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The Effectiveness of Welfare Benefits on the Quality of Life: The United Kingdom

Sosyal Yardımların Yaşam Kalitesine Etkisi: Birleşik Krallık Örneği

Arş. Gör. Zeynep ACA

Uludağ Üniversitesi, İİBF, acazeynep@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the assesment of living standards to evaluate whether or not the provision of welfare benefits makes a difference to the lives of recipients. Data were collected in the province of Glasgow, in the United Kingdom, between 2015 March and 2016 February, as a part of a project named "The Analysis Of Public Welfare Benefits Efficiency". This article is based on a theoretical approach derived from Amartya Sen's concept of 'functionings' and 'capabilities' and Martha Nussbaum's 'central human functional capabilities list' which comprises -life, bodily health, senses-imagination and thought, emotion, practical reason, affiliation, other species, play, material and political control over one's environment, -which was used to asses wellbeing. This article pays particular attention to the question how far the provision of welfare benefits enables benefit recipients to achieve their capabilities with particular reference to the capabilities of bodily health, senses-imagination and thought, emotions, affiliation, play, and control over one's environment.

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ÖZET

Bu çalışma, sosyal yardımların faydalanıcılarının yaşam kalitesine etkisini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma 2015 Mart-2016 tarihleri arasında Glasgow'da (Birleşik Krallık) yürütülen "Kamu Temelli Sosyal Yardımların Etkinliği Analizi" başlıklı projenin, sosyal yardımların faydalanıcılarının yaşam kalitesine etkisine ilişkin elde edilen bulguları içermektedir. Mülakat tekniğinin kullanıldığı çalışma, Amartya Sen'in 'yapabilirlik' ve 'işlevsellik' kavramları ve Amartya Sen'in teorisinden hareketle Martha Nussbaum tarafından sunulan yapabilirlik listesi çerçevesinde şekillendirilmiştir. Evrensel nitelikteki yapabilirlik listesi; bedensel sağlık, bedensel bütünlük, algılama, hayal etme ve düşünme, duygular, pratik akıl, üyelik, doğal çevre ile kurulan ilişkiler, oyun-eğlence ve kişinin çevresi üzerindeki kontrolü başlıklarını içermektedir. Çalışma, 'özelde' sosyal yardımların sağlanmasının yardımlardan faydalananların bedensel sağlık, algılama-hayal etme ve düşünme, duygular, üyelik, oyun-eğlence ve kişinin çevre üzerindeki kontrolüne ilişkin yapabilirliklerini ne ölçüde başarabildikleri sorusuyla ilgilenmektedir.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this study aims to assess the living standards of the beneficiaries who have welfare benefits. The findings of the study are related to the quality of life of beneficiaries which were obtained from the project entitled "The Analysis of Public Social Assistance Efficiency", conducted in Glasgow, UK, between March 2015 and February 2016 by the researcher. This study was influenced by the theoretical approach derived from Amartya Sen's (1993: 31) concepts of 'functionings' and 'capabilities'. Although, these two concepts seem very close to each other, they are different in respect of meaning. According to A. Sen, 'functionings' represent 'the various things that [a person] ... manages to do or be in leading a life', whereas a person's 'capabilities' reflect 'the alternative combinations of functionings from which a person might choose, and which they might achieve' (Sen, 1993:31).

Functionings include doings and beings which are of value in a person's life. These consist of most elementary ones such as being well-nourished, avoiding preventable diseases etc, and more complex things such as having self-respect, earning the respect of others, and being able to take part in life within society etc. (Sen and Nussbaum, 1993:10). A person's capabilities represent alternative combinations of functionings. Capabilities present a set of vectors of functionings (Sen, 1997a: 200; Sen, 2014:18). In this context, capabilities express the freedom to be able to achieve various types of life and within this context, freedom is at the center of the capability approach (sen, 2006: 49).

On the other hand, if the well-being of a person can be seen in terms of quality of the person's being, the quality of life of a person can be seen as a combination of a range of inter-related functionings (Sen, 2006: 39). In this way, a person's well-being cannot be over seen by functionings and doings when making choices and required decisions (Sen, 2006). From this aspect, the assessment of a person's quality of life has to be related to functionings and capabilities of the person (Sen, 2004b: 63). Although A. Sen did not form any capabilities list based on his theory, Nussbaum constructed a capabilities list with reference to the capability approach.

1. Methodology

This research was conducted in Glasgow (UK). The outlined data were obtained from semi-structured interviews with the beneficiaries. The questions were created based on Nussbaum's capabilities list with reference to Amartya Sen. The study participants were asked to provide information about their reasons for claiming welfare benefits, any difficulties they faced when submitting their claims, their feelings about the experience of applying for welfare benefits, how the provision of welfare benefits had affected the quality of their lives, and how the experience of claiming benefits had affected the quality of their lives. The detailed questions were based around the 'central human functional concept'.

The following methods were used to reach the participants. First, we established informal contact with 4 voluntary organizations: Glasgow Central Citizens Advice Bureau, One Parent Families Scotland, Poverty Alliance and Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland, all of which offer advice and support to people living with poverty. Secondly, other voluntary organizations were asked for their support in this research by sending a copy giving details of the aim of the research via the internet. Finally, the researcher met authorized people by participating in various forums in different voluntary organizations and thereby their support was obtained for this research.

Interviews were conducted on two different foodbanks and at 2 offices of participating voluntary agency, between September and November in 2015. Within this study, total 56 beneficiaries were interviewed, but just 41 interviews were included in these analyses. Out of this 41 interviews 15 women and 27 men, within this age group between 18 and 64 years old (Job Seeker Allowance of 14, Employment Support Allowance of 20, Universal Credit of 1, Income Support of 2, and for of 4 Tax Credit. There were also some people had more than one benefit).

Out of 56 interviews, 14 were excluded for the following reasons: Voluntary withdrawal from interviews or as based on the reason that, some participants did not fully understand the questions and gave answers which did not related to the questions. Each interview lasted approximately 25-30

minutes. The study participants were fully informed about the purposes of the research and all beneficiaries were asked to sign a Consent Form prior to the interview. They were also informed that they had the right to withdraw at any time if they wished. The interviews were recorded with the consent of the participant(s) and then transcribed. The real names of the interviewees were not used in this study. NVIVO 11 Software Programme was used to analyze all the data obtained from those interviews..

2. Research Findings

The capability list, -with reference to A. Sen's approach, -created by Martha Nussbaum was used to evaluate the quality of life of the study participants. In the context of this analysis, the contribution of welfare benefits to people's capabilities were assessed in terms of bodily health, senses, emotions, practical reasons, affiliation, play and control. This assessment revealed no difference in the evaluation of the welfare benefits, between women and men with or without children. Hence, all participants were evaluated generally without separating men from women with or without children.

2.1. Bodily Health

This capability consists of being able to have good health, be well-nourished, have adequate shelter facilities and so on (Nussbaum, 2003: 41).

In the assessment related to the capability of the bodily health of the participants emerged that they faced adversities, especially in respect of the ability to maintain a healthy life. For example, Isabella, who is one of participants, stated that she was facing health problems, because she is thinking about how she can survive in the case of her welfare benefits being cut..

When they stop my benefits when they take money of me they causing me worry how I'm going to pay my bills. Physically and mentally affected me. When you take the money of you and you think how you are going to do it. The rest of money for other bills they don't give money to you they take money of you.it effects mentally and physically because you don't know how to pay your bills [Isabella, age range: 45-54].

Another participant expressed that although he has welfare benefits, he is under stress because of his health conditions as indicated below:

(...) more stressful. You worry before medication if they stall for some reason plus you need pay the rent and bills my benefits is changed there is a DWP take 17 pound every sometimes 10 pound you never know what you are getting [Jack, age range: 55-64].

Another participant emphasized that his welfare benefit had not made any difference to his physical and psychological conditions pre-and post-welfare benefit.

(...) I don't think it has because I'm still the same situation. No it gives no any different it is not really ended different. I'm still in the same situation I was before so it is not really improved my physical or pyschologist idea. If I don't have money, my health is no good so I don't have food to eat I don't have that then you start thinking is so poison rum poison bun is your main desert I mean in the health. No changed any different [Jim, age range: 25-34].

Another participant stated that occasionally his benefit system expectations caused stress as indicated below:

It is causing stress some extent. You have to inform about any changing's circumstances. Especially when your working hours change because I work for agency. My working hours fluctuate. So it always quite stressful because it may end up over paid. You have to pay many back [Calvin, age range: 25-34].

Another participant also stressed that the benefit system procedures and expectations created pressures. His statement:

Yeah the way I am stressed. I come here to signing on every fort night looking for a work. I don't know how to use computer and looking for a job, affecting me my leg, making my life much harder [Nick, age range: 35-44].

Another participant stated that as he was destitute, it was not possible to maintain a healthy life on his current benefits, as indicated below:

I don't think it is enough to live on for fort night i m getting at the moment. Because I don't get fare paid for my hospital appointment so it is a bit of struggle [Oliver, age range: 45-54].

With an Aristotelian vision, A. Sen emphasized the presence or absence of the deprivation of freedom for a person's quality of life. For example, income and assets are important with respect to general purpose means which can allow a person to lead a life which is worth living (Sen, 2004a: 28). If we see life as a set of doings and beings, the evaluation of quality of life means the assessment of functionings and capabilities which leads us to assess far beyond values of income and assets, because income and assets are just tools for doings and beings in the assessment of a person's functionings and capabilities (Sen, 2003: 43-44). In this context, when a person's capability is identified as the opportunity to achieve valuable combinations of her/his functionings, it enables us to distinguish between two things: 1) A person capable of doing things which are worthwhile in her/his life. 2) She/ he is able to hold the means which enable his/ her to do things she/he would like to do. If we focus on the latter, the capability approach resists excessive focalization on means (Sen, 2005: 153). In this aspect, A. Sen also evaluated a person's quality of life far beyond the ordinary view which are basic needs (such as well-nourished, etc) and the importance of goods and services in human life which are necessary. As stated above, A. Sen, with this view underlined the contributions of means in a person's quality of life rather than the existence of means. This view does not deny the importance of means, but implies focus on the impact of means on a person's capabilities, and in this study, the means is welfare benefits (Sen, 1997b: 219; Sen, 2014: 6). A. Sen also indicated that in the evaluation of a person's well-being with regard to the contribution of means to a person's functionings and capabilities, interpersonal differences and different conditions of people should be considered (Sen, 2004a: 88). From this point of view of the evaluation of welfare benefits, it can be argued that welfare benefits are not sufficient to enable beneficiaries to be able to achieve bodily health capability.

2.2. Senses Imagination, And Thought

This capability can be defined as a person being able to use the senses, to be able to imagine, to be able to think, to be able to provide empathy-and to do these things in a "truly human way". It is also the ability to use imagination and thought with respect to experiences, which could be pleasurable experiences and the avoidance of unpleasantness and pain (Nussbaum, 2006: 58).

The conditions of a person affect the opinions that the person has in connection with his/ her experiences. For example, Emma who was the only university student among the 41 beneficiaries involved in the study proved that she could judge her thought in connection with her experiences by the following statement:

I think I a lot people feel quite embarrassed but I don't feel embarrassed. Because I think everyone should be titled to them, I think there is some stigma, hmm but hmm I understand the reason why i need to claim benefits-because there aren't a lot of jobs and because we just really low, so we need have extra benefit to support the income. So I think some people are quite embarrassed but i am not [Emma, 25-34].

On the other hand, other participants taking part in this research expressed that the application of welfare benefits was not a generally good experience for them, and was also a source of unhappiness. Examples are shown below:

It's no good because it is no much, and sometime you have struggle, because I have got kids, they demands some stuff like they needed. They are kinda I cannot afford to do for everything for them. That's really difficult. Yeah it is really hard. I think if I go to time job, my family go around us totally different. If you don't have a family around in this country, it is really difficult. That is really hard [Sofia, age range: 25-34].

Another participant complained that the procedure of the benefit system required too much paper work.

Rubbish that is rubbish benefits are absolutely rubbish. (...) A lot. I got so angry and frustrated. I can not get through them. (...) It made a worse this kind of claiming benefit made my health worse work [Daniel, age range: 45-54].

Another participant stated that he felt ashamed of being on welfare benefit. His statement was as follows:

I have been ashamed. I was a good worker at work [Douglas, age range: 35-44].

Another participant expressed that he would rather work but she could not because of health problems.

I am not happy, you know. Because I want to work. I prefer work hard [Eva, age range: 25-34].

A. Sen was interested in what individuals can or cannot do and stressed the significance of sovereignty of their conditions in the words of K. Marx, instead of dominance of conditions and chance on individuals (Sen, 1983: 754). A. Sen regarded individuals as active agents, and not only emphasized the positive aspect of freedom by locating freedom in the center of the capability approach (Sen, 1997c: 316) but also by allowing individuals to avoid becoming passive recipients of social arrangements (Sen, 2004a: 15). In this context, individuals living in an institutional world are dictated by institutions. In this respect, institutions contribute not only to the freedoms of individuals, but also provide a contribution with the roles they play (Sen, 2004a: 200). Consequently, the assessment of institutions has to be in respect of their roles and contributions to freedoms. On the other hand, the concepts of individual justice and fairness affect the way of using the freedoms of individuals who are dependent on social institutions and especially the perception of problems and solutions together (Sen, 2004a: 49-50). It can be said that generally the participants in this study were not able to achieve this capability by taking this into consideration in the analysis and the evaluation of public policies also needs to be considered in these different connections.

2.3. Emotions

This capability expresses a person's ability to be interested in things and individuals outside herself/himself who love and care for him/her, and to grieve at their absence. For a person's emotional development, the avoidance of stress and fear is also necessary (Nussbaum, 2000:79).

Some participants in this research mentioned that they could not show sufficient care for their family. For example, one participant stated that he could not live together with his children because of his own conditions.

By the time you pay my electricity and it doesn't leave me a much that's why I don't have my children beside me [Henry, age range: 45-54].

Another participant also expressed that he could not support his family sufficiently and this situation caused him great stress.

(...) it is more stressed out of my two kids. i cannot support a family. it stresses out .[Antony , age range: 18-24].

Some other participants had the same views, one of which was as follows:

Sometimes you can get down and upset because you can not take grandkids. (...) You can not do what you wanna do i think its a lot people know if you are prison you wanna get better off you can get sky you can get electricity and gas. (...) No I'm not happier. You don't exist you just surviving day by day. You can not buy per shoes per trousers something [George, age range: 55-64].

However, as indicated above, this capability also includes the emotional development of a person, which may be prevented because of stress and the emotional stress of others. In this context, a participant stated that he faces pressure within his senses because of problems arising from the pressures caused by the system.

Well not so much physical but psychological. As i said before being on benefits it is just very depressing. To going from working and being independent and being in a situation where your having to be accountable to the department so worked for a pension and having to going to the job

center and signing on every 2 weeks whether it is convenient for you or not. It is just emotionally draining and sometimes stressful it is also stressful in a sense that the benefits you are getting is never enough to cover your rent and your utilities so you are always constantly stressed about juggling your finance and meeting those demands so from that point of view it is stressful and because i am already suffering from psychological and mental disorder that is just added pressure that i could do without [Tom, age range: 45-54].

Another participant explained that he felt pressures because of his health conditions and insufficient welfare benefit.

Physically I cannot afford to buy food I can not. Psychologically strain on especially when I accelerated my illness I have been suicidal because of hard decision. I was surviving for 44 pounds a week. It was impossible if there was no foodbanks. I would take off my life. (...) I completely don't have enough to survive. Psychologically it really affected me, affects me physically because I can not afford to proper food [Bill, age range: 55-64].

As emphasized above, the capability approach of A. Sen is interested in what individuals can or cannot do (Sen, 1983: 754), which is why A. Sen locates freedoms at the center of the capability approach. With this view in mind, the capability approach can be read as a process of expanding the real freedoms of individuals. Within the capability approach, the extension of freedoms is the first main objective and a primary tool. If freedom takes this kind of approach, it means that the constitutive and the instrumental role of freedom is located in the capability approach. The constitutive role is an important enhancement of the individual's life (Sen, 2004a: 55-56), and the capability approach contains both elementary freedoms (such as good nourishment, avoiding starvation and preventable disease, etc) and others (such as literacy, calculation etc.) (Nussbaum and Sen, 1993: 10). The instrumental role of freedom can be defined as various types of freedoms influencing each other respectively in alimentation and improvements (Sen, 2004a: 57). However, A. Sen puts the individual's differences and social and natural conditions into place by locating freedom at the center of the capability approach (Sen, 1998a: 278).

In this context, the development of individual capacities becomes inevitable in the achievement of emotional capability and others, so then social, political and economic adjustments are put into practice by considering the differences and instrumental roles of individuals in different types of freedoms (Sen, 2004a: 76).

2.4. Practical Reason

To be able to demonstrate a good practice and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life (Nussbaum, 2003:41).

When the participants' opinions about their life planning are analyzed, it can be seen that participants were not confident about their future, and this is apparent from their statements about daily life.

Hmm yeah sometimes I'm a bit more secure about my income is slight more secure in the short term but I would it a bit in a long term because it is becoming more difficult and so I know that some benefits I'm on will be harder for me to qualify within the coming years so I hope not be on benefits for long terms so I think it will be harder for the people's future [Emma, age range: 25-34].

One participant stated that she constantly worried about her future. Her statement was as follows:

If I say psychologically fear of what is gonna happen. It gives me concern. Makes me want to look for a job because I don't know what happen tomorrow [Chloe, age range: 35-44].

Another participant mentioned that she could not plan her future as stated below:

(...) this time for future again plan is no, just a week or 2 week i need a good health and money and enjoy sometimes with holiday and vacation benefit isn't enough for these things. Another life i need with my friend we start to job and I need that this time I can not for short benefit is good. Not for full time [Jessica, age range: 25-34].

Some other participants also pointed out that they could only plan one day at a time. For example, Alan, Simon and Erica expressed the same opinion as the previous participants:

In some circumstances, I would avoid my stress not enough to survive more than it is little bit good I can survive you know normal. It is not good enough to survive only taking this benefits it is not enough. (...) actually benefit isn't good for live or survive. I need to find job and live my life my own this benefits for those people they may help them they help me until I get a job to rely on foodbank for sometimes until I find a job. You can buy some food even it is not enough to work for the transport and other facilities it is not enough [Alan, age range: 25-34].

I have got nothing to say about it. Keeps me alive [Simon, age range: 35-44].

(...) you are on benefits. You don't get enough to live on never enough. They are trying to put you down again down again constantly worry. How you going to survive? [Erica, age range: 45-54].

In the light of this available data, it becomes apparent that beneficiaries are not in the position to work towards a future, in other words, in their circumstances they do not have the ability to plan their future. At this point, the argument can be presented that an individual's interests and problems should be entirely their responsibility. However, A. Sen stated that each elementary freedom which individuals use to fulfill their responsibilities is shaped depending on the environmental, social and personal conditions (Sen, 2004a: 382). In this context, freedoms become an inevitable requirement of social support mechanisms and the capabilities which individuals have actually depend on the nature of social arrangements which can be of vital importance for the individual's freedoms (Sen, 2004a:388). If a person is deprived of capabilities and elementary freedoms to take any action, then the person cannot be responsible for any action. Therefore, to talk about responsibility, we have to consider whether or not the person has the chance of free movement. In this aspect, A. Sen asserted that for individuals to be able to act responsibly, the state should give more choice to individuals and provide opportunities for people to make important decisions for themselves (Sen, 2004: 383).

2.5. Affiliation

2.5.1. Friendship

This capability is defined as being able to live with and interact with other people, to empathize and show concern for others, and to take part in a diverse range of forms of social integration. Being able to imagine the situation of other human beings reflects various forms of social integration (Nussbaum, 2003: 41-42).

The analysis of this capability indicated that participants generally could not achieve social integration with others. For example, Christopher stated that he could not participate in social activities and this affected his health.

(...) my psychological health is not good because I couldn't socialize and keep myself busy. I couldn't keep myself busy isolation and not socializing and not work all day affects my psychological side. Physically I didn't affect me physically but psychological because no feeling I'm not contributing the society and I would feel myself not doing much. (...) I wouldn't say not improve physical side was there already before I claim psychologically side definitely became worse because I would rather be no isolated and socializing and I would rather be contributing. Not being part of society money comes in you just get enough to support yourself sometimes. It is not enough to support yourself it is not good way in my opinion [Christopher, age range: 35-44].

Another participant expressed that her life was far removed from socializing, and foodbanks were the only places where she was able to socialize with others. Her statement was as follows:

I say it is in the middle. Just wee bit helps. I'm trying to sort out my benefits at the moment. I say it is more stressful because I don't have enough money to do anything rent

and I can not do anything. I can not go out and I just stay in the house. All the places come to me as a mission. (...) How can you see benefit improve your life? Do you think people have social life to work? People should work. Of course it can make your life better live in a social. There are no enough jobs to people. If there is a job I would take it because there is no started live in a social. (...) I'm here for every fortnight (I'm in and out in and out [Isabella, age range: 45-54].

Bill had the same view, as shown below:

I can put food in my house. That is it. Sometimes i can go without. No I just I cannot. I have been in the pictures for 5 years. My ex-wife is very understanding. She respects me. It is very difficult. I have .my social out is coming here and looking for information [Bill, age range: 55-64].

Another participant stated that with his current life it was not worth socializing.

Socializing is quite different. I just spent money on electricity and gas. Sometimes toiletries there is nothing reliable socialize with [Jeff, age range: 25-34].

If functioning is an achievement in the aspect of assessment of a person's life standard, a capability is the ability to achieve. In this context, functionings and capabilities are directly related to life conditions. Functionings include different aspects of various life conditions. Capabilities reflect freedoms which are essential to achieve alternative combinations of functions (Sen, 1988b: 48). From A. Smith's perspective, A. Sen's interpretation is related to living conditions, which can be read as a person being able to participate in social life without shame (Sen, 1988b: 23). On the other hand, if we recollect that a person's capability is a combination of alternative functionings, then if a person would like to live his expected life, he/she must have freedom of choice (Sen, 1982: 10). Hence, A. Sen's approach on justice is based on assessment of the capability. From this point, A. Sen emphasized that it has to be considered whether or not different lives of freedom of choice of a person are really worthwhile, by evaluating the capability based on freedom. That is absolute freedom for A. Sen and the real freedom is determined by the person's capability (Sen, 1990: 115-116). A. Sen also stated an assessment of social justice with respect to elementary freedoms to achieve the individual's expected life (Sen, 2004a:126). From this point, freedom for an individual reflects several choices which an individual has or is able to obtain (Sen, 2008: 274). In this context, extensions of freedoms have two-way interactive relationships. As an individual's freedoms increase, so the individual's life becomes increasingly enriched and unobstructed and this variation in the individual's life enables her/ him to become more integrated in social life by using his/her own will and can both influence the community where she/ he lives and can be influenced by it (Sen, 2004a: 29). Hence, for A. Sen, the individual is an active agent and if an individual has sufficient social opportunities, they can designate their fate effectively and will be able to help each other (Sen, 2004a: 26).

2.5.2. Respect

This can be defined briefly as individuals being able to have sufficient dignity and self-respect (Nussbaum, 2006: 59).

A few participants stated that they had not encountered any unfavorable situations about dignity and self-respect, while others had feelings of self-inadequacy and other participants indicated that they did not get the respect they felt they deserved.

I never felt good about claiming benefits. I feel that myself I am a sponger always a stigma attach to the benefit. You have to what you have to do it [James, age range: 45-54].

One participant expressed that he had experienced some trouble as shown below:

It is shameless when you don't have a support you need a get support. (...) I didn't want to get it. I thought just a little bit embarrassed. I feel a bit down [Arron, age range: 35-44].

Another participant stated her feelings before the application of the benefits as shown below:

(...) you always trying to maintain at dignity and respect and everybody gets dignity and respect. I takes me a lot to 6 weeks to come here to get a food and I was on here on Friday, Wednesday and Thursday. I talked to Rachel and Rachel will get some food sorted. If I didn't come in i don't have any choice. It is not fair to people to use benefits. They are bad that they are driving people like this. It is like this to survive. I understood it [Erica, age range: 45-54].

As indicated above, some participants highlighted that they were not sufficiently respected by society.

(...) you don't get respect. You are just a number. When you are going to tell you away your not allow to use your phone. If there is an emergency there is no phone. You can not drink from bottle or if you are 5 minutes late you get sanctioned [George, age range: 55-64].

Another participant expressed that when she went to a job center, she had the same opinion as that stated above:

When I went job center I hate it because they look on you as you are piece of dirt. Why you getting job? I try to get a job. You know what here a number is if you want to phone. I am getting a job. If you treat as a piece of shit because you haven't got education and you are rubbish [Halen, age range: 45-54].

This particular participant had the same opinion:

Well basically medical board government. Calling me a liar instead of I'm working instead of I'm still receiving chemotherapy. They don't respect me. I'm just a number. (...) Degradation and begging for benefits and calling for a liar. It doesn't improve my situation at all. It treats me like nobody after 30 years paying tax. It is disgusting [Bill, age range: 55-64].

This one was also the same as above:

Yeah sometime they do like in a job center the people like some kind of treating like rubbish they try to push them and talk so rudely and they think we don't do anything and they just try to last week she tried to put me lots of appointments and go through all the things but I already 2 days a week volunteers rest of time. I go to job center women health center to improve my skills 4 or 5 days because I'm busy to go get a job time. They think they always like they are rude some people they are really good some people not that is everywhere [Sofia, age range: 25-34].

As can be seen from the above statements, individuals in need of any welfare benefits have felt embarrassment occasionally. This embarrassment may arise from their self-perspective or how they are treated by others. On the other hand, respect can be seen as a marginal question by policy leaders and can be ignored. However, this issue was not a marginal problem for A. Sen. In this respect, A. Sen's approach is a Rawlsian solution and then Sen stated that self-respect must be seen as fairness in the theory of justice. Therefore, individuals in need of welfare benefits who might face problems with regard to self-respect have to be taken into consideration by politicians (Sen, 2004a: 193), as a requirement that fairness be taken into consideration within the processing of a fair system. In other words, for A. Sen, there is a complementary relationship between individual agency and social arrangements. The significance of social commitments to solve problems from which individuals was also highlighted by A. Sen (Sen, 2004a: 14). With this view, the implementation of social arrangements has to take individual freedoms into consideration..

2.6. Play

To involve in creative activities, entertainments and laughter and son on (Nussbaum, 2003: 42).

In this context, with reference to findings obtained from this research, it can be asserted that, participants hardly or not take part in creative or amusing activity. One of the participants stated that achievement of his play capability was limited. His statement was as follows::

No well the only activities I do occasionally just go walking where I live I live near the canal so I just go walk in the along canal. It is free and it doesn't cost anything and I'm surrounded by nature so I just can get out of the house and go walking and get fresh air get some exercise but if I had to join a gym I wouldn't be able to afford it so I'm on a benefit [Tom, age range: 45-54].

Another participant expressed the same opinions as above:

(...) I just go to town center I just do this. No I don't do anything like that. I don't socialize outside [Caroline, age range: 35-44].

Another participant indicated that he had to give home-made gifts. His statement is below:

Leisure center we can go. I'm going lay center in Coston. If you play like with group of male football table tennis badminton you can manage it for 3 pound each twice in a week. You can manage it. If you wanna learn how to swimming it is very hard. It is just like 42 pounds charge [Lucas, age range: 45-54].

Another participant expressed that he could not display his capability in respect of play.

No can not do things like that because when you get your benefit. You need to pay gas and electric, tv license. (...) it has only helped me to basically live day to day. It is no big money benefit something [George, age range: 55-64].

Another expressed that he needs to achieve play capability mentally, but was not able to due to his circumstances.

Benefit doesn't give you a high quality life. You can not go only once a week if you stay yourself then you have social moral support unless you go to pub. I don't think it gives a high quality of life. Just surviving in a benefits basically [James, age range: 45-54].

One participant stated that he could not afford the play capability, in terms of the money obtained from the benefit system.

No I can not afford to go sitting in a restaurant I can not afford to do these things like that money that I receive I rely on day to day basis. I got my flat but just roof over me the money that I get just useful for social activities some of them doesn't cost you anything enjoyment doesn't exist with me anymore syndrome [Mark, age range: 45-54].

A. Sen also explained the life of individuals with functionings. According to A. Sen, life is alternative combinations of various functionings (Sen, 1982: 10). From this point of view, even though capabilities and functionings are connected with each other, at the same time they are separate from each other. For example, hunger can be the state of a person fasting because of religious beliefs and also the state of another person who suffers from shortage of food but their capabilities cannot be said to be the same. Thus, the capability approach emphasizes that the importance of an individual's life is at his/her own discretion and not a necessity (Sen, 2004a: 108).

Individuals need to have opportunities to choose their desired life (Sen, 2005:155). From this point of view, if freedom offers real opportunities to achieve the valuable things individuals would like to have and if we are interested in the freedom of choice, then we have to consider what choices the individual really has (Sen, 2006: 38). In this context, living standards are considered as the reference to the desired life of the individual. Thus, no matter how freedom is defined, the role of freedom is important in terms of enabling the achievement of valuable things for individuals (this also includes good quality of life) (Sen, 1988a: 270). Hence, A. Sen drew attention to the aspects of 'opportunity aspect' and 'process aspect'. The opportunity aspect of freedom stands for alternative opportunities that individuals have in their life which are seen to be worth taking. The process aspect of freedom refers to the active actions of individuals without any choice enforced by a person or institution- (Sen, 2004c: 10 In this regard, individuals are forced into meeting their elementary needs with their welfare benefits resulting in an absence of choice for the play capability, and this means interference in their free choice. However, from the aspect of the capability approach it is important that individuals can

choose the life which they would like to have and not have a lifestyle forced upon them by necessity (Sen, 2004a:108). Furthermore, A. Sen asserted that the opportunity and process aspect of freedom can be handled within the scope of human rights, and that the denial of the process aspect of freedom can be an infringement of human rights (Sen, 2005:153). From this viewpoint, that an individual does not have the opportunity of free choice can be seen in the context of the violation of human rights..

2.7. Control:

2.7.1. Control Over One's

“Being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others” (Nussbaum, 2006: 59). One of the necessary factors to implement this capability is the existence of instrumental support which enables a person to own property.

When the participants' ideas were evaluated on this capability, it can be seen that welfare beneficiaries have various problems in achieving their capability. For example, some participants stated that they could achieve their capability only on a rather basic level. Stephen expressed how he provided his basic needs as shown below:

I'm grateful what government gave me but not enough to live on because I should get 72 pound a week and i pay 17 pound 10 pence's for this 31 pound for the gas and electric. I come to foodbank and I'm grateful what I'm getting but not enough to live. I'm trying to get by. (...) I don't like taking I feel embracement to come foodbank and here is a rich country and there is a foodbank. Unfortunately I need to come here to survive [Stephen, age range: 55-64].

Another participant also explained that his capability, even at a basic level, depended on the contribution of foodbanks.

I have benefits. Things are okay because I can get the stuff i need then it picks me up and makes me feel better because I have the money at the end. I know it can help me it is about get through my daily basis and the things that I need but when I don't have the benefits no you feel nothing there. When you go to foodbanks that is where they help [Walter, age range: 25-34].

Another participant had almost similar views, as follows:

(...) you think it is improved because you don't have enough money to live on because cost of living is up. I'm size 4 these denims are size 10. This jacket these trousers are so baggy. I'm a size 4, I'm really thin. Electricity and gas buy food buy clothes if it is no coming last week don't get wrong. I don't get drug. I have got methadone, i used depend on my mom so i did it now not depending on because she is no well. She got herself to worry about now. I'm on my own now to depend on. (...) we got 45 pound less than 45 pound a week. To have to enough to live on. Minimum wage is 8 pound if you go look for it comes out 3 pounds a day to live on. What would you get you 3 pound? Nothing at all. Disgrace is disgrace. (...) I never go shopping because I never get enough money because see gas. I put 40 pound for fort night. I put 30 pound for my lights and that leaves me 65 if I buy messages . It doesn't last me for fort nights. You can not buy cereal that is a luxury. I gotta go do a budget and I can not buy this I can not buy that I don't eat breakfast. I just eat dinner as long as I have dinner it is fine [Elaine, age range: 55-64].

From the point of view of the recipients of welfare benefits, they were hardly able to achieve their capability. For example, foodbanks were necessary to provide their fundamental needs. However, A. Sen objected to the idea of the allocation of elementary needs by any charity. According to A. Sen, this capability has to be given to people to enable them to stand on their own feet (Sen, 2004a: 225). With this analysis which A. Sen formulated with the concept of the 'exchange entitlement' and resolved by the 'Entitlement Approach', the ownership of the goods was indicated, if necessary to the

person with control (Sen, 1982: 3-4, 45) On the other hand, if the foodbank element is discarded, the individuals' functionings do not consist of just elementary functionings in the analysis (Sen and Nussbaum, 1993:10; Sen, 2008: 271), and it is therefore revealed that beneficiaries cannot fully achieve this capability. It is clear that what was important for Sen is that individuals can achieve the type of life that is valuable for them. Therefore, the capability approach is considered to be the enhancement of human capabilities (Sen, 2004a: 33). Having more freedoms enables individuals to achieve the valuable things they would like to have to reach worthwhile results, and it is possible to have both equality of opportunity and implementation (Sen, 2004c: 10).

Individual freedom is social output and then enhancement of individual freedoms is realizable only through social arrangements. However, when this is implemented by social arrangements, they are not only acceptable, but also effective. In this context, both the implementation of social arrangements and individual freedoms complement each other (Sen, 2004a: 49).

2.7.2. Work

The control capability also includes a person's ability to look for a job on the basis of equal rights with other people, and the ability of a person's creative aspects to reveal and enter into meaningful relationships with colleagues at work (Nussbaum, 2003: 42).

One of the participants, Kate, stated that she was not aware of what changes she could expect in her life if she had a job. Her statement is indicated below:

To me, if I can get a job. I feel better, you know. Because the stress is going to job center to sign on. The stress look for a job every day, going to interview every day. It is crazy. So I prefer to have a job than claiming this benefit. (...) the benefit I wouldn't say that is something that because you still have to use the way it comes and it goes out. As you receiving it goes to sort bills sort feeding in a clothing. For me if I have a job, I feel better because I don't. The little is giving. You know. it doesn't go a long way. Really, really helping to improve life if you have a job. (...) about all the thing, I would like to add is for a single mom very hard to get a job because of the hours. If the government can provide the system where support single mom because of the children you cannot get full time job even if they do, it doesn't suit around the kids if government can make you of provision to speak to an organization that can help to employed mother consider how to give them a work. It could make the life better and easier because there is why most mothers can not get jobs because of the hours. If the job when the kids are at school and if they can get within the hours it can really help and they can be out of benefit and they can move with their life [Kate, age range: 35-44].

With the same thoughts as Kate, a mother who mentioned that working full time was not possible also expressed that seeking work created pressure on her. Her statement is shown below:

it is really hard for me to go for a full time job because just in case for appointment sometimes I have to go every weekend to the hospital with him and stay with him (she implies her child who has health problems) in the hospital if I'm working full time I cannot do that if I'm going for part time then it is gonna be 9 till 3 or 12, I can not find any job between that time. (...) Same as like every day as like so much stress I have to go online and look through all jobs if i don't have a job going for that job every day. I don't have that opportunity. I just have to go look and that period time sometimes 2 hours sometimes 3 hours look for a job. There is outcome there is no job because I can not go for full time there is every time always thing looking through that is stress [Valeria, age range: 25-34].

Another participant expressed her feelings about not having work as follows:

(...) embarrassment because I prefer to work unfortunately not many positions I cannot do what I normally do my profession because they have business is erupted. (...) to some extend I can afford to feed myself more than it doesn't make my life less stressful, simply

doesn't. The payment I have got minimum amount it is basic survival level money at the end of the day I don't waste money. I am fine [Monica, age range: 35-44].

Another participant stated that he could not achieve control capability as his conditions might become different if he had a job. His statement is below:

It's no good because it is no much, and sometime you have struggle, because I have got kids, they demands some stuff like they needed. They are kinda I cannot afford to do for everything for them. That's really difficult. Yeah it is really hard. I think if I go to time job, my family goes around us totally different [Sofia, age range: 25-34].

As A. Sen consistently pointed out, the most important thing is the capabilities that individuals have. In this context, any individual does not have a job should not be regarded as income deficiency which is compensated by income transfers (Sen, 2004a: 37), because different types of freedoms of individuals are the support of each other and within the relationship (Sen, 2004a: 19). From this aspect, not doing a job may prevent a person from revealing their potential creative abilities to do a particular job. Consequently, free agency contributes to strengthen different types of freedoms. Furthermore, unemployment might cause social exclusion and loss of self-confidence, psychological and physical health problems. Consequently, A. Sen indicated that employment opportunities are a social responsibility and for individuals to lead the life they wish may depend on social and economic opportunities considerably. Nevertheless, making the decision of how to use employment opportunities and the consideration of available options are the responsibilities of individuals (Sen, 2004a:388-389).

Conclusion

This study focused on the measurement of the living standards of recipients of state welfare benefits and aimed to understand whether or not the provision welfare benefits makes a difference to the lives of the recipients with reference to A. Sen's capability approach. From the responses of the study participants, it was determined that individuals experienced difficulties in achieving their capabilities. From this conclusion, it can be claimed that the provision of welfare benefits are ineffective in terms of achieving an individual's capabilities. However, considering that the individual's capabilities are formed by various social arrangements, for the resolution of problems related to an individual's capabilities it can be asserted that social arrangements must be regulated in a controlled way so that they are in harmony with each other, and provide a choice of various lifestyles to individuals.

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