



SOCIAL JUSTICE

AN INTRODUCTION



What is Social Justice?

1. Social justice is concerned with social relations, in other words the place of the person in society.
2. Justice is concerned with equal treatment in getting what we deserve.

JUSTICE IN THE WESTERN TRADITION

In Religion:

Christianity and Judaism understand justice as
Right Relationship:

When dealing with others we give them their
due – what they are owed as human beings.

*“Do unto others as you would have them do
unto you” (Matthew 7:12)*

JUSTICE IN THE WESTERN TRADITION

In Philosophy:

According to Plato's *Republic*, justice includes both negative and positive duties.

According to Aristotle, justice consists in what is lawful and fair, with fairness involving equitable distribution.



JUSTICE IN THE WESTERN TRADITION

So in the Western philosophical and faith traditions, justice is understood as relational: what we owe one another.

In other words, our rights and responsibilities.

Social justice is about how society protects and realises all of our rights equitably and fairly.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Charity responds to a person's needs and asks what are we willing to give to help meet those needs.

Social Justice responds to a person's rights and asks what is a person entitled to as a right.

A Rights-Based Approach is at the heart of Social Justice.




SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS




The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948.

The UDHR includes 30 fundamental rights agreed to by all 192 UN Members States.

Unlike other civil liberties, Human Rights depend on only one thing... being human.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ew993Wdc0zo>

- 
- 1 We are all born free and equal
 - 2 Freedom from Discrimination
 - 3 Right to Life
 - 4 Freedom from Slavery
 - 5 Freedom from Torture
 - 6 Right to Recognition Before the Law
 - 7 Right to Equality Before the Law
 - 8 Right to Remedy
 - 9 Freedom from Arbitrary Detention
 - 10 Right to a Fair Trial



11 Presumption of Innocence and International Crimes

12 Right to Privacy

13 Freedom of Movement

14 Right to Asylum

15 Right to Nationality


16 Right to Marry and to Found a Family

17 Right to Own Property

18 Freedom of Religion or Belief

19 Freedom of Opinion and Expression

20 Freedom of Assembly and Association

- 
- 21 Freedom of Democracy
 - 22 Right to Social Security
 - 23 Right to Work
 - 24 Right to Rest and Leisure
 - 25 Right to Adequate Standard of Living
 - 26 Right to Education
 - 27 Right to Cultural, Artistic and Scientific Life
 - 28 Right to a Free and Fair World
 - 29 Duty to Your Community
 - 30 Rights are Inalienable

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE COMMON GOOD

How we organise our society is essential to making Human Rights effective.

1. We must balance our individual and collective rights and responsibilities.
2. We must choose priorities about our use of resources to provide fair opportunity, access and participation to make Human Rights a reality for everybody.



HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE COMMON GOOD

This makes the pursuit of Social Justice inherently political, because it requires decision-making.

The Common Good provides a guide to a vision of society that benefits everybody:

The sum of social and economic conditions that facilitates human flourishing for every person.



SOCIAL INJUSTICE: DENIAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Just as the Common Good provides a guide to making Human Rights effective...

... so too alternative political, economic and social conditions can have the effect of undermining Human Rights.

Such conditions include:

- Political repression

- Social exclusion and inequality

- Economic inequality and poverty

POLITICAL REPRESSION



Exclusion from participation in the political life of society,

State sponsored violence,

and laws and policies that discriminate against people, individually or collectively,

all represent a direct attack on Human Right.

POLITICAL REPRESSION



Examples:

Fascist regimes in the 20th Century denied social and political freedoms, denied fair process under the Law, and persecuted and murdered minorities.

Communist regimes in the 20th and 21st Centuries set up authoritarian police states, and denied economic and political freedoms.

POLITICAL REPRESSION

Examples:

Apartheid Laws in South Africa and Segregation Laws in the USA in the 20th Century discriminated against people based on the colour of their skin.

Political and religious discrimination against the Catholic and Nationalist community in Northern Ireland in the 20th Century by the Stormont and UK Governments.





SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND INEQUALITY



Human beings cannot survive alone. Our Rights, which govern proper social relations, are meaningless separate from society.

Therefore cultural and social inequalities, and exclusion from fair access and participation in society, undermine the full realisation of Human Right.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND INEQUALITY



Examples:

Racial discrimination which can result in incidences racist abuse.

Even when not supported by the Law, racism can create an atmosphere of intimidation, unfair treatment, and exclusion from the market-place, such as rental accommodation and employment.



SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND INEQUALITY



Examples:

Gender inequality and exclusion of girls and women.

Only 66% of countries have achieved gender parity in primary education.

This falls to 45% in lower secondary education, and only 25% in upper secondary education.

(<https://www.unicef.org/education/girls-education>)



ECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND POVERTY



Human Rights mean little without resources to make them a reality.

How we organise our economies to provide all people with access to the material resources necessary to exercise their Rights is central to making Human Rights effective.

This is a fundamentally political question.

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND POVERTY

POVERTY

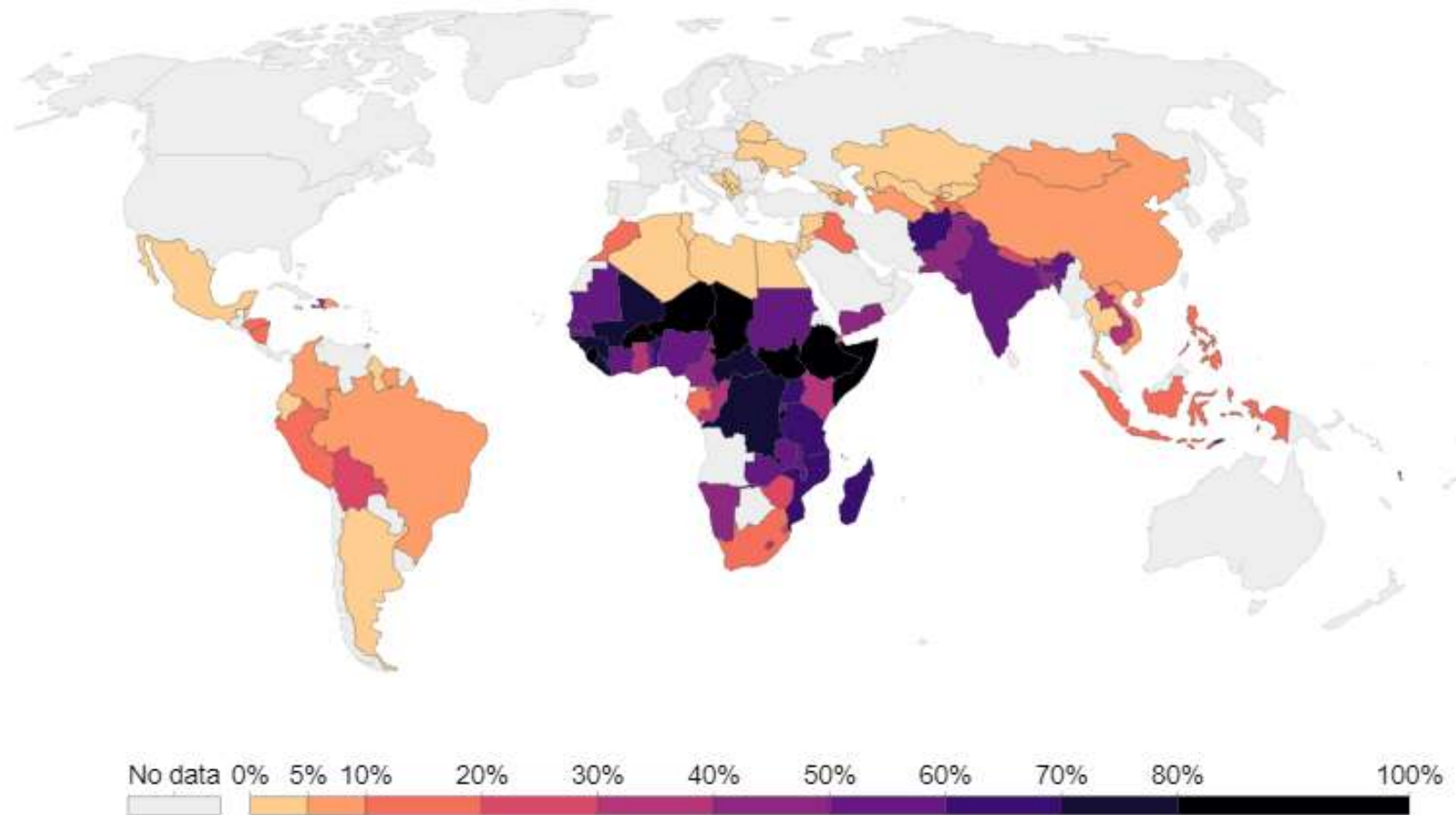
Poverty denies people access to their material needs and excludes them from meaningful participation in society.

Poverty denies Government the revenue needed to provide essential public services like education and healthcare.

Share of population living in multidimensional poverty, 2014

Our World
in Data

Proportion of people who are poor according to the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). The MPI weights ten indicators of deprivation in the context of education, health and living standards. Individuals are considered poor if deprived in at least one third of the weighted indicators (see source for more details).



Source: OPHI Multidimensional Poverty Index - Alkire and Robles (2016)

OurWorldInData.org/extreme-poverty/ • CC BY

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND POVERTY

“For those living in poverty, many human rights are out of reach. Among many other deprivations, they often lack access to education, health services, safe drinking water and basic sanitation. They are often excluded from participating meaningfully in the political process and prevented from seeking justice for violations of their human rights...

...The elimination of extreme poverty should not be seen as a question of charity, but as a pressing human rights issue.”

(<https://www.ohchr.org>)

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND POVERTY

THE POVERTY LINE:

International Poverty Line: Extreme poverty is currently measured as people living on less than \$1.90 a day.

National Poverty Lines differ from country to country depending on circumstances, living standards and cost of living.

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND POVERTY



But poverty does not only exist in poor countries...

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND POVERTY

In Ireland, the Government defines poverty as:

"People are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources, people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society."

(Government of Ireland, 1997)

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND POVERTY

According to the CSO:

- ▶ 637,000 people in Ireland are living in poverty, of which 193,600 are children.
- ▶ 98,100 people living in poverty are in employment; the “working poor”.
- ▶ 886,000 people are experiencing deprivation, of which 293,200 are children.

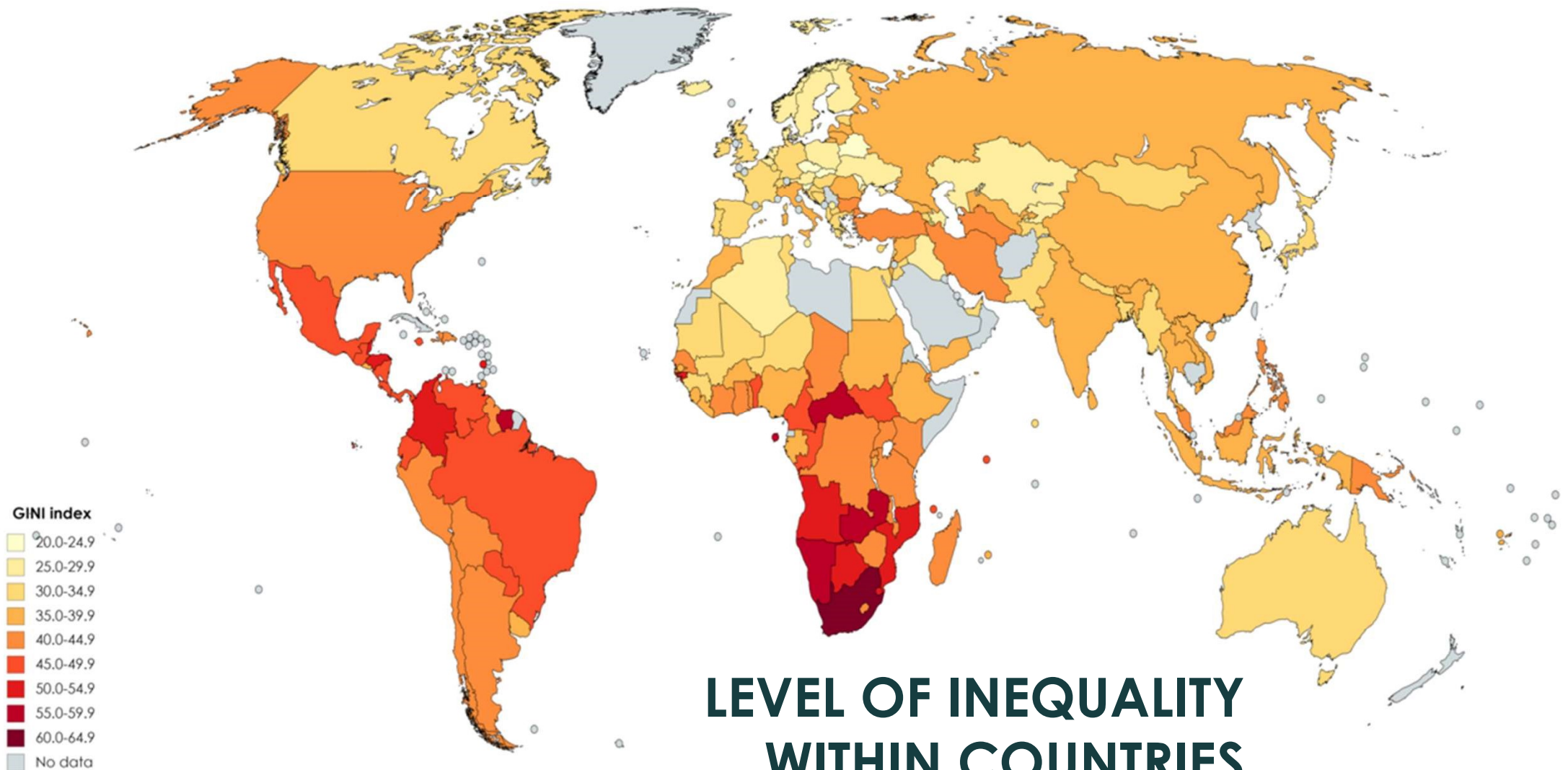
(Survey in Living Conditions, 2020)

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND POVERTY



This raises serious questions about economic inequality.

In a world of limited resources, income and wealth inequality results in both luxury and poverty.



LEVEL OF INEQUALITY WITHIN COUNTRIES

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND POVERTY



Presently, the world's richest 1 percent possess more than twice as much wealth as 6.9 billion people.

At the same time, almost half of humanity is living on less than \$5.50 a day.

(Oxfam International)

MAKING RIGHTS A REALITY: THE SDGS

So the question then becomes: How do we organise our societies and economies to make Rights a reality?

The United Nations have agreed a framework for achieving this:

The Sustainable Development Goals

MAKING RIGHTS A REALITY: THE SDGS

The Sustainable Development Goals are a list of 17 interlinked goals for sustainable development for all countries in order to make Human Rights a reality for everybody.

The SDGs were set in 2015 by the UN General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by 2030.

They are defined in a UN Resolution known as Agenda 2030.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-iJM02m_Hg

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

