is not only imaginary (see Bréban, 2017), providing that the person principally concerned shares the spectator's reaction to his situation (providing that he sympathises with him), his change of point of view becomes effective." (Bréban and Gilardone 2020)

The sentiments of the impartial spectator becomes the sentiments of the person who sympathises; as an immediate consequence of the act of sympathy, we perceive the sentiments of the impartial spectator as they are ours. Therefore, it is not possible that after sympathising with others, we maintain our morally wrong views. Sympathy necessarily shapes our understanding of what is morally appropriate. According to this perspective, if the misogynistic majority mentioned in the example above could sympathise with repressed women and advocates of gender equality, they would necessarily realise the importance of equal treatment.

Finally, although the proposal of Bréban and Gilardone further develops Sen's justifications for the effectiveness of public scrutiny, it also compels one to ask a further question to fully understand the role of governance by discussion in settling comparative debates. They stress the central role of sympathy in transforming agents' opinions in Smith's theory and suggest that by restoring Smith's ideas on sympathy, Sen can fill a gap in his argument concerning the possibility of opinion transformation. In other words, to ensure that public discussions and the opinions of outsiders can be transformative and to render Sen's confidence in public scrutiny well-grounded, one needs to refer to the Smithian concept of sympathy.

objectivity. Taking it a step further, one could argue that both Smith and Sen would concur that the voice of the impartial spectator may be reached and expressed throughout public discussions. Nevertheless, since Sen's interpretation of the notion of spectator differs from the one depicted in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, they would propose distinct underlying mechanisms to explain how exactly the voice of the impartial spectator may be heard through public scrutiny. It is probable that in Smith's framework, public discussions would appear as an intermediate step of the decision-making process that facilitates reaching the supreme moral conscience of the human within. He would argue that the supreme moral conscience, and hence the decision, is reached through an internal mechanism of the individual where the opinions of the outsiders only facilitate its activation. At this point, one must recall that in *The Idea of Justice*, the impartial spectator's perfect moral conscience is completely ignored by Sen. Therefore, for Sen, public discussions cannot be an instrument for reaching the already existing supreme conscience; instead, it is a tool through which the public can collectively build the idea of what ought to be pursued. In this sense, one can infer that in Sen's framework, it is almost as if the judgements of the impartial spectator are being composed through public scrutiny. In regard to the dichotomy Sen sought to establish, this difference may be significant in light of his goal in presenting the transcendental institutionalism versus comparative debate. However, one may notice that the conflict this difference signifies is merely theoretical. In practice, Smith and Sen would agree that there are merits of the government by discussion, yet, as discussed above, they would propose different reasons for its effectiveness. Given that open impartiality is essential for the objectivity of ideas formed in public discussions, it may be said that the effectiveness of these discussions is secured by a behavioural requirement. Notably, Sen recognises and accepts this as normal and inescapable.

The success of democracy is not merely a matter of having the most perfect institutional structure that we can think of. It depends inescapably on our actual behaviour patterns and the working of political and social interactions. There is no chance of resting the matter in the 'safe' hands of purely institutional virtuosity. The working of democratic institutions, like that of all other institutions, depends on the activities of human agents in utilizing opportunities for reasonable realization. (Sen 2011, 354)

This requirement, however, may raise a further issue as one may wonder whether a theory of justice ought to rely on people's capacity to maintain complete impartiality.

Given that there is a lot of injustice in the world, the behavioural assumption that each human being holds the ability to be impartial may seem too optimistic or naive. If this is the case and public deliberations are not promising enough, then, perhaps societies need transcendental theories, other than that of Smith, that impose some specific principles. One of the goals of the next chapter is to assess the credibility of this behavioural assumption by unveiling the relevance of inquiries on human nature.

CHAPTER 4

SELF-INTEREST, SOCIAL BENEFITS AND PUBLIC SCRUTINY

In the previous chapter, it was concluded that the efficacy of public discussions is contingent on participants' behavioural patterns. More precisely, collective deliberation can be fruitful only if participants can evaluate others' opinions impartially after regarding the opinions of not just the rest of the group but those of the rest of the world. In this chapter, I ask whether this behavioural requirement is too strong and unrealistic. One can infer from the discussions in the previous chapter that evaluations on the average person's ability to form impartial judgements can have significant implications for the dichotomy Sen attempted to establish, i.e. his distinction between transcendental institutionalism and the comparative approach. A proof that the aforementioned behavioural requirement is unrealistic would refute Sen's justifications for the effectiveness of public scrutiny in fulfilling the demands of justice. Hence, the findings of this chapter may enable one to have reasonable expectations of public scrutiny and reexamine the necessity of transcendental principles of justice.

While appraising the behavioural requirement of Sen's framework, an important factor to consider is the influence of one's pursuit of self-interest on her judgments. Agreeably, when self-love is in excess, maintaining an impartial stance and sympathising with others can often be difficult. As argued in the preliminaries, Smith identifies self-love as a major obstacle to impartiality. In many cases, there may arise sharp conflicts between the behavioural demands of justice and the actions one needs to take to actively seek her personal interests. Hence, being excessively considerate of personal gains may lower one's chances of making a fair decision. Acknowledging this, in this chapter, I focus on and analyse Smith's and Sen's relevant writings to grasp

how and to what extent self-regard suppresses one's capacity to form impartial judgements.

4.1. Redefining Self-Interest: Amartya Sen

Before investigating how self-seeking behaviour affects judgements, it is necessary to delve into Smith's and Sen's perspectives on self-interest and contrast them with the conventional understanding of rationality and self-interest in economics. Sen, unlike Smith, does not propose a theory of morality and does not explicitly differentiate between actions deemed vicious or virtuous. While he primarily focuses on economic behaviour in his discussions, I believe his ideas can also shed light on the role of human behaviour in public discussions and the influence of one's pursuit of self-interest in his judgments about justice.

"The Rational Choice Theory" outlines a series of behavioural premises commonly supported by economists and to deduce the widely accepted notion of self-interest in studies of economics, it is essential to examine its premises. In his book *Rationality and Freedom*, Sen (2004, 30-1) identifies three key behavioural assumptions imposed by this theory to define rationality. The first (RCT-1) suggests that human behaviour consistently seeks to maximise a singular objective. The second (RCT-2) asserts that this objective is only tied to self-interests. The third (RCT-3) posits that self-interest is influenced solely by one's own position, not those of others. In various discussions, Sen argues that the third premise of Rational Choice Theory constrains the definition of self-interest too narrowly.

In some of the literature in economics and politics (but less often in philosophy), the term "rational choice" is used, with breathtaking simplicity, for the discipline of systematic choice based exclusively on personal advantage. If personal advantage is narrowly defined, then this type of "rational" modeling would make it hard to expect that considerations of ethics, or justice, or the interest of future generations will have much role in our choices and actions. (Sen 2000, 270)

In this section, I intend to analyse Sen's accounts against the third premise, RCT-3, and his own conception of self-interest.

Remarkably, Sen's critique of RCT-3 is not primarily concerned with whether the premise accurately describes reality in all contexts. (Sen 1977) When the context is not specified and the discussion pertains only to the general situation, it may be said

that a layperson can readily dispute the third premise as it is commonly observed that one's happiness depends on the happiness of the environment. A contextual analysis is essential since the descriptive strength of behavioural premises may vary depending on the economic model constructed upon them and the objectives that economists aim to achieve through the model. (Sen 1980) According to Sen (1980), due to the wide range of inquiries in economics and the diverse aims of economic models, it is not meaningful to base every model on identical rigid premises. Instead, he (1980) claims that behavioural assumptions should be selected according to the specific nature of the inquiry. For instance, in his paper titled "Rational Fools: A Critique of the Behavioral Foundations of Economic Theory," Sen (1977) claims that models addressing the consumption of private and public goods ought to rest on different behavioural premises by arguing that Rational Choice Theory is insufficient as a foundational framework for the latter. This is because private goods are owned by particular individuals, whereas public goods are shared by a community, requiring individuals to be considerate of others when consumed. Contrary to the assumptions of Rational Choice Theory, individuals tend to be mindful of the needs of future users when consuming public goods.

Sen (1977) argues that the fixed assumptions of Rational Choice Theory are too inflexible to serve as the foundation for every model and he offers a short historical account of the widespread acceptance of the premise that human behaviour is egocentric.³¹ According to him (1977), this assumption dates back to the economist Francis Ysidro Edgeworth's³² attempts to discredit utilitarianism as an accurate depiction of real behaviour and his endeavours to substitute the utilitarian framework with the premise that humans are self-centred in economic affairs. After Edgeworth, it was observed that adopting the latter premise leads to two favourable outcomes regarding market equilibriums, namely the two fundamental theorems of welfare economics. (Sen 1977) The first theorem of welfare economics states that under certain additional assumptions, the market equilibrium is Pareto optimal, which means that at the equilibrium points, the resources cannot be redistributed without making at least

³¹Again, in this context, egocentric behaviour refers to being solely focused on one's own interests and disregarding the interests of others.

³² Francis Ysidro Edgeworth (1845-1926)

one individual worse off than she was in the equilibrium state.³³ Since Pareto optimality has been seen as a crucial measure of welfare, many believe the theorem implies that people's pursuit of self-interest benefits the society. (Sen 1977) Therefore, this theorem is often seen as a piece of evidence supporting Smith's concept of the invisible hand. (Sen 1977) With the outcomes of these theorems seen as desirable, it prompted the idea that society might benefit if everyone were self-centred. Consequently, in the eyes of many, the assumption that people act in their self-interests, along with RCT-3, has begun to cover both descriptive and normative elements. (Sen 1977)

Although several reasons have contributed to the widespread acceptance of Rational Choice Theory, Sen considers economists' rationale for adhering to it to be unpersuasive. To clarify his position, in the same paper, he (1977) firstly points out that Edgeworth introduces the assumption that agents are self-centred as it is the sole means to challenge utilitarianism whereas he could adopt others methods to dispute it. Secondly, contesting the view that Pareto optimality is an effective indicator of social welfare, Sen (1977) questions whether fundamental theories of welfare truly imply that self-centeredness leads to social benefits.³⁴

Being in the core [Attaining Pareto optimality], however, is not as such a momentous achievement from the point of view of social welfare. A person who starts off ill-endowed may stay poor and deprived even after the transactions, and if being in the core is all that competition offers, the propertyless person may be forgiven for not regarding this achievement as a 'big deal.' (Sen 1977)

Put simply, Pareto optimality does not guarantee that those who are very disadvantaged are better-off or that resources are distributed justly; in fact, knowing that a distribution is Pareto optimal provides no indication of the relative positions or status of individuals. Furthermore, regarding the topic of egocentrism, Sen (1977)

³³ Pareto optimality, named after the economist Vilfredo Pareto, refers to a situation where resources are distributed among individuals in such a way that it is impossible to increase one person's resources without reducing another's. If it is possible to increase someone's resources without harming others, then the distribution is not Pareto optimal, indicating that resources are not allocated efficiently. This implies that there are still opportunities to enhance social welfare without negatively impacting any individual.

³⁴ In their paper "Théorie du Choix Social et Économie Normative," Mongin and Fleurbaey (1996) provide a concise explanation of why Pareto optimality has been embraced by new welfare economics as a standard for measuring welfare. They (1996) argue that Pareto optimality has been widely accepted as a measure of welfare as it helps economists to circumvent the complex task of making interpersonal comparisons of utility or well-being.

argues that anyone with plain common sense can foresee that if the economy were governed solely by individuals pursuing their narrowly outlined self-interests, without paying attention to the well-being of others, society would descend into chaos. This implies the orderliness of society suggests that Rational Choice Theory overlooks a crucial aspect of human nature and behaviour. As a result, Sen insists that behavioural foundations of many economic models need to be reformulated.

Sen (1977 & 2000) also proposes adjustments to conventional behavioural assumptions by introducing and elaborating on two concepts: sympathy and commitment. His paper principally argues that the influence of commitment on human behaviour should be acknowledged and integrated into certain economic models, a topic which will be explored in subsequent sections. For the present objectives of understanding his critique of RCT-3, it is essential to concentrate on Sen's interpretation of sympathy. Firstly, it should be clarified that Sen's idea of sympathy does not correspond with that of Smith, and Sen does not aim to dispute the Smithian concept by introducing his own interpretation. He (1977) explicitly mentions in his paper that the choice of words is not crucial. According to Sen, when one sympathises with others, their well-being becomes interdependent on their circumstances. For instance, "[i]f the knowledge of torture of others makes you sick, it is a case of sympathy." (Sen 1977) Therefore, Sen (1977 & 2000) argues that actions motivated by sympathy inherently consider self-interest. It quickly becomes apparent that Sen's concept of sympathy does not disprove RCT-2, but it may challenge RCT-3, which was the premise stating that self-interest is determined primarily by one's own situation, not that of others.

If the Senian sympathy can have a substantial impact on individuals' economic behaviours in certain situations, then economists analysing these situations should reframe the concept of self-interest and rationality promoted by Rational Choice Theory. However, according to Sen (1977), the adjustments needed to account for the influence of sympathy are not very extensive. Since Sen believes other characteristics alongside sympathy overlooked by Rational Choice Theory oftentimes greatly influence economic behaviour, he (1977) argues that the theory's conception of rationality cannot serve as a universal one. In this section, I have tried to clarify that

according to Sen, a limitation of Rational Choice Theory lies in its assumption that personal interests are solely determined by one's own circumstances. In the following section, I will argue that even though Smith is often credited with establishing the origins of the Rational Choice Theory, he would most likely also critique the widespread acceptance of the third premise.

4.2. Redefining Self-Interest: Adam Smith

In his paper "Adam Smith and the Contemporary World," Sen (2010) argues that Smith has been narrowly interpreted to support the behavioural assumption that humans are primarily self-centred. He (2010) notes that Smith's well-known statement -that we do not depend on the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker for our meals; but rather on their focus on their own interests- has been frequently cited by the advocates of these assumptions.³⁵ As elaborated in the following section, Sen (1977 & 1987) astutely argues that this statement merely highlights the role of self-interest in promoting agents to participate in the market, cautioning against interpreting Smith's accounts as advocating that self-interest dominates and benefits in all circumstances. I believe that Sen's analyses of Smith's ideas largely aim to show that the individual portrayed by the philosopher can frequently be self-sacrificing; the typical individual envisioned as Smith is not someone who uncompromisingly strives to maximise her narrowly defined personal well-being.³⁶ Thus, Sen primarily disputes the notion that the human prototype depicted by Smith aligns with RCT-2. While I admit that Sen has made very worthwhile attempts to demonstrate that Smith's writings do not unequivocally suggest people are only driven by self-interests in economic states of affairs, many, with justification, argue that individuals' pursuit of self-interests holds a significant position in Smith's economic theory.³⁷ To understand

³⁵ Smith's well-known statement has been quoted in the Preliminaries.

³⁶ Sen's examinations of this subject can be found in his book *Development as Freedom and Rationality and Freedom*, and his essays "Uses and Abuses of Adam Smith" and "Rational Fools: A Critique of the Behavioral Foundations of Economic Theory."

³⁷ As I will be discussing soon, while addressing the Adam Smith Problem, which was briefly introduced in a footnote of the preliminaries section, Göçmen (2007) mentions a group of scholars that follow the "French connection theory" while interpreting Smith's two main philosophical works. These scholars mainly argue that there is a discrepancy between the sympathising individual Smith depicts in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and the ambitious and self-seeking behaviour he outlines in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of Wealth of Nations*:

the source of this conflict, it is crucial to examine how Smith addresses personal aspirations and outlines the concept of self-interest.

It is true that in his famous statement mentioned above, Smith argues that fulfilment of consumers' needs happens as an unintentional consequence of the butcher's, brewer's, and baker's pursuit of their own interests. Essentially, it is claimed that the butcher, the brewer or the baker need not be benevolent and selfless to ensure that the public is fed. At first glance, in the scenarios as the one described above, one may feel that tradesmen's and shopkeepers' self-interests operate independently of the well-being of the consumers or the rest of the public. However, upon closer examination of Smith's statement, it becomes apparent that not being benevolent is not equivalent to completely ignoring the circumstances of others. As Smith (1981a, 26) points out, in the commercial society it is impossible for the butcher, the brewer and the baker to be deeply and sincerely concerned with the circumstances of all customers because to better their living conditions, they simply have to deal with an overwhelming amount of social interaction. When discussing the social interactions of an individual living in a commercial society Smith (1981a, 26) indicates that "[i]n civilized society he stands at all times in need of the cooperation and assistance of great multitudes, while his whole life is scarce sufficient to gain the friendship of a few persons." Hence, a commercial society needs to be glued together through multiple natural forces, it cannot sustain itself merely through people's tendency to act benevolently. "But man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only." (Smith 2002, 26) Hence, people's selfish behaviour may not only be encoded to human nature but also this tendency to act in an egocentric manner may be primarily provoked by the structure of commercial

"In the second half of the nineteenth century many philosophers, economists, social scientists and historians, such as Bruno Hildebrand, Carl G. A. Knies, Witold von Skarzynski and Lujo Brentano, claimed that Smith was influenced by his teacher Francis Hutcheson and his friend David Hume. He took over from Hutcheson early on his view of benevolence and from Hume his view of sympathy. On the basis of these two conceptions he developed his moral philosophy. However, in 1764 he travelled to France and there he came, they claimed, under the 'influence of French materialist philosophers Helvétius and Holbach, in addition to the leading physiocrats'. As a result of these French influences, they claim, Smith changed his anthropological views. He consequently dropped his fundamental concepts of benevolence and sympathy, and borrowed from French philosophers the concept of self-interest, which he laid down as a foundation to his account of human nature in *The Wealth of Nations*." (Göçmen 2007, 6)

society. Consequently, it is important to analyse Smith's writings in depth before asserting that the dictates of human nature completely align with the narrowly self-seeking economic behaviour of individuals residing in a commercial society. I intend to argue that mutually beneficial exchange is not solely facilitated by the governing pursuit of self-interests which causes individuals to ignore others' feelings and circumstances.

Before further exploring Smith's statement, another passage that can lead to the same misunderstandings will be introduced:

But though the necessary assistance should not be afforded from such generous and disinterested motives, though among the different members of the society there should be no mutual love and affection, the society, though less happy and agreeable, will not necessarily be dissolved. Society may subsist among different men, as among different merchants, from a sense of its utility, without any mutual love or affection; and though no man in it should owe any obligation, or be bound in gratitude to any other, it may still be upheld by a mercenary exchange of good offices according to an agreed valuation. (Smith 2002, 100)

While Smith posits in this passage that mutual love and affection are not necessary to safeguard society, he does not imply that society can be sustained if individuals are entirely indifferent to others' well-being. In fact, Smith (2002, 100) also states in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* that "[a]ll the members of human society stand in need of each others assistance, and are likewise exposed to mutual injuries." I aim to show that based on Smith's writings, one can regard others' well-being out of a sense of responsibility, goodwill or for her own interests, without necessarily relying on love and affection but in either case, she will inevitably find herself in a position at which she will be obliged to take into account the well-being of her surroundings. Based on my findings, it is important to exercise caution before asserting that the economic behaviour depicted by Smith in these scenarios conforms to the principles of Rational Choice Theory, particularly RCT-3.

Before I delve into this topic, it must be noted that some scholars, regarding the position of the pursuit of self-interests in Smith's works, believe that the philosopher offers two fundamentally different accounts on human nature. According to them, these two anthropological accounts are governed by opposing forces: in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith draws attention to individuals' capacity to sympathise and attain almost excellent moral conscience whereas in *An Inquiry into the Nature and*

Causes of Wealth of Nations, he mostly highlights the significant and prominent role of selfish behaviour as a driving force of economy and does not address his concept of sympathy. (Göçmen 2007) This discrepancy between the two anthropological accounts of Smith is referred to as the “Adam Smith Problem” and different scholars tackle this issue in distinct ways. (Göçmen 2007) Göçmen (2007) provides a classification of scholar’s perspectives on this issue and argues that there are three types of approaches to the Adam Smith Problem. The first class of scholars adhere to the “French connection theory” and claim that the two anthropological accounts of Smith are fundamentally contradictory as Smith wrote *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of Wealth of Nations* after completing *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and in the interim, he was influenced by the French physiocrats who stress the influence of self-love. (Göçmen 2007, 6-7) The second class of scholars follow the “dualistic justificatory approach” and argue that the contradiction between the two anthropological accounts of Smith should not be considered as a problem. They contend that the sphere of ethics and economics are distinct and hence, it is only natural that the human behaviour described by Smith changes with respect to the context at hand. (Göçmen 2007, 8-12) Finally, the third group of scholars stick to the “defensive approach” and reject the idea that there is an inherent contradiction between Smith’s two anthropological accounts. (Göçmen 2007, 12-14) In his work, Göçmen (2007) not only seeks to resolve the Adam Smith Problem³⁸ but also presents various

³⁸ Tackling the Adam Smith Problem, Göçmen (2007) argues that there is a conflict between the two anthropological accounts of Smith yet this should not be viewed as a shortcoming of Smith’s philosophy. His argument is as follows: “I agree with those scholars who claim that there is a contradiction between Smith’s anthropological assertions in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and *The Wealth of Nations*. I disagree with them, however, with regard to the question whether this problem should be ascribed conceptually to Smith... Smith’s concept of the ‘impartial spectator’ is, together with his concept of sympathy, crucial to his ethics, but in *The Wealth of Nations*, he hardly refers to these concepts, at least in an explicit way. This seems to give rise to the impression that his ethics in general and his concept of the ‘impartial spectator’ in particular ‘is not a part of Smith’s system in the *Wealth of Nations*’, as Samuel Fleischacker asserts... It is true that if we look at the ‘Index of Subjects’ of the Glasgow Edition of *The Wealth of Nations*, we cannot find any reference to the ‘impartial spectator’ and when we search in the text we can find only one. However, as I shall show later, the fact that Smith did not use his concept of the impartial spectator in *The Wealth of Nations* as a fundamental category has to do with his conception of critique. In *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith wants to develop an immanent critique of commercial society, that is, he wants to show the consequences of the distorting structural problems of commercial society by analysing its inner logic. If he had based his analysis and critique on the concept of the impartial spectator, he would have formulated an external, that is, a deontological moral critique of the economic structure of commercial society. Like Kant, this would have led Smith to a parallelism between moral and economic categories, that is, to a ‘system’ of two

interpretations of Smith's accounts showing that scholars have entertained a wide range of ideas regarding the positions of self-love and sympathy in Smith's thinking. Without delving deeply into the Adam Smith Problem, I aim to argue in this section and the next that self-love and sympathy should not always be considered as opposing forces based on Smith's philosophy as in some cases, self-love may enhance one's capacity for sympathy and benevolent action.

It seems that Sen does not explicitly dwell upon the idea that the conception of self-interest in Smith's writings is different and broader than the one in the Rational Choice Theory, yet this idea is implicitly present in his discussions on the position of self-interest in Smith's philosophy.³⁹ Remarkably, according to Smith (1981a, 376), the pursuit of self-interests is so closely linked with others' welfare that the realisation of personal ambitions can be even dependent upon and facilitated by the opulence of others and like that of neighbouring nations. According to his theory, in commercial societies, individuals who act prudently cannot ignore the well-being of others within their society as they pursue their own interests, and this helps foster social harmony. In other words, a prudent person can never be, as Sen (1977) puts it, the "social fool" described by the premises of Rational Choice Theory. However, one should not conclude that pursuing self-interests, individuals are always impartial and do not unrightfully or unjustly prioritise themselves. In examining how the pursuit of self-interest influences judgements, I believe that one can distinguish between two types of personal ambitions in Smith's writings: (i) those motivated by the desire for a secure and stable society, (ii) those driven by the desire for affection or the innate inclination to admire the wealthy and powerful. It will be argued that pursuing both types of individual benefits, one needs to be considerate of others' circumstances and feelings. Examples of personal ambitions driven by the desire to feel beloved include

entirely different sets of categories running parallel to one another rather than integrating with one another. Instead, Smith wants to show that the fundamental categories of commercial society, such as capital and labour, would themselves suggest their own critique if they were analysed thoroughly in their relation to one another." (Göçmen 2007)

³⁹ In *Rationality and Freedom*, Sen (2004, 40), for instance, stresses that according to Smith, individuals' actions and decisions are often shaped by one's concerns for the collective welfare. While Sen's accounts show that the anthropological accounts of Smith do not align with the concept of homo economicus, based on my examinations, they do not explicitly dwell upon the idea that in the eyes of Smith, the pursuit of self-interest, too, may require the individual to consider others' well-being.

aspirations to elevate social status, accumulate wealth and luxury goods, earn the respect of others or in general, the desire to better one's conditions. Smith extensively discusses these aspirations in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of Wealth of Nations*. I will demonstrate that although he believes these desires greatly benefit societies, Smith also recognises that they can corrupt moral sentiments and make one's views more partial. Based on *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, an example of personal aspirations arising from the desire to live in a harmonious society is the desire to eradicate manifest injustices. Arguably, in striving for these personal goals, one's judgments stay unbiased.

According to Smith (1981a, 540), when an individual seeks to live in a just society that rewards one's labour and pursues her personal interests accordingly, she is mainly motivated by the desire to live in a peaceful society. Having the desire to live in a peaceful society, individuals can decide to combat injustices that cause suffering for themselves and for others even if doing so does not *directly* serve their interests. (Smith 2002, 102-3) In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith details this situation by elaborating on this long term personal aspiration to live in a secure society inherent in human nature. He justifies the existence of this desire by emphasising its crucial role in safeguarding societies, and once again, his explanations invoke the idea of a divine plan:

Though Nature, therefore, exhorts mankind to acts of beneficence,... [Beneficence] is the ornament which embellishes, not the foundation which supports the building, and which it was, therefore, sufficient to recommend, but by no means necessary to impose. Justice, on the contrary, is the main pillar that upholds the whole edifice. If it is removed, the great, the immense fabric of human society, that fabric which to raise and support seems in this world, if I may say so, to have been the peculiar and darling care of Nature, must in a moment crumble into atoms. In order to enforce the observation of justice, therefore, Nature has implanted in the human breast that consciousness of ill-desert, those terrors of merited punishment which attend upon its violation, as the great safe-guards of the association of mankind, to protect the weak, to curb the violent, and to chastise the guilty... Man, it has been said, has a natural love for society, and desires that the union of mankind should be preserved for its own sake, and though he himself was to derive no benefit from it. The orderly and flourishing state of society is agreeable to him, and he takes delight in contemplating it. Its disorder and confusion, on the contrary, is the object of his aversion, and he is chagrined at whatever tends to produce it. *He is sensible too that his own interest is connected with the prosperity of society, and that the happiness, perhaps the preservation of his existence, depends upon its preservation.* Upon every account, therefore, he has an abhorrence at whatever can tend to destroy society, and is willing to make use of every means, which can hinder so hated and so dreadful an event. Injustice necessarily tends to destroy it. Every appearance of injustice, therefore, alarms him, and he runs, if I may say so, to stop the progress of what, if allowed to go on, would quickly put an end to every thing that is dear to him. (Smith 2002, 102-3; emphasis added)

While Smith acknowledges that individuals may choose to pursue justice even when it does not directly benefit them, he also underscores their understanding that their well-being is intertwined with that of society. The critical point here is that although resisting injustices may not seem like a deliberate pursuit of self-interest, Smith's discussions on the desire to live in a peaceful society implies that it could be perceived as such. Consequently, the instinct to protect the society adds an individualistic dimension to those aspirations which appear to be primarily benefiting the society. These findings hint that the pursuit of beneficence and justice, therefore, can often go hand in hand. Hence, it may be impossible to determine whether actions taken to preserve the collective are driven by selfless benevolence or contain a completely self-serving element. Towards the end of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith (2002, 364-5) openly avoids discussing whether all benevolent actions stem from self-love: “[w]hether the most generous and public-spirited actions may not, in some sense, be regarded as proceeding from self-love, I shall not at present examine.” This is because even if benevolent actions are brought about by self-love, in his eyes, the “decision of this question is not... of any importance towards establishing the reality of virtue, since self-love may frequently be a virtuous motive of action.” (Smith 2002, 365) Despite having an individualistic aspect, the aspirations of the first kind are not against the requirements of virtue and they revolve around the pursuit of justice. Thus, they naturally do not at all times hinder one's capacity to formulate impartial judgements and may even foster it. Smith's writings on the natural tendency and desire to protect society, then, greatly expand the conventional concept of self-interest.

Regarding the second class of personal aspirations, first and foremost, it is necessary to establish the connection between the inherent tendency to admire greatness and the desire for feeling beloved. Smith contends that desires to enhance social status, amass wealth and luxury goods, and gain the respect of others stem from humanity's natural tendency to long for wealth and power. As discussed in the preliminaries, he believes that achieving these goals does not result in happiness per se; they provide satisfaction only in an indirect manner. To see how, it is important to recognize that according to Smith, to feel beloved is the innermost need of human beings:

What reward is most proper for promoting the practice of truth, justice, and humanity? The confidence, the esteem, and love of those we live with. Humanity does not desire to be great, but to

be beloved. It is not in being rich that truth and justice would rejoice, but in being trusted and believed, recompenses which those virtues must almost always acquire. (Smith 2002, 194)

Hence, when someone becomes wealthy and successful, this does not have an intrinsic significance, the crucial aspect is that thanks to their greatness, they earn the admiration of others, which in turn makes them feel more beloved, which is the most precious feeling for human beings. In addition, Smith (2002, 184) suggests that relentlessly pursuing wealth and power, however, can ironically lead to disdain and condemnation from others. He (2002, 184) thinks that the aversion we feel towards those who display excessive self-love serves as a reminder that we should not indulge in self-love.

Significantly, Smith acknowledges instances where the natural admiration for the great and wealthy causes one to be prejudiced and results in injustices. For example, in *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, he (1982, 40) claims that individuals who distribute their estates through a will frequently prefer to allocate their wealth to those who are already affluent, rather than to those in less fortunate conditions. This, he (1982, 40) says, may be unfair but it aligns with the innate human tendencies. However, encountering such statements, one should not directly assume that according to Smith's metaphysical view, ensuring justice or humans' well-being is not always the foremost objective of nature. According to Smith (2002, 265-6), our admiration for the wealthy and successful is more pronounced than our sympathy for the poor due to the fact that greater social benefits are derived from the former.⁴⁰ According to *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, one of the significant advantages of this admiration is that it fosters respect for social hierarchies and, hence, contributes to societal harmony. (Smith 2002, 265-6)

⁴⁰ In the following quote Smith explains why this is the case: "After the persons who are recommended to our beneficence, either by their connection with ourselves, by their personal qualities, or by their past services, come those who are pointed out, not indeed to, what is called, our friendship, but to our benevolent attention and good offices; those who are distinguished by their extraordinary situation; the greatly fortunate and the greatly unfortunate, the rich and the powerful, the poor and the wretched. The distinction of ranks, the peace and order of society, are, in a great measure, founded upon the respect which we naturally conceive for the former. The relief and consolation of human misery depend altogether upon our compassion for the latter. The peace and order of society, is of more importance than even the relief of the miserable." (Smith 2002, 265-6)

In *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of Wealth of Nations*, Smith also explains that the natural inclination to respect and praise the rich and powerful is inherent in human nature for another very meaningful purpose and as a distinct and special part of the divine plan. Admiration for greatness inspires a desire to emulate the affluent and the accomplished, or it generates the desire to better one's conditions. This desire, according to Smith, is particularly significant. In fact, he believes it has revolutionised society.

A revolution of the greatest importance to the publick happiness, was in this manner brought about by two different orders of people, who had not the least intention to serve the publick. To gratify the most childish vanity was the sole motive of the great proprietors. The merchants and artificers, much less ridiculous, acted merely from a view to their own interest, and in pursuit of their own pedlar principle of turning a penny wherever a penny was to be got. Neither of them had either knowledge or foresight of that great revolution which the folly of the one, and the industry of the other, was gradually bringing about. (Smith 1981a, 422)

In Smith's theory, the drive to enhance one's living standards benefits society by stimulating economic growth, thereby promoting growth in overall wealth, enhancing fair distribution, advancing political freedom and social harmony through various mechanisms. (Herzog 2016) To comprehend these mechanisms, one needs to be familiar with Smith's proposal that the best measure of opulence within a country is the quantity and quality of labour its citizens contribute.⁴¹ In addition, it is important to bear in mind that Smith is not a proponent of the idea that the poor should be incentivised by harsh living conditions. On the contrary, Smith (1981a, 96) views such improvements as always progressive, desirable and without negative consequence:

Is this improvement in the circumstances of the lower ranks of the people to be regarded as an advantage or as an inconveniency to the society? The answer seems at first sight abundantly plain. Servants, labourers and workmen of different kinds, make up the far greater part of every great political society. But what improves the circumstances of the greater part can never be regarded as an inconveniency to the whole. No society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable. It is but equity, besides, that they who feed, cloath and lodge the whole body of the people, should have such a share of the produce of their own labour as to be themselves tolerably well fed, cloathed and lodged. (Smith 1981, 96)

⁴¹ This idea is referred to as "Smith's Labour Theory of Value." In Smith's era, many mercantilist thinkers believed that the affluence of a country is directly correlated with the amount of accumulated money within its borders. In *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of Wealth of Nations*, Smith (1981a, 55-9) offers a distinct understanding of the true source of opulence through his labour theory of value defending that the amount of labour involved in the production of a material is the key determiner of its value. This, however, does not mean that the real prices of goods necessarily reflect the amount of labour spent to produce a commodity.

Hence, it can be stated that according to Smith' idea of social progress encompasses enhancements in the quality of life for the disadvantaged.

Taking these facts about Smith's theories are taken into account, we can summarise the aforementioned mechanisms as follows: first, people try to enhance their circumstances by increasing their labour output and this augments the overall prosperity of the nation. With increased prosperity, Smith argues that more savings will accumulate, resulting in a greater availability of capital.⁴² Therefore, additional job opportunities will become available for the poor. Furthermore, due to the invisible hand's influence, the living standards of the poor will be elevated also as a result of the increased affluence of the wealthy. These factors, especially the improvement in the conditions of the poor, will lead to greater prosperity and strengthen a country's foreign trade. According to Smith's comparisons between feudal and commercial societies, the enhancement of a country's foreign trade bears political significance. This is because as a feudal society evolves into a commercial one, individuals rely less on a master for their sustenance and gain greater autonomy in their own lives. (Smith 1981a, 412-3) Unlike feudal societies, individuals in commercial societies can improve their life standards by meeting others' demand for the produce of their arts by working independently of the rich and the powerful. Consequently, this demand helps reduce the political influence derived from property ownership.⁴³ (Smith 1982, 50)

⁴² According to Smith (1981a, 338-9), those individuals who are excessively prudent and frugal greatly benefit the society. Smith (1981, 338-9) has noticed that a person's savings may one day turn into his or others' investment which means they may fuel productive labour and generate employment opportunities. Savings, thus, enables a nation to be more industrious and this, based on Smith's labour theory of value, promotes economic growth. It may be noted that this is in line with today's economic models which analyse economic growth by equating the amount of savings to the capital.

⁴³ Here is the section from *Lectures on Jurisprudence* in which Smith details the idea that in the commercial societies property ownership does not bring one as much power to control the deprived: "When the barbarous nations of the north overran the Roman Empire, and settled in the western parts of Europe, property came to be very unequally divided. At the same time all arts were intirely neglected. This threw a great share of power into the hands of those who possessed the greatest property. It will be evident also that the balance of property will make those who are possessed of it have a far greater superiority in power, than the same share of property will give one in a more refine and cultivated age. In these times one who is possessed of 10000£ sterling per year may I be said to possess what would maintain 100 men; if he was to restrict himself to a moderate allowance such as is necessary to support a man and furnish (?him) with food and cloathing. But we see that this is not the way men use their money. This ten thousand pound maintains only the man himself and a few domestic servants. The arts which are now cultivated give him an opportunity of expending his whole stock on himself. He has architects, masons, carpenters, taylors, upholsterers, jewelors, cooks, and other minissters of luxury, which by their various employments give him an opportunity of laying out his whole income. He gives

While it is accurate that, based on Smith's writings, these mechanisms are activated by the desire to improve one's own circumstances, it is incorrect to assume that these mechanisms would operate if everyone attempted to improve their own conditions without regard for the well-being of others. In other words, one should not suppose that these paths of progress will occur if people disregard others' welfare and strictly conform to the premises outlined in the Rational Choice Theory. Explicating these chains of events, Smith also emphasises that the personal aspirations which necessitate individuals being mindful of others is a vital aspect of the economy. As noted by Sen (1977), it can be inferred from his discussions that mutual trust is a crucial driving force of the market and indeed, to establish credibility with others, it is essential to be attentive to their well-being and interests. For example, the butcher, the brewer, and the baker not only pursue their self-interests through operating their businesses but also by ensuring customer satisfaction. The latter, indeed, involves a need to take others' utility into consideration. Another observation of Sen on this topic is that, when discussing the introduction of paper money, which may be considered a pivotal change in a nation's economy, Smith (1981a, 292) observes that the notes issued by trustworthy bankers circulate as if they were gold and silver coins due to the confidence that such currency can always be readily exchanged for them. The importance lies not only in prices but also in customers' perceptions of business quality, which can be equally significant. Therefore, typically, the perspectives of others can play a role in one's success. The prudent person has to be attentive to the well-being, utilities and feelings of others.

Thus far, these discussions show that neither Smith's writings on the desire to better one's circumstances nor his ideas on human inclination to protect society support the third premise of Rational Choice Theory. In summary, based on Smith's writings,

nothing away gratuitously, for men are so selfish that when they have an opportunity of laying out on their own persons what they possess, tho on things of no value, they will never think of giving it to be bestowed on the best purposes by those who stand in need of it. Those tradesmen he employs do not think themselves any way indebted to him; they I have given him their time and labour equivalent to what they have received of him; and tho they may reckon it a small favour that he gives them the preference in his custom, they will not think themselves so greatly indebted to him as if they had received a sum from him in a gratuitous manner. This manner of laying out ones money is the chief cause that the balance of property confers i so small a superiority of power in modern times." (Smith 1982, 49-50)

while one may pursue collective interests with personal well-being in mind, it is also possible that in seeking strictly her own benefit, she might need to consider others' welfare. In the next section, I examine Smith's and Sen's ideas that challenge the implications of the second premise of Rational Choice Theory. This premise asserts that the pursuit of self-interests constitutes the main aspiration of human beings.

4.3. When Personal Desires Clash with the Demands of Justice

So far, I have examined the cases in which the welfare of society and desires of individuals align. It was discussed that this agreement often ensures that individuals fulfil some behavioural demands of justice by being mindful of others' feelings and opinions. However, it may be pointed out that there are many situations in which individuals face a conflict between the moral demands of justice and their personal desires. To illustrate that even in such situations, individuals may choose to prioritise justice, Sen refers to his concept of commitment, while Smith highlights humans' desire to be praiseworthy and their inherent love of virtue.

It is important to remember that based on Sen's concept of sympathy, when individuals sympathise, their well-being becomes interconnected with the circumstances of others. (Sen 1977) Thus, as shown in the previous section, Sen (1977) argues that actions driven by sympathy inherently involve considerations of self-interest. However, Sen (1977) firmly believes in considering the welfare of others, humans do not necessarily need to be driven by self-interest and to explain the driving force behind selfless actions he introduces the term commitment. The primary distinction between Sen's concept of commitment and sympathy is that actions driven by commitment are not motivated by the desire to maximise or maintain personal well-being.⁴⁴ (Sen 1977) It is important to note that this distinction is independent of the outcomes of actions for the actor's wellbeing, i.e. actions driven by commitment may leave the welfare of the actor unchanged or better-off, whereas actions driven by sympathy may unexpectedly,

⁴⁴ In his article "Rational Fools: A Critique of the Behavioral Foundations of Economic Theory," Sen (1977) states that he is offering a revised version of his differentiation between sympathy and commitment. Sen says that, beforehand, he did not claim that an action that is motivated by one's commitment can also serve for her own well-being. Hence, the revised version of this differentiation puts greater importance on the motivation of the actor than the results the action bears to one's and others' well-being.

though not anticipatedly, reduce one's well-being. (Sen 1977) Since it is difficult to ascertain the actor's true motivation, providing an example of an action driven by commitment is not a straightforward task. To stress the significance of one's motivation for this distinction, let us consider a case in which a person observes someone cutting in line at the supermarket checkout. Although her own right is not violated, she might feel angry upon noticing this and may approach the line-cutter to explain the general rule of conduct. Alternatively, having experienced such actions many times before, she may not have an emotional reaction to this situation. Still, she does not have to remain indifferent; knowing that what has been done is wrong, she may decide to warn the line-cutter. One could say that in the first scenario, the actor is primarily motivated by the discomfort caused by her anger and seeks to alleviate this discomfort through her intervention. Therefore, since the well-being of the actor has been influenced, this is an act of sympathy and hence, Sen would argue that it is essentially egocentric. In contrast, in the second scenario, the actor's well-being remains intact and her actions are driven by some moral principles which she believes are of great importance. The distinction Sen would make between these two scenarios concerns the psychology and intentions of the actor, making it challenging for an outsider to perceive. Nevertheless, in certain instances of commitment where a noticeable decrease in the actor's well-being is evident, the distinction may not be as difficult to discern. (Sen 1977)

Before exploring Smith's thoughts on the desire for praiseworthiness and love of virtue, I would like to refer to a short Smithian reflection on Sen's distinction between commitment and sympathy. In the preliminaries, it was mentioned that the Smithian notion of sympathy is more demanding than putting oneself in someone's shoes as true sympathy requires one to fully identify with another person by setting aside one's own values, culture, understanding etc. Pointing out to the fact that one goes beyond his own character whilst sympathising, Smith (2002, 374) ascertains that sympathy cannot be intrinsically egocentric.⁴⁵ Hence, Smith's and Sen's understandings of sympathy do

⁴⁵ The following sentences of Smith may be shown as evidence: "When I condole with you for the loss of your only son, in order to enter into your grief I do not consider what I, a person of such a character and profession, should suffer, if I had a son, and if that son was unfortunately to die: but I consider what I should suffer if I was really you, and I not only change circumstances with you, but I change persons

not correspond, which is to be expected since they employ the term in distinct contexts. In my view, the different meanings they attribute to the term do not suggest a fundamental disagreement between the two regarding the topic of self-interest. A more meaningful difference between Smith's and Sen's ideas on personal ambitions is that Sen rigorously distinguishes between two sources of motivation, sympathy and commitment, behind actions ostensibly taken for others, whereas in Smith's theory, the boundaries that Sen attempted to outline are not as clearly defined. Smith's accounts on humans' love of society, which was discussed in the previous section, may serve as a perfect illustration of this point. On the one hand, Smith (2002, 103) asserts "Man, it has been said, has a natural love for society, and desires that the union of mankind should be preserved for its own sake, and though he himself was to derive no benefit from it," suggesting that individuals may commit themselves to the society in the Senian sense. On the other hand, Smith (2002, 103) also states the following shortly afterward: "He is sensible too that his own interest is connected with the prosperity of society, and that the happiness, perhaps the preservation of his existence, depends upon its preservation," indicating that individuals simultaneously pursue collective interests by considering their own well-being; a view which is akin to Senian conception of sympathy.

In numerous other instances, Smith's discussions imply that the two sources of motivation identified by Sen can concur and together prompt individuals to seek the well-being of others. Reading the writings of the philosopher, one can easily spot many instances where Smith describes how people's pursuit of self-interest leads them to behave as if they are benevolent or the opposite happens as acting benevolently turns out to be rewarding for individuals. Regarding this, the following observation may be crucial: according to Smith's theory, a benevolent deity, or the nature, has endowed human beings with the desire to be virtuous, along with other inclinations, instincts and urges, such as the desire to protect society, that oftentimes cause them to act altruistically from others' perspectives. In other words, within Smith's framework,

and characters. My grief, therefore, is entirely upon your account, and not in the least upon my own. It is not, therefore, in the least selfish. How can that be regarded as a selfish passion, which does not arise even from the imagination of any thing that has befallen, or that relates to myself, in my own proper person and character, but which is entirely occupied about what relates to you?" (Smith 2002, 374)

nature ensures that the well-being of society is a universal goal by instilling in human nature desires that would yield altruistic behaviour, which would cause discomfort if not fulfilled.⁴⁶ Consequently, even seemingly selfless actions or actions that lower the life quality of the actor appear to stem from the personal desire to satisfy various strong urges, even if this urge creates a desire within the individual to be virtuous and praiseworthy. In fact, Smith often announces that virtuous actions are brought by individualistic desires concerning virtue and good manners:

It is not the love of our neighbour, it is not the love of mankind, which upon many occasions prompts us to the practice of those divine virtues. It is a stronger love, a more powerful affection, which generally takes place upon such occasions; the love of what is honourable and noble, of the grandeur, and dignity, and superiority of our own characters. (Smith 2002, 158)

Our innate need to affirm the superiority of our morals can be more influential than our concern for others' situations or this need may invite us to pay more attention to the circumstances of our surroundings. Therefore, Smith contends that the desire to be virtuous, inherently self-centred as it represents a personal goal, fosters virtuous actions. By identifying a close relationship between virtuous actions and the desire to be virtuous, Smith's writings highlight that the Senian concepts of sympathy and commitment are in reality very much intertwined. In a sense, Smith demonstrates that even actions driven by commitment have an individualistic dimension, as our commitment sparks a personal desire to act, which would necessarily have an impact

⁴⁶ This is because in the eyes of Smith the goal of nature is to propagate the species and to ensure the continuation of the human kind. The creator has designed human nature in a way that human beings have a natural tendency to pursue these goals: "Though man, therefore, be naturally endowed with a desire of the welfare and preservation of society, yet the Author of nature has not entrusted it to his reason to find out that a certain application of punishments is the proper means of attaining this end; but has endowed him with an immediate and instinctive approbation of that very application which is most proper to attain it. The oeconomy of nature is in this respect exactly of a piece with what it is upon many other occasions. With regard to all those ends which, upon account of their peculiar importance, may be regarded, if such an expression is allowable, as the favourite ends of nature, she has constantly in this manner not only endowed mankind with an appetite for the end which she proposes, but likewise with an appetite for the means by which alone this end can be brought about, for their own sakes, and independent of their tendency to produce it. Thus self-preservation, and the propagation of the species, are the great ends which Nature seems to have proposed in the formation of all animals. Mankind are endowed with a desire of those ends, and an aversion to the contrary; with a love of life, and a dread of dissolution; with a desire of the continuance and perpetuity of the species, and with an aversion to the thoughts of its intire extinction. But though we are in this manner endowed with a very strong desire of those ends, it has not been intrusted to the slow and uncertain determinations of our reason, to find out the proper means of bringing them about. Nature has directed us to the greater part of these by original and immediate instincts. Hunger, thirst, the passion which unites the two sexes, the love of pleasure, and the dread of pain, prompt us to apply those means for their own sakes, and without any consideration of their tendency to those beneficent ends which the great Director of nature intended to produce by them." (Smith 2002, 90-1)

on our feelings and well-being. Thus, after reading Smith, one might question the soundness of maintaining Sen's mutually exclusive separation between sympathy and commitment.

Although the wish to be virtuous reflects a personal goal, according to Smith, this does not imply that it is a vice. In fact, Smith is a strong proponent of the idea that pursuing one's own interests does not have to be harmful or vicious.⁴⁷ For him, from a moral perspective, it is perfectly acceptable to be mainly motivated by the desire to be virtuous, rather than by love for others, while being mindful of their conditions. On the other hand, in the eyes of Smith (2002, 365), the wish to demonstrate one's virtue to others or desiring to be admired despite not deserving it are not marks of good manners. Thus, personal ambitions can be either viciously or nobly egoistic. This distinction is also emphasised in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* as Smith differentiates the desire for praise and the desire to be praiseworthy. Smith (2002, 363-71) expands on the difference between the desire for praise and being praiseworthy in his critique of Bernard Mandeville's claim that human actions that bring societal benefits originate from vices and the selfish desire for praise. In *The Fable of The Bees: or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, Mandeville (1988) asserts that a well-functioning society and economy cannot be established without some citizens engaging in vicious acts. His poem "The Grumbling Hive: Or, Knaves Turn'd Honest" in *The Fable* depicts the predicted downfall of a bee society due to the elimination of all private vices, suggesting that an economy's vitality is maintained by these vices. Mandeville (1988) highlights avarice, vanity, prodigality, and envy as key vices essential for society's functioning, as these particular vices significantly benefit the economy by contributing to the trade of luxurious items and in general, increasing the

⁴⁷ In fact, Smith (2002, 202) states that ambition cannot at all times be considered a vice and sometimes is necessary for the approbation of the self and others: "We should have little respect for a private gentleman who did not exert himself to gain an estate, or even a considerable office, when he could acquire them without either meanness or injustice. A member of parliament who shews no keenness about his own election, is abandoned by his friends, as altogether unworthy of their attachment. Even a tradesman is thought a poor-spirited fellow among his neighbours, who does not bestir himself to get what they call an extraordinary job, or some uncommon advantage. This spirit and keenness constitutes the difference between the man of enterprise and the man of dull regularity. Those great objects of self-interest, of which the loss or acquisition quite changes the rank of the person, are the objects of the passion properly called ambition; a passion, which when it keeps within the bounds of prudence and justice, is always admired in the world, and has even sometimes a certain irregular greatness, which dazzles the imagination."

accumulated capital and demand for many goods and along with it the rate of employment. While Mandeville emphasises that vanity and the quest for praise and admiration make people more industrious and drive the economy, Smith (2002, 366) argues that individuals can also be motivated in the same way by their desire to be genuinely praiseworthy.⁴⁸ According to him, industriousness can originate from virtuous motives yet Mandeville fails to consider this possibility:

All public spirit, therefore, all preference of public to private interest, is, according to him, a mere cheat and imposition upon mankind; and that human virtue which is so much boasted of, and which is the occasion of so much emulation among men, is the mere offspring of flattery begot upon pride. (Smith 2002, 364)

I believe that it is possible to infer from Smith's writings that receiving praise from the public without deserving it looks contemptible to individuals who are deeply committed to their desire to be virtuous.

As a result, Smith's theory of morals and his insight into the influence of human behaviour on a nation's economy, along with Sen's discussions on commitment, challenge the second and third premises of Rational Choice Theory,⁴⁹ albeit in slightly different ways. Both Smith and Sen illustrate that humans may opt to pursue justice, even at the cost of making sacrifices by considering the circumstances of others. Smith foregrounds the desire to be praiseworthy and love of virtue whilst arguing that individuals may prioritise moral obligations when faced with a perceived conflict with personal desires, as failing to do so may lead to moral injury. Sen suggests that individuals committed to certain principles may act altruistically, even when their personal well-being is jeopardised, without discussing the impact of moral pain on individual welfare. Consequently, neither Smith nor Sen believes that individuals only aim to maximise their narrowly defined self-interests. Although people often strive to achieve personal goals, both Smith and Sen emphasise that concern for others is also

⁴⁸ A further question may concern whether the desire to be praiseworthy denotes an essentially egocentric pursuit. In a relevant passage of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, which is provided in the section "Redefining Self-Interest: Adam Smith," the philosopher avoids answering this question. However, as argued before, he clearly argues that possessing the desire to be praiseworthy cannot be considered a vice.

⁴⁹ A short reminder: The first premise (RCT-1) suggested that human behaviour consistently seeks to maximise a singular objective. The second (RCT-2) asserted that this objective is tied to self-interest.

a significant aspect of economic behaviour, which is a point neglected by advocates of Rational Choice Theory.

4.4. Nullifying the Influence of Self-Love Through John Rawls's Veil of Ignorance

The aspiration to be virtuous and worthy of praise makes us more sensitive towards others' emotions, prompting a deeper understanding of human feelings and providing an opportunity to experience genuine sentiments of the stakeholders through invoking the human within. Smith (2002, 186), however, admits that many people are unaware of this innate inclination. Therefore, Smith argues that a legal system and general principles of conduct are necessary to ensure that such individuals behave well and do not cause any harm.⁵⁰ When a person is motivated by vicious interests rather than by the love of virtue, his judgments about justice can become partial and distorted. Therefore, the presence of a desire for virtue does not guarantee that all individuals will possess this desire and be inclined to sympathise and frame impartial judgments.

Regarding this situation, John Rawls (1999, 118) observes that self-serving prejudices can distort one's judgments on fairness, advocating the necessity of a framework that mitigates this influence: “[s]omehow we must nullify the effects of specific contingencies which put men at odds and tempt them to exploit social and natural circumstances to their own advantage.” In *A Theory of Justice*, he attempts to propose a theoretical solution to this problem by designing a thought experiment in which people's pursuit of self-interest cannot skew their ideas on the requirements of justice. In this experiment, the overall goal is to determine general principles of fairness. The parties involved are placed behind a “veil of ignorance,” which means that although the participants are aware of the life standards of people within the society, they cannot identify themselves with anyone; somehow they lack a sense of identity and do not know which citizen they actually are.⁵¹ Nevertheless, whoever person they stand for,

⁵⁰ I elaborate on this idea in the Conclusion.

⁵¹ John Rawls explains what it means to be behind a veil of ignorance: “It is assumed, then, that the parties do not know certain kinds of particular facts. First of all, no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status; nor does he know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence and strength, and the like. Nor, again, does anyone know his conception of the good, the particulars of his rational plan of life, or even the special features of his psychology such as

the parties suppose that they would like to maximise the amount of primary social goods they own and this assumption enables them to develop a sense of desirability and rank alternatives. (Rawls 1999, 123) After detailing his thought experiment, Rawls (1999, 130-44) proceeds by arguing that behind the veil of ignorance, parties cannot be misguided by their regard for their own interests and merely through individual rational deliberation, all would unanimously agree upon the same principles of fairness.

It is true that behind the veil of ignorance, a person cannot, at least intentionally, serve for the interests of the member that she would identify with once the veil is removed. However, I agree with Sen on the notion that this does not imply that behind the veil of ignorance parties become altruistic or selfless per se.⁵² In fact, parties cannot exhibit these qualities as it is assumed that they are disinterested in others' positions. (Rawls 1999, 111) Given that they assume that they would like to maximise their possessions of primary social goods, they would know that their well-being is at stake if it turns out they are the worst-off among all. It is due to such considerations that Rawls claims they agree upon equal distribution of primary goods in the very beginning of the experiment. Thus, it's challenging to claim that even behind the veil of ignorance, the impact of self-interest on judgments is entirely eliminated. Instead, through this notion, Rawls has created a scenario where prioritising self-interests inevitably leads parties to be considerate of the life standards of society's all members: "Now the combination

his aversion to risk or liability to optimism or pessimism. More than this, I assume that the parties do not know the particular circumstances of their own society. That is, they do not know its economic or political situation, or the level of civilization and culture it has been able to achieve. The persons in the original position have no information as to which generation they belong... As far as possible, then, the only particular facts which the parties know is that their society is subject to the circumstances of justice and whatever this implies. It is taken for granted, however, that they know the general facts about human society." (Rawls 1999, 118-9)

⁵² This has been pointed out by Sen (2011, 198) in the following passage: "In Rawlsian analysis, when the representatives of the people congregate and determine what principles must be seen as 'just' for guiding the basic institutional structure of the society, the interests of the different persons all count (in an anonymous way, since no one knows, thanks to 'the veil of ignorance', who exactly anyone is actually going to be). As Rawls characterized the original position in his *Theory of Justice*, the parties or their representatives do not unleash any specific moral views or cultural values of their own in the deliberations of the original position; their task is merely to best advance their own interests and the interests of those whom they represent. Even though all the parties pursue their respective interests, the contract on which unanimity is meant to emerge can be seen, in the Rawlsian perspective, as the best for the interests of all, taken together, under the 'veil of ignorance' (since the veil prevents anyone from knowing who exactly he or she is going to be)."

of mutual disinterest and the veil of ignorance achieves much the same purpose as benevolence. For this combination of conditions forces each person in the original position to take the good of others into account.” (Rawls 1999, 128-9) I believe that this is the ingenuity in Rawls’s design.

Consequently, it might be said that in Rawls’s thought experiment, parties have been incentivized to pay attention to others’ circumstances as they are their own. Even if human actions are not merely driven by self-love, one can readily assume that incentives that appeal to self-interests may have an impact on human behaviour. Rawls’s theory may motivate one to contemplate the general conditions under which the pursuit of generally vicious or noble self-interests agree with behavioural dictates of justice. On several occasions, both Smith and Sen describe the necessary circumstances and institutional arrangements under which (i) people’s judgements may become less prone to bias (ii) one’s pursuit of self-interest would not compromise the impartiality of her perspective. In the next section, I will elaborate on their findings on this topic.

4.5. Institutional Arrangements for Government by Discussion

Smith and Sen mention specific institutional frameworks that can improve the effectiveness of public discourse by enabling individuals to make more impartial judgments. Sen highlights the vital role of freedom of the press, whereas Smith emphasises the importance of being rewarded for one’s labours, education level, and available time for enabling the public to form unbiased judgments. These arrangements especially assist in making sure that the voices of the oppressed and minorities can be heard by everyone.

As one can infer from previous discussions, Sen (2011, 117) notes that the values and priorities of various socio-economic and ethnic groups within a society can differ significantly, making it challenging to identify a single value ranking that represents the concerns of all citizens. Freedom of the press not only facilitates the representation of the opinions and values of minority groups, but also makes it possible for the perspectives of the global community to be evaluated, which fosters open impartiality.

Unsurprisingly, Smith's writings are in parallel with Sen's concerns about the underrepresentation or neglect of the voices of some groups, especially those of wage-earners. In *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of Wealth of Nations*, he discusses several barriers that hinder the voices of labourers from being heard in public debates:

But though the interest of the labourer is strictly connected with that of society, he is incapable either of comprehending that interest, or of understanding its connection with his own. His condition and habits are commonly such as to render him unfit to judge even though he was fully informed. In the publick deliberations, therefore, his voice is little heard and less regarded, except upon some particular occasions, when his clamour is animated, set on, and supported by his employers, not for his, but their own particular purposes. (Smith 1981a, 266)

Therefore, Smith contends that workers are unaware that by pursuing their own interests, they can contribute to social progress. They are not conscious of their interests as labourers and consequently, do not recognise their integral role in keeping society functioning. For this reason, Smith (1981a, 282) believes that a basic level of education is essential for everyone and he hints that social progress could be accelerated if workers were better educated.

Smith, more forcefully than Sen, asserts that enhancing economic conditions is essential for enhancing the political influence and recognition of labourers. As mentioned earlier, Smith believes that an increase in economic activity ought to improve the situation of the disadvantaged both in absolute terms and in comparison, meaning that growth is supposed to reduce economic inequality. Additionally, it was noted that during the shift from feudalism to capitalism, the trade of goods, which is vital for economic growth, has diminished the political power of feudal authorities and property owners, leading to greater freedoms and increased political independence for the public. Smith (1981a, 186) argues that society should consistently reward people's labour to encourage this motivation to better one's conditions since the satisfaction of this desire is crucial for economic growth and, consequently, social progress. By promoting economic growth, this encouragement will enhance the living standards of the poor, potentially allowing them to access higher-quality education and secure more substantial political representation. To put it in Senian terms, according to Smith, economic growth brings about an enhancement in the value of various capability functionings of all individuals in the society. These enhancements help all citizens gain a better grasp of justice and make more impartial judgments.

Hence, Smith provides several normative reasons for pursuing economic growth, including the goal of securing justice, motivating both citizens and authorities to focus on increasing the nation's economic activity. In short, Smith essentially believes that the improvements in individuals' capabilities meet cumulative demands and that augmented income further expands citizens' capability sets. On this account, it is not surprising that he defines political economy in strictly material terms:

Political economy, considered as a branch of the science of a statesman or legislator, proposes two distinct objects; first, to provide a plentiful revenue or subsistence for the people, or more properly to enable them to provide such a revenue or subsistence for themselves; and secondly, to supply the state or commonwealth with a revenue sufficient for the publick services. It proposes to enrich both the people and the sovereign. (Smith 1981a, 428)

Reflecting on this definition, one should not assume that Smith suggests that raising revenues and providing subsistence are the ultimate goals of political economy. If Smith had not seen a strong connection between economic growth and people's living standards and freedoms, he might have framed this definition quite differently. Still, one might question the reliability of Smith's rationale regarding the mutually beneficial relationship between aggregative demands and living standards. Scholars such as Herzog (2016) argue that Smith's claims linking economic growth and wealth to increased political representation and freedom are overly optimistic.

Similarly, Sen (2000, 14) argues that the gross national product is a poor measure of welfare as its growth does not necessarily promise an increase in freedoms and capabilities enjoyed by citizens. His observations reveal that many affluent countries have problems where people lack access to social services, receive poor-quality education and face discrimination based on ethnicity or gender. Conversely, some relatively poorer countries may outperform wealthier ones in certain aspects of welfare. For this, Sen (2000, 91) frequently cites examples such as Kerala's advanced social health services and education system. Even though institutional arrangements that broaden individuals' capabilities involve costs, Sen believes these examples show that implementing such changes is still possible and that having vast amounts of material resources is not the principal prerequisite of social development. Accordingly, Sen (2000, 148-57) attempts to disprove the Lee thesis⁵³ by arguing that restricting

⁵³ As Sen puts it in *Development as Freedom*, the Lee thesis, named after Singapore's former prime

individual freedoms through economic planning is not necessary for economic development. Most significantly, unlike Smith, Sen does not see a strong connection between social welfare and economic growth. Indeed, Sen's writings make one question Smith's notion that economic growth would promise political autonomy and representation and provide the public with a better understanding of the essence of justice.

minister Lee Kuan Yew, mainly states that there is always a disagreement between the measures taken for economic growth and those that reinforce political freedoms. Hence, the proponents of this idea believe that to foster economic development, the governments have no choice but to suppress the political rights and freedoms of the citizens. (Sen 2000, 149-52) Sen (2000, 149 & 151) believes that this thesis is not empirically well-grounded.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION: THE IMPLICATIONS OF AMARTYA SEN AND ADAM SMITH'S THEORIES FOR NORMATIVE ECONOMICS

In this final chapter, I would like to gather the findings of the sections of this thesis and try to see the implications of these findings for the decision-making processes within the scope of normative economics. As argued in the Introduction, normative economics analyses the relative desirability of economic states and rankings of alternative social states; one of the fundamental goals of normative economists is to uphold fairness. That there is a strong tie between desirability and fairness is hinted by Smith's accounts in which he (2002, 19) argues that resentment is among the strongest and most detestable sentiments. Hence, assessing an economic state's degree of fairness is an important aspect of comparisons in normative economics and hence, the transcendental vis-à-vis comparative debate that Sen introduces in *The Idea of Justice* indeed is of significance for a normative economist. The consequences of this thesis may shed light on the extent to which normative economists should rely on transcendental principles of justice.

Presumably, one of the main results of the third chapter is that neither Smith's theory nor Sen's arguments on the transcendental-comparative dichotomy permit one to completely count on transcendental principles whilst making comparative assessments. On the other hand, as far as I can see, Sen is unable to offer an articulate justification for the claim that transcendental criteria have no role in comparisons as he fails to offer an account on why certain epistemic tasks cannot be addressed through a transcendental framework. It seems that Sen cannot justify his claim that the transcendental normativity has no relation to comparative normativity, which is elemental for his dichotomy. I discussed why I agree with those scholars who

underline this point and further argued that Smith's doctrine has transcendental components that remain unnoticed by Sen.

On the other hand, I also claimed that in Smith's eyes, it would not be appropriate to entirely rely on a system of principles in certain comparative assessments. Elaborating on this claim, I tried to establish that Smith mainly wants to invoke the impartial spectator whenever possible instead of relying on the prior sentiments of the human within as he believes that the inductively derived general rules may be misleading under certain circumstances. Moreover, I referred to the metaphysical foundations of Smith's theory to demonstrate that he contends that not all judgments of the impartial spectator can be accurately expressed and transformed into the general principles of justice with ease. I argued that Smith saw an everlasting disparity between divine reasoning and human comprehension. Therefore, I concluded that Smith, to some degree, acknowledged that broad principles are insufficient to capture all the complexities of reality and partially concurs with Sen on this topic.

The view that the transcendental principles may be insufficient to secure justice in all comparative assessments outlines an agreement between the theories of Smith and Sen. I firmly believe that this agreement is chiefly due to their mutual awareness that the decision-making procedures should not be isolated from individuals' judgement processes. This means that neither Smith nor Sen would agree that a single systematic framework developed out of static transcendental principles can secure justice in all comparisons. Putting aside Sen's redundancy claim, which totally dismisses the role of transcendental criteria, it may be said that the transcendental algorithms that select the best feasible social state should always be audited and improved by individuals who carefully observe the societal outcomes of decisions. People's experiences of particular instances can elucidate the deficiencies of the chosen transcendental criteria and provide valuable feedback. Hence, public discussions may also constitute an important component of the decision-making processes, even if one follows merely a transcendental approach. The key point here is that it may be impossible to develop a completely reliable transcendental algorithm for comparative decision-making, i.e. a complete and accurate algorithm which we can apply without worry and further

scrutiny. Some decisions may require us to rethink and reformulate the general principles of justice.

Then, the next question is the following: to what extent should the authorities and normative economists trust and adhere to the transcendental principles of justice in comparative assessments? Should one be eager to doubt the legitimacy of these principles or be extremely cautious while claiming that the situation at hand is extraordinary and thus, general rules may be deceptive? Moreover, under which circumstances would the public voice become a better indicator of the requirements of justice than the pre-established transcendental principles? If we consider behavioural and descriptive discussions in Smith's writings, we may reach the conclusion that the transcendental principles should seldom be questioned. As discussed in the fourth chapter, Smith (2002, 186) believes that there are too few people who can always judge the propriety of their future actions due to the influence of self-love on their judgements.⁵⁴ To ensure that the society functions in harmony, most of the human beings will need to blindly follow general rules of morality as they often cannot fully feel the sentiment of propriety:

Many men behave very decently, and through the whole of their lives avoid any considerable degree of blame, who yet, perhaps, never felt the sentiment upon the propriety of which we found our approbation of their conduct, but acted merely from a regard to what they saw were the established rules of behaviour. (Smith 2002, 188)

It was discussed in the previous chapter that in the eyes of Smith, each human being holds the potential to achieve a nearly excellent morality. However, the philosopher also states that in the commercial society most fail to attain this potential, resulting in the judgements of the majority being not insignificant but mostly unreliable. If Smith believed that people could deeply feel the sentiment of propriety, he, perhaps, would not stress the importance of obeying the transcendental principles as strongly; he would think that these principles need not be enforced by outside forces such as the social environment as they can be adopted by the majority without due scrutiny.

⁵⁴ "Those general rules of conduct, when they have been fixed in our mind by habitual reflection, are of great use in correcting the misrepresentations of self-love concerning what is fit and proper to be done in our particular situation." (Smith 2002, 186)

To illustrate the implications of these findings for normative economics, one might consider a common dilemma faced by economists and policy-makers: the decision to increase wages in step with inflation or keep them the same. It may be said that there is no consensus on whether this adjustment should be implemented and if so, how much the wages should be raised. While some think that the purchasing power of the disadvantaged should be restored through compensation measures at all costs, others believe that these measures usually end up being more detrimental than beneficial for the public. Apart from other reasons, the latter primarily argue that boosting wages can expand the demand for goods and the newly generated demand can have a compounding effect on the inflation rate rendering the adjustment ineffective and even counterproductive.

In this scenario, one of the duties of positive economics⁵⁵ is to predict whether raising wages will exacerbate the situation by further diminishing the purchasing power of the public. Even if the economic models can certainly establish that raising the wages to some particular degree will not produce a significant increase in the inflation rate, under special circumstances this measure can be harmful or ineffective in unanticipated ways. Hence, positive economists aim to comprehensively analyse the unintentional consequences of a certain decision as much as possible. Normative economists, on the other hand, are obliged to examine these predictive economic models and after evaluating the risks involved, should decide whether such a measure has to be taken or not and how.

The findings hitherto discussed mainly suggest that a second thought is necessary when one is making this decision by solely addressing some transcendental criteria of justice or merely relying on the voice of the public. I believe utilising both techniques jointly may be more effective and can help prevent policy failure. Regarding the roles of the public discussions and transcendental principles in this particular decision-making process, it may be said that policy-makers are prompted to act and consider the decision to augment wages through (i) the influence of some transcendental

⁵⁵ Unlike normative economics, positive economics fundamentally deals with offering descriptive explanations of economic phenomena.

principles, (ii) the voice of those in the public who suffer the harsh consequences of the inflation. The morality of the authorities must be put to test if they anticipate that the living conditions of all, and especially the worst-off, are deteriorating. Without observing the situation of the citizens, the transcendental principles embedded in a policy-maker's mind may allow her to recognise when something is amiss by enabling her to develop a tentative moral sense of the right and wrong. In other words, through transcendental principles, any person, rich or poor, could sense that any country's inflation should be kept in check even if she has not contacted those who face the repercussions. Otherwise, the voice of the public can indicate that the rise in costs is, in general, unwelcomed.

When the authorities have this initial insight, their actions can be guided both by the public voice and reason or other relevant transcendental principles. At this point, it must be noted that Sen's belief that policies ought to give considerable attention to the capability sets of individuals can also be regarded as a transcendental principle.⁵⁶ It may be said that his capability approach deviates from the transcendental framework regarding the method it proposes to identify the most crucial capabilities. Although Sen does not specify criteria for evaluating the relative degree of importance of different functionings in one's quality of life, he does provide an account of what is intrinsically more valuable than other values, namely capabilities. In our scenario, Sen would suggest that through the voice of the public and collective discussions, the urgent problems and prominent capability deprivations caused by inflation can be specifically targeted. For example, public discussions can provide important information on whether inflation causes a group of people to live below the hunger threshold, puts businesses at risk of bankruptcy or limits access to education and healthcare services. Later, either the public opinion or transcendental principles could rank different capabilities of the order of importance and indicate which functionings can be sacrificed for others. Notably, another contribution of Sen's comparative approach and the Smithian notion of the impartial spectator to this process is that they show that a total-ranking of capabilities may not be necessary to design effective

⁵⁶ This has been discussed by Ege, Igersheim and Le Chapelain (2012) and also hinted by Nussbaum (2003) in her paper on identifying the most crucial capabilities.

policies. While public discussions can ensure that orthodox principles and general rules of justice are not dogmatically applied in the decision-making process, transcendental principles that serve as reference points can ensure that the citizens are more self-critical and exercise caution while formulating their views on a subject. This way a feedback mechanism between transcendental principles and the public will can be constructed and the differences between the public opinion and general rules may be reconciled.

The fourth chapter of the thesis mainly claimed that the citizens' profiles and behavioural patterns can have significant impacts on the quality of public discussions. Individuals who are persistently self-centred may refuse to adopt an impartial perspective and may wish the government to sacrifice some fundamental capabilities of others in order to protect their clearly less significant capabilities. In our scenario, since wage earners constitute the majority a country's population, it may be said that the employers cannot easily opt to stifle the fundamental capabilities of employees through public discussions. Nevertheless, we face many situations in the world where the majority represses the underrepresented minorities. Even though Smith and Sen agree that parties' perspectives may become more impartial through public discussions, before any collective shift in opinions occurs, transcendental principles may offer superior guidance in some decisions. If, for example, the authorities are aware of the fact that misogynistic views are commonly and traditionally embraced by the public or an ethnic minority group has been historically marginalised, then, it may be more meaningful to refer to transcendental principles to protect the capabilities of the oppressed than to rely on the outcomes of a few public discussions.

Remarkably, when one primarily consults transcendental frameworks in a comparison, a major challenge is determining the appropriate transcendental principle to apply. One may recall that according to Sen, in many cases, selecting the best transcendental criteria may be impossible as some may turn out to be equally sound. Moreover, these equally sound criteria can propose conflicting suggestions and rankings of social states, which, in turn lead one to question the right method for selecting the best transcendental principle for the given situation or identifying the supreme transcendental theory. Presumably, reaching an agreement on the ultimate

transcendental theory cannot not be straightforward. The people raised in misogynistic societies, for example, could argue that the ultimate transcendental theory simply supports the repression of women. Consulting the sentiments of the human within is the Smithian solution to this issue of identifying the most accurate transcendental criteria yet, according to Smith's theory, verifying that one's opinions and priorities were formulated out of the judgements of the impartial spectator is not a feasible task for the most. Hence, the challenge of distinguishing between dogmatic and the truthful statements remains a problem of the transcendental institutionalism approach that requires further examination.

If, on the contrary, under certain circumstances, it becomes obvious for all that the well-being of each citizen is closely linked to social welfare, then, in that comparative assessment, public voice may be considered more reliable. Granted that most of the citizens are aware of the fact that the labour of wage earners plays a crucial role in enhancing general welfare and improving the functioning of the society, they may be less hesitant to argue against wage adjustment measure even if it conflicts with their personal interests as employers. In a nutshell, it may be helpful to assess different social groups' willingness to judge a topic impartially.

Consequently, the process for designing a policy can be determined by considering various factors, including the general biases of the public, the level of education, the degree by which the press is free and the extent to which different groups' personal desires might conflict with measures that improve the general welfare. One may argue that each decision might necessitate adopting a distinct approach for choosing one of the most viable social states. A policy that addresses the unique circumstances of the day and fulfils the requirements of justice can be designed through a decision-making method tailored to these conditions.

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A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Adam Smith ve Amartya Sen toplumdaki bireylerin yaşam koşullarıyla derinlemesine ilgilenen ve kişilerin esenliği için adaletin ve dolayısıyla tarafsız ve nesnel değerlendirmelerin önemini vurgulayan düşünürlerdir. Bu tez, normatif iktisat için son derece önemli olan “En makul sosyal koşullar uygulanabilir seçenekler arasından nasıl belirlenebilir?” sorusunu Smith ve Sen’in eserleri üzerinden incelenmeyi hedefler. Tezde uygulanabilir en makul sosyal durumun belirlenmesinin ancak bu seçimin nesnel bir açıklamayla desteklenmesiyle mümkün olduğu varsayılır. Bu soruya bir yanıt bulmak uğruna Smith ve Sen’in kuramlarında yer alan ideal karar alma süreçleri analiz edilerek her iki düşünürün de normatiflik ve nesnellik arasında kurduğu ilişki incelenir. Ana olarak Smith’in *Ahlaki Duygular Kuramı* ve *Ulusların Zenginliği* isimli eserleri ve Sen’in yapabilirlik yaklaşımına dair yazılarıyla beraber *Adalet Düşüncesi* isimli kitabı değerlendirilir. Sen’in demokrasi ve kamu tartışmalarının vazgeçilmezliğini savunan fikirleri ve Smith’in tarafsız gözlemci figürünü içeren karar verme sürecine dair anlatıları tartışılır. Smith ve Sen’in ayrıntılarıyla sundukları karar verme süreçlerinin arasındaki benzerlikler ve farklılıklar gözlemlenir ve bu süreçlerin görece güçlü ve zayıf noktalarının belirlenir. Böylece kamu mantığının ve aşkınsal adalet ilkelerinin karar verme sürecindeki rolleri araştırılır.

Bu araştırmanın bulguları adalet felsefesi için kıymetli olmakla beraber normatif iktisatta başvurulması gereken ideal karar alma sürecinin tasarlanmasında da yardımcı olabilirler. Bu tezde normatif iktisat, Phillipe Mongin’in bu terim için verdiği tanımla özdeşleştirilmiştir. Mongin’e (2006) göre normatif iktisat, iktisat biliminin farklı sosyal koşulların görece arzulanabilirliğini değerlendirmekle yükümlü olan alt dalıdır. Bu tanımda kullanılan arzulanabilirlik sözcüğünün birçok farklı değeri ilgilendirdiği düşünülebilir. Normatif iktisat çerçevesinde alınan kararlar sosyal durumların uygulanabilirliği ve toplam talepleri ne derece sağladığı gibi birçok ölçüt tarafından

şekillendirilse de bir sosyal durumun ne derece arzulanabilir olduğu, bu seçeneğin yansıttığı toplum düzeninin ne kadar adil olduğu ile doğrudan ilişkilidir.

Tezde Smith ve Sen'in tarafsızlığın karar verme sürecindeki önemini vurguladığı fakat iki düşünürün insani değer ve tercihlerin çeşitliliğini oldukça farklı yöntemlerle ele aldığı savunulur. Smith'in kuramına göre karar alma sürecinde öncelikli olarak tarafsız gözlemcinin yüksek ahlaki vicdanına başvurmanız gerekirken, Sen kamu tartışmalarıyla varılan sonuçlarla karar alınması gerektiği ve geçerli sayılabilecek birden fazla değer sıralamasının olabileceği kanısındadır. Sen'in aksine Smith, mutlak adalet ilkelerinin karşılaştırmalı değerlendirmelerde gerekli ve yol gösterici olduğunu savunurken şimdiye dek oluşturulmuş her bir ilkenin mutlak olarak görülmemesi gerektiğine dikkat çeker. Smith'e göre ilahi ahlak ilkeleri genel ve zamansız kurallara indirgenemeyecek kadar karmaşıktır. Erdem sahibi bireyler karşılaştırmalı değerlendirmelerde genel ahlak ilkelerine bağlı çıkarımlar edinmeye çabalamak yerine tercihen tarafsız gözlemciye başvurmalıdır. Eğer kişi tarafsız gözlemciyle özdeleşebilecek kadar erdem sahibi değilse, genel ahlak ilkelerine uymakla sorumludur.

Sen kamu tartışmalarının ve kamu mantığının adaletin sağlanmasında önemli bir rolü olduğunu savunur ve Smith'in ahlak kuramı bu fikri destekler. Her iki düşünür de kamu tartışmalarının tarafsızca başkalarının fikirlerini yargılayabilecek katılımcılar aracılığıyla etkili olabileceğine inanır. Ortaya atılan düşüncelerin, önyargılar ve ben sevgisi tarafından şekillendirildiği tespit edilmeden önce her bir bireyin konuyla ilgili fikri göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır. Sonuç olarak, iki düşünür de bireylerin kendi fikirlerini değerlendirme biçimleri ve davranış şekillerinin kamu tartışmalarının başarısını etkilediği kanısındadır. Tez, Smith ve Sen'in bireylerin kişisel çıkar arayışları üzerine düşünceleri ışığında bu arayışın yargıların tarafsızlığını nasıl etkilediğini ortaya çıkarmayı da amaçlar. Bireylerin yargılama biçimlerini inceleyen bu konu, kamusal tartışmaların başarısına dair gerçekçi beklentiler oluşturulması açısından önem arz eder. *Ahlaki Duygular Kuramı* adlı eserde bazı kişisel hırsların yargıların tarafsızlığına katkıda bulunabileceği ama diğerlerinin, özellikle *Ulusların Zenginliği*'nde bahsedilen birtakım tutkuların, görüşlerin taraflı olmasına neden

olduğu görülür. Sen ise adanmışlık (commitment) kavramını öne çıkararak adanmış bireylerin tarafsız fikirler üretebileceğini ima eder.

Duygudaşlık, Smith'in *Ahlaki Duygular Kuramı*'nın en temel kavramıdır ve bir bireyin başkalarının duygularına erişmesi ve onları hissetmesi anlamına gelir. Smith'e göre duygudalık kişinin tüm gerçekliğini bir kenara bırakmasını ve duygudaşlık duyulan bireyle bir süre için özdeşleşmesini gerektirir. (Smith 2002, 374) Düşünür, insanların genelde olay ve düşüncelerin uyandırdığı ilk hislere tutunduğunu ve güvendiğini gözlemler fakat bu duygular çoğu zaman aldatıcıdır. Özellikle kişinin ben sevgisi aşırıya kaçtığında olay ve düşüncelere verdiği duygusal ve dürtüsel tepkiler yol gösterici kabul edilemez. (Smith 2002, 182-3) Smith kişinin yalnızca güvenilebilir ahlaki duygulara yaklaştığı zihinsel yolu keşfetmeyi hedefler ve duygudaşlığın bu süreçte kritik bir rolü olduğunu belirtir. Smith'in kuramına göre başkalarıyla duygudaş olarak farklı görüşlerden haberdar oluruz ve bu da içimizde yatan tarafsız gözlemciyi uyandırır. Tarafsız gözlemci yüksek ahlaki vicdana sahip olan soyut bir figürdür ve Smith tarafsız gözlemcinin her bir bireyin kalbinde ve zihninde bulunduğunu, herkesin onun vicdanına erişimi olabileceğini öne sürer. Düşünürün ahlak kuramındaki gerçek gözlemci ise gerçek bir seyirciyi temsil eder ve gerçek gözlemci tarafsız gözlemci gibi konu hakkındaki tüm düşüncelere dikkat verse de bu fikirleri tarafsız bir şekilde değerlendirme yetisine sahip değildir. Bir kişinin gerçek gözlemciye dönüşmesi ve farklı düşüncelere kulak vermesi, içindeki tarafsız gözlemciyi uyandırmaya yardımcı olur. (Smith 2002, 178)

Bir davranışın uygunluğunu değerlendirirken kişinin sadece tarafsız gözlemcinin hislerine dayanması gerekir. Bu hisleri algılayabilmek için kişi gelişkin bir duygudaşlık yeteneğine sahip olmalı ve aklın yetilerini etkin bir biçimde kullanabilmelidir. Birey, tarafsız gözlemcinin hislerine erişim sağlayıp tepkilerini gözlemledikçe aklında birtakım ahlak ölçütleri oluşturmaya başlar. Herhangi bir ahlak ilkesinin mutlak bir kural olarak görülebilmesi için tarafsız gözlemci tarafından sayısız kere onaylanması gerekmektedir. (Smith 2002, 182-8)

Smith'e göre iyiliksever bir tanrı, insanlara anlamlı amaçlara hizmet eden belirli beceri ve eğilimler baş etmiştir. İnsan doğasında bulunan bazı özellikler ve eğilimler belirgin

bir biçimde toplumun yarırınayken diđer niteliklerin toplumsal faydaları hızlıca fark edilemez. Ben sevgisi, övgü alma arzusu, kişinin durumunu iyileştirme isteđi, ün ve zenginliğe duyulan hayranlık çođu zaman ahlaken uygun nitelikler olarak görölme de bu tutkuların toplumsal ilerlemeye önemli katkıları mevcuttur. Smith, kişilerin kendi çıkarlarını gözetmeleri halinin bir ülkenin ticareti ve ekonomisinin itici gücü olduğunu detaylı bir biçimde savunur.

Sen, *Adalet Düşüncesi* isimli eserinde aşkınsal kurumsalcılık yaklaşımını takip eden adalet teorilerinin bazı eksikliklere işaret etmeye çalışır ve kendi adalet kuramını tanıtır. Aşkınsal kurumsalcılığı tamamıyla adil olan bir toplumun özelliklerini tespit etmeyi hedefleyen yaklaşım olarak tanımlar ve aşkınsal adalet teorilerinin tamamıyla adil olan bir toplumun yapısı için gereken kurumsal düzenlemelere odaklandığını belirtir. Sen, karşılaştırmalı yaklaşım izlediğinde geliştirilen adalet kuramlarının toplumlarda var olan adaletsizliklerin nasıl ortadan kaldırılabileceğini incelediklerini söyler. Düşünür, her açıdan adil olan bir toplumun özelliklerini irdelemenin anlamsız olduğunu düşünmese de karşılaştırmalı değerlendirmelerde aşkınsal kuramların elde ettiđi sonuçlardan yararlanılmasını onaylamaz.

Sen'e göre aşkınsal kurumsalcılığın bazı temel eksikleri arasında (1) aşkınsal ölçütlerin karşılaştırmalı değerlendirmeler için gereksiz ve yetersiz olması, (2) fikirlerin hayata geçirilmesi ve uygulanabilirliğine dair kayıtsız kalmaları, (3) tüm olası sosyal durumları içeren bir sıralama elde etme konusunda ısrarcı olmaları ve (4) yarı paydaşların ve dışarıdan kişilerin görüşlerini göz ardı ederek tarafsızlığı ve nesnelliđi sağlayamamaları yer alır. *Adalet Düşüncesi*'nde Smith'in ahlak kuramının karşılaştırmalı yaklaşımı takip eden bir teori olduğu ve aşkınsal kuramların temel zayıflıklarına sahip olmadığı iddia edilir.

Sen'e göre tarafsız gözlemci aracılığıyla alınan kararlar karşılaştırmalı değerlendirmeler için uygun ölçütler yaratılmasını, sosyal durumların uygulanabilirliğini gözetilmesini, kısmi sıralamalardan faydalanılmasını ve her bir bireyin görüşünün kayda alınmasını sağlar. Sen tarafsız gözlemci kavramına atıfta bulunarak eserinde yer alan birçok argümanı desteklemeyi ve özellikle de tarafsızlığın önemini vurgulamayı hedefler.

Sen'e göre aşkınsal kuramların bulguları karşılaştırmalı değerlendirmeler için hem gereksiz hem de yetersiz kalmaktadır. Düşünür aşkınsal kuramların bu konuda gerekli olmadığını anlatmak için bazı analogiler sunar ve bu analogilerin birinde yapılması gereken görev Kilimanjaro ve McKinley dağlarının yüksekliklerini karşılaştırmaktır. (Sen 2011, 102) Sen, bu görevin doğası gereği Everest'in en yüksek dağ olduğunu bilmenin bu karşılaştırma için faydalı olmadığını belirtir. Bu analogi üzerinden düşünür, iki sosyal durumun karşılaştırılması için her yönüyle adil olan ideal toplumun özelliklerini bilmenin işe yaramaz olduğunu göstermeye çabalar. Bir diğer deyişle, mantığın karşılaştırmalı değerlendirmelerde ideal toplum anlayışına başvurmayı şart koşmadığını söyler. Ege, Igersheim ve Le Chapelain (2012 & 2016), Valentini (2011) ve, Hirsch (2011) gibi birçok akademisyen, Sen'in bu fikrini alternatif sosyal durumlar ile ideal toplum arasındaki mesafeyi ölçen aşkınsal metriklerin işlevselliğini savunarak veya karşılaştırmalı değerlendirmelerde aşkınsal kuramların vazgeçilmezliğini belirterek reddeder. Sen aşkınsal kuramların kendi metriklerini oluşturabileceği fikrini kabul etse de bu metrikler üzerinden gerçekleşen karşılaştırmaların güvenilir olmadığını inanır. Farklı sosyal durumların ideal topluma tanımsal yakınlığını (descriptive closeness) ölçen aşkınsal metriklerin, bu durumlar arasında yapılan tercihlerin gerekçelendirilmesi için yeterli olmadığını düşünür. Karşılaştırmalarda birçok metriğin kullanılması ve bu kullanımın da gerekçelendirilmesi gerektiğini belirtir.

Sen'in yetersizlik savına karşı çıkan Ege, Igersheim ve Le Chapelain (2016) yönergesel yargılar (prescriptive claims) ile aşkınsal ilkeler arasında birebir eşleme olduğunu savunurlar. Onlara göre, her bir karşılaştırmalı değerlendirmenin referans temeli ya da karşılaştırmanın yapılmasını sağlayan ölçütler, aşkınsal bir bileşen içermek durumundadır. Örneğin, eğer karşılaştırmalı bir değerlendirme köleliğin serfliğe tercih edilir olduğunu çünkü özgürlüğün için bir değer olarak kabul edilmesi gerektiğini belirtiyorsa, bu yargıdan ideal toplumun bireylerin özgürlüğünü koruması gerektiği sonucuna varılabilir. (Ege, Igersheim ve Le Chapelain 2016) Bu görüşe göre, Sen'in aşkınsal kurumsalcılık ve karşılaştırmalı yaklaşım ayrımı aşkınsallığın normatifliğin ayrılmaz bir parçası olması sebebiyle sağlam temellere dayanmamaktadır.

Sen, aşkınsal kurumsalcılık ve karşılaştırmalı yaklaşımın bazen ortak sorular sorduğunu doğrulasa da iki yaklaşım arasında bariz farklar olduğunu ve en temelde bu yaklaşımların epistemik hedeflerinin birbirinden ayrıldığını bildirir. Tez, Sen'in bu ayrımının temellerini farklı bir açıdan değerlendirmek adına Smith'in ahlak kuramının aşkınsal ve karşılaştırmalı bileşenlerini araştırır. Smith'in kuramında tarafsız gözlemcinin yüce ahlaki vicdanına, ve dolayısıyla aşkınsal bilgi birikimine, başvurulması gerektiğini belirttiği ve bu durumun kuramın aşkınsal bir temele dayandığını gösterdiğini savunan akademisyenlerin fikirleri incelenir. Kurama göre, tarafsız gözlemcinin aşkınsal bilgisi genel ahlak kurallarının oluşumunu mümkün kılar. *Ahlaki Duygular Kuramı*'nda yer alan kararların tarafsız gözlemcinin aşkınsal bilgisine başvurularak alınması gerektiği fikri Smith'in teorisinin, Sen'in düşündüğünün aksine, yalnızca karşılaştırmalı bir kuram olarak görülemeyeceğini düşündürür.

Sen'in yapılamamazlık (infeasibility) savı tek bir aşkınsal kuramın, ideal toplum tasvirlerinin karşılaştırmalı değerlendirmelerde görülen çok yönlü ve karmaşık durumları kapsayamayacağını ve bu tasvirler arasından en doğrusunu seçmenin mümkün olmadığını önerir. Düşünür, hiçbir aşkınsal kuramın her bir karşılaştırmalı değerlendirmede adaletin tüm gereksinimlerini ortaya çıkaracak kadar gelişkin olamayacağına ve dolayısıyla üstün bir aşkınsal teorinin tüm karşılaştırmalarda nihai referans işlevi göremeyeceğine işaret eder. Sen'in bu iddiası, gereksizlik savının aksine, aşkınsal kuramların karşılaştırmalarda hiçbir katkısının olamayacağını ifade etmez. Sen bu şekilde düşünmese de yapılamamazlık savını benimseyen kişi çelişki doğurmaksızın farklı karşılaştırmalara farklı aşkınsal kuramlarla yaklaşılması gerektiğini ileri sürebilir. Sen'e göre (2011, 57) üstün bir aşkınsal kuramın belirlenememesinin en temel sebebi pek çok sayıda kabul edilebilir (sound) ideal toplum tasvirinin bulunmasıdır ve bu ideal toplum tasvirleri alternatif sosyal durumları birbirlerinden oldukça farklı şekilde sıralayabilirler. (Sen 2011, 10)

Sen, her bir aşkınsal kuramın belirli bir grup aşkınsal adalet ilkeleri üzerine kurulduğunu ve birçok adalet teorisinin seçilen birtakım değerlere öncelik verdiğini veya değerleri önem sırasına göre dizdiğini savunur. Nozick'in özgürlüklere verdiği önem ve Rawls'un özgürlüklere fırsat eşitliği karşısında verdiği leksikografik öncelik

bu deęer dizilerine 3rnek teŐkil eder. (Sen 2011, 274 & 300) Bazı adalet kuramları, karŐılaŐtırmalı deęerlendirmelerde karŐılaŐılan ikilemleri 33z3mlenebilmesi i3in karar mercilerinin kendi deęer sıralamalarına sadık kalmalarını 3nerir. Sen 3nceden belirlenmiŐ deęer sıralamalarının ve adalet ilkelerinin karŐılaŐtırmalı deęerlendirmeler i3in yeteri kadar esnek olmadıkları fikrindedir.

Sen'in kıtlıkların nedenlerine iliŐkin 3alıŐmaları bir durumun, veya karŐılaŐtırmanın, kendine 3zg3 gerekliliklerine dikkat vermenin 3ok 3nemli olabileceęini g3sterir. Bu araŐtırmalarının sonucu Sen, (1988) m3lkiyeti i3kin bir hak olarak g3rse de bu hakların kıtlık durumunda ihlal edilebileceęini d3Ő3n3r. 3nceden belirlenmiŐ ve katı deęer sıralamalarının rehberlięine dayanmanın, g3n3n en acil meselesini g3rmezden gelmemize neden olabileceęine inanır. Ona g3re, (2011, 221) g3n3n en kritik deęer ve sorununu belirlenmesinde halkın sesi herhangi bir aŐkınsal ilkeler dizisinden daha 3st3n bir yol g3stericidir.

Sen, (2011, 395) ana deęerlendirme temeli olarak tek bir ideal toplum tanımına sahip olma isteęinin ve t3m sosyal durumları i3eren bir sıralama elde etme hırsının adalet kavramına dair yanılıęlardan kaynaklandıęını belirtir. Tam sıralamalara (total-orderings) ulaŐma isteęi ile t3m karŐılaŐtırmaları 3st3n bir grup aŐkınsal kritere tabii tutma arzusu arasında bazı baęlantılar bulunabilir. Eęer bir aŐkınsal kuramın, ve dolayısıyla bir ideal toplum tasvirinin, dięerlerinden 3st3n olduęu kanıtlanabilirse sosyal durumların hepsi bu kurama baŐvurularak sıralanabilir. Ancak farklı karŐılaŐtırmalar i3in 3eŐitli aŐkınsal kuramların kriterleri gerekli g3r3l3rse tam sıralamalara ulaŐmak kolaylıkla m3mk3n olmayacaktır. Bununla beraber, Sen'in adalet teorisinde tam sıralamalar elde etme isteęine getirilen eleŐtiriler, sadece sosyal durumları i3eren kararları ilgilendirmez. Bu eleŐtiriler, aŐkınsal kuramların tam sıralamasını oluŐturma 3abası i3in de ge3erlidir. Adaletin doęasına iliŐkin kavrayıŐ eksiklikleri, 3oęunluęun 3st3n bir aŐkınsal kuramın var olabileceęine ve her koŐulda tam sıralamalar elde edilebileceęine inanmasına neden olur. Oysa Sen'in "eksiklięin temel nedeni" olarak adlandırdıęı savı, adaletin muęlak ve derin doęası gereęi bazı se3eneklerin kıyaslanamaz olduęunu ileri s3rer. Adaletin doęasındaki bu muęlaklık sebebiyle muhakeme her zaman oybirlięiyle anlaŐmaya varılmasını saęlayamaz. Bu

konuya ilişkin olarak Sen (2011, 70) aynı zamanda tarafsız gözlemcinin bazen kısmi sıralamalar üretebileceğini söyler.

Sen'in aksine Smith, üstün bir aşkınsal adalet kuramının varlığından şüphe etmez. Smith'in ahlak kuramına göre, aşkınsal bilgi haznesi sayesinde tarafsız gözlemci tamamıyla adil olan bir toplumun özelliklerinden de haberdar olmalıdır. Ancak, tarafsız gözlemci üstün aşkınsal kuramın içeriğini bilse de bu durum insanların bu bilgiye bütünsel olarak erişebileceğini göstermez. Sen'in yapılamamazlık savı üstün aşkınsal kuramın varlığı ve biricikliğini sorgularken, Smith'in ahlak kuramı bu iddiayı ulaşılabilirlik, bütünlük ve hatta ifade edilebilirlik meselesine dönüştürmektedir.

Smith, *Ahlaki Duygular Kuramı*'nda tarafsız gözlemci ile bireylerin etkileşiminin daha sürekli bir hale gelmesinin mümkün olduğundan bahseder. Bu kurama göre, yüksek erdem sahibi kişiler tarafsız gözlemciyle yakın bağlar kurmayı başaramış bireylerdir ve sıkça kendilerini bu gözlemciyle özdeşleştirebilirler. Buna rağmen, Smith'in metafizik felsefesi ve kazuistik yöntem üzerine düşünceleri adaletin zamansız ve evrensel ilkelerini kavramanın kişinin tek başına üstesinden gelemeyeceği bir görev olduğunu gösterir. Kuramda bu görev daha ziyade tüm insanlığa ve her bir nesle atfedilen epistemik hedeflerden biridir. Smith'e göre mükemmellik yalnızca ilahi olana ait bir sıfattır ve bütünsel bir erdem fikri yalnızca ilahi olanın aklında var olabilir. Bu nedenle, her bağlamda geçerli olan ahlak kurallarını ve benzer bir şekilde tamamen adil olan bir toplumun tüm ilkelerini belirlemek ilahi bilgiye erişmeye eşdeğerdir. Sonuç olarak, Smith erdem ve adaletle ilgili sorguların eksik kalmaya mahkum olduğunu ima eder. Verilen örnekler üzerinden insanların genel ahlak kurallarına, tarafsız gözlemciye başvursalar da tümevarım üzerinden ulaştıkları görülür ve bu durum insanların genel ahlak ilkelerini türetme kapasitelerinin kısıtlı olduğuna işaret eder. Her koşulda geçerli olan birtakım aşkınsal ilkeler var olsa da insanların bu ilkelere ulaşma kapasitesi oldukça yetersiz olduğundan, genel kural olarak isimlendirilen her ilkeyi karşılaştırmalı değerlendirmede doğrudan uygulamamız gerekir. Bununla beraber, insanların toplumu koruma güdüsü (Smith 2002, 103) ve içlerinde buldukları toplumla beraber geliştikleri gerçeği, gelecek nesillerin daha doğru genel ahlak kuralları oluşturabileceğini göstermektedir.

Sen, karar alma sürecinde demokrasi ve kamu mantığının rollerini, nesnellik ve tarafsızlık arasında kurduğu sıkı bağlarlar üzerinden açıklamaya çalışır. *Adalet Düşüncesi*'nde Sen (2011, 118) bir epistemik değer olarak nesnelliği tartışırken, “nesnel kabul edilebilirlik” ile ilgilendiğini ifade eder. Nesnel kabul edilebilirlik, farklı tarafların birbirlerinin iddiaları arkasındaki nedenlemeleri teyit etmelerini gerektirir. Nesnel kabul edilebilirliğin en önemli göstergesi normatif bir fikrin arkasında yatan gerekçelerin kamu tartışmaları sonucunda kabul görmesi halidir. (Sen 2011, 122) Sonuç olarak, nesnel ve öznel fikirlerin ayırt edilebilmesi için demokrasi ve kamu tartışmalarının vazgeçilmez olduğu düşünülür. Benzer bir şekilde, Sen'in yapabilirlik yaklaşımının temelinde de bir karar için en kritik yapabilirliklerin kamu tartışmaları tarafından seçilmesi gerektiği savunulur. Martha Nussbaum, (2003) Sen'in bu fikrinden yola çıkarak düşünürün yapabilirliklerin görece önemleriyle ilgili net ifadelerden kaçındığını belirtir.

Adalet Düşüncesi'nde Sen, adalet kuramları tarafından değerlendirilen iki farklı tarafsızlık kavramını olduğunu öne sürer. Bunlardan ilki “kapalı tarafsızlık” olup bireylerin sınırlı bir gruba karşı uyguladığı tarafsızlığı ifade eder. “Açık tarafsızlık” ise kişinin belirlenmiş bir grubun üyelerinin fikirlerinin yanı sıra var olan her bir kişinin konuyla ilgili düşüncesini gözetmesini gerektirir. Sen'in adalet kuramından açık tarafsızlık ve kamu tartışmalarının kalitesi arasında karşılıklı bir ilişki olduğu sonucu çıkarılabilir. Toplumsal karar alma süreçleri, bireylerin değerlendirmelerinin ne derece tarafsız olduğuna bağlı olarak nesnel yargılara varabilir. Eğer bireylerin düşünceleri yoğunlukla taraflı olma eğiliminde ise, birtakım önyargılar kamu tartışmalarında öne çıkan fikirleri çarpıtabilir. Bununla birlikte, kamu tartışmalarında farklı kesimlerden ve arkaplanlardan gelen insanların fikirlerini duymak ve değer yargılarını anlamlandırmak, kişinin yargılarının tarafsız hale gelmesine olanak verebilir. Açık tarafsızlık ve kamu tartışmalarının arasındaki bu karşılıklı ilişkiye göre nesnelliğin gerekli bir ön koşulu, herkesin herkese karşı tarafsız olmasıdır. Sen'in, Smith'in ahlak kuramına oldukça değer vermesinin en önemli nedenlerinden biri, tarafsız gözlemcinin açık tarafsızlığın önemini vurgulaması ve böylece nesnelliği desteklemesidir.

Sen'in adalet kuramı, başkalarının görüşlerine kulak vermenin tam olarak nasıl düşünme biçimimizi ve fikirlerimizi değiştirebildiğini açıklayan psikolojik bir inceleme içermez. Bu nedenle, birçok akademisyen Sen'in kuramının, tarafsızlığın bireylerin düşüncelerini nasıl geliştirebildiğini açıklamak açısından yeterli olmadığını savunur. Sen kamu tartışmalarında gerçekleşen etkileşimlerin psikolojik yansımalarını derinlemesine işlemese de Smith'in ahlak kuramı bu etkileşim sürecini detaylandıran tartışmalar barındırmaktadır. Bu noktada, her iki düşünürün kuramının da açık tarafsızlığı nesnelliğin ön koşulu olarak kabul ettiği dikkate alınmalıdır. İki kuram arasındaki bu benzerlikten yola çıkılarak hem Smith'in hem de Sen'in, tarafsız gözlemcinin sesinin kamu tartışmaları sayesinde ifade edilebileceği konusunda hemfikir olacakları tahmin edilebilir. Tezde, bu benzerliklerin değerlendirilmesi sonucu her iki düşünürün de adaletin davranışsal gereksinimlerini öne çıkardıkları tespit edilir.

Tezin ikinci ana gövdesi, iki kuramda yer alan kamu mantığının başarısını sağlayacak ortak davranışsal gereksinimlerin ne derece gerçekçi ve hayata geçirilebilir olduğunu tartışır. Bir önceki bölümdeki tartışmalardan, ortalama bir insanın tarafsız yargılar oluşturma yeteneğine dair değerlendirmelerin, Sen'in kurmaya çalıştığı ikilik, yani aşkınsal kurumsalcılık ile karşılaştırmalı yaklaşım arasındaki ayrım, üzerinde önemli bir etkisi olabileceği sonucu çıkarılabilir. Bahsedilen davranışsal gerekliliğin gerçekçi olmadığına dair bir kanıt, Sen'in kamu tartışmalarının adaleti sağlamak konusundaki etkinliğini savunan fikirlerini çürütecektir. Dolayısıyla, bu bölümün bulguları, kamu denetimine ilişkin makul beklentiler oluşturulmasını ve aşkınsal adalet ilkelerinin gerekliliğinin yeniden gözden geçirilmesini sağlayabilir. Tarafsızlığı adaletin davranışsal bir gerekliliği olarak değerlendirirken göz önünde bulundurulması gereken önemli bir faktör, kişinin kişisel çıkar arayışının yargıları üzerindeki etkisidir. Ben sevgisi aşırıya kaçan bir kişinin tarafsız bir duruş sergilemesi ve başkalarıyla duygudaş olması çoğu zaman mümkün olmayacaktır. Smith'in bu konudaki yazıları, kişinin kendisine karşı duyduğu sevgiyi tarafsızlığın önündeki en büyük engel olarak tanımlar. Ben sevgisi nedeniyle kişisel kazançları çokça göz önünde bulundurmamak, kişinin adil kararlar vermesine engel olabilmektedir. Tezde ben sevgisinin kişinin tarafsız yargıda bulunma kapasitesini nasıl ve ne ölçüde baskıladığı, Smith ve Sen'in ilgili yazıları üzerinden araştırılmıştır.

Çıkarıcı davranışın yargıları nasıl etkilediğini incelemeyen önce, Smith ve Sen'in kişisel çikara ilişkin bakış açılarını ekonomi arařtırmalarında kabul görmüş rasyonellik ve kişisel çikar anlayışıyla karşılařtırmak gerekir. "Rasyonel Seçim Teorisi," ekonomistler tarafından kabul edilen bir dizi davranışsal önermeye işaret ederek ekonomi biliminde kabul görmüş rasyonellik ve kişisel çikar anlayışlarını ortaya koyar. *Rasyonellik ve Özgürlük* isimli kitabında Sen, (2004, 30-1) bu teorisinin rasyoneliteni tanımlamak için dayattığı üç önermeden bahseder. İlk önerme (RST-1) insan davranışının sürekli olarak tek bir hedefe yöneldiğini söyler. İkincisi (RST-2) bu hedefin kişinin kişisel çikarları ile ilgili olduğunu belirtir. Son olarak üçüncüsü (RST-3) kişisel çikarlarının yalnızca kişinin kendi konumu tarafından etkilendiğini önerir. Sen birçok tartışmada Rasyonel Seçim Teorisinin kişisel çikar kavramını eksik tanımladığını iddia eder. Düşünürüne göre, (1980) ekonomi alanında yer alan arařtırmaların çeşitliliği ve ekonomik modellerin birçok farklı amaca hizmet edebileceği göz önüne alınca, her bir modelin Rasyonel Seçim Teorisinin katı öncülerine tabii tutulmasının mantıklı olmadığı görülür.

Sen, insanların benmerkezci olduğunu söyleyen önermenin ekonomi alanındaki yaygın kabulüne ilişkin kısa bir tarihsel açıklama sunar. Bu açıklama Rasyonel Seçim Teorisinin kabul görmesine birçok farklı nedenin katkıda bulunduğunu gösterse de Sen ekonomistlerin bu kurama bağlı kalma gerekçelerinin ikna edici olmadığını düşünür. Teorinin dayattığı öncüleri geliřtirmek adına insan davranışını önemli ölçüde şekillendiren iki kavram üzerinde durur. Bu kavramlardan ilki duygudaşlık, ikincisi ise adanmışlıktır. Sen'e göre bir birey başkasıyla duygudaş olduğunda bu bireyin mutluluğu ve iyi olma hali karşısındakinin koşullarına bağımlı hale gelir. Sen duygudaşlık hissinin insan davranışını üzerinde önemli bir etkisi olduğunu savunarak Rasyonel Seçim Teorisinde yer alan kişisel çikar kavramının, bu tartışmada özellikle RST-3'ün, yanılıcı olduğunu ve bu kavramın geliřtirilmesi gerektiğini anlatır.

Sen, (2010) yanılıcı yorumlamalar sonucu Smith'in insanların temel olarak benmerkezci olduğunu destekleyen bir düşünür olarak görülmeye başladığını söyler. Bu tür yorumlarda bulunan kişilerin Smith'in akşam yemeğimizi kasabın, bira satıcısının ya da fırıncının hayırseverliği sayesinde değil, onların kendi çikarlarını gözetmeleri sonucu elde ettiğimizi anlatan pasajını sıklıkla alıntıladığını belirtir.

Smith'in bu pasajından kişisel çıkar arayışının her koşulda baskın olduğu sonucuna varılmaması gerektiğini çünkü bu ifadenin yalnızca bireylerin çıkar arayışlarının onları piyasanın bir parçası haline gelmeye teşvik ettiğini söylediğini vurgular. (Sen 1977) Ayrıca Sen'in incelemeleri filozofun birtakım tasvirlerinin fedakar olan bireylerden de bahsettiğini gösterir. Sen'in Smith'e dair yazılarının, öncelikle filozofun çizdiği insan prototipinin RST-2 ile uyumlu olmadığını göstermeyi amaçladığı söylenebilir. Sen, Smith'in fikirlerinin insanların yalnızca kendi çıkarları doğrultusunda hareket ettiklerini kesin bir şekilde ortaya koymadığını göstermek için değerli girişimlerde bulunsa da pek çok akademisyen bireylerin kendi çıkarlarının peşinde koşmasının Smith'in ekonomi teorisinde önemli bir yere sahip olduğunu savunmaktadır.

Smith'in yukarıda bahsedilen pasajı derinlemesine incelendiğinde, filozofun oluşturduğu ahlak kuramında hayırsever olmayan ve sadece kendi çıkarları peşinde koşan birinin bile başkalarının koşullarını görmezden gelemeyeceği görülür. Bu kurama göre, ticari toplumların oluşmasını ve devamlılığını sağlayan birden fazla doğal güç bulunur ve insanların hayırsever olma eğilimleri ticari toplumu ayakta tutmak için tek başına yeterli bir güç değildir. İnsan doğasında yer alan benmerkezci bir şekilde hareket etme eğilimi ticari toplumların yapısı tarafından körüklenir. Bu nedenle, insan doğasının ticari bir toplumda yaşayan bireylerin çıkarıcı ekonomik davranışlarıyla tamamen örtüştüğünü iddia etmeden önce Smith'in yazılarını derinlemesine analiz etmek önemlidir. Tez, Smith'in yazılarına dayanarak, sağduyulu kişilerin başkalarının koşullarını, sevgi ve şefkate dayanmak zorunda olmaksızın, sorumluluk duygusuyla, iyi niyetle veya kendi çıkarları için gözetebileceğini, ancak ticari toplumlarda bireylerin nihai olarak çevresindekileri dikkate almak zorunda kaldığını iddia eder. Bununla beraber, tez Smith'in felsefesinde özsevgi ile duygudaşlığın her zaman karşıt güçler olarak görülmemesi gerektiği, çünkü bazı durumlarda özsevginin kişiyi duygudaşlığa ve hayırseverliğe davet ettiğini savunur. Fakat bu savdan yola çıkarak kendi çıkarları peşinde koşan bireylerin çoğunlukla tarafsız değerlendirmelerde buldukları ve kendi isteklerine haksız bir şekilde öncelik vermedikleri sonucuna varılmamalıdır.

Tez, bireysel çıkar arayışlarının kişilerin değerlendirmelerini nasıl etkilediğini sorgularken Smith'in eserlerinde kişisel hırsların arkasında iki tür kaynak yattığını belirtir. Kişisel hırsların altında yatan ilk temel güdüm güvenli ve istikrarlı bir toplumda yaşama arzusudur. Smith'in barışçıl bir toplumda yaşama arzusuna dair anlatıları, toplumun iyiliği adına yapılan diğerkam davranışların bile kişisel bir boyutu olduğunu ve kişinin bireysel çıkarlarına hizmet edebileceğini gösterir. İkinci güdüm ise varlıklı ve güçlü bireylere duyulan hayranlık ve üst sınıflara öykünme halidir. Bu güdümlerin oluşturduğu arzuların peşinde koşan insanlar kaçınılmaz olarak başkalarının koşullarını gözetmek zorundadır. Smith'in çeşitli eserleri üst sınıflara duyulan hayranlık sonucu ortaya çıkan kişisel hırsların insanların tarafsız yargılara varmasını engelleyebileceğini anlatır.

Adaletin davranışsal gereklilikleri ile bireylerin arzularını tatmin etmesi için almaları gereken aksiyonlar birçok durumda çelişebilir. Sen, bu tür durumlarda bile bireylerin adaletin gerekliliklerine öncelik vermeyi seçebileceğini göstermek için adanmışlık kavramına atıfta bulunurken, Smith insanların övgüye değer olma arzusunu ve erdemli olma isteklerini ön plana çıkarır. Sen adanmış bir bireyin zarar görmeyi dahi göze alarak adil ve erdemli olabileceğini belirtir. Smith'in tartışmaları ise Sen'in adanmışlık ve duygudaşlık arasında yaptığı ayrımın çok keskin algılanmaması gerektiğini ima eder. Filozofun özellikle Bernard Mandeville'e getirdiği eleştiri, benmerkezciliğin bazen diğerkam davranışları besleyebildiğini ve bu durumda benmerkezcilik olmanın ahlaksızca görülemeyeceğini ifade eder. Bu fikirlerin tartışılması sonucu hem Smith hem de Sen'in kuramının, Rasyonel Seçim Teorisinin ikinci ve üçüncü varsayımlarına meydan okuduğu gösterilir.

Tez, kısaca John Rawls'un adalet kuramında yer alan cehalet örtüsü kavramını irdeler. Rawls'un kuramında yer alan düşünce deneyi, tarafların toplumda yaşayan her bir bireyin koşullarına ve hayat kalitesine kendi koşullarına verdikleri özeni göstermelerini teşvik eder. Cehalet örtüsü kavramından yola çıkılarak Smith ve Sen'in kişilerin çıkar arayışlarının adaletin davranışsal gereklilikleri ile uyumlu hale geldiği sosyal durumları tespit etmeye çabaladıkları ifade edilir. Başka bir deyişle, her iki düşünür de kişisel çıkar arayışlarının bakış açısının tarafsızlığını tehlikeye atmayacağı koşulları ve kurumsal düzenlemeleri belirlemeye çalıştığı söylenebilir. Sen tarafsız

yargıların oluşturulmasında basın özgürlüğünün hayati bir rolü olduğunu ifade ederken, Smith aynı konuda toplumun emeği ödüllendirmesinin önemini vurgular ve kişilerin eğitim seviyesinin değerlendirmeleri üzerindeki etkisinden bahseder.

Tezin sonuç bölümünde Smith'in ahlak kuramının ve Sen'in aşkınsal kurumsalcılık eleştirisi üzerine yapılan kritiklerin, karşılaştırmalı değerlendirmelerde aşkınsal ilkelerden yararlanabileceğini gösterdiği tekrarlanır. Ayrıca, hem Smith'in birtakım fikirleri hem de Sen'in bazı savları başarılı bir biçimde her karşılaştırmayı yalnızca aşkınsal adalet ilkelerine tabii tutmanın yanıltıcı olabileceğini savunur. Smith ve Sen'in kuramlarındaki benzerliklerin esas olarak karar verme prosedürlerinin bireylerin muhakeme süreçlerinden soyutlanmaması gerektiğine dair ortak farkındalıklarından kaynaklandığı desteklenir. Karşılaştırmalı seçimler için tamamen güvenilir bir aşkınsal algoritma yani eksiksiz ve doğru bir sistem geliştirmenin imkansız olabileceği belirtilir. Bazı özel durumların genel adalet ilkelerini yeniden düşünmemizi ve yeniden formüle etmemizi gerektirebileceği söylenir. Bu noktada, yetkililerin aşkınsal ilkelere ne derece bağlı kalması gerektiği ve hangi koşullarda kamu tartışmalarının sonuçlarına daha çok ağırlık vermeleri icap ettiği sorgulanır. Smith'in eserlerindeki davranışsal ve betimsel tartışmalara dayanarak, aşkınsal ilkelerin nadiren sorgulanması gerektiği sonucuna varılır. Son olarak, kamu tartışmalarının ve aşkınsal ilkelerin karar alma sürecindeki rolleri somut bir örnek üzerinden açıklanmaya çalışılır. Tezin bulgularının normatif iktisattaki önemini göstermek adına maaşları enflasyona paralel olarak arttırma kararının alınmasında aşkınsal kuralların ve kamu mantığının işlevleri anlatılır.

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