

JUSTICE, EDUCATION, AND DEMOCRACY: A CRITICISM OF NEOLIBERALISM*

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John Rawls's political liberalism and Amartya Sen's capabilities approach have been among the most influential theories in political philosophy. Their theoretical and practical implications have also been an important aspect of discussion in the field of philosophy of education. This study provides a discussion focusing on the concepts justice, education, and equality from the perspectives of political liberalism and the capabilities approach. It also examines impacts of neoliberal economic theory over education policies and finalizes with a discussion on why democratic societies need to consider egalitarian education policies.

INTRODUCTION

Education is an essential institution for a society through which citizens are developed, both as individuals that realize self-development within an understanding of a meaningful life and as qualified citizens that contribute to their society's social, political, cultural, and economic progress. Countries do not only define and organize their educational systems and implement policies within such a broad understanding of education, some international organizations also support education policies of other countries in order to contribute to the nations' development. -For example, the United Nations declared in 1994 that the coming decade is the decade for human rights education. Since the beginning of the 1990s, UNESCO (1994, 2009, 2011) adopted a notion of education for all, which aims at providing quality education to children, youth, and adults so that everyone receives basic education, gender difference in education is eliminated, and a quality education is provided in an equality basis. Similarly, the European Union and the Council of Europe have put significant weight on the education of citizens, especially on democratic citizenship in a developing larger society of nations.¹ In fact, democratic citizenship and education gained more importance as the world began getting more integrated and globalized. Furthermore, some concerns such as decline in democratic participation on the part of the young and some incidents in the international politics

have been given attention and importance (Kerr and Lopes 2008). In connection with this, the Council of Europe in 1997 declared that education focusing on citizenship issues is crucial in developing fully cooperating members of a democratic society and realizing a freer, more tolerant, and just societies. These international organizations have continued to promote democratic citizenship and equal educational opportunities in the following years. Currently, as framed Education and Training 2020 program of the EU, citizenship education in different countries are expected to promote such common values and principles as active citizenship, multicultural dialogue, democratic values, respect for human rights, positive interaction with others, and sensitivity to all kinds of discrimination (Council of the European Union 2009).

In relation to this, political philosophers have provided various theories of justice and philosophers of education have long been discussing some possible implications of those theories for educational theory and practice. Educational approaches derived from theories of justice and democratic theories have emphasized some central values and principles – such as being tolerant, respectful, reasonable, participatory – that are considered necessary to be developed by members of democratic societies. But, there are also economic theories which comprise another aspect of political philosophy, that have also been influential over discussions of justice and some other essential political issues. In fact, one particular economic theory has long been dominating politics and policy discussions, namely neoliberalism or neoliberal economic theory. However, as shall be discussed in the following parts, the outcomes of neoliberal policies which were put into practice for the last few decades signify that values and principles of neoliberalism – such as entrepreneurship and consumerism – do not support and are not compatible with the values and principles that are needed by the contemporary democratic societies.

In this paper, I shall first elaborate on the relation between education and justice theories by focusing on John Rawls's political liberalism and the capabilities approach developed and advanced by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. Second, I shall provide a discussion on neoliberalism and its impacts on education policies concerning democratic citizenship from an egalitarian perspective. Last, I shall finalize with a discussion on why justice theories and their educational implications are of significant and vital importance for contemporary democratic societies.

JUSTICE, CAPABILITIES, AND EDUCATION

John Rawls, one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century, has been an influential thinker out of whose ideas various approaches and perspectives both in political philosophy and philosophy of education have arisen.² One important approach to justice that was fundamentally influenced by Rawls's idea of political liberalism is the capabilities approach that was first developed by Amartya Sen. Both Rawls and Sen criticize and argue against theories and approaches that define social justice and welfare in terms of, for example, utility or income.³ The main difference between the two

thinkers' ideas, however, can be found in their focus on the starting point of justice discussions.⁴ While Rawls aims primarily at how to frame the principles of justice, Sen centers his attention to what he calls the capabilities that can be defined as the focal points behind the principles of justice.

According to Sen (1980, 1999), what makes a society just can be analyzed by looking into the real or effective opportunities – or in his terms, capabilities – that enable individuals to live lives that they find valuable. Sen believes that instead of focusing on the degree that people realize functionings, the well-being of people is to be analyzed by evaluating the real opportunities behind those functionings.⁵ In other words, rather than the amount of the functionings realized by an individual, an account of justice must consider the degree of freedom that enables an individual to realize meaningful functionings (Sen 1980, 1999, 2005). Within their conceptions of the good that define a worthwhile life, individuals may value various functionings. For this reason, a theory of justice is to take into account the freedoms that enable individuals to realize functionings. In simple terms, capabilities are defined as effective freedoms that make an individual capable of deciding, realizing, and maintaining a good life for personally valuable reasons.

In this regard, Sen's capabilities approach is in close relation with Rawls's political liberalism. Rawls (1993) stresses the importance of the political conception of a constitutional agreement among members of a pluralistic democratic society which consists of individuals (and groups) that hold incommensurable and yet reasonable doctrines. Rawls (1993) argues that although they share a common reason and capacity for judgment, the power of human reason may not necessarily lead individuals to arrive at and agree upon the same conclusions, especially regarding tough ethical matters. This fact or what Rawls calls as the burdens of judgment, results in variety of perspectives on ethical issues. Accordingly, persons either as individuals or groups may differ in their explanation of a good way of life. More importantly, what makes individuals or groups reasonable is about whether they acknowledge this fact of plurality. In other words, a reasonable person knows that persons may hold different conceptions of the good that define a life that is worth living. In this sense, such a person does not seek to impose his/her own view of life on others. Rather, he/she respects rights and freedoms of others who affirm conceptions of the good that may be different from or even conflicting with the one he/she holds.

Accordingly, in a society of reasonable individuals and groups, a common political virtue appears to be justice. It is mainly because reasonable individuals and groups in a pluralistic society are expected to rationally conclude that if the principles of justice are defined by a political conception of justice, meaning that they are not derived from any comprehensive doctrines⁶ that define how to live a valuable life, then rights and liberties of every member of the society can be secured. In such a society, therefore, individuals and groups are considered equal in the domain of the political and free in the domain of the private. In other words, principles of justice guarantee citizens' equality in the public political culture and secure their freedoms in their private lives in which they live in accordance with whatever conception of the good they affirm. This society

regulated by the principles of political justice is expected to remain stable insofar as all the citizens maintain their character of being reasonable and comply with the principles of justice while recognizing justice as the first virtue of their political society.⁷

In fact, as emphasized above, both Rawls and Sen agree on the plurality of conceptions of the good that are embraced by individuals. However, while Rawls tries to clarify how a society can be both pluralistic in this sense and just by framing the principles of justice restricted in the domain of the political, Sen argues for the necessity of focusing on effective freedoms that enable individuals to realize various functionings in accordance with their conceptions of the good. But, Sen's approach is faced with an important problem because its focus, namely the capabilities, appears to be too wide to provide a set of basic capabilities that may frame principles of justice for a society. In other words, as the diversity of conceptions of the good, there will be countless of functionings that may be regarded valuable by different persons for different reasons. Within such a tremendous variety, how or whether a list of capabilities can be framed as to provide a basis for justice discussions?

However serious this question may be, Sen never provides such a list, because he believes that only public reason should frame a basic list of capabilities for this purpose through democratic processes. But, Martha Nussbaum (2010), a prominent thinker in political philosophy who advanced the capabilities approach further, develops a basic list of capabilities.⁸ Nussbaum's main motivation behind providing such a list is related to the idea of setting a minimum threshold for a society to be considered as just. In other words, if any of the ten central capabilities are not met by a society, then it becomes impossible for that society to be regarded as a just society. In fact, what Nussbaum aims is to develop a list of central capabilities that provide a basis for a political conception of justice as defined by Rawls (Nussbaum 2010). In this way, Nussbaum provides an answer to the question, mentioned above, that motive and direct Rawls's entire discussion about political conception of justice. Nussbaum, in fact, offers a metric for principles of justice that enable a democratic pluralistic society to be just and stable over time even though it consists of different and even incompatible conceptions of the good (Brighouse 2004).

Now, in such a pluralistic democratic society regulated by political principles of justice, what would be the place and role of a main institution of the society, education? The main difference between Rawls's theory of justice and Sen's capabilities approach, concerning education, is about the weight and critical role given to the educational institutions of such a society. For Rawls, in a well-ordered society⁹ educational institutions or formal education system do not necessarily have an influential role in contributing to the advancement and perpetuation of democratic culture in that pluralistic society. Rather, Rawls (1993, 2001) argues that the public political culture in a well-ordered society itself educates individuals spontaneously as they participate in it, so that each citizen learns to recognize oneself and others as free and equal, while also acquiring all the basic fundamental ideas of a politically liberal democracy including the fact of pluralism, burdens of judgment, being reasonable, valuing the virtue of justice, and so on.¹⁰ Rawls (2001, 56) also stresses that if members of a pluralistic society "left

to their own reflections,” it becomes hard to expect them to conceive of themselves as free and equal, which signifies the vitality for its citizens to participate in public political culture. Therefore, in a well-ordered society, education of the citizens is dependent upon the participation in the public culture. But, regarding a non-ideal society, such as a developing democracy, it inevitably becomes necessary and vital to provide a form of citizenship education through its formal education system.¹¹

But, Rawls primarily discusses the culture in an ideal society, a well-ordered society. The capabilities approach, however, centers the main argument onto the discussions about the equality and justice issues in the real world. In fact, Sen framed the capabilities approach to be an alternative to a common perspective that evaluates how developed a society is. Sen (1980, 1999) argues that human development cannot be sufficiently evaluated by examining only, for example, the income, wealth, or gross national income per capita. What is more important in such an evaluation is, according to this approach, the freedom that persons have in choosing valuable functionings in realizing a good way of life for meaningful reasons.¹²

As mentioned, Nussbaum’s capabilities list has provided a concrete metric for societies to be evaluated as just and for analyzing people’s well-being. In both Sen’s broad explanation of the capabilities and Nussbaum’s basic capabilities list, education plays an essential role in realizing most, if not all, of the functionings. Even the most basic educational skills, such as reading, writing, and calculating, may have significant effects on an individual’s likelihood of realizing more complex functionings that may be necessary for becoming a fully participating member of a society. For this reason, if anyone is deprived of education in a society, then it may be impossible for that society to meet the criteria framed by Nussbaum to be considered as just. In other words, deprivation of education creates an essential injustice that may cause further injustices in a society. In this regard, it may be argued that education is a central capability that needs to be provided for each member of a just society, which highlights that education is to be among the basic rights and liberties provided equally for everyone.¹³

In fact, education in a just society in this sense provides individuals with real opportunities not only for developing and realizing a conception of the good, but also for becoming effective contributors to the advancement of the society. But, up to what extent educational inequalities can be justified without compromising this central capability, a fundamental freedom that should be equally accessible for each member of a society? Regarding Rawls’s theory, this question may appropriately be responded by looking at the principles developed in his notion of justice as fairness. The two main principles simply state that (1) each person has an equal right to the most basic liberties that are guaranteed for all and (2) (a) social and economic inequalities are to be distributed under conditions of fair equality of opportunity and (b) those inequalities are to be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society (Rawls 1993, 2001). Among these principles, in addition, the first has priority over the second, while the first part also have priority over the second part of the second principle. In other words, considering an interpretation of educational rights and inequalities in a society other than an ideal well-ordered one, each individual has to have an equal right to the most

basic educational opportunities as everyone else does and educational inequalities, for example an opportunity to further an advanced education, are to be distributed under the terms of fair equality of opportunity. Yet, those inequalities are to benefit the least advantaged members of the society eventually, even if it may be received in the long run.

However, this question may be responded from the perspective of the capabilities approach with a similar concern but in a different way. Considering the central capabilities developed by Nussbaum, it may be argued that no inequalities can be permissible under the threshold that the ten capabilities set for a just society. Educational inequalities may be justified if and only if each member of a society is considered to have real opportunities for realizing the ten basic capabilities, because education is to be seen as an essential capability that underlies individuals' abilities to achieve most other capabilities and related functionings. But, it may be hard to make an interpretation concerning educational inequalities that may be considered beyond the threshold set by Nussbaum. Similarly, it may also difficult to provide a direct conclusion about this issue from Rawls's theory of justice, since he primarily focuses on an ideal well-ordered society and education plays a limited role in such a society as mentioned. However, it seems nevertheless clear, for both the political liberalism and the capabilities approach, that education has an important role in sustaining a society's stability. At the same time, it may be argued that an interpretation of the two perspectives together may provide a stronger discussion on education focusing on justice and equalities, because, as mentioned, one provides an idea of how to frame principles of justice while the other clarifies what to consider when outlining those principles. Thus, there appears to be a complimentary aspect of the two perspectives in general, and regarding education in particular.

Before concluding this section with a general interpretation of such a complimentary perspective on justice, education and equality, it may be helpful to provide a well-developed example of a specific educational issue. Lorella Terzi (2005a, 2005b, 2007, 2008) has provided an educational account from a perspective of capabilities approach with a focus on students with disabilities.¹⁴ Terzi (2007, 2008) argues that if no one should remain below the threshold set by the capabilities approach, then no students should be deprived of basic educational capabilities on the grounds of any kind of disabilities. Similar to general functionings discussed above, there may inevitably be countless of educational functionings, which necessitates considering some central educational functionings. For this reason, Terzi (2008), similar to what Nussbaum have done, frames some central educational functionings that could also be regarded as an educational threshold in a just society. Terzi's list consists of literacy and numeracy skills, scientific understanding, disposition to sociality and participation, and learning functionings including being able to concentrate, pay attention, and engage in activities. Terzi considers these educational functionings as the most basic ones that enable an individual to develop and advance more complex educational and social functionings, such as developing and realizing a conception of the good, furthering an advanced education, participating in civic and economic aspects of the society. What is central to Terzi's argument is that all the members of a society, including those with disabilities,

are to have equal rights and freedom to develop necessary capabilities at least up the threshold that enables a society to be considered as just. For this reason, like Nussbaum's central list of general capabilities, there must also be central educational capabilities since education provides a foundation for further complex capabilities that require individuals to have developed some basic skills.

Now, considering political liberalisms and the capabilities approach together with education in non-ideal real-world conditions in mind, it appears to be possible to provide some general conclusions that may carry potential implications about specific educational matters including equality, justice, and citizenship issues. Firstly, justice is the central concept in both perspectives that ultimately aim at realizing a just society for everyone regardless of any conditions. But such a just society is highly dependent upon its citizens. Reasonableness, for example, is one crucial characteristic that each citizen is expected to have. It may be defined in the simplest form that a reasonable person is one who is willing to propose and participate in the development of a political conception of justice among the members of a society with differing conceptions of the good and to comply with the principles of justice as they are just.¹⁵ Educating reasonable members requires, therefore, developing a sense of justice in students. But, this process should never be about educating them into a specific conception of justice. Rather, it should be about the notion that in a pluralistic society, principles of justice are to be framed by the participation of all and are not to be derived from any single comprehensive doctrine so that a political conception of justice can be arisen and be regarded as just by all since it secures everyone's equal rights and liberties in the domain of the political. In other words, students are expected to recognize the importance of the virtue of justice, which appears to be particularly crucial in a pluralistic society, along with some values such as reciprocity. Speaking of plurality, secondly, students are also to acquire the ideas of the burdens of judgment and the fact of plurality, with the intention of recognizing the need for such values as toleration and respect.¹⁶ Thirdly, along with a sense of justice, individuals are expected to develop a conception of the good and pursue a good way of life for personally meaningful reasons. In this regard, providing students with and allowing them to engage in various aspects – such as cultural, occupational, social, political, and so on – of a conception of the good during their early lives appear to be important for their personal development as individuals and for their well-beings. Accordingly, students are to be supported in developing skills that enable them to analyze and follow rationally – as well as reasonably in the sense that was discussed above – the ways to realize meaningful functionings in accordance with their conceptions of the good. Lastly, the ultimate aim for the young is in fact about enabling them to become fully participating members of their society, both in their personal lives as individuals and in the wider society as citizens. This requires them to develop personal, social, economic, and political skills that qualify them to become such individuals and citizens. But, what necessitates a democratic just society, considering all the things mentioned, is that it should provide a conception of education and follow educational policies that guarantees that each member of the society sufficiently develops required skills and traits in order for them to live a worthy life. Otherwise, no society would be

considered as just.

At this point, it may be reasonable to provide or rely upon a basic list of capabilities, such as that of Nussbaum's, and also a basic educational capabilities list, such as that of Terzi's. But, as Sen argues this may also be left to societies to be established through democratic ways of public discussion and reasoning.¹⁷ Because, as Rawls (1993) discusses each society may have a different historical backgrounds, social structures, and current conditions that are to be included in such a discussion. Yet, some implications derived from theories of justice as the four points discussed above, may provide some normative perspectives on when a society may be considered as just and what responsibilities are supposed to fulfil regarding education in a just society, which may also provide guidelines for education policies.

EDUCATION UNDER NEOLIBERALISM

Unfortunately, the dominant approach to education is no longer conceptualized as a common public service for a long time, as Simon Marginson (1995) rightly underlined more than two decades ago. Why is it so and what is the rationale behind it? This question may seem to require some long and complicated responses while considering a number of complex issues. However, as this study elaborates on theories behind what is put into practice, it may not be so difficult if one may look at perspectives that have been dominant in politics and, consequently, in education for the last few decades. Neoliberalism or neoliberal economic theory, starting from the 1970s, have become central to arguments in practical politics and gained significant support in the West, especially in the United States and the United Kingdom. The economic success of these countries during the 1980s provided an impressive example for many other countries aiming at economic success. Later, while the collapse of the Soviet Union increased political influence of those exemplary countries, the support from international organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, increased economic influence over developing countries. In time, consequently, the rules of global politics and economy have been reshaped by neoliberal theory.¹⁸ But, what is neoliberalism in theory and practice? David Harvey (2005, 2) writes:

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices.

In other words, neoliberal theory argues for transferring all the economic power and control from the state to individual entrepreneurs or private markets, within a belief that private markets function perfectly if no governmental intervention occurs. In reality, however, economies in various countries have witnessed several serious crisis and

whenever private markets fails the state has been the main protector of the market by transferring public resources to the private market entrepreneurs, which signifies an obvious insincerity of neoliberal theory (Harvey 2005; Stiglitz 2010). In addition, it appears that neoliberal approach in practice melts all the political issues into economics, while reducing all forms of life to economics too (McAfee 2017). Consequently, neoliberalism has created and continues to promote dominance and sovereignty of market economy over the democratic state and the common good (Giroux 2017). Inevitably, as Wendy Brown (2015) clearly discusses, neoliberal policies have been devastating democratic practices and culture in all the areas of society, which will make liberal democratic practices unlikely to survive if no changes are undergone. What is more unfortunate from an egalitarian perspective, is the notion of the state as the most powerful protector of its citizens has converted into an idea that the state is to be the main protector of the private market and be a client seeking to increase its investable grade in the global arena, while the meaning of equal citizenship has turned into an idea that if one has more economic wealth, then has more rights and influence (Centeno and Cohen 2012). As discussed by Giroux (2017) neoliberal economic theory, such as that of Hayek's, has been more ruthless to democratic values than the classical liberal economic theory developed throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Accordingly, neoliberalism has exacerbated some vitally important social issues such as, widening inequalities, political authoritarianism, and global underdevelopment (Bloom 2017).

Moreover, the concepts of market economy and its logic has been normalized in daily discourse and, as a result, not only cost-benefit analysis became influential in guiding behaviors but also inequalities started to be seen as inevitable and functional (Amable 2011; Centeno and Cohen 2012). As stressed by Bloom (2017), neoliberalism promotes morals of capitalism and creates capitalist subjects. The dominant logic and discourse, consequently, helps justifying inequalities in the society. In this regard, Giroux (2017) rightly argues that neoliberalism operates as a public pedagogy and political ideology rather than simply an economic discourse focuses on economic growth and prosperity.

Furthermore, political and economic dominance of neoliberalism have had significant impacts on education policies over the years. Similar to the fundamental changes on some central political concepts, meanings of some basic educational concepts have also been altered by neoliberal thought. For example, education itself is seen as one important component of neoliberal economy simply because of its business potential, which underlines the importance of privatization and consumerism in neoliberal economy. Within this business perspective, moreover, parents are conceptualized as consumers free to make a choice among competing franchised education institutions, while students are defined as human capital on which families make investments by purchasing a commodity, education (Proctor and Aitchison 2015).

Consequently, in this neoliberal system, students' access to quality education is determined in accordance with their families' socio-economic status based on their income and wealth. In other words, lesser socio-economic status provides lesser

educational opportunities, which results in lesser educational outcomes that contribute to perpetuate lesser socio-economic status. Through the use of education along with other basic institutions of a society, as a result, neoliberalism creates more non-egalitarian social structures. Similar to the general neoliberal logic that justifies inequalities as inevitable and functional, neoliberal education also tries to justify educational inequalities as inevitable and functional. The neoliberal rationale behind it simply defends the argument that low inequality may harm educational and thus economic performance. Put it another way, according to neoliberalism, distributing educational resources unequally at the cost of producing few very high achievers, rather than producing all average achievers, is justified simply because they can contribute more to economic growth.

However, as Dennis J. Condron's (2011) comparative analyses, for example, has shown that less egalitarian countries have lower average achievement, lower percentages of very highly skilled students, and higher percentages of very low skilled students, while more egalitarian countries have higher average achievement, higher percentages of very highly skilled students, and lower percentages of very low skilled students. These results, in fact suggests that egalitarianism and educational excellence are compatible, in contrast to what neoliberalism argues for (Condron 2011). However, neoliberal economic theory still dominates educational policies. Accordingly, as in the case of its influence in daily discourse, impacts of neoliberal thought can be seen among central values placed in the curriculum. For example, as a result of neoliberal policies, entrepreneurship has become a mandatory aspect of all programs while democracy and citizenship are hardly mentioned in few courses that promote democratic citizenship, which leads students to conceptualize democratic citizenship based on freedom of choice as consumers and freedom of economic control as entrepreneurs (Lundahl and Olson 2013). Hence, neoliberalism provides rationale for perpetuating inequalities in all the aspects of society. Accordingly, education policies under the influence of neoliberalism function in line with the same rationale, even though it is indefensible and falsified by the educational outcomes as mentioned. Perpetuating inequalities in a society over its education system bears some serious risks for the future of democratic societies, because educational inequalities provide foundations for future inequalities that in turn weaken beliefs in basic democratic values, such as social trust, equality, and civic liberties (Schlicht, Stadelmann-Steffen, and Freitag 2010). Therefore, as long as trying to justify and perpetuate inequalities in general and define education in the same vein from a neoliberal perspective, education policies and practices will continue promoting values that are essentially incompatible with democratic ideals.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Neoliberalism in the global arena dominates policy discussions and practices. But, there is a growing non-egalitarian social structure under neoliberal theory, which fundamentally jeopardizes the functioning of democracy. This fact is in deep relationship

with education, because a non-egalitarian society produces more inequalities through applying business-based education policies under the influence of neoliberal economic theory, which in turn makes the society more non-egalitarian. Such a social structure may eventually expand the gap between social classes –that have been strengthened by neoliberalism itself – to an extreme ends, and may cause more damage to democratic values. Daily discourse, logic, and human behaviors have already been influenced by neoliberal thinking, as mentioned. An understanding of justified inequalities and a notion of the more wealth the more rights have weakened citizens' belief in social justice and basic rights and liberties. As clearly put by Giroux (2017), neoliberalism not only creates economic inequalities and ethically questionable power relations, but also promotes rigid exclusions from civic participation.¹⁹

Through education, neoliberalism primarily produces profit-making-minded individuals while undervaluing the importance of democratic values. But, as framed and declared in various international documents, contemporary democratic societies need citizens who are respectful to others and differences, value justice and human rights, actively participate in democratic process, open to multicultural dialogue, and so on. It appears in this regard that what have been applied and what have been aspired in fact do not match. There is a need to make a decision between educating entrepreneurs who analyze all human behaviors within a business understanding of cost-benefit analysis or reasonable citizens who regard justice as the first virtue and are willing to live by the principles of justice that secures everyone's equality and freedom.

Justice theories concerned with democratic social structures, such as Rawls's idea of political liberalism and the capabilities approach have significant importance for contemporary societies. People are not living in an ideal world as in Rawls's well-ordered society. However, Rawls's idea of political liberalism and the capabilities approach together provide a normative perspective from which education policies can be evaluated both prior to practice and in practice. As discussed in this article, pluralistic democratic societies must to put more importance to equality and justice concerns. Fully developed, well-educated citizens are essential for a pluralistic society to progress toward being a freer, more egalitarian, and just democracies. As discussed, rather than producing entrepreneurs, educating reasonable individuals that recognize the fact of plurality and the burdens of judgment, develop a sense of justice and be willing to act in accordance with the principles of justice, be able to evaluate and develop a conception of the good for self-development, and also willingly try to become a fully cooperating member of a society is to be an ultimate aim of democratic citizenship education. In short, developing individuals who consider justice as the first virtue appear to be what contemporary democracies need. But, in order to realize this, first of all, the ongoing domination of neoliberalism must be put to an end.²⁰ The state has to take the primary responsibility in educating its citizens, rather than leaving this basic responsibility to the hands of profit-making-oriented business individuals and groups. The state has to be the main provider and defender of educational standards that enable each citizen as equal member of the society, as discussed by the capabilities approach. Today, no society can be considered as a just society unless it provides each individual with necessary educational opportunities so that all citizens can develop and realize some

essential capabilities to become fully participatory members of the society, responsible for the self and others, sensitive to other beings and the nature, and inclusive and cooperative persons.

*An abstract of this work was orally presented as a research proposal at the Education, Society & Reform Research Conference on 6-7 April 2018."

NOTES

1. For detailed discussions on the historical developments of the EU's policies on education, see, for example, Sotiria Grek et al. (2009); Mann (1993); John Holford (2008).

2. After Rawls, scholars studying on theories of justice either had to work within his theory of justice or explain why they disagree with Rawls (Brighouse 2004; Robert Nozick 1974). Also, as Christian Fernández and Mikael Sundström (2011) analyze, discussions on citizenship education between 1990 and 2010 have been Rawls-centric.

3. Rawls published his complete theory of justice first in *A Theory of Justice* (1971), later developed his version of political liberalism in the 1980s (see Rawls 1985), and published later version of his theory of justice in *Political Liberalism* (1993). Sen published his ideas in his work *Equality of What* (1980) and in time became influential in both philosophy and economics.

4. For detailed analysis of the ideas of Rawls and Sen, see, for example, Harlan Beckley (2002); Harry Brighouse and Ingrid Robeyns (2010); Madoka Saito (2003).

5. The concept of functionings is centrally important for Sen's capabilities approach. Even though Sen has been criticized by using vague concepts (Gerald A. Cohen 1993), the idea of functionings can be clarified simply as follows. The idea of functionings consists of two other concepts, beings and doing. On one hand, the concept of doings can be defined by various activities such as thinking, running, reading, driving, and so on. The concept of beings, on the other, can be defined by various states of being such as being healthy, educated, happy, secure, and the like. The two concepts together are identified as functionings.

6. For example, any religious, philosophical, cultural, or ethical comprehensive doctrines that define the good in every aspect of life.

7. I do not intend to provide a complete explanation of Rawls's justice as fairness or all the fundamental ideas of his political liberalism, considering the scope and limitation of this study. The main aim here is to give a general idea of a politically liberal society and emphasize how it provides and secures equality and freedom of its members under an inevitable plurality of conceptions of the good. For a detailed explanation of Rawls's theory see, for example, Samuel Freeman (2007). For a shorter and concise discussion, see, for example, Harry Brighouse (2004).

8. Nussbaum's (2010) list consists of ten central capabilities: (1) Life, (2) bodily health, (3) bodily integrity, (4) senses, imagination, thought, (5) emotions, (6) practical reason, (7) affiliation, (8) other species, (9) play, and (10) control over one's environment.

9. Rawls identifies a politically liberal pluralistic democratic society, which operates under an overlapping consensus by the principles of justice, as a well-ordered society.

10. For a detailed discussion on education in a well-ordered society, see, for example, M. Victoria Costa (2004); Rasit Çelik (2016a).

11. This issue is beyond the limitations of this current article. However, I elaborate on this issue elsewhere (Çelik 2016b).

12. It may be important to note at this point that Sen's views have been significantly influential in considering education as a major dimension of the United Nation's Human Development Index that evaluates nations' development in order to advance human well-being.

13. Rawls (1993) argues that each society may have a different set of principles of justice and an overlapping consensus, since each may have different historical, social, and cultural backgrounds. Similarly, Nussbaum's list is not intended to fit all the societies as fixed. Instead, as long as agreed upon by all within an understanding of a political conception of justice, such a list may consist of various capabilities in different societies. However, since education appears to be the most central capability that enables some other capabilities to be realized by persons, education may need to be a central to all versions of a list of capabilities. Taken together, a consensus on education in a society may be different from the one in another society. In other words, educational practices are not to be defined as fixed and derived from a single doctrine, such as a Western-like education. The concern is to be about how to align educational practices with the principles of justice that are just to all.

14. In order to remain within the limits of this study, I will not provide more examples of educational accounts developed from the perspectives of political liberalism and/or the capabilities approach by different scholars. But one may also see, for example, Barry L. Bull (2012); Eamonn Callan (1996); (2016b); Çelik (2016b); Costa (2004); Tim Fowler (2011); Solveig M. Reindal (2010); Saito (2003); Melanie Walker (2003).

15. Rawls introduced some new central concepts to his theory of justice, including the idea of reasonableness, after he developed his version of political liberalism. In this regard, the concept of reasonableness bears a unique meaning for his theory. For example, the idea of reasonableness does not equal to acting from or being a product of reason. It is also not to be confused with being rational. The idea of reasonableness applies to various concepts, such as persons, doctrines, and conceptions of justice. For more detailed discussions, see, for example, James W. Boettcher (2004), Sebastiano Maffettone (2004), David M. Rasmussen (2004).

16. For detailed discussions on how to relate these values to the curriculum, see, for example, Barry L. Bull (2008); Çelik (2016b).

17. On this issue, see, for example, Rutger Claassen (2011).

18. For more information about the historical progress of neoliberalism, see, for example, David Harvey (2005).

19. For a detailed ethical discussion on the paradoxical aspects of market vs. non-market values under neoliberalism, see, for example, Bloom (2017).

20. The question about how or whether this is possible may seem challenging.

However, as this article relies on, a possible approach to resolve this issue can be found in Rawls's *Political Liberalism* (1993). One may not be able to propose a single doctrine that may fit to all societies. Rather, as it is clearly elaborated by Rawls (1993), different societies may arrive at different principles of justice secured by an overlapping consensus. Yet, the main point is to make sure that the principles – including those of education – are not to derive from any comprehensive doctrine. I will not delve into this question here, in order to remain within the scope and aim of this article (see Rawls's *Political Liberalism* for the fundamental ideas on how to arrive at such a conclusion through public reason). However, one may take this concern as a further research topic.

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Submitted 8 August 2018; revised 4 March 2019.