

Luck in the Just Society

-Sociology of Individual's Choices and a Justification for Egalitarian Social Policies-¹

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Submitted by: 30.05.2023

Accepted by: 26.07.2023

Article Type: Research Article

Abstract

To what extent can individuals be kept responsible for the disadvantages they experience? This is undoubtedly one of the most fundamental questions that have led to a historical cleavage between egalitarian perspectives that underline roles of structural inequalities leading to disadvantages and anti-egalitarian/libertarian perspectives that tend to keep individuals themselves responsible for their own living conditions. Taking a mediating position between these perspectives, a relatively new normative framework, viz. luck egalitarianism, has recently provided an analytical answer to this question. Building upon an authentic conceptual framework in which two distinct forms of luck are defined, it claims that individuals cannot be kept responsible for their disadvantaged conditions so long as these conditions have appeared as consequences of factors that are beyond their own control, such as luck, which inescapably brings forth a normative idea that individuals should take responsibility of disadvantages that are consequences of their own choices/decisions. This paper discusses that evaluative aspects of individuals' choices/decisions within the given configuration of luck egalitarianism's analytical framework are excessively ambiguous, which can easily lead it to turn into a perspective morally justifying quite a number of disadvantages. Drawing on various hypothetical cases and empirical findings, it suggests that luck egalitarianism should recognize sociological formation of individuals' choices/decisions in modern stratified societies to overcome such jeopardy. Following this, it addresses two positive implications of such recognition as (1) saving luck egalitarianism from being a means of right-wing exclusionary political positions and (2) opening up a space to incorporate egalitarian social policies.

Keywords: *Distributive Justice, Luck, Choice, Political Sociology, Social Policy*

Citation: Arun, M. O. (2023). Luck in the just society -Sociology of individual's choices and a justification for egalitarian social policies-. *Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 23(3), 751-770.

¹ This study does not require ethics committee permission.

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Adil Toplumda Şans

-Birey Seçimlerinin Sosyolojisi ve Eşitlikçi Sosyal Politikalar İçin Bir Temellendirme-

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Başvuru Tarihi: 30.05.2023

Kabul Tarihi: 26.07.2023

Makale Türü: Araştırma Makalesi

Öz

Dezavantajlı bireyler deneyimledikleri dezavantajlardan ne derece sorumlu tutulabilir? Kuşkusuz bu soru, yapısal eşitsizliklerin dezavantajın oluşumunda oynadığı rollere vurgu yapan eşitlikçi bakış açıları ile bireyleri kendi yaşam koşullarından sorumlu tutan eşitlikçi olmayan/liberteryen bakış açıları arasındaki tarihsel kırılmaya yol açan en temel sorulardan biridir. Bu iki bakış açısı arasında uzlaştırıcı bir pozisyon olarak görece yeni ortaya çıkmış olan şans eşitlikçiliği yaklaşımı ise bu soruya analitik bir cevap sunmaktadır. İki farklı şans tanımının yer aldığı özgün bir kavramsal çerçeve üzerine kurulu olan şans eşitlikçiliği, bireylerin kendi kontrolleri dışında gelişen şans gibi etmenlerin sonucunda ortaya çıkan dezavantajlardan sorumlu tutulamayacağını belirtmektedir. Bu bakış açısı, kaçınılmaz olarak, bireylerin kendi seçimlerinin/kararlarının sonucu olarak ortaya çıkan dezavantajların sorumluluğunu üstlenmeleri gerektiği yönündeki normatif fikri de beraberinde getirmektedir. Bu çalışma, şans eşitlikçiliği yaklaşımının analitik çerçevesinin verili yapısı içinde, birey seçimlerine/kararlarına ilişkin değerlendirme unsurlarının oldukça muğlak olduğunu ve bunun da şans eşitlikçiliğinin birçok dezavantajı meşrulaştıran bir bakış açısına dönüşmesine sebep olabileceğini tartışmaktadır. Çeşitli hipotetik örnekler ve kimi görgül verilere dayanarak, şans eşitlikçiliğinin söz konusu riski, katmanlaşmış çağdaş toplumlarda birey seçimlerinin/kararlarının sosyolojik olarak kurulduğunu kabul ederek aşabileceğini işaret etmektedir. Bunu takiben, böylesi bir kabulün şans eşitlikçiliğinin (1) dışlayıcı sağ siyasal pozisyonlarca araçsallaştırılmasına engel olmak ve (2) eşitlikçi sosyal politikalarla işbirliği kurmasına olanak sağlayan bir alan açması gibi iki olumlu sonucu beraberinde getireceği ifade edilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dağıtıcı Adalet, Şans, Seçim, Siyaset Sosyolojisi, Sosyal Politika

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Introduction

Daniel Kahneman, one of the Nobel Laureates for integrating psychological research into economics, has once identified success as the sum total of talent and luck; he then added that a great success is the summation of just “a little more talent” and yet “a lot of luck” (Kahneman, 2011, p.176). This was an explicit acknowledgement of the fact that individuals’ success and thus their achievements of an affluent life are one way or another influenced by variables beyond their own control in our modern societies. Kahneman in fact is right in that individual’s ability to be successful, or to demonstrate distinctive achievements and thus having an affluent life are seminally influenced by luck in our modern societies; yet, as frequently pointed out by various scholars of social and political philosophy, impact of luck in achieving an affluent life should be neutralised in a society that claims to be just. Dealing with this issue in fact was an unavoidable task for social and political philosophers of contemporary era since luck as a factor beyond individuals’ own control is intrinsically contradictory to the greatest vow of the liberal economic and institutional regulations that have always promised to arrange distribution of value and rewards based on individual’s own merits and talents, rather than her/his birthplace, kinship relations, family origin, gender, or ethnicity upon which they have hardly any control.

Among others, however, luck egalitarianism is perhaps the most accoutred normative theoretical framework that is a genuinely authentic proposal substantially discussing on how individual’s (un)luck should conceptually and analytically be evaluated in the just society. It primarily claims that individual’s disadvantages which have appeared beyond their own control should be compensated through re-distributive policies since, according to luck egalitarianism, any individual cannot be kept responsible for any undesired consequence, such as poverty, from which s/he has no power to refrain. Building upon this normative moral argument, luck egalitarianism seems at first sight taking substantially egalitarian position within given literature of social justice; yet this is not fully so since such a normative view dialectically also brings forth the argument that individual’s disadvantages which have been, for example, predictable and thus avoidable are deserved and thus should not be compensated through any re-distributive policy. In this regard, aligning with the egalitarian perspectives, luck egalitarianism advocates compensation of disadvantages that have not been results of individuals’ choices/decisions and/or have been unpredictable as well as unavoidable; yet in line with anti-egalitarian/libertarian perspectives, it justifies disadvantages so long as they are consequences of individual’s freely chosen/decided actions. Conceptually speaking, it expresses this position by referring to two forms of luck. On the one side, it refers to the brute luck which is conceptualised to address consequences that are beyond individual’s own control. On the other side, it also refers to the option luck conceptualized to address predictable and avoidable consequences that have appeared as a result of individual’s deliberate choices/decisions. Within this conceptual framework, luck egalitarianism aims to remove undesired consequences of bad brute luck from individuals’ life whilst it advocates that undesired consequences of bad option luck are deserved. Thus, evaluation of disadvantages with the purpose of deciding whether these disadvantages are (un)deserved and thus should be (non)compensated requires luck egalitarians to scrutinize individual’s responsibility which is elaborated based on her/his choices/decisions.

However, this paper argues for, evaluation of individuals’ responsibility based on their choices/decisions is too ambiguous, or vague, within the given analytical texture of luck egalitarianism; and luck egalitarianism that proposes a distinctive evaluative framework to govern the distributive process needs to incorporate with a broader and sociologically-informed account of individual’s choice/decision formation. In other words, it claims that the existing analytical texture of luck egalitarianism should be extended so as to recognize the fact that individuals’ choices/decisions are ingrained in their sociological characteristics, such as social and economic status, gender, ethnicity, age, political identity, religiosity and religious belonging, upon which they

have hardly any control. Following this, it addresses two positive implications of such recognition and explains how such recognition saves luck egalitarianism from dropping the cradle of right-wing exclusionary perspectives and can provide it an opportunity to engage with egalitarian social policies.

Individual's Luck, Choice and Responsibility in the Just Society

A distinctive characteristic of the theory of justice as fairness proposed by Rawls, probably one of the most-influential political philosophers in the last few decades, is its conceptualisation addressing justice as the first virtue of social institutions (Rawls, 1999, p.3). This means that Rawls took a normative position asking “how a society is just in its regulations of interactions among its members” (Huang, 2019, p.278) instead of aligning with the ancient Greek understanding considered justice as “a virtue of individuals” (Arun, 2017, p.33; LeBar, 2020). Here, Rawls’ position attains a responsibility to institutional regulations in allowing individuals to achieve a good life and living in a just and “well-ordered society” (see Rawls, 2001, pp.8-10) whilst the ancient Greek perspective primarily addresses individuals themselves as responsible actors who are expected to act in a just way regardless of what sorts of social, economic and political conditions surround them.

In fact, individuals responsibility, or the extent of individuals’ liabilities and duties, in achieving good life has always been an issue for the distributional theories of social justice as well as everyday politics. Broadly speaking, anti-egalitarian stances that mostly hold right-wing political agenda tend to align with positions leaning to address individuals themselves as responsible agent in achieving good and affluent life while egalitarian normative ideals that primarily involve left-wing political agenda tend to underline influence of external conditions surrounding individuals’ lives in achieving good and affluent life. However, there are various hybrid perspectives that partly incorporate certain arguments of these two counter-stances even though not all of these hybrid perspectives are developed in a conceptually systematic manner. Luck egalitarianism *inter alia*, a relatively new normative perspective, that has been initially developed by Ronald Dworkin (1981a; 1981b; 2000; 2002; see also Arneson, 1989 and 2015; Cohen, 1989; Nagel, 1991; Vallentyne, 2002; Barry, 2008; Knight, 2013; Segall, 2013) and sometimes named as “equality of fortune” (Anderson, 1999, p.289) has recently proposed a systematically advanced conceptual framework aiming to provide particular evaluative framework for question of to what extent can individuals be kept responsible for achieving a good and affluent life? Building upon an aim to conceptually respond the question of responsibility, luck egalitarianism has in essence provided a considerable support, as Cohen notes (1989, p.933), for egalitarian normative positions since it borrows the most powerful underpinning and source of moral justification of the non-egalitarian distributional principles, namely individual’s choice and responsibility, and use these underpinnings to advance and strengthen egalitarian principles.

The concept of “luck egalitarianism” is initially coined by Elizabeth Anderson (1999; see also Knight, 2013, p.924) and frequently used in the literature to address the normative theory that Dworkin initially proposed at the beginning of 1980s even though Dworkin himself did not comply with such terminological use quite well (Dworkin, 2003, p.190, see also Barry, 2008, p.136). Focusing on “counteracting the distributive effects of luck on people’s lives” (Knight, 2013, p.924), it primarily proposes to aim “neutraliz(ing) the impact of luck on the lives of individuals” (Barry, 2008, p.136). In this regard, its foundational claim is associated with that any factor which are beyond individuals’ own control, such as luck, should not be a function of what a person receives at the end of the process of value distribution. This is to say that it advocates a particular form of value distribution insensitive to factors beyond individuals’ own control since such insensitivity, normatively speaking, is comprehended as the foundational moral condition of the just process of allocating both material (e.g. wealth, income, positions of power, and so forth) and immaterial (e.g. admiration, respect, recognition, and so forth) rewards. Accordingly, it aligns with the egalitarian concerns and particularly with the “principle of equality” which, for Parfit (1984, p.26), refers to claim that “it is bad if, through no fault of theirs, some people are worse

off than others”. To illustrate, if a person has become needy without any control over social or economic conditions that have had detrimental effects on her/his life and thus have made her/him poor, then any form of inequality between this person and better-off ones is not morally justifiable since worse off conditions of this person was not a deliberate choice or s/he did not have any power over circumstances leading her/him to destitution. Underpinning such a view, the claim is that “some people are blessed with good luck, some are cursed with bad luck, and it is the responsibility of society – all of us regarded collectively – to alter the distribution of goods and evils that arises from the jumble of lotteries that constitutes human life as we know it” (Arneson, 2008, p.80), which inevitably brings forth a responsibility for the public authority in compensating, or ameliorating, undesired outcomes of bad luck from which some members of society suffer.

Beyond discussions regarding what form of compensation ought to be procured by the public authority, normative perspective of luck egalitarianism as seen here is built upon a moral comprehension that some forms of inequalities and their undesired consequences are undeserved so long as they are not derived from individuals’ free choices. Even though this seems a keen and insightful egalitarian defence of welfare rights for disadvantaged individuals *vis-a-vis* counter arguments of the libertarian and anti-egalitarian normative perspectives, it also dialectically brings forth a pre-supposition concerning presence of certain inequalities as well as disadvantages that are deserved. This is precisely because of inevitable dialectical nature of normative political conceptualisations each of which co-exists with its counterpart⁴. Consequently, such a comprehension leads to the argument that if a normative perspective identifies unjust inequalities (in a sense of undeservingness) in relation to conditions unchosen, then it inevitably, *albeit* implicitly, also involves a notion of just inequalities (in a sense of deservingness) that are chosen. The conceptual framework of luck egalitarianism starts to rise up precisely here.

Clarifying the distinction between deserved (e.g. resulted from chosen pre-conditions) and undeserved (e.g. resulted from unchosen pre-conditions) inequalities as well as disadvantages, luck egalitarianism conceptually identifies two forms of luck, namely option luck and brute luck (see Lippert-Rasmussen, 2001, pp.551-557; Otsuka, 2002, pp.40-41; Vallentyne, 2002, pp.529-538; Barry, 2008, p.137; Knight, 2005, pp.56-57 and 2013, pp.925-926). Dworkin describes the option luck as “a matter of how deliberate and calculated gamble turn out – whether someone gains or losses through accepting an isolated risk he or she should have anticipated and might have declined” and the brute luck as “a matter of how risks fall out that are not in that sense deliberate gambles” (Dworkin, 1981b, p.293 and 2000, p.73). Based on this definition in which individuals’ choices and decisions in their lives are resembled as choices/decisions taken during a gamble, Dworkin in fact provides an analytical framework concerning how to evaluate a person’s misfortune and how to decide whether such misfortune should be compensated or not. Thus, he proposes a particular form of scrutiny that should be followed in evaluating individuals’ choices/decisions based on which process of value distribution should, according to him, be governed. Based on this analytical framework, qualities of individuals’ decisions should be scrutinized in a way that questions three aspects which are (1) whether individuals’ choices/decisions were deliberate, meaning if choices/decisions were purposeful, intentional, or voluntary, (2) whether potential outcomes of choices/decisions were predictable or anticipated, meaning if individuals taken a decision were pre-informed about its potential consequences, and lastly (3) whether the decision taken was avoidable, meaning that individuals were able to choose something else.

According to luck egalitarianism, individuals whose choices/decisions do not involve these three distinctive qualities and who end up with undesirable as well as disadvantaging outcomes deserve a compensation of their misfortune since outcome of their choice/decision demonstrates a form of brute luck which is beyond their own control. Yet, individuals whose choices/decisions involve these three qualities and who one way or another

⁴ For a detailed discussion on how the resilience discourse of neo-liberal outlook draws upon the conceptualisation of “deserving” and how this outlook dialectically brings forth the concept of “undeserving” to justify various austerity policies in modern market economies, Arun’s (2022, pp.1022-1023) recent work can be helpful.

end up with an undesirable as well as unequal outcomes are undeserving people; and thus their misfortune is not eligible for any form compensation since they have ended up with undesirable conditions due to the option luck which was deliberately chosen, anticipated and avoidable. Illustrating these two forms of luck, Dworkin (2000, p.73) speaks of that “if I buy a stock on the exchange that rises, then my option luck is good” and then adds that “if I am hit by a falling meteorite whose course could not have been predicted, then my bad luck is brute”. These hypothetical examples illustrate that, for Dworkin, the primary source of information in deciding whether individuals’ bad luck needs to be compensated depends on to what extent s/he has control upon deciding/choosing something to do and/or to be. Conceptually speaking, the difference between brute luck and option luck “marks the divide between luck that calls for redistribution, and the luck which requires no such correction” (Knight, 2013, p.925), based on which luck egalitarianism identifies the fundamental egalitarian aim as “to extinguish the influence of brute luck on distribution” (Segall, 2013, p.40), yet leaves (un)desired outcomes of option luck aside.

As a more explanatory and straightforward portrayal of the brute luck and option luck taxonomy, consider two undergrads who have dropped out of school after repeatedly failing in courses and consequently fell into poverty in later life due to constant unemployment as a result of having no credible higher education degree. If the first student has repeatedly failed in courses due to having a trouble of, say, inborn physical disability in walking that practically constrains her/him in being mobile and participating in public life in various social spheres (e.g. school attendance), then s/he cannot be blamed with being constantly unemployed and thus a poor individual as a result of having no credible higher education degree. This means her/his poverty is an outcome of a physical constraint, *viz.* the brute luck, that was beyond her/his own control; and thus conditions of poverty s/he experiences need to be compensated by public authority. If the second student has repeatedly failed in courses due to sparing most of her/his time for, say, virtual platforms based on her/his aspiration⁵ to be a social media influencer and thus deliberately avoiding from allocating sufficient time to her/his course works, then her/his unemployment and poverty in later life do not deserve any compensation of the public authority since these undesirable outcomes are considered as outcomes of a deliberate choice/decision, *viz.* the option luck, that was avoidable from. This is to say that luck egalitarianism is primarily concerned with rectifying undesirable outcomes of the brute luck, but not the option luck⁶, which is because “the fundamental distinction for an egalitarian is between choice and luck in the shaping of people’s fate” (Cohen, 2011, p.122).

Considering definitions and distinctions of these two forms of luck in terms of what they require in the just society (e.g. entitling poor with welfare rights, provision of unconditional financial supports, and so forth), it is argued that luck egalitarianism advocates re-distribution of the original distribution of value in a society so long as the original distribution is an outcome of the brute luck that has initially rendered the process of value distribution an unjust allocation; yet as long as the original distribution is a consequence of the option luck, then there is no need for a further re-distribution since resulting inequalities among individuals reflect their choices/decisions and thus are morally non-compensable⁷ (Barry, 2008, p.137). It is this line of reasoning

⁵ In fact, one can rightfully raise a critical concern addressing that individuals’ choice of time allocation can be an (in)direct result of various structural/external factors involving, say, a person’s social needs of recognition or cultural distortion of media; and thus, such critical perspective can explicitly address that the student’s choice and undesirable outcomes of it are not preferences independently crafted from distorting structural factors. I agree such critical perspective about which I will extensively discuss below underneath of the second section.

⁶ The problem here is associated with that option luck does not always appears as a loss. It may also appear as a gain individuals receive in result of their risky choices/decisions. Consider a person who chooses to play a lottery at the end of which s/he may either lose or win a promised reward. In case of a loss, according to Dworkin, any compensation is not morally justified since it was an avoidable and predictable result of deciding to play the lottery. Yet, a particular moral issue arises in case of a win. When an individual plays a lottery and wins through luck, it is apparently still a luck which is beyond individuals’ own control and which brings forth diverse advantages. So, the moral distributional question appears as follows: Should individuals be entitled to advantages they gain through luck and become unequally more affluent than others just as a result of their luck? This question brings forth the distinction between bad option luck and good option luck and also opens up a new area of moral issues. In fact, within the existing literature, few scholars address critical views questioning such forms of inequalities (see Barry, 2008, p.137; Cohen, 2009, pp.9-16; Knight, 2013, p.931).

⁷ It should be noted that Dworkin does not only propose the normative idea that compensation of bad brute luck is a moral requirement of the just society, but also offers certain means to realise it, such as resource equality, auction, envy test and hypothetical insurance market (for more detail, see

leading quite a number of egalitarian political philosophers to believe in that “an unequal distribution that is not a matter of bad luck for the worse off could be just” (Lippert-Rasmussen, 2023). Obviously, conceptualisation of individuals’ luck in this way allows luck egalitarians to play a mediating role between right-libertarians and left-egalitarians by negotiating the tense relationship of their central arguments. On the left side, egalitarians emphasize constraining nature of external conditions involving social, economic, political and cultural structure that either partly restrain or fully prevent an individual’s ability to take prudent choices/decisions in various ways and thus make them unable to achieve genuinely good life. On the right side, however, libertarians emphasize that blaming the external conditions without taking an individual’s responsibility into account and expecting society to ease all burdens of achieving good life are violation of rights and labour of those who sustain their lives within these external conditions yet who somehow also achieve to overcome burdens of these conditions. Playing a mediating role between these two normative positions, luck egalitarians suggest that individuals can be kept responsible of their choices/decisions so long as influence(s) of the brute luck are outcasted (luck egalitarianism confirming the left-egalitarian position); yet, unequal economic or social outcomes of the option luck are allowed to stand (luck egalitarians confirming the right-libertarian position).

Briefly saying, luck egalitarianism suggests to evaluate individuals’ choices/decisions in a particular way taking into account if these choices/decisions are affected or stimulated by an unfair conditions upon which people have no control. However, assessing individuals’ choices/decisions in relation to influences of unfair conditions is rarely as straightforward as examples given above, such as falling into poverty due to school drop off or deciding to gamble. Decisions we take and choices we make in actual modern life of stratified societies are quite largely dependent on various contingent factors that are beyond, or hardly under, our own control such as having an opportunity for parental education, stable family life, locations of birth, status of citizenship and so forth. Our social class, gender, ethnicity, cultural and religious belongings as well as family origin and wealth are factors that, sociologically speaking, are seminally influential on our choices/decisions. In fact, it is hardly possible to find out a choice/decision that is fully independent from our sociological characteristics. In this regard, individuals’ luck in the sense that luck egalitarians address is to a large extent a sociologically constructed phenomenon, which is reflexively underpinned through various hypothetical and actual cases below.

Luck and Sociology of Individual’s Choices/Decisions: A Reflexive Account

A pervasive characteristic of modern stratified societies is that luck, in a sense that proponents of luck egalitarianism address as a factor beyond individuals’ own control, is still colossally influential on individuals’ ability, as well as upon their substantial opportunities, facilitating to arrive at good and affluent life. This is to say that what makes an individual (un)lucky (e.g. a choice/decision leading her/him to un/desired outcomes such as poverty or affluent life) is considerably associated with her/his socio-economic class, gender, ethnicity, and/or in some societies political identity, age, religiosity or type of religious belonging and so forth, which persuasively refers to that what is called as (un)luck is deeply intertwined with individuals’ sociological characteristics. In fact, several scholars (see Mason, 2000, pp.239-242; Phillips, 2004, pp.15-16; Barry, 2006, p.93; Kibe, 2011, pp.11-16) acknowledges influences of social backgrounds and identities of individuals as well as social structure and relations on person’s choices/decisions in various ways. Yet, most of the normative theoretical perspectives within the literature of (re)distributive justice insufficiently engages with sociological conception of inequalities⁸; and there is still an explicitly observable need for grounding empirical

Dworkin, 1981b; Otsuka, 2002; Fleurbaey, 2002; Armstrong, 2005; Arneson, 2015; Halliday, 2016). Due to limited space of this work and to not disrupt the ongoing stream of thought that is exclusively based on the moral argument of luck egalitarianism, I will not discuss on these aspects here.

⁸ In fact, such an insufficient engagement between disciplinary fields of sociology and political philosophy is quite evident, especially when the focal point of discussion is about social justice and/or (re)distributive issues. On the one side, overarching and highly transcendental theories of political philosophy inevitably become insufficient in plausibly responding questions derived from sociological diversities of actual everyday practices of

investigations concerning how individuals' choices/decisions are ingrained in their social identities. Even though this is an explicitly observable need, the intertwinement of what is called as (un)luck and socially constructed identities of individuals can reflexively be demonstrated with references to both actual cases observed in individuals' everyday practices as well as hypothetical, *albeit* highly likely, cases addressed by various scholars within the existing literature. Obviously, such a reflexive perspective can be addressed to critically raise two claims. Firstly, hypothetical cases discussed here with a purpose of assessing the normative framework of luck egalitarianism are not the ones observed in everyday life. Yet, discussions based on such cases, especially in political philosophy, are quite common since a hypothetical case does not necessarily mean an unrealistic case impossible to be encountered in the flow of everyday life. Secondly, actual cases discussed here can also be addressed as the ones that are outcomes of research conducted with different purposes from assessing the normative framework of luck egalitarianism. However, considering the fact that these cases are straightforwardly associated with individual's choices and their formation, they are still extensively relevant to assess the normative framework of luck egalitarianism that primarily aims to regulate distributional process based on individual's choices/decisions. In this regard, even though reflexive perspective is limited to make a comprehensive elaboration, it is still promising to develop a plausible evaluative perspective concerning luck egalitarianism.

However, before moving on to develop such a reflexive perspective underlining sociological formation of people's choices/decisions, it is perhaps useful to briefly remind that normative proposal of luck egalitarianism is primarily based on a moral argument suggesting that (re)distributional process of the value in a society should be sensitive to the individual's responsibility. This inevitably brings forth that individuals' choices/decisions leading them to act in a particular way during their course of life should be taken into account in order to make a morally just assessment concerning whether they deserve any form of public compensation or not. This is to say that if a person's choice/decision to act in a particular way has resulted with an unlucky outcome (e.g. an undesirable consequence, *viz.* poverty as a form of disadvantage) and if this choice/decision of her/him was not under this person's control (e.g. the choice/decision has coercively taken), then the unlucky outcome is considered as a result of the brute luck because of which this person deserves a public compensation through re-distribution of value. However, individual's choice/decision is optional in a sense discussed above, luck egalitarianism advocates that any compensation is not deserved even though the choice/decision has resulted with an unlucky outcome. Below, drawing on various hypothetical as well as actual cases, I will discuss that individuals' choices/decisions that lead them to end up with various unlucky outcomes are most often sociologically formed and associated with their social identities; and thus they have hardly any control upon them, because of which luck egalitarianism needs to develop a more advanced and sociologically-informed account of choice/decision formation.

Sociological formation of choices/decisions: Hypothetical cases

Some hypothetical cases proposed by various scholars in the existing literature can be collected under the category of "victims of bad option luck" which is persuasively illustrated by Anderson (1999, pp.295-302) as a distinct category of luck that is bad, *albeit* optional. Anderson provides a hypothetical, yet highly likely, example of a driver who involves a traffic accident with her/his uninsured car. As a result of the accident, if the driver is severely injured and s/he has negligently chosen not to insure her/himself beforehand through applying an insurance company available in the market, then this person does not deserve any compensation from the public budget within the normative framework of luck egalitarianism. This is primarily because of that severe consequences appeared after the accident could have been avoided (e.g. cost of medical treatment,

individuals. On the other side, sociological perspectives on the issues of (re)distribution and (in)equality turn out insufficient evaluations that are mostly constrained with descriptive attempts mostly concerning identification of diverse nature of inequalities without giving sufficient space on normative political suggestions leading to policy proposals.

or various extra burdens in case of disability after the accident), or at least lessened, through insurances available in the market, yet it was the driver's negligent choice to avoid from insuring her/himself against such foreseeable or possible accidents. Critically approaching to luck egalitarianism, Anderson addresses such cases as luck egalitarianism's "abandonment of negligent victims" and notes that "if the faulty driver survives, but is disabled as a result, society has no obligation to accommodate his disability" (ibid. p.296) within the evaluative logic of luck egalitarianism. Another example that Anderson (ibid.) quotes from Rakowski (2003, p.79) is that "if a citizen of a large and geographically diverse nation like the United States builds his house in a flood plain, or near the San Andreas fault, or in the heart of tornado country, then the risk of flood, earthquake, or crushing winds is one he chooses to bear, since those risks could be all but eliminated by living elsewhere". Under such a case, those who have severely injured, disabled, or disadvantaged do not deserve any public relief or compensation since they could have avoided from these foreseeable consequences by simply choosing to live somewhere else or lessen devastating consequences of natural disasters by insuring themselves, according to luck egalitarians. Another example that can also be a justification of non-compensation by the proponents of luck egalitarianism is patients who suffer from diseases occurred due to regular smoking habits (see Ekmekçi and Arda, 2015, p.249). Since the well-known severe chronic diseases resulted from such habits, *viz.* regular smoking, could have been avoided from, addicted individuals of such habits can be categorised as those who are victims of bad option luck and thus do not deserve any compensation (e.g. public health reliefs/treatments). Under such circumstances, luck egalitarianism justifies non-compensation of individuals' severe conditions, or disadvantages, based on the argument that these undesirable consequences are foreseeable, or predictable. It is this predictability based on which luck egalitarianism suggests to consider suffering people as those who are negligent and do not deserve any compensation.

On the other hand, predictability of potential undesired outcomes emerging in relation to individuals' choices/decisions, in other words foreseeability of bad option luck, cannot be a sufficiently plausible reasoning to justify non-compensation on its own. This is because of that even individuals' choices/decisions demonstrate a characteristic of negligence, they can still be deliberately or intentionally crafted ones that appear as a result of a particular form of implicit coercion associated with individuals' sociological characteristics such as socio-economic class, gender, ethnicity, age, political identity or religiosity. This is to say that, for example, non-compensation of undesired consequences of a traffic accident can only be justified so long as, not only availability of insurances in the market or predictability of an accident in flow of everyday life, but also individuals' ability to economically afford such insurances. This means that individual's given socio-economic position in his/her community's stratification structure can play an implicit role of economic coercion that leads her/him to deliberately choose avoiding from insuring⁹ her/himself against potential accidents. Under such a condition, individuals whose socio-economic statuses coerce them avoiding from taking prudent decisions cannot be addressed as negligent ones who do not deserve any public compensation because of being faulty drivers. Similarly, citizens who decide/choose to keep living in a geographical location known as an earthquake zone or a flood way even though they have been informed about dangers of living in that area cannot be considered as victims of bad option luck after such a catastrophe occurs. Neither availability of information concerning the danger of living in that area or availability of insurances against natural disasters in the market nor predictability of such natural disasters can justify non-compensation of these individual's disadvantage on their own after an earthquake or flood has happened. This is because individuals whose socio-economic statuses play a coercive role in choosing to remain in earthquake zone or flood way cannot be

⁹ Dworkin emphasizes economically feasible insurance policies (Dworkin, 2000, pp.76-77 quoted from Otsuka, 2002, p.43). Yet, "economically feasible insurance" is quite ambiguous concept which does not tell much how class-based choices/decisions should conceptually be evaluated within the normative framework of his proposal before the compensatory process takes place. Besides, even though people's economic status, or income level, allows them to buy insurances against, say, undesired outcomes of "catastrophes" or "blindness" (see Dworkin, 2000, p.74 and p.76), they may still deliberately avoid from buying these "economically feasible" insurances due to various other sociological factors, for example, by believing that blindness and/or earthquake are an unavoidable "destiny" or "God's will" in line with their religious or cultural beliefs.

addressed as those who negligently decide/choose keeping to live in these areas even though there are geographical locations available to live in their country or they have previously been informed about dangers of living in that earthquake zone and flood way.

This reflexive perspective upon the hypothetical cases provided by various political philosophers in the existing literature moves beyond simply addressing a shortfall of the normative argument of luck egalitarianism that demands individuals taking the responsibility of their choices/decisions. Referring to luck egalitarianism's vaguely and loosely-crafted conception of individual's responsibility, it calls for a more advanced account of keeping individuals' responsible of their choices/decisions, and claims that individuals cannot be kept responsible of their choices/decisions only based on availability of varied options that could have supposedly been chosen as well as predictability of potential outcomes of a choice/decision. Though, it suggests that individuals' sociological characteristics, *viz.* socio-economic class, that lead her/him to make a particular choice/decision should also be involved in assessing whether s/he should be considered as a fully and exclusively responsible agent of the choice/decision taken. Such an invitation for sociological inquiry of individual's responsibility should aim to scrutinize not only explicit forms of coercion (e.g. non-availability of other options, lack of information concerning potential undesired consequences) leading individuals to act in a particular way, but also structural forms of coercion (e.g. choosing an option due to a social norm, socio-economic class, ethnicity, age and so forth) that implicitly lead individuals to act in a way resulting with undesired as well as disadvantaging consequences. This perspective requires luck egalitarians to develop an account of sociological formation of individuals' choices/decisions in a way that primarily explores and scrutinizes how social backgrounds and characteristics of individuals play a role of forming, altering and influencing their choices/decisions in relation to given economic, institutional, political and cultural structures of their milieu upon which individuals have hardly a control. Otherwise, scrutinizing individual's choices/decisions in a way detached from their socio-economic statuses/classes, institutional contexts, political relations as well as cultural atmospheres and thus constraining evaluative reflections only with the availability of other options and predictability of potential outcomes could be a pattern of methodological inquiry assuming individuals as beings existing/living spatially detached from time and place. Thus, an explicit need appears here as that the normative perspective of luck egalitarianism that has primarily been developed by political philosophers ought to be developed in a more comprehensive and closer relation with discipline of sociology in order to sharpen both analytical and conceptual textures of its moral arguments.

Sociological formation of choices/decisions: Actual cases

However, the argument underlining that, in the normative framework of luck egalitarianism, individuals' choices/decisions should sociologically be scrutinized to make a morally just assessment regarding (non)compensation¹⁰ of a disadvantage is in here reflexively addressed based on hypothetical, *albeit* highly likely, cases. Consequently, it may plausibly raise concerns critically stressing that both the primary proposal of luck egalitarianism as well as the reflexive sociological argument need for further scholarly investigation underpinned by actual empirical evidences. Even though luck egalitarianism is a relatively new normative proposal *vis-à-vis* some other mainstream theories of social justice (e.g. entitlement-based libertarian theory of justice or Rawlsian justice as fairness), and thus empirical sociological research exploring its strengths and shortfalls is limited, some factual evidences that are particularly associated with individuals' choices/decisions can still be pointed out to interpretatively reflect on the normative argument of luck egalitarianism.

As a factual issue of modern industrial societies, obesity that "provides one of the best examples of the process of social influence" on our choices (Horowitz and Jennings, 2018, p.393) may at first sight be seen as an undesired consequence appeared due to negligent choices of excessive eating habits of feckless individuals.

¹⁰ Politically speaking, the assessment refers here to a decision-making process of the political authority concerning whether a re-distribution policy of value is needed in order to arrive a more just society.

Considering that (1) some other options different from processed junky foods causing obesity are available in the market and individuals' can choose these healthier options as well as (2) long-term harmful effects of excessive eating habits of such junky foods are known, a luck egalitarian approach can claim that obesity is a result of a negligent choice of individuals and thus it is a consequence of the option luck, *albeit* bad, because of which those who are obese do not deserve any compensation through a re-distribution policy of public authority (e.g. public health support against the obesity). Such a view underlining individual's responsibility in choosing healthier foods and avoiding from obesity are, however, quite narrowly conceived view regarding individual's choices/decisions, which is based on a conception portraying individual as an actor who can decide and act independently from influences of social structure involving various forms of social and economic relations, institutional regulations, legal arrangements and as forth. Factual empirical evidences, on the other hand, demonstrate that social relations play a non-negligible role in individuals' becoming victims of obesity. Quoting from Christakis and Fowler (2007), Smith and Christakis (2008, p.412) point out an empirical finding, for example, that a person likelihood of becoming obese is not independent from whether her/his social contacts became obese in past. In fact, social networks and relations play quite a determining role, in not only whether individuals likely to be obese or not, but generally individuals' decisions toward healthy life-style. To illustrate, Berkman and Glass (2000, pp.145-149) extensively discuss on how social networks affect individuals' health and identify five mechanisms through which social networks become influential on individuals' health as follows: social support, social influence, social engagement, person-to-person contact, and access to material resources. These demonstrate that individuals' choices/decisions in food selection and consumption are not immune to influences of various sociological factors which are way much beyond their own control; and this argumentatively leads us to claim that unlucky consequences (e.g. obesity) of such choices/decisions (e.g. excessive eating habits of processed junky foods) cannot justify non-compensation.

One another actual case supporting this critical argument against vaguely formed normative proposal of luck egalitarianism can be given from the factual case of individuals' adaptation to the obligatory regulations, such as mask use in public spheres, applied during the Covid-19 pandemic. Quoting from Yılmaz (2011), Garan *et. al.* (2021, p.96) underlines positive correlation between individuals' tendency to take a high risk and poverty; and based on an empirical data collected during the pandemic from a sample of 2515 individuals from economically diverse social strata, researchers address that compliance to use of mask is lowest among those economically the lowest income quartile in society. In addition, researchers also stress that those who have economic difficulty to access mask also ignore the mask and rules for social distancing (*ibid.* p.97). More strikingly, Bozkurt *et. al.* (2023, p.62) demonstrate that sociological factors involving age, gender, household income, political view and religious involvement are significant predictors of hesitating from use of vaccine in a recent research concluded with empirical data involving 4004 individuals. As an explicit empirical finding, these also underpin the argument that individuals' choices/decisions in acting a particular way is associated with various sociological factors upon which they have hardly a significant control. Thus, luck egalitarianism that suggests us to take individuals' responsibility into account and invites us to make assessment on (non)compensation based on their choices/decisions in the distributional process need to recognize how various sociological factors influence these choices/decisions so long as it aims to be a comprehensive evaluative framework that is alternatively a more insightful and a less ambiguous perspective than other competing theories of the just society.

Two Implications of Recognizing Sociological Formation of Individual's Choice/Decision

As addressed above, luck egalitarianism play a mediating role between anti-egalitarian perspectives that are against re-distribution of initial distribution of value and egalitarian perspectives that advocate re-distribution of initial distribution through an emphasis upon significance of individuals' responsibility evaluated based on what they choose/decide prior to re-distribution. In this evaluation, it develops an authentic conceptual

framework that involves two antagonist forms of individual's luck, namely brute luck and option luck, and suggests to arrange distributional process in a way that primarily aims to remove unlucky consequences (e.g. various forms of disadvantage such as poverty) of individual's choices/decisions demonstrating quality of the brute luck, but not the option luck identified with qualities of being deliberate, predictable and avoidable. However, as it is argued and claimed above, luck egalitarianism as a normative perspective that has primarily developed and advanced within the field of political philosophy needs to recognize sociological formation of individuals' choices/decisions that are deeply ingrained in individual's various sociological characteristics.

Beyond being a more insightful and less ambiguous approach of the just society, recognizing sociological formation of individuals' choices/decisions brings forth two substantial opportunities for luck egalitarianism. In other words, there are two positive implications which can be identified in relation to the recognition of sociologically-formed characteristics of individuals choices/decisions.

Saving luck egalitarianism from being a means of exclusionary right-wing justification

The first one is a political implication saving luck egalitarianism from turning into an approach instrumentally utilized by the right-wing exclusionary political perspectives with the purpose of underpinning moral justifications of anti-egalitarian policies. As noted above with reference to a leading political philosopher, namely Cohen (1989, p.933; see also Barry, 2008, p.137), luck egalitarianism borrows the most powerful tool from the arsenal of anti-egalitarian political stances through its emphasis on individual's responsibility and draws upon it to morally justify egalitarian re-distributional policies. Yet, its use of individual's responsibility that is evaluated based on certain qualities of individual's choices/decisions (*viz.* being deliberate and its outcomes are predictable as well as avoidable) remains too narrow and can easily be turned into a means for moral justification of anti-egalitarian policies. To illustrate, addressing availability of insurances in the market for traffic accidents and natural catastrophes such as earthquake and predictability of such events, luck egalitarianism can easily turn into a perspective advocating economically disadvantaged people's deliberate choices/decisions of not buying these insurances as a reason to justify non-compensation. Thus, it can turn into a means utilised to refuse re-distributive policies. However, exploring sociological background of such deliberate choices/decisions of individuals and thus addressing explicit (e.g. economic status – affordability of such insurances by poor) or implicit (e.g. religious/cultural values – having a belief that these accidents are one's destiny or God's will) coercive reasons behind these choices/decisions, luck egalitarianism can be a perspective aligning with re-distributive policies. Similarly, ignoring influences of peer-groups on a person's habits or rise of processed food industry in modern societies which are structural reasons influencing individuals choices/decisions in various ways, luck egalitarianism can easily turn into a means of moral justification for refusing health support policies targeting obese people by claiming that information concerning causes of obesity is available and the risk of obesity can be foreseen. Thus, a right-wing anti-egalitarian political position can make use of luck egalitarianism to refuse re-distributive policies such as free-health care for obesity. The same argument can also be put forth in relation to actual case concerning influences of age, gender, household income, political view and religious involvement on individuals' choices/decisions about vaccination, mask use and adaptation to preventative regulations during the pandemic. Briefly saying, engaging with a sociological account concerning formation of individuals' choices/decisions with the purpose of evaluating their responsibility helps to save luck egalitarianism from turning into an excessively exclusionary right-wing and anti-egalitarian normative perspective that can instrumentally be utilised to morally refuse re-distributive policies, let alone its role playing a mediating role between anti-egalitarian and egalitarian political stances.

Opening up a space for egalitarian social policies and a moral underpinning for them

Secondly, related with its political implication above, broadening the perspective toward sociological formation of individuals' choices/decisions brings forth a substantial opportunity for luck egalitarianism to engage with social policies. It should first need to be noted that the objective of establishing a social structure that is

configured with economically, politically and institutionally just relations and thus aligns with principles of social justice is explicitly referred in definitions of social policy (see Güven, 1997, p.11; Sunal, 2011, p.285; Gülmez, 2017, p.14; Altan, 2021, p.22) as well as in relation to issues associated with it (see Alper, 2000, p.137; Bozkurt, 2000, p.188; Güloğlu, 2000, p.223; Ören, 2013, p.28), because of which social justice is iteratively addressed as one of the central aspects of social policy discipline. Yet, most of these definitions does not explicitly underlines that social policies in essence align with a particular understanding of social justice, *viz.* egalitarian models, but not with others such as libertarian or utilitarian models of just society. In this regard, luck egalitarianism as a hybrid model that takes both libertarian concerns (e.g. individual's responsibility and choice) and egalitarian ideals (e.g. compensation of the brute luck) into account can be considered as model of social justice that does not straightforwardly align with social policies. However, as noted above, recognition of sociological formation of individual's choices/decisions plays a role in saving luck egalitarianism from leaning toward exclusionary anti-egalitarian normative perspectives which are in essence against redistributive social policies. This is to say that recognition of sociological formation of individuals' choices/decisions also serves to inhibit rise of moral justifications of anti-egalitarian positions identifying undesired outcomes as consequences of individuals' responsibility. This inescapably opens up a space for reclaiming egalitarian social policies by disadvantaged social classes and identities. Thus, playing a role of saving luck egalitarianism from falling into an alliance with anti-egalitarian exclusionary positions, recognition of sociological formation of individuals' choices/decisions can indirectly be helpful for moral justification of egalitarian social policies.

Moreover, such a recognition leads us to a point where social policies appear as ethical pre-requisites for applicability of luck egalitarianism as a normative framework governing distributional process. This especially becomes an apparent need as considering that Dworkin applies the conceptual distinction between the brute luck and the option luck "to a world where a number of egalitarian conditions are already in place" (Barry, 2008, p.139). This means that applicability of Dworkin's brute luck and option luck distinction to the distributional process requires at least a certain degree of equality at the initial positions where individuals start their life, which inevitably brings forth a necessity to correct, or at least ameliorate, existing unjust inequalities in modern stratified societies. Without correcting such existing inequalities at the initial positions where individuals start their life, any of their choice/decision cannot be considered as those fully-derived from individuals' free-will and agency. Thus, people cannot be kept responsible about consequences of those choices/decisions that are coercively taken in relation to unequal initial positions where they start their life. This line of reasoning inevitably leads us to a point that since people have no control upon either where (e.g. a child of upper or lower-class family) or as whom (e.g. as a woman or man, black or white) start their life, correcting unjust initial inequalities through various forms of social and public policies appears as a must condition for the applicability of luck egalitarianism. In this regard, social policies that aim to eradicate, or at least lessen, impacts of unequal initial positions on individuals' choices/decisions appear as an ethical pre-requisite for the applicability of luck egalitarianism, which provides another moral justification of social policies when the luck egalitarianism is appropriated by a political authority as a framework governing distributional process within society.

Conclusion

Luck egalitarianism is a relatively new normative perspective aiming to neutralise influence of uncontrollable factors, *viz.* (un)luck, on individuals' opportunities to live a good and affluent life. In doing so, it advocates that individuals cannot be kept responsible for disadvantaged conditions if these conditions are not outcomes of their own choices/decisions. Focusing upon this normative argument, this paper initially identified luck egalitarianism's theoretical claims and its distinct conceptual framework in a way related to foundational debates ongoing in the broad literature of social justice. Following this, it paid a particular attention on

discussing how individual's choices/decisions are formed through their sociological characteristics. Based on various hypothetical and actual cases, this paper then carved out its own arguments that luck egalitarianism's evaluation of individual's responsibility is too vague and it should recognize that individual's choices/decisions are ingrained in their sociological characteristics upon which they have hardly any control. Subsequently, the paper identified two implications of such recognition as saving luck egalitarianism from being an instrument for exclusionary right-wing politics and opening up a space for egalitarian social policies.

It should firstly be noted that inequalities are not necessarily and always miscreant, nor disadvantages emerging from all forms of inequalities. They can be fair and deserved, which is sometimes implicitly and sometimes explicitly pointed out by a number of normative theories of the just society within the existing literature of social justice. On the other hand, not only in the flow of everyday life and discourses of political actors, but also even in a vast number of descriptive researches in economics, sociology and political sciences, inequalities are mostly considered as inherently unfair and undeserved state of beings. However, most theories of the just society acknowledge that some forms of inequalities are both instrumentally necessary and intrinsically good. This is to say that for most theories of justice, the main problem is not about existence of inequalities, but about that if these inequalities emerge under just or fair conditions. This is the primary reason regarding why most theories of social justice are normative perspectives seeking for, not absolute equality in all times and all places, but rather identification of conditions under which inequalities are justified (Arun, 2022, p.1019).

One of such theories of the just society is known as luck egalitarianism which proposes that it is morally not acceptable if various circumstances that are beyond individual's own control, such as luck, lead her/him to experience disadvantage since anyone cannot be kept responsible for circumstances upon which s/he has no power to change. Thus, it explicitly places individual's responsibility at the centre of evaluation in deciding whether inequalities as well as disadvantages that individual experience should be compensated through redistributive policies. However, such a view also inescapably brings forth that in case individuals have control over circumstances that have one way or another led to inequalities and disadvantages, then these inequalities and disadvantages are morally just and deserved; thus they should be preserved. Building upon such an account of individual's (dis)advantage, luck egalitarianism takes a moderate position that partly demonstrates sensitivity to both egalitarian and anti-egalitarian/libertarian concerns of social justice. However, a serious problem arises when an individual's responsibility about consequences of her/his choices/decisions is evaluated based upon these choices/decisions' particular qualities, namely deliberateness of these choices/decisions and predictability as well as avoidability of their potential consequences.

Even though individuals' choices/decisions are deliberate or potential outcomes of these choices/decisions are predictable and avoidable, this does not demonstrate that these choices/decisions are freely made choices/decisions. This is primarily because our choices/decisions are ingrained in our sociologically constructed identities involving social and economic status, gender, ethnicity, age, and so forth. We most of time have hardly a control, or power, to select or cast off these social identities which are yet seminal influential on formation of our choices/decisions that we make in our lives. From choices/decisions that have life-long impacts on our lives, such as selections regarding a particular type of education or occupation, to choices/decisions that have less impactful on our lives, such as selections regarding a particular form of diet or moving to a different location, are either implicitly or explicitly formed in relation to our sociological characteristics. Therefore, as long as luck egalitarianism aims to remove influences of uncontrollable factors, such as luck, on individuals' life chance and advocates to evaluate their responsibility based on their choices/decisions, then it should extend the way that it scrutinizes these choices/decisions in a broader and sociologically-informed manner. This is to say that luck egalitarianism should embrace an account that recognizes sociological formation of individuals' choices/decisions so long as it justifies inequalities and disadvantages that emerge as consequences of freely made choices and decisions. Otherwise, luck

egalitarianism, within its given analytical texture concerning how to evaluate individuals' choices/decisions, can easily turn into a normative perspective that can instrumentally be used to morally justify unfair and undeserved inequalities in line with exclusionary right-wing political positions. Beyond this positive implication that saves it from falling into an alliance with exclusionary right-wing positions, such a recognition is also promising in opening up a space for luck egalitarianism to incorporate with egalitarian social policies which are in fact ethical pre-requisites for application of luck egalitarianism as a distributional model in modern stratified societies.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Amaç

Bireylerin tecrübe ettikleri ve farklı biçimlerde tezahür eden dezavantajlardan sorumlu tutulup tutulamayacaklarına ya da ne derece söz konusu sorumluluğa sahip olduklarına ilişkin sorunsal sosyal adalet literatüründe eşitlikçi ve eşitlikçi olmayan/liberteryen pozisyonlar arasındaki esas tartışma başlıklarından birisidir. Uzunca bir süredir devam eden ilgili tartışmaya hem eşitlikçi hem de eşitlikçi olmayan pozisyonların kimi unsurlarını içererek dahil olan şans eşitlikçiliği yaklaşımı, şans gibi bireyin kendi kontrolü altında olmayan faktörler dolayısıyla ortaya çıkan dezavantajlardan sorumlu tutulamayacağını belirtmekte ve bu dezavantajların tazmin edilmesinde yeniden dağıtımçı politikaları desteklemektedir. Buradan bakıldığında eşitlikçi perspektiflere yaklaştığı görünen şans eşitlikçiliği, söz konusu vurgusuyla dolaylı olarak bireylerin kontrolü altında ve/ya kendi seçim ve kararlarının sonuçları olarak ortaya çıkan dezavantajların hak edilmiş ya da adil dezavantajlar olduğunu da ifade etmiş olmaktadır. Kaba şans ve seçime dayalı şans olmak üzere iki farklı şans tanımının yapıldığı bir kavramsal çerçeve içerisinde bu normatif iddiasını sunan şans eşitlikçiliği yaklaşımında, birey sorumluluğunun göstergesi olarak ise kişilerin verdikleri kararlar ve yaptıkları seçimler işaret edilmektedir. Öte yandan birey seçimleri ve kararlarının analiz çerçevesi şans eşitlikçiliğinin verili yapısı içinde oldukça dar ve muğlak bir biçimde sunulmaktadır. Bireyin aldığı kararı bilinci olarak almış olması, bu kararın potansiyel sonuçlarının öngörülebilmesi ve bu karardan kaçınabilme olanağının var olması gibi üç temel ölçüt, çağdaş toplumlarda birey karar ve seçimlerinin oluşumundaki sosyolojik çeşitliliği yakalamakta yetersiz kalmaktadır. Çalışmanın temel amacı bu noktada ortaya çıkmakta, katmanlaşmış çağdaş endüstri toplumlarında birey seçimleri ile kararların oluşumunda sosyolojik değişkenlerin belirleyiciliğine dikkat çekerek, şans eşitlikçiliğinin değerlendirme çerçevesini söz konusu sosyolojik değişkenleri de dikkate alarak genişletmesi gerektiğinin altını çizmektir.

Tasarım ve Yöntem

Bu çalışma, yukarıda ifade edilen amaç çerçevesinde, disiplinler arası bir inceleme ve tartışmayı gerekli kılmaktadır. Çalışmanın tasarımı siyaset sosyolojisi ve felsefesi disiplinleri ile dağıtıcı adalet kuramlarının normatif önerilerinin birer siyasa olarak uygulaması durumunda kaçınılmaz olarak ihtiyaç duyulan sosyal politika disiplinin kuramsal alanı içerisinde şekillenmiştir. İlk olarak, siyaset felsefesinin dağıtıcı adalet kuramlarına ilişkin literatür içerisinde ortaya çıkan ve bu alandaki temel bakış açılarına eleştirel bir bakış açısıyla temel iddialarını ortaya koyan şans eşitlikçiliği yaklaşımının normatif önerisi ve bu önerinin özgün kavram seti sunulmaktadır. Devamında ise şans eşitlikçiliği yaklaşımının normatif argümanı ve bu argümanın beraberinde getirdiği kavram setinin sınırlılıklarına ilişkin eleştirel bir tartışma sosyoloji disiplinin sosyal yapı ve sosyal çeşitliliğe vurgu yapan bakış açısıyla sürdürülmekte, birey seçim ve kararlarının oluşumunda sosyolojik karakteristiklerin etkisi hipotetik örnekler ve görgül veriler ışığında sunulmaktadır. Son olarak, ilgili örnekler ve sosyolojik verilerle gerekçelendirilen iddianın kaçınılmaz bir sonucu olarak, katmanlaşmış çağdaş endüstri toplumlarının eşitlikçi sosyal politikalara duyduğu ihtiyaç ifade edilmekte ve bu anlamıyla da sosyolojik çeşitliliği tanıyan bir şans eşitlikçiliği anlayışı için yeniden dağıtıcı eşitlikçi sosyal politikaların ahlaki gerekliliği tartışılmaktadır. Çalışmanın disiplinler arası bir tartışma olarak tasarlanmış olması ve şans eşitlikçiliği yaklaşımına kimi görgül veriler ışığında eleştirel bir bakış açısıyla yaklaşması yöntem olarak geleneksel literatür taramasının ötesine geçmeyi gerektirmiştir. Bu çerçevede, şans eşitlikçiliği yaklaşımını tanılayıp, onun temel argümanı ve önerilerini sunmanın ötesinde, farklı disiplinlerin bakış açısı ve güncel bulguları ışığında eleştirel bir tartışma yöntemi izlenmiştir.

Bulgular

Çalışmada dört temel ilişkisel argüman ortaya çıkmıştır. Birincisi, siyaset felsefesinin dağıtıcı adalet kuramları içerisinde ortaya çıkmış olan şans eşitlikçiliği yaklaşımının bireylerin tecrübe edilen dezavantajlara dönük sorumluluğunu değerlendirme ölçütleri verili hâlde oldukça muğlaktır. İkinci olarak, birey seçim ve kararlarının oluşumunda sosyolojik karakteristiklerin etkisini açıkça görülmektedir. Dolayısıyla, ilgili karakteristikler üzerinde oldukça sınırlı bir kontrole sahip olduğu görülen bireylerin, kendi kontrolleri altında olmayan bu karakteristikler üzerinden şekillenen seçim ve kararları da özgürce verilen kararlar değildir. Bu sebeple, şans eşitlikçiliği yaklaşımı birey seçim ve kararlarının oluşumunda sosyolojik karakteristiklerin etkisini görmezden gelmemelidir. Üçüncü olarak, sosyolojik değişkenlerin birey seçim ve kararları üzerine etkisini tanıyan bir kapsayıcılıkla analitik çerçevesi genişletilen şans eşitlikçiliği yaklaşımının bu vesileyle dışlayıcı sağ siyasal akımlarca birçok eşitsizliği meşrulaştırmak üzere araçsallaştırılmaktan kendisini koruyabilecektir. Son olarak, çağdaş endüstri toplumların katmanlaşmış eşitsiz yapısı içinde birey seçim ve kararlarının sosyolojik olarak kurulduğunu tanımak üzere analitik çerçevesi genişletilen şans eşitlikçiliği yaklaşımı, kaçınılmaz olarak eşitlikçi sosyal politikalarla daha yakın bir işbirliği kuracak ve bu da sosyal politikaları etik olarak gerekçelendiren kuramsal bir fırsat oluşturacaktır.

Sınırlılıklar

Bu çalışmanın öne çıkan en önemli sınırlılığı birey sorumluluğunu onların seçim ve kararları üzerinden değerlendiren şans eşitlikçiliği yaklaşımının verili analitik çerçevesine dönük ortaya koyulan eleştirinin özgün bir görgül veri setiyle desteklenmemiş olmasıdır. Her ne kadar birey seçim ve kararlarının oluşumuna ilişkin verilen örnekler günlük hayatın çok çeşitli alanlarında daha önce yapılmış görgül verilere dayansa da, çalışmanın ifade ettiği temel argüman özgün bir veri toplama süreci sonrasında değil, fakat literatürde ilgili konuya ilişkin olarak daha önce bulgulanmış görgül verilere dayanarak oluşturulmuştur. Dolayısıyla, birey seçimlerinin ve kararlarının oluşum sürecinde rolü işaret edilen sosyolojik değişkenlerin söz konusu seçim ve kararlara ilişkin etkisini merkeze alan keşfedici bir temel görgül sorgulama halen ihtiyaç olarak önümüzde durmaktadır.

Öneriler

Birey seçim ve kararlarının oluşumuna ilişkin olarak şans eşitlikçiliği kuramını merkeze alarak gerçekleştirilecek özgün bir görgül araştırmanın eksikliği temel sınırlılık olarak yukarıda ifade edilmiştir. Dolayısıyla, bu sınırlılığın giderilmesine dönük tasarlanan görgül bir araştırma öncelikli bir öneri olarak gündeme gelmektedir. Özellikle temel sosyolojik karakteristiklerin, örneğin sosyo-ekonomik statü ve/ya sınıf, toplumsal cinsiyet, etnisite, dini ve siyasal aitlik gibi değişkenlerin, bireylerin hem kısa dönemli hem de uzun dönemli seçimlerini/kararlarını hangi yönlerden ve ne derece etkilemektedir sorusunu merkeze alan bir görgül sorgulama şans eşitlikçiliği yaklaşımının analitik çerçevesinin güçlendirilmesine ve daha kapsayıcı bir değerlendirme aracına dönüşmesine önemli bir katkı sunacaktır. Söz konusu sorgulamanın keşfedici ve tanımlayıcı bir temel araştırma özelliği göstermesi bu çalışmada ortaya atılan argümanın düşünömsel ve yorumlayıcı dayanaklarının görgül olarak tahlil edilmesini de sağlayacaktır. Ayrıca, söz konusu görgül sorgulama dezavantajlara sebep olabilecek birey seçim ve kararlarının oluşumunda belirleyici rol oynayan ilgili sosyolojik değişkenlerin belirlenmesinde de aydınlatıcı olabilecek ve dolayısıyla bu değişkenlerin olumsuz rollerini azaltmak üzere uygulanacak eşitlikçi sosyal politikaların hangi başlıklarda tasarlanması gerektiği konusunda fikirsel bir arka plan da sağlayabilecektir.

Özgün Değer

Bu çalışmanın ortaya koyduğu temel argümanlar ile bu argümanları temellendirmeye dönük olarak sürdürölen tartışmaya ek olarak, çalışmanın metodolojik/epistemolojik bir özgün değeri de bulunmaktadır. Söz konusu özgün değer bu çalışmanın çok disiplinli bir inceleme ve sorgulama üzerine kurulmuş olmasıyla yakından ilişkilidir. Bu çalışma, genel olarak sosyal adalete özel olarak ise dağıtıcı adalete ilişkin yapılan akademik tartışmaların çok disiplinli bir bakış açısından sürdürölmemesinden doğan temel bir eksikliği dolaylı olarak işaret etmektedir. Sadece siyaset felsefesinin aşkın ve evrensel ahlaki ilkelerine dayanan değer dağıtım modelleri gerçek dünyanın sosyolojik çeşitliliği karşısında adaletsizlik olarak yorumlanabilecek anomaliler üretebilmektedir. Öte yandan, daha çok eşitsizlikleri ve dezavantajları tanımlama alanına sıkışmış olan sosyolojik çözümler de bu eşitsizlik ve dezavantajları aşmaya dönük normatif, siyasal, ilkesel önerilerden uzaklaşmış durumdadır. Dolayısıyla, söz konusu disiplinleri birleştiren ve sosyal adalete ilişkin tartışmaları ilgili disiplinlerin özgün katkılarıyla devam ettiren tartışmalar metodolojik/epistemolojik olarak da bir ihtiyaç olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu çerçevede çalışma, şans eşitlikçiliği bağlamında, siyaset felsefesinin ve sosyolojinin özgün bakış açılarını bütünleştiren ve değerlendirmesini böylesi bir epistemolojik arka plan üzerine kuran özgün bir içeriğe sahiptir.

Araştırmacı Katkısı: M. Onur ARUN (%100).