

Methodological Foundations for Ensuring Social Justice in The Context of Contemporary Uzbekistan

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This article examines the theoretical and methodological foundations of social justice in the context of New Uzbekistan, highlighting its significance for sustainable development and the creation of a just society. **Method:** The study adopts a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach, integrating systemic, comparative-philosophical, hermeneutic, semiotic, historical-genetic, axiological, institutional, and political-legal frameworks. These methodologies are applied to understand the complexity of social justice as both a theoretical concept and a practical system within the legal, political, economic, and spiritual domains. **Results:** The analysis reveals that social justice in New Uzbekistan is deeply interconnected with national values, civilizational identity, and the functioning of key institutions. It underscores the importance of integrating these elements to achieve a balanced and equitable society. **Novelty:** The novelty of this research lies in its multidisciplinary perspective, which combines both theoretical and practical approaches to studying social justice in the unique sociocultural and political context of Uzbekistan. This approach offers new insights into the role of social justice in shaping the country's sustainable future.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of modern Uzbekistan, a comprehensive and in-depth study of the problem of social justice requires a complex and multifaceted methodological approach. Examining this issue within the framework of a single philosophical theory or scientific method is insufficient. For an effective analysis, it is necessary to integrate various scientific approaches in order to encompass both the theoretical and practical dimensions of the problem [1].

The “systemic approach” is a key framework that forms the methodological basis of the study. This method necessitates considering social justice as a complex system that is inherently interconnected with the legal, political, economic, and moral-cultural domains of society rather than as a singular phenomenon. This method makes it possible to analyze a number of aspects holistically, such as how national values affect legal consciousness or how economic inequality affects political decisions. As noted by the Uzbek scholar I. Saifnazarov in his works on research methodology, “In studying complex social phenomena, the systemic approach facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the subject by revealing the interconnections among its internal elements and their interactions with the external environment” [2].

RESEARCH METHOD

In studying the theoretical foundations of social justice, the method of comparative-philosophical analysis holds significant importance. This method enables a systematic comparison of justice concepts in Western philosophy (liberalism, communitarianism, utilitarianism) and Eastern philosophical traditions, as well as the perspectives embedded in our national philosophical heritage (Farobi, Amir Temur, the Jadids). It allows for the identification of both commonalities and distinctive features, thereby facilitating the creative integration of the positive aspects of diverse theories to develop the most appropriate model of justice for Uzbekistan [3].

Hermeneutic and semiotic analysis techniques are used to examine the relationship between the idea of justice and national ideals. Through the interpretation of texts from folk proverbs, fairy tales, epic poetry, and historical documents, the hermeneutic technique aids in clarifying the meanings of ideas like “justice”, “truth” and “equity”. On the other hand, semiotic analysis uncovers the social norms and hidden meanings surrounding justice that are ingrained in symbolic acts inside national conventions, traditions, and ceremonies (such as wedding rituals, funeral rites, and group labor sessions). In his work “Logic, Semiotics, Hermeneutics”, philosopher M. Abdullaev highlights the importance of examining both the explicit and symbolic interpretations of social occurrences in order to arrive at a thorough understanding [4].

Studying social justice in the context of Uzbekistan requires the use of the historical-genetic method in addition to the methodological techniques already mentioned. This approach goes beyond simply documenting the current status of social justice-related ideas and activities; it also entails tracking their historical development, determining their sources, and examining the phases of their evolution. For instance, examining the Soviet-era model of social justice (social equality and state-guaranteed social protection) and its enduring traces in public consciousness, as well as the transformation of these concepts during the transition to a market economy in the years of independence, necessitates a historical-genetic approach [5]. As emphasized in numerous scholarly publications by the Institute of History of the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, a deep understanding of contemporary social issues requires thorough comprehension of their historical roots, particularly those embedded in the history of the 20th century [6].

Thus, the methodological strategy of this study is based on the dialectical integration of a systematic approach, comparative-philosophical analysis, sociological methods, hermeneutic and semiotic analysis, historical-genetic method, as well as normative and descriptive analysis. These methodological principles provide a solid theoretical foundation for a comprehensive and in-depth examination of the issue of social justice in the context of New Uzbekistan, taking into account its national and cultural specificities [7].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To broaden the methodological spectrum for studying social justice, the axiological approach (value-based approach) holds particular significance. This approach considers social justice not merely as a social phenomenon or theoretical concept, but as one of the most important values for both society and the individual. Axiological analysis helps to identify the position of the value of social justice within the system of other societal values (such as freedom, security, stability, and economic efficiency) and to understand its interrelationships with them. In some cases, these values complement each other, while in others, they may be in tension or conflict. For instance, placing excessive emphasis on economic efficiency may undermine social justice, whereas measures implemented to ensure social justice can, in some cases, lead to a slowdown in economic activity [8]. Uzbek philosopher M. Imomnazarov, in his work "Foundations of our national spirituality", analyzes the regulatory role of values in social life and emphasizes that societal development depends on achieving a balance between material and spiritual values. Identifying and maintaining this balance constitutes one of the primary tasks in the study of social justice [9].

It is logically appropriate to conclude the analysis of methodological approaches with the civilizational perspective. This approach requires examining the issue of social justice not within the confines of a single state or region, but within a broader context, that of the distinctive characteristics of Uzbek civilization. According to the civilizational approach, each civilization possesses its unique cultural-historical code, worldview, and system of values. Consequently, notions of social justice are also shaped within this civilizational framework. The distinctiveness of Uzbek civilization is defined by its location at the crossroads of East and West and its embodiment of a synthesis of Turkic and Islamic cultures [10]. Within this context, the concept of justice may assume unique forms that differ both from the individualistic legal traditions of the West and the communal-paternalistic traditions of the East. As emphasized in the research of political scientist R.M. Alimov on Uzbekistan's geopolitical position, "any attempt to implement a socio-political model without taking into account the country's civilizational distinctiveness is ineffective". Accordingly, the civilizational approach allows us to seek and theoretically substantiate a model of social justice for Uzbekistan that is not only effective but also organically aligned with its cultural-historical nature [11].

Thus, the integrated and comprehensive application of all the aforementioned methodological approaches, systemic, comparative-philosophical, sociological, hermeneutic, historical-genetic, normative-descriptive, axiological, and civilizational, serves as a necessary condition and a reliable methodological foundation for conducting an in-depth and multidimensional scientific-philosophical analysis of a complex and multifaceted phenomenon such as social justice in the context of New Uzbekistan [12].

The praxiological approach is another significant strategy that enhances the methods used to analyze social justice. This method examines social justice as a direct result of human behavior and practical activity rather than as an abstract theoretical concept. Praxiology examines the rules of "effective action" to determine whether social

initiatives, legal standards, and political decisions that strive to achieve social justice are effective in practice and yield the desired outcomes. In other words, enacting just laws alone is insufficient; it is crucial to ensure the effectiveness and practical viability of their implementation. As philosopher F.R. Yuldashev emphasizes, “Social practice serves as the primary criterion for the validity of theory. Any theoretical model of social justice, if it fails to yield positive results in practice, remains merely a well-intentioned idea”. This approach shifts the focus of research from theoretical debates to the analysis of practical mechanisms and their effectiveness [13].

Lastly, the interdisciplinary approach emerges as a unifying principle of all the previously described methodological methods. It is impossible to thoroughly examine social justice within the parameters of a single subject because it is such a complicated and multidimensional topic. It includes aspects related to philosophy, sociology, law, economics, politics, history, and culture. Therefore, the integration, indeed, the synthesis, of the methodological instruments, conceptual frameworks, and accomplishments from these many domains of research is necessary for an effective examination. For instance, while economics measures the degree of inequality in society, sociology and social psychology examine whether this inequality is perceived as just or unjust, and legal science analyzes its juridical foundations; underlying value-related and worldview issues are explored by philosophy. As noted in the collective monograph “Methodology of contemporary humanitarian sciences”, “Addressing the complex global and local challenges of the twenty-first century is possible only on the basis of interdisciplinary integration”.

The methodological foundation of this study is precisely based on such a complex, interdisciplinary approach, aiming to examine the issue of social justice in the dialectical unity of theoretical and practical, universal and national, historical and contemporary aspects. This, in turn, logically concludes the first chapter of the dissertation and provides a solid theoretical and methodological basis for transitioning to practical analysis in the subsequent chapters.

The institutional approach is one methodological approach to social justice research that merits special consideration. This method views social justice as the result of actual social institutions, both formal and informal laws, customs, and organizations, functioning within society rather than as an abstract concept or a collection of personal opinions. This viewpoint holds that the efficiency and equity of governmental institutions, including the legislative, judicial, educational, healthcare, and taxation systems, are closely related to the degree of justice in society.

According to Douglas North, one of the classical theorists of institutionalism, the long-term economic development of a society depends fundamentally on the institutional environment it has established, particularly the reliable protection of property rights and the existence of effective institutions that ensure the unquestioned enforcement of contracts. Applied to the issue of social justice, this idea implies that citizens’ trust in the state and in one another, the attractiveness of the investment climate,

and the development of entrepreneurship all rely on institutions that establish fair “rules of the game” and guarantee their adherence.

Furthermore, the institutional method makes it possible to analyze both official and informal institutions, including the mahalla, the family, and customs. As previously mentioned, unofficial organizations such as the mahalla are essential to maintaining social justice in Uzbekistan. They sometimes function better than official legal structures, settling social conflicts more quickly and fairly. As the Uzbek economist B. Khodiev emphasizes in his works on institutional economics, “successful modernization requires the harmonious development of formal and informal institutions, with each complementing the other” [14].

It is also necessary to complement the methodological framework for studying social justice with the method of political-legal analysis. This approach examines the issue of social justice directly within the context of power relations, political processes, and the practice of legislation. No matter how elevated the ideals of justice may be, their practical implementation ultimately depends on factors such as the will of the political elite, inter-party competition, the legislative process, and the independence of the judiciary.

Moreover, the political-legal approach also examines citizens’ opportunities to protect their rights. Issues such as the independence of the judiciary, access to fair trials, and the effectiveness of the Ombudsman (Human Rights Commissioner) are crucial indicators of social justice in practice. As the Uzbek legal scholar Professor H.B. Boboyev notes in his research, “the law may be perfect on paper, but without an effective judicial-legal system to ensure its implementation, it loses its force”. This perspective highlights that studying social justice requires analyzing not only legislation but also the practical application of law and its effectiveness [15].

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : This study identifies that social justice in the context of New Uzbekistan is a complex socio-philosophical phenomenon that necessitates an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating legal, political, economic, and spiritual dimensions. **Implication :** The findings underscore the importance of integrating institutional, spiritual, and value-based systems to achieve justice, suggesting that social justice can be effectively implemented through collaboration between state policies, civil society organizations, and the mahalla system. **Limitation :** The study's focus on theoretical and methodological frameworks may limit its direct applicability to specific policy interventions, and the examination of practical applications remains underexplored in some contexts. **Future Research :** Future studies should investigate the practical mechanisms of implementing social justice in Uzbekistan, exploring the effectiveness of the proposed interdisciplinary framework and examining the influence of local institutions on justice outcomes in different regions of the country.

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