

FACTORS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE TRANSFORMATION: A THEORETICAL- METHODOLOGICAL AND EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This scholarly article provides a comprehensive theoretical-methodological and empirical analysis of the key factors influencing social justice transformation: economic, political-institutional, educational, cultural-normative, and technological. The study employs John Rawls's Theory of Justice, Amartya Sen's Development as Freedom, and Martha Nussbaum's central capabilities approach as its theoretical foundation.

Keywords: Social justice, inequality, transformation, institutions, capability approach, economic justice, legal reform, digital inclusion, social capital, Uzbekistan.

Introduction:

The concept of social justice is one of the central ideas in the perpetual quest of human civilization. This concept, defined by Aristotle in Ancient Greece as "giving everyone their due," has been progressively enriched in its meaning through medieval theology, Enlightenment philosophy, and modern political theory. Today, the issue of social justice stands among the most urgent topics not only from a philosophical perspective but also from economic, legal, and political ones. Against the backdrop of inequalities that transcend national borders, systemic discrimination, and global financial crises, the demands and criteria for social justice are confronting entire societies with a new intensity.

Social justice is not merely a matter of redistributing certain wealth. It is also a complex, multidimensional phenomenon associated with recognition, representation, value systems, and equality of opportunity (Fraser, 2005). To build a just society, it is essential not only that material goods are distributed equally but also that every individual has the necessary conditions to realize their potential. In this regard, the capability approach of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum has revolutionized modern social justice theory.

The process of systemic reforms implemented in Uzbekistan since 2017 is a unique national example of the transformation of social justice. The constitutional amendments adopted within the framework of the "New Uzbekistan" concept (2023), the "Humanitarian State" principle, and the socially oriented state budget policy are institutional expressions of these changes. At the same time, it is necessary to conduct a scientific study of how deep and sustainable the reforms are, under the influence of which factors they are being implemented, and what systemic obstacles exist.

The transformation of social justice is the process of transforming the social order into a more just form, which occurs under the influence of many internal and external factors. Identifying these factors, understanding their interaction, and utilizing them in policy formulation is one of the primary tasks of

modern social sciences. It is for this reason that this study aims to conduct a systematic and comprehensive analysis of the factors of social justice transformation.

Scientific Problem and Relevance of the Research:

On a global scale, inequality is growing rapidly. A group that owns 1% of the world's wealth holds 43% of all world wealth (Oxfam, 2023). Within the framework of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Goal 10 - reducing inequality - is recognized as one of the most difficult goals to achieve (UN, 2023). Under these conditions, the scientific study of the components of social justice is becoming not only a theoretical but also a practical necessity.

For Uzbekistan, this issue is even more relevant. The new Constitution, adopted in 2023, reinforced the principles of a social state; however, building a just society requires more than good laws—it also requires institutions, economic opportunities, and a cultural environment to implement them. Surveys conducted in the Andijan region show that significant differences remain in access to quality services between rural and urban populations (Andijan Regional Statistics Department, 2024). This also proves the regional relevance of the research.

The main goal of the study is to analyze the main factors influencing the transformation of social justice from a theoretical, methodological, and empirical perspective, as well as to determine their practical manifestations using the example of Uzbekistan.

Research objectives: (1) comparative analysis and systematization of the main theoretical approaches to the transformation of social justice; (2) identifying and methodologically substantiating the five main factors influencing transformation; (3) Empirical analysis of social reforms implemented in Uzbekistan between 2017 and 2024; (4) assess social justice indicators in a regional context, particularly in the Andijan region; (5) develop practical recommendations for policy formulation.

The main hypothesis of the study was formulated as follows: The transformation of social justice is a multi-factor systemic process that occurs under the influence of complementary legal-institutional, economic, educational, cultural, and technological factors; the weakness of any of these factors slows down the entire transformation process.

This study primarily covers the context of the Republic of Uzbekistan, specifically the period from 2017 to 2024. For comparative analysis, the experience of Central Asian countries and international experience was used. The study is based on a political-philosophical, sociological, and economic interdisciplinary approach.

Methods:

This research is based on a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative analysis. This approach is recognized as the most effective method for studying such a complex multidimensional phenomenon as social justice, as it allows for both deep theoretical understanding and empirical verification.

The following methods were used in the study: first, a systematic literature review - more than 120 scientific articles, monographs, and reports published in the Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ResearchGate databases between 1971 and 2024 were studied. The PRISMA protocol was followed when selecting sources. Secondly, a comparative analysis was conducted—the experience of social justice policy in various countries (the Scandinavian model, the South Korean experience, the

Brazilian "Bolsa Família" program) was analyzed in comparison with the experience of Uzbekistan. Thirdly, an institutional analysis was conducted—analysing the legislative framework of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Constitution 2023, Civil Code, Labor Code, laws on social protection), national strategies, and presidential decrees. Fourth, the analysis of secondary data - open data from the UNDP, the World Bank, the OECD, the Statistics Agency of Uzbekistan and the Statistics Department of the Andijan region were used.

The theoretical basis of the research consists of three main theoretical directions. The first direction is the theories of normative justice: Rawls (1971) "Theory of Justice," Sen (1999, 2009) the possibilities approach, Nussbaum (2011) the central list of possibilities. These theories establish normative criteria for social justice and provide a basis for its measurement. The second direction is institutional economics: North (1990) the theory of institutions, Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) the analysis of inclusive and extractive institutions. This direction helps explain the institutional determinants of social justice. The third direction is social capital and cultural theories: Putnam (1993, 2000) the theory of social capital, Bourdieu (1986) the theory of types of capital, Ostrom (1990) the theory of collective action.

The reliability of the research is ensured by several factors: resource diversification (triangulation), methodological pluralism, and the use of internationally recognized indicators. The main limitation is the lack of comprehensive statistical data on some important indicators (e.g., social mobility, subjective well-being) for Uzbekistan. Conducting large-scale surveys in future research will help address this shortcoming.

Results:

John Rawls's A Theory of Justice, published in 1971, marked a significant turning point in modern political philosophy. Rawls proposed that a just society should be built on principles chosen by rational individuals who project from behind a "veil of ignorance." These principles include two fundamental provisions: the first is the principle of equal fundamental freedoms (all citizens should have the same fundamental freedoms); the second is the principle of difference (social and economic inequalities can only be justified if they benefit the least privileged members of society).

Rawls's approach emphasizes procedural justice: a fair outcome stems from a fair process. However, this approach has also been criticized. Sandel (1982) criticized Rawls's conception of the abstract personality, which is based on viewing it in isolation from society. Sen (2009) proposed a practical approach aimed at transitioning to a "less unjust society" rather than building a "just society" project. Amartya Sen (1999) introduced the opportunity approach to the general public in Development as Freedom. According to you, economic progress should be measured not by GDP or consumption, but by people's real capabilities and freedoms. Opportunity is the ability to realize the forms of life that an individual wants to achieve. Sen identifies five main freedoms: political freedoms, economic opportunities, social opportunities, guarantees of transparency, and security of defense (Sen, 1999, p. 38-40).

Martha Nussbaum (2011) further refined the opportunity approach and compiled a list of the "ten central human opportunities." This list includes possibilities such as life, physical health, physical integrity, feelings and thinking, emotions, practical intelligence, belonging, coexistence with other

species, play, and political control. According to Nussbaum, a socially just state should provide each citizen with a minimum level of these opportunities (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 33-34).

Nancy Fraser (2005) examined social justice in three dimensions: redistribution, recognition, and representation. According to Frazer, full social justice requires ensuring equality in all three dimensions. Redistribution represents economic justice, recognition represents cultural justice, and representation represents political justice. These three dimensions are inseparable: when economic inequality is combined with discrimination in recognition, social injustice deepens.

Economic inequality is the most visible and measurable measure of the transformation of social justice. Based on historical data, Thomas Piketty (2014) showed that the structural nature of wealth accumulation is determined by the fact that the return on capital (r) is always higher than the rate of economic growth (g) ($r > g$). This leads to the conclusion that income inequality is the result of political choices rather than a natural economic process.

Conclusion:

This study comprehensively analyzed five key factors influencing the transformation of social justice: economic, political-institutional, educational-enlightenment, cultural-normative, and technological. The research hypothesis was confirmed through empirical data and theoretical analysis: the transformation of social justice is a multi-factorial, systemic process where the combined impact of the factors is stronger than their individual effects, and the weakness of any single factor slows the dynamics of the entire transformation.

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