

Social justice overview assignment



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The arguments over what is fair and who determines fairness is often the dividing line amongst intellectuals attempting to define social justice. In the end, all interpretations agree that social injustice is often more likely than social justice and active participation by everyone is necessary to effectively establish a society where social justice is the norm. The broadest definition of social justice, as provided by Google, is “ justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society. ” The most important part in that definition is the delineation that social justice is determined by a society.

Societal demands, needs, wants, and rights vary considerably around the globe and therefore so does their understanding of social justice. Some have argued that because social justice is dependent on each society that it cannot be measured or valued, even so that has not stopped several researchers from utilizing statistical data to support their views of what social justice is and how nations, for example, measure up to their standard. Once again, the problem of measuring social justice lies in the debate as to what is fair or equitable in a given society. Is there a universal level of justice humanity should be striving for?

This question has been answered by many individuals over the course of human story, and by combining the shared fundamentals of various discourses it is possible to create a grander definition of “ social justice as a state of affairs (either actual or ideal) in which (a) benefits and burdens in society are dispersed in accordance with some allocation principle; (b) procedures, norms, and rules that govern political and other forms of decision making preserve the basic rights, liberties, and entitlements of

individuals and groups; and (c) human beings (and perhaps other species) are treated with dignity and respect not only by authorities but also by other relevant social actors, including fellow citizens. " This particular definition looks at three distinct aspects of social justice, distributive, procedural, and international justice (Jots and Kay, 2010). These aspects sometimes work in conjunction with one another or can stand alone, in the opinion of some writers. One of the more popular descriptions of social justice is that meeting an individual's needs is a claim of justice and not charity and therefore requires that any given distribution Of resources must be conducted by the government (Jackson, 2005).

The earliest philosophers, such as Aristotle and Socrates, spoke at length f justice and how governments and individuals were mutually responsible for maintaining standards, but the first known usage of " social justice" comes from Italy and a Catholic priest in the sass's (Novak, 2009). It was around this time that opinions of the poor and destitute shifted considerably. Many intellectuals of the day considered that maybe no one " deserved" to be poor, and that given the right opportunities could also achieve a standard of living that was more than their original lot in life. It must be mentioned that the original meaning of social justice is quo tit different from the contemporary understanding and political undertones it now has. The historical usage didn't involve equitable redistribution of resources or the government at all.

In fact, Pope Leo XIII supported this priest's writings with his own testament that the new world order required a new justice for the people, but that equity was not the manner in achieving it. He, more or less, condemned the <https://assignbuster.com/social-justice-overview-assignment/>

idea that equality was an ideal for society. His argument being that all men are created equal in the sight of God, but are gifted different talents and due to that are not equal socially. If all persons were completely equal, than society would not function. The pope also sent a threat that socialism would be the end to civil society. Rather than a government institution enforcing justice, the Pope suggested the people must be responsible for themselves, their neighbors, and the children raised between them to act justly (Novak, 2009).

This concept revolved more around the virtues necessary to be a just individual and society. These virtues, like compassion, integrity, responsibility, and selflessness, were combined to describe social justice as it's own virtue. Compare this concept of social justice to that of contemporary philosopher John Rawls' or theorist David Miller's thoughts on justice and the differences will be stark. John Rawls, considered by many to be one of the most important political philosophers Of the twentieth century, is most known for his theory Of " justice as fairness. " Under this concept Rawls purports two principles of justice; the " Equal Liberty principle" and the " Difference Principle".

The Equal Liberty Principle affirms that each person has an equal set of liberties that are the same as those liberties given to everyone. Rawls provides a list of what he considers are basic liberties which include the freedom of thought, political liberties, rights covered by law, and freedom of association. The Difference Principle states that social and economic inequalities do exist but that they should be organized so that the greatest benefit is given to the least- advantaged members of society and that all "

offices and positions be open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity" (Rails, 2003). In short, Rails' theory of social justice declares the protection of equal liberties and assisting the least advantaged in a society is just.

Rails' concept is developed around the idea of a social contract where society members enter into an agreement to follow certain rules for the betterment of everyone, and that a rational individual would enter this contract as long as it is fair because they will understand it is necessary for societal justice. David Miller, a political theorist and professor at Oxford University, posited his own theory of social justice in contrast to Rails'. Miller argues that modern society is complex, and so social justice is also complex, and understanding his principles within certain situations changes the relevance of them. His concept focuses on the three principles of desert, need, and equality. Miller considers these three elements as outcomes of the system, rather than a means to an end.

Desert refers to a recognition or reward duly earned, a need is something basic for life someone lacks, and equality refers to those rights that should be equitably distributed (Robinson, 2014). Since Miller's theory is dependent on circumstances he also details three "modes of human relationship" to further describe how the three principles relate to one another. The modes are Solidarity Community, Instrumental Associations, and Citizenship. The modes are used to give interpretation and focus to the principles above. For example, in Citizenship mode equality is the most relevant principle for distribution of rights and liberties as a citizen of a state. Sing Rails and Miller as examples of current western ideas on social justice it is clear that no one

idea has a complete grasp on what is the “ correct” understanding of social justice and it’s implementation. Both do agree however that government plays a role in ensuring a socially just constituency. Social justice continues to be a term that allows itself to be interpreted in various ways and due to this many believe it is a subjective concept and cannot be verified or quantified by any means. Though some of the ideas presented are difficult to calculate, governments are acting to report national progress towards improving certain social injustices that are a constant problem. The Social Inclusion Monitor is one such report used by the European Union to report on that status of all member states in six areas of social concern.

They are; poverty prevention, equitable education, labor market inclusion, social cohesion and non-discrimination, health, and intergenerational justice. Data for this report uses both quantitative and qualitative information gathered from ELI Statistics on Income and Living Conditions, as well as the evaluations completed by 1 00 experts responding to a survey. This type of report clearly details where member nations are falling short in the social justice index. It not only puts nations on report, but affords other members the knowledge of potential areas they can assist in since part of the intent of the EH is to be more than just an economic agreement.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (COED) is another organization aimed at improving the well-being of citizens in democratically backed governments and end poverty. Whether privately or publicly funded, organizations designed to improve social justice are a considerable benefit to present and future Of humanity. Social justice, no matter the definition, should be a concern for all persons living in a

community. Discrimination against anyone based on gender, race, religion, ethnicity, or other descriptor works against the betterment of humanity. Only through an effective social justice system can everyone have the freedoms and rights afforded them by being human.