



Hannah Arendt And Amartya Sen On Freedom

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses Arendt and Sen's concept of freedom. The two thinkers discuss this topic in the context of social and political life. The main question that this article addresses is: "What are the similarities and differences between Arendt and Sen on freedom?" Using a critical analysis approach, this article argues that although these two thinkers come from different eras their thoughts on freedom have some agreements and specific differences. Their agreement here points to some similarities, supports and connections between their thoughts whereas the different positions here refer to some specific ideas which is mainly due to some specific or peculiar context of their ideas on freedom. The similarity between the two thinkers is that they indirectly agree that freedom is concerned with the capability or all the possible ways to be and to do, and the absence of repressive policies. Nonetheless, Arendt's reflections on freedom were not in an atmosphere of socio-political emergency marked very seriously poverty, injustice, tyranny, and political pressure. Sen, on the other hand, was precisely in that atmosphere: the problem of welfare, contemporary poverty, injustices, contemporary capitalism.

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini membahas konsep kebebasan menurut Arendt dan Sen. Kedua pemikir tersebut membahas topik ini dalam konteks kehidupan sosial dan politik. Pertanyaan utama yang dibahas dalam artikel ini adalah: "Apa kesamaan dan perbedaan pandangan antara Arendt dan Sen tentang kebebasan?" Dengan menggunakan pendekatan analisis kritis, artikel ini berpendapat bahwa meskipun kedua pemikir ini berasal dari era yang berbeda, pemikiran mereka tentang kebebasan memiliki beberapa kesamaan dan perbedaan khusus. Kesepakatan mereka di sini menunjukkan pada beberapa kesamaan, dukungan, dan hubungan antara pemikiran mereka. Sedangkan posisi yang berbeda di sini mengacu pada beberapa ide spesifik mereka yang terutama disebabkan oleh beberapa konteks spesifik atau khusus dari ide-ide mereka tentang kebebasan. Kesamaan antara kedua pemikir tersebut adalah bahwa mereka secara tidak langsung setuju bahwa kebebasan berkaitan dengan kemampuan atau semua cara yang mungkin untuk menjadi dan melakukan sesuatu, dan tidak adanya kebijakan yang represif. Meskipun demikian, refleksi Arendt tentang kebebasan tidak berada dalam suasana darurat sosial-politik yang ditandai dengan oleh kemiskinan, ketidakadilan, tirani, dan tekanan politik yang sangat serius. Di sisi lain, Sen justru berada dalam suasana itu: masalah kesejahteraan, kemiskinan kontemporer, ketidakadilan, kapitalisme kontemporer.

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PENDAHULUAN

In her work entitled *Between Past and Future*, Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) elaborates the idea of freedom in relation with social and political life. She made three arguments and emphasized a number of important points about the idea of freedom in general. First, there is a connection between politics and freedom. For politics to be possible, freedom is a must, and vice versa.¹ As she states: “action and politics, among other capabilities and potentialities in human life, are the only things of which we could even conceive without at least assuming that freedom exist.”²

Second, by taking inspiration from Kant, she recognizes that freedom is comprised of both positive freedom—the capacity to decide or act in accordance with one's values—and negative freedom, which indicates the lack of external repression. Although it is not stated directly, later in her other work entitled *Human Condition* especially on her thought of Action, she argues that speech and action are the two essential components (of freedom) that determine one's self-realization in the public sphere or social life.³ To put it another way, the existence of all one's actions, politics, capabilities, and potentialities can all be seen as manifestations of freedom. These two components serve as prerequisites for human participation or engagement in social life.

In contrast, Amartya Sen (1933–present) discusses freedom in connection to capability. He distinguishes between two types of freedom: substantive freedom and instrumental freedom. The first freedom refers to primary means required to achieve the substantive one are indicated by instrumental freedom, while instrumental freedom leads to substantive freedom. These two interdependent freedoms make up individual freedom. Sen views freedom as the central idea in his theory of capacity, which encompasses the subject's many options, capabilities, functioning, condition of affairs, and opportunities. To put it another way, freedom in the sense of capability encompasses all of the things that an agent can do and be. Philosophically, freedom refers to the existential capability of human beings themselves to have, live, and practice all of their capabilities (individual agency).⁴

Based on the two views, this article argues that although these two thinkers come from different eras, their thoughts on freedom have some agreements and specific differences. Their agreement here points to some similarities, supports and connections between their thoughts. The different positions here refer to some specific ideas of them which is mainly due to some specific or peculiar context of their ideas on freedom. The similarity here points to the indirect agreements that freedom is concerned with the

¹ Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thoughts* (New York: The Viking Press, 1961), 146.

² Arendt, *Between Past and Future*.

³ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, With an Introduction by Margaret Canovan, Second Edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 175-177.

⁴ Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, (New York: Anchor Books A Division of Random House, Inc., 1999), 3-5. That claim is reflected from this part of the book.

capability or all the possible ways to be and to do and the absence of repressive policies. Arendt and Sen discuss this topic in the context of social and political life.

In light of the two perspectives above, this article argues that, despite coming from distinct historical periods, these two thinkers' ideas on freedom share certain similarities and differ in other ways. While the various perspectives here allude to certain specific beliefs of theirs, primarily because of some particular or peculiar context of their ideas on freedom, their agreement here indicates some commonalities, supports, and links between their thoughts. The resemblance here suggests that freedom is concerned with the absence of oppressive policies and the liberty to be and do in all imaginable ways. Arendt and Sen talk about this subject in relation to politics and society.

However, there are some notable distinctions between the two. They are, of course, come from different historical periods. Their reflections diverge from the socio-political context which serves as both the foreground and the background. Both of them understood that their conception of freedom was inextricably linked to the sociopolitical environment. In contrast to Sen, who was dealing with the issues of welfare, modern poverty, inequities, and capitalism, Arendt's thoughts on freedom were not set in a sociopolitical emergency that was distinguished by tyranny, poverty, and political pressure.⁵

METODE

The main question that this article addresses is: "What are the similarities and differences between Arendt and Sen on freedom?" Answering this question, this article employs a critical analysis approach to the thinking of Arendt and Sen on freedom. This requires an inquiry into books, journal, dan online sources. This article is divided in three parts. The first part is an exposition of Arendt's idea of freedom. The second one elaborates Sen's idea of freedom. The third part discusses the similarities, differences, and contributions of both to each other's thoughts.

DISSCUSSION

Arendt's Understanding of Freedom

Arendt observes that, historically, the concept of freedom was not given much attention, particularly in the tradition of Ancient Greek thought, in contrast to concepts like being, emptiness, etc. This subject was first discussed during the Christian era.⁶ She acknowledges that her broad and prevalent conception of freedom is the one she got from Kant, notwithstanding her exploration of the evolution of this idea from Aristotle to Kant.⁷ She drew attention to the fact that freedom is viewed as an antinomy in Kant's

⁵ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 3-6.

⁶ Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 146-147, 151, 157.

⁷ Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 144.

ideas and is discussed in relation to causation. In her later work entitled *Human Condition*, Arendt indirectly related her views on freedom. And yet, her understanding of freedom is seen quite extensively more in her work entitled *Between Past and Future*, specifically in a chapter on “What Is Freedom.”⁸

As was already mentioned, Arendt’s concept of freedom is connected to three key ideas. *First*, Arendt views freedom from two closely related perspectives—individual and political freedom—even though this is not articulated clearly.⁹ These two domains of freedom are implicitly addressed in its particular method of elaboration. Individual and political freedom in this sense can be divided into two forming structures: negative freedom (liberty)¹⁰ and positive freedom (self-determination).¹¹

According to Arendt, negative liberty, in the context of both political and individual freedom, can only be defined as the lack of any kind of limitations that deprive a person or group of people of their free will and cause them to become depressed. Additionally, the phrase “freedom” in the positive meaning or “self-determination” essentially refers to any event, condition, or circumstance in which people or subjects have the capacity to choose how they want to be perceived.

Arendt’s *second* core idea about freedom is that it is inextricably linked to a person’s political and personal existence. According to Arendt, the concept of freedom is a self-evident fact in both political and everyday life.¹² Arendt specifically stated that freedom is a phenomena in the field of practical reason that is connected to the existence of subjects in the social, public, and political sphere while highlighting the foundation of Kant’s ideas on freedom, which is connected to practical reason.¹³

Arendt concurs that the social and individual spheres are unquestionably linked to freedom.¹⁴ At first, freedom was not viewed as an issue but rather as a commonplace aspect of daily life and a crucial component of both one’s personal and societal political spheres.¹⁵ The essential component of politics, human nature, and the capacity for action is freedom. Sometimes it serves as the rationale for people to coexist in political arenas rather than the explicit goal of political action.¹⁶

Freedom provides political existence with purpose or serves as a prerequisite for political possibility, which it expresses through action.¹⁷ Only when the public sphere

⁸ Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 144-171.

⁹ Sharath Srinivasan, “No Democracy without Justice: Political Freedom in Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach,” *Journal of Human Development* 8, no. 3 (November 2007): 458-464, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14649880701462395>.

¹⁰ Srinivasan, “No Democracy without Justice,” 146, 149, 155, 167.

¹¹ Srinivasan, “No Democracy without Justice,” 151-153.

¹² Srinivasan, “No Democracy without Justice,” 143.

¹³ Srinivasan, “No Democracy without Justice,” 145.

¹⁴ Srinivasan, “No Democracy without Justice”.

¹⁵ Srinivasan, “No Democracy without Justice”.

¹⁶ Srinivasan, “No Democracy without Justice”.

¹⁷ Srinivasan, “No Democracy without Justice”.

is providing the assurance for it can freedom manifest itself in actual political life.¹⁸ When freedom and politics work together, politics will naturally emerge, but when they do not, totalitarianism will take over and all facets of life, including civil liberties and the right to political freedom, will be destroyed.¹⁹

She does, however, distinguish between political and interior freedom. According to her, inner freedom is the area that men enter within themselves to feel free from outside pressure, while political freedom is politically conditioned.²⁰ This is due to the fact that this kind of freedom is associated with a person's internal choice to view different external forces, interactions, and connections as no longer binding him. The sense of freedom being denied can reflect awareness of its existence.²¹

The *third* point relates to Arendt's theory of freedom, namely positive freedom or self-determination, which is basically defined by two fundamental components: speech and action. When action and speech are restricted, freedom cannot be realized, then society and politics will inevitably cease to exist.²² Arendt later referred to these two aspects as two factors that signified the beginning of human being, or existential natality, because they are as fundamental and existential for individuals.²³

Freedom, then, is defined as "calling something into being which did not exist before, was not given before, not as an object of cognition and imagination which could be known."²⁴ This independence is felt through self-talk and solitude rather than in relationships with other people.²⁵ Freedom appears in this place, where there are simply I-can and I-will. Free will refers to the ability to desire, intend, and seek for things in the Christian tradition.²⁶

Throughout human history, freedom was only recognized as a status or requirement for someone to act, relocate, leave their house, go out, and interact with others through words and deeds before it was recognized as a component of thinking and will.²⁷ When an action surpasses its determinants, such as motive and intended objective, it is considered free.²⁸ "Actions need both intellect and will but it springs from principle which inspires it from without."²⁹

Freedom is actualized in an act performed. Arendt notes that, "men are *free*-as distinguished from their possessing the gift of freedom-as long as they act, neither

¹⁸ Srinivasan, "No Democracy without Justice," 149.

¹⁹ Srinivasan, "No Democracy without Justice," 149-156.

²⁰ Srinivasan, "No Democracy without Justice," 146.

²¹ Srinivasan, "No Democracy without Justice," 147.

²² Srinivasan, "No Democracy without Justice," 148-149.

²³ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 177-178; See also Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 166.

²⁴ Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 151, 165.

²⁵ Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 158.

²⁶ Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 157-160.

²⁷ Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 148.

²⁸ Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 151.

²⁹ Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 152.

before nor after, for to *be* free and act are the same.”³⁰ Arendt exemplifies that freedom that appears in action can be seen “in Machiavelli’s concept of *virtue*, the excellence with which man answer the opportunities the world open before him in the guise of *fortuna*.”³¹

For Arendt, as far as humans are capable of acting, this basic capability allows them to realize what is hoped for, even including all its unlimited possibilities and the uniqueness of every man.³² Arendt even claims that, this is based on the fact that, every new birth always bring something unique and new comes to the world.³³ Arendt even relates this until to the moment of natality or birth as the root, source and foundation of the origin or starting point of not only the presence of someone in the world but also the phenomenon of freedom or his primordial ability or capability of being or action itself.³⁴

As previously said, the essence of freedom, which is the capability to do and to be, for Arendt, deals or is fundamentally related to the action which begins from birth. Besides, speech as well is integral part of it and makes the actor becomes distinct in the middle of plurality, or make subject becomes distinct, unique and individual among the equals.³⁵ That is to say that, freedom as capability to be and to do for Arendt primordially signified by the event of natality (primordial action) which stands by or signified by the action and speech interconnectedly which finally becomes the fundamental elements of subject as a new comer in the world (the who of the subject).³⁶ These three manifest the presence of the subject through words and deeds (capability). Speech completes the presence or the revelations of the subject/actor in its existence in the world.³⁷

Further, Arendt sees that the purposes of the operation or manifestation of capability to act both individually and in concert are for self-defence, the pursuit of interest, for the meaning.³⁸ For Arendt, through act and speaking, ‘men show who they are, reveal relatively their unique identity, make appearance in the human world.’³⁹ The disclosure of the subject/actor/doer as a who and what, can be seen through the modes of appearance (what: qualities, gifts, talents, shortcomings) (who: what he says and does).⁴⁰

Thus, Arendt understands freedom as an integral part of personal and political realm. Besides, it points to positive and negative freedom and the possibility of freedom

³⁰ Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 152-153.

³¹ Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 153.

³² Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 178.

³³ Arendt, *The Human Condition*.

³⁴ Arendt, *The Human Condition*.

³⁵ Arendt, *The Human Condition*.

³⁶ Arendt, *The Human Condition*.

³⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*.

³⁸ Arendt, *The Human Condition*.

³⁹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*.

⁴⁰ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 179.

is enabled by speech and action as the basic capabilities for the operation of freedom itself.

Sen's Notion of Capability as Freedom

Amartya Sen's understanding of freedom is found in two important books: *Development as Freedom* and *Freedom, Agency and Wellbeing*. Sen makes several important arguments about freedom in these works. First, Sen's concept of freedom or capability is the current state of affairs in some developed countries that deal with issues of poverty, social injustice, and political liberalism, which has an impact on welfare issues, capitalism, oligarchy, tyrannical government, deprivation, injustice, GNP-Income, economic problems in developing countries, the issue of social exclusion, and African-Americans in the United States.⁴¹ There is a relationship even though Sen's speech on prosperity, freedom, and progress is not quantified by GNP or economic growth.⁴²

Second, Sen defines freedom in a number of linked concepts in his book *Development as Freedom*. According to him, freedom is the capacity of an individual bolstered by the availability of many procedures and chances. The essence or focal point of freedom is those capabilities. Capabilities also refer to the rational opportunities that are available to an individual and can be viewed as a type of freedom.⁴³ It suggests that, depending on one's choice, one can do anything. It also alludes to the possibility of existence or being.⁴⁴

According to Sen's *Inequality Reexamined*, freedom is tied to what people accomplish and advocate as well as to the things they value, as Sabine Alkire notes in her book *Valuing Freedom*.⁴⁵ According to Sen, freedom consists of two components: the accomplishment of the valuable ones and capability. Both activities (activity or the capacity to do) and the condition of being/affairs are indicated by these valued matters.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Sen, *Development and Freedom*, 6, 21-24.; Amartya Kumar Sen, "Individual Freedom as Social Commitment," *India International Centre Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1990), 101-115, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23002184>; Amartya Sen, *Social Exclusion: Concept, Application, and Scrutiny* (Office of Environment and Social Development: Asian Development Bank, June 2000), 3-5.

⁴² Sen, *Development and Freedom*, 5, 14.; See also, Sen, "Individual Freedom as Social Commitment," 101-102.

⁴³ Solava Ibrahim, "Introduction: The Capability Approach: From Theory to Practice-Rationale, Review and Reflections," In *The Capability Approach*, eds. S. Ibrahim and M. Tiwari, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1-28, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137001436_1.

⁴⁴ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 231; Amartya Sen, "Development: Which Way Now?" *The Economic Journal* (1983), 755.

⁴⁵ Sabine Alkire, *Valuing Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4.; See also, Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined: Definition, Commodities and Capabilities* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1992).

⁴⁶ Sabine Alkire, *Valuing Freedom*, 4.

As previously said, Sen is able to relate to the several functions that a person can accomplish.⁴⁷

Functioning is nothing more than the factors that relate to what can be done, lived, or built up (to be) in a person's condition, circumstances, opportunities, availability, affordability, and moments.⁴⁸ Sen goes on to say that being and doing—being fed, self-assured, and involved in decision-making—are connected to functioning itself. Thus, functioning constitutes an individual's essence or being.⁴⁹ The ability of an individual or group to promote and accomplish worthwhile functioning is referred to as freedom. In the end, freedom incorporates all of the functioning (being and doing) that an individual acquires.⁵⁰

Sen's notion of capability as freedom comprises of four key elements: functioning, freedom, pluralism, and incompleteness. Capabilities, according to Sen, are "a set of vectors of functioning which refers to one's freedom to choose a form of valuable life."⁵¹ From this point on, the concept of "freedom-to" is the central premise of the capability approach. According to this perspective, freedom is linked to actual opportunities that one acknowledges as significant or worthwhile. According to that interpretation, freedom has both inherent and practical worth.⁵²

Thirdly, based on that interpretation, Sen implies that freedom pertains to personal freedom and is associated with tangible, real people.⁵³ Individual agency is another name for Sen's concept of individual freedom. In other words, a person is an agent for himself when freedom is seen as the capacity to choose from among the options available to him in life. "Someone that acts and brings about change, and whose achievements can be judged in terms of his own values and objectives, whether or not we assess them in terms of some external criteria as well," is how Sen defines an agent or subject.⁵⁴ He then displays two kind of freedoms, which are principal means of development or instrumental freedom, and primary ends or substantive freedom.⁵⁵

The final end that is considered as something of value is what Sen calls substantive freedom. The goal of real development is substantive freedom. Substantive freedom is always made possible by instrumental freedom. The functioning or fulfillment of these two freedoms forms individual freedom.⁵⁶ In other words,

⁴⁷ Amartya Sen, "Capability and Well-Being," In *The Quality of Life*, eds. Martha C. Nussbaum and Amartya Sen, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 30.

⁴⁸ Sen, "Capability and Well-Being".

⁴⁹ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 5.

⁵⁰ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 6.

⁵¹ Sen, *Development as Freedom*.

⁵² Sen, *Development as Freedom*.

⁵³ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 18; Sen, "Capability and Well-Being," 33-35.

⁵⁴ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 19.

⁵⁵ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 36.

⁵⁶ Ingrid Robeyns, *Wellbeing, Freedom and Social Justice: The Capability Approach Reexamined* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2017), 107-109.

(individual) freedom or capability always involves two things at once, namely primary ends and the necessary means for development.⁵⁷ Even though it is sometimes focused on substantive freedom, the welfare and quality of life of members of society is evaluated based on these two elements together.⁵⁸

Sen views that instrumental freedoms are the means of development. Prosperity and wealth are merely tools, not ends (instrumental freedom). Instrumental freedoms have numerous components. He goes on to list five essential instrumental freedoms: social possibilities, economic facilities, political freedoms, guarantees of transparency, and protective security. He discusses these liberties in connection with the unity principle. According to Sen's theory, achieving substantive freedom necessitates the participation or operation of numerous methods or instrumental freedoms depending on their complementary responsibilities. In this context, "unity" refers to a concept that supports national variety.⁵⁹

He argues that in analyzing development, the importance of various instrumental freedoms is largely determined by their relationship to objectives and aims nonetheless, regardless of diversity.⁶⁰ He understands instrumental freedoms in the sense of their status as having effects or consequences on the formation of freedom. These instrumental freedoms do not collide with each other because they are together in a single idea of freedom and are bound by certain related values.

He also speaks of the "five distinct types of freedom, seen in an instrumental perspective are particularly investigated in the empirical studies that follow. These include 1) political freedoms, 2) economic facilities, 3) social opportunities, 4) transparency guarantees and, 5) protective security."⁶¹ Each of these distinct types of rights and opportunities helps to advance the general capability of a person. They also complement each other. Public policy to foster human capabilities and substantive freedoms in general can work through the promotion of these distinct but interrelated instrumental freedom.⁶²

Further, he says that freedoms are not only the primary ends of development but also among its principal means. Foundationally, the evaluative importance of freedom must be acknowledged, it must be also acknowledged the remarkable connection that links freedoms of different kinds with one another. Political freedom (in the form of free speech and elections, help to promote economic security. Economic facilities in the form of opportunities of participation in trade and production can help to generate personal

⁵⁷ Robeyns, *Wellbeing, Freedom and Social Justice*, xii.

⁵⁸ Robeyns, *Wellbeing, Freedom and Social Justice*, 18.

⁵⁹ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 127.

⁶⁰ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 10.

⁶¹ Sen, *Development as Freedom*.

⁶² Sen, *Development as Freedom*.

abundance as well as public resources for social facilities. Freedom of different kinds can strengthen one another.⁶³

Sen also talks about instrumental freedoms in relation to the liberal democratic political system which emphasizes individual rights. The emphasis on human rights will be closely related to the issue of freedom.⁶⁴ Sen admits that liberal democratic government does not always guarantee that every citizen enjoys individual agency.⁶⁵ Thus, the realization of fundamental instrumental freedoms that guarantee individual agency is potentially largely determined by individual agency.⁶⁶ For Sen, “democracies provide the best regime for the implementation of instrumental freedom, but democratic regimes in themselves do not guarantee their implementation.”⁶⁷

Regarding substantive freedom, for Sen it is the goal or end of development. Sen admits that instrumental freedoms really support the capabilities of a subject or agent. Capability here for Sen is substantive freedom itself. Substantive freedom then really depends on each individual in society who decides (agency) and is enjoyed both individually and collectively.

Fourthly is Sen’s thought of the relationship between his idea of freedom and some essential and related topics: like politics, the evaluation of development. In his work *Freedom as Development*, he also says that basically the idea of development is determined by the quality of the operation of real freedom. Specifically, he also claims that, there are two measurements to determine the existence and the development of the quality of freedom, firstly, “both GNP or individual incomes and other determinants such as social and economic arrangements (facilities for education and healthcare), political and civil rights (liberty to participate in public discussion and scrutiny), industrialization, technological progress, social modernization, the others contribute to the expanding of freedom’ as the first aspect.”⁶⁸

Besides, second, the absence of repressive politics and policies. He finds that freedom can only exist and develop or expand if, “the removing of all the major sources of unfreedom: poverty, tyranny, poor economic opportunities, systematic deprivation, neglect of public facilities, intolerance, overactivity of repressive states’ is concretely done.”⁶⁹ Sen analyzes that “the lack of substantive freedoms relates directly to economic poverty which makes people’s freedom to satisfy hunger, achieve sufficient nutrition, obtain remedies for treatable illness, opportunity to be adequately clothed and sheltered, enjoy clean water, sanitary facilities.”⁷⁰ It also is also concerned “the lack of public

⁶³ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 10-11.

⁶⁴ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 231.

⁶⁵ Robeyns, *Wellbeing, Freedom and Social Justice*, 63-64.

⁶⁶ Robeyns, *Wellbeing, Freedom and Social Justice*, 284

⁶⁷ Robeyns, *Wellbeing, Freedom and Social Justice*, 155

⁶⁸ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 3.

⁶⁹ Sen, *Development as Freedom*.

⁷⁰ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 3-4.

facilities and social care: the absence of epidemiological programs, organized arrangements for health care, educational facilities, effective institutions for maintenance of local and order.”⁷¹

Sen also sees that, “the violation of freedom results directly from a denial of political and civil liberties by authoritarian regimes and from imposed restrictions on the freedom to participate in the social, political and economic life of the community.”⁷² He then says that “freedom is central to the process of developments for two reasons”, *the evaluative reason* which is the assessment of progress has to be done primarily in terms of whether the freedoms that people have are enhanced, 2) *the effectiveness reason*: achievement of development is thoroughly dependent on the free agency of people.”⁷³ So, in other words, the development of society is essentially determined by the presence or absence and development of more optimal and high-quality freedom. This is largely determined by the affordability and availability of basic elements as above. If not, all aspects of human life will be problematic.

Related to the above point, in other part, he also speaks of “the fundamentality of political liberty and civil freedoms, and civil rights’ to everyone. Political and civil freedom are constitutive elements of human freedom.”⁷⁴ He also speaks of freedom which “involves the *processes* that allow freedom of actions and decisions, and the actual *opportunities* that people have, given their personal and social circumstances.”⁷⁵ He continues that “unfreedom can arise either through inadequate processes (such as violation of voting privileges or either political or civil rights) or through inadequate opportunities that some people have for achieving what they minimally would like achieve (including absence of such elementary opportunities as the capability to escape premature mortality or preventable morbidity or involuntary starvation).”⁷⁶ “Even though both process aspect and opportunities aspect involves some substantial contrast, Sen says that they have their importances of their own, and each aspect relates to seeing development as freedom.”⁷⁷

An essential part of human development is equity. Every person has the right to live a fulfilling life according to his or her own values and aspirations.⁷⁸ Freedom as functioning alone is incomplete because it is not always complete if it does not involve agency and freedom. Freedom refers to capability which is persons or group’s freedom to promote and achieve valuable matters.

⁷¹ Sen, *Development as Freedom*.

⁷² Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 4.

⁷³ Sen, *Development as Freedom*.

⁷⁴ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 16-17.

⁷⁵ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 17.

⁷⁶ Sen, *Development as Freedom*.

⁷⁷ Sen, *Development as Freedom*.

⁷⁸ United Nations Development Program, *The Rise of the South: Human Progress in Diverse World: Summary Human Development and Report 2023* (New York: United Nations Development Program, 2013), 3.

As previously explained, capability for Sen refers to a combination of various functions that are open to be chosen, decided to be attempted and achieved by an individual.⁷⁹ Starting from this, evaluation of the quality and progress of a person's life is based on the manifestation and realization of a person's various abilities to achieve a life that is considered to be of value to a person.⁸⁰ In other words, as Sen himself says, "capability is the freedom to achieve and realize various life choices in various ways."⁸¹ For Sen, there is a type of capacity that is more basic, elementary and provides the information needed for anti-deprivation policies.⁸²

He then wanted the functioning that could be directly observed to become normative information for poverty issues. He admits that his concept of capability is close to Aristotle's concept of flourishing and capacity in relation to the quality of life.⁸³ In fact, he also pointed to the influence of Adam Smith on his concept, especially Smith's concept of necessities and living conditions.⁸⁴ He not only tries to overcome the distinction between democratic processes or economic opportunities, but wants to point out that both are important elements of the concept of development.

The reason is that Sen, in the context of his views on capability and freedom, views humans or individuals as rational beings who are capable of evaluating for themselves the various choices and possibilities available to them, various preferences and essential values that are in harmony with their fullness.⁸⁵ Therefore, the concept of individual agency in this context is related to the subject's degree of maturity of rationality and personal maturity because these two things determine the quality of the choices made. In other words, it determines the quality of implementation and the quality of a person's freedom. These points then ultimately relate to the sense of responsibility that grows within the subject to assess himself and take responsibility for the suffering around the subject.⁸⁶ In Sen's analysis, the issue of deprivation is closely related to individual agency and is strongly influenced by social, political and economic regulatory forces.⁸⁷

So, freedom which is fundamentally related to individual reasoned agency becomes an important element in discussions about development as freedom. The concept of development as freedom is then related to the agency of the subject or individual; how the subject himself realizes or implements rationally and precisely various choices, opportunities, availability and abilities to realize life choices that are of

⁷⁹ Sen, "Capability and Well-Being," 31.

⁸⁰ Sen, "Capability and Well-Being".

⁸¹ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 75.

⁸² Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 132.

⁸³ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 24.

⁸⁴ Sen, *Development as Freedom*.

⁸⁵ Amartya Sen, "Freedom of Choice: Concept and Content," *European Economic Review* 32 (1988): 269-294, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/0014292188901730>.

⁸⁶ Sen, "Freedom of Choice," 283.

⁸⁷ Sen, "Freedom of Choice," xi, xii.

value to him. Sen emphasized that what is understood in relation to wealth is nothing other than living a life that is rationally and freely believed to be of value to one and this is nothing other than individual agency. Poverty is not primarily an economic problem but a matter of losing basic capabilities or basic freedoms.⁸⁸

So, overall, it can be claimed that Sen understands several important points, namely, that freedom is always related to individual and collective life. Freedom also refers to individual freedom in the private and socio-political sphere. Freedom is related to two things, namely instrumental freedom which refers to various means and opportunities, possibilities, abilities and availability that are affordable for the subject. Freedom also concerns substantive freedom, namely the goals to be realized.⁸⁹ These two things are united in the appreciation of individual freedom or individual agency. These two things determine a person's actions and being. The quality of personal and societal development is actually measured based on the existence and quality of the development of freedom of a person or group of people in living together.

Arendt and Sen's Similarities and Differences on Freedom

In this article, the term "similarity" refers to indirect agreement, parallelism, situational similarity, and the connection of ideas or concepts. Indirect conflicts, disparate and less explicit emphases, limited conversations, and divergent concepts are all examples of what is meant by differences. Contributions to one another when seen in light of these parallels and discrepancies; the former support arguments, while the latter foster divergent viewpoints that enhance one another.

First of all, similarity or agreement of ideas. Arendt and Sen recognize and recognize two categories of freedom, namely negative freedom and positive freedom. Arendt calls negative freedom as liberty⁹⁰ and Sen calls it liberty or 'unfreedom' situation or condition.⁹¹ Both agree that freedom is also related to the absence or elimination of external repressions that prevent someone from experiencing their freedom. For Sen, freedom in this negative sense is seen through political policies that constitutionally revoke people's basic rights to be able to have access to many things for a more decent life related to welfare. Apart from freedom in the negative sense, both also agree on positive freedom.

This type of freedom is a simultaneous counterpart in the essence of freedom itself.⁹² This freedom refers to the ability, state or condition or possibility to be able to

⁸⁸ Sen, "Freedom of Choice," 20-22.

⁸⁹ David A. Crocker, "Functioning and Capability: The Foundations of Sen's and Nussbaum's Development Ethic," in *Women, Culture, and Development: A Study of Human Capabilities*, eds. Martha C. Nussbaum and Jonathan Glover, (Oxford, 1995; online edn, Oxford Academic, 1 Nov. 2003), <https://doi.org/10.1093/0198289642.001.0001>, accessed 19 July 2024., 585-587.

⁹⁰ Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 146, 149, 155, 167.

⁹¹ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 3-4.

⁹² Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 158.

determine oneself based on what is considered valuable for the fullness of one's life. Sen mentioned and equated it with capability or ability to be and to do. He also calls it functioning and achievement or state of affairs. Hannah Arendt does not explicitly acknowledge what Sen understands. It is just that Arendt defines positive freedom as the ability to determine oneself. The point is that both of them agree that freedom is also related to the circumstances, conditions, and existential situations that are adequate for a moral agent to make choices of action related to the essential values for his or her own life.

What is specific is that for Arendt, behind all the ability to determine oneself, there are two basic elements of freedom which are the basis for the entire process of self-determination, namely; actions and speech. These two fundamental elements make possible the operation of all positive freedoms. Arendt even connects human existence to the issue of freedom. That the moment of freedom where humans can determine themselves through actions and speech is the moment of natality or birth or new beginning.

Although there was no direct interaction or explicit agreement, Sen agreed in principle. Sen only discusses two fundamental components of the realization of freedom: instrumental freedom and substantive freedom. These two derivative freedoms make up individual freedom, with instrumental freedom being the main way that substantive freedom is realized and substantive freedom being related to goals, objectives, and the achievement of one's aspirations. According to Sen, these two components of freedom also determine how well a person's development and life are evaluated.

Both Arendt and Sen also concur that freedom always comes in two flavors: individual freedom and socio-political freedom. They both come from similar backgrounds, which include the environment of scientific and technological advancement, capitalism, industry, and democracy (liberal democracy).⁹³ In Arendt's view, there is no outward sign of suffering and misfortune in relation to injustice, poverty, and political pressure. In Sen's perspective, social injustice, social gaps, and political tyranny lead to injustice in society, and many people lack equal access to the necessities of a decent life.

The second similarity between the two also relates to their interactions with previous thinkers. Arendt in her elaboration shows clearly the history of the development of the understanding of freedom from the classical tradition of Aristotle, Christianity, the modern era to Kant.⁹⁴ He even said that the concept of freedom that he inherited was inherited from Kant's thought.

⁹³ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 4, 20-23; Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 146, 149, 155, 167.

⁹⁴ Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 144-145.

Because of this, Sen also linked his ideas about freedom in the sense of flourishing and prosperity to the ideas of thinkers like Aristotle and Adam Smith.⁹⁵ Arendt's analysis of the history of understanding freedom reveals another model of freedom that has existed and been lived throughout history: spiritual freedom, which is understood and experienced by separating oneself from all forms of social interaction and the subject moving inward to develop a relationship with oneself. This kind of freedom is considered, reflected upon, and connected to freedom in the sense of liberty.

However, Arendt asserts that the modern era has altered how people value freedom. Despite being an intellectual property of the discourse on freedom, this revelation has no direct bearing on the discourse, which Sen and Arendt discuss as being about freedom in the social life sphere and its numerous interconnections. The existential reality of humanity, according to Sen and Arendt, is found in social space, social interaction, and how each individual demonstrates their duty to others.

Another similarity between the two must be noted: as was mentioned at the outset, they both agree that freedom is always related to other people and self-autonomy, which is defined as the eradication of all forms of oppression that render people unfree; relationships with other people relate to what other people (whether they be governments, institutions, groups, or other individuals) should do with themselves, such as the attitude of not destroying individual freedom; and secondly, they relate to what the subject decides, which is always related to other people.

In a broader sense, both agree that freedom always has both individual and social dimensions. Only in the social space can this freedom be manifested. Arendt talks about actions and speech and web relationships to show this facticity and Sen talks about the phenomenon of oppression and social injustice or the concept of capability itself to explain the social dimension of this freedom.

As mentioned previously, what is immediately obvious regarding the difference between the two is that they both live in different eras. Even though there is parallelism in the background of thought, namely: socio-political conditions, technological developments, industry and capitalism, both have differences. Arendt's thoughts about freedom are not very obvious in socio-political situations that are plagued by injustice, economic oppression, problems of welfare gaps, unfairness, unfair government policies and capitalism.

The era of Arendt's thinking about freedom is an era that is historically different from Sen's, but also the aim of Arendt's writing is encouragement, advice and suggestions for everyone to develop themselves fully through involvement in the social public sphere. Sen has a context that is not that long ago. Sen faces an unfair socio-political and economic situation. Socio-economic poverty, political inequality, welfare

⁹⁵ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 24.

which is a serious problem in several countries, and limited material commodities for a decent life. This atmosphere became the specific context for Sen.

Arendt presents the idea of action and speech as two basic conditions, or two basic states of affairs in human existential nature, that must exist for the realization of freedom and self-realization in the social public sphere. In other words, Arendt discusses two basic elements in humans that must exist and not be repressed by anyone from outside and can be developed by subjects for self-realization in public spaces. It can be said that Arendt's contribution to Sen is an additional analysis of the historical development of the understanding of freedom that is explored in the history of philosophical discourse about freedom.

Sen enriches, develops and contextualizes the concept of freedom that was agreed upon indirectly with Arendt but in the current era. Where poverty, suffering and injustice are so massive and structured by a system of political liberalism, Sen's reflections on the models and forms of freedom that must be developed, both instrumental and substantive freedom, are relevant. Sen understands instrumental freedom as a means, but what Sen thinks more about is the various opportunities and occasions available for the substantive realization of freedom itself. With that, this freedom is related to something that must be thought about from within oneself but also provided by institutions, the government and other parties. Even though it is not stated explicitly, there is a 'connection' between Arendt's ideas about action and speech as two basic conditions for freedom and Sen's about instrumental freedom. Arendt and Sen's discovery can be a meeting point, agreement, relationship and contribution for both of them.

CONCLUSION

Hannah Arendt and Amartya Sen agree that freedom always entails both societal and individual freedom, despite their differing historical periods and origins. Both concur that politics and coexistence in society are sometimes inextricably linked to freedom. Both accept that there are always two types of freedom: positive freedom and negative freedom. The lack of repression and political structural conditioning that prevents each person from leading a complete life is associated with negative freedom. Aside from that, they both support positive freedom, which has to do with the opportunity to choose oneself according to one's own values.

Sen is aware that all freedom is always made up of two internal freedoms: substantive freedom and instrumental freedom. While the first freedom is tied to the methods to attain the first freedom, the second freedom is related to ends that are deemed important. These two elements are essential to the concept of individual freedom and are prerequisites for its potential realization. There are no disagreements on this based on Arendt's thoughts on freedom, despite the fact that she does not state this openly or concur with it. Arendt discusses two further fundamental means and conditions—action

and speech—that are necessary for the realization of freedom. Sen’s idea of freedom is linked to these two components, which can both be categories of instrumental freedom but can also be substantive freedom

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