Current Commentary
Social Injustice in the Industrial Revolution 4.0

Aprila Niravita
Faculty of Law, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
Managing Editor, Indonesian Journal of Advocacy and Legal Services
✉ ijals@mail.unnes.ac.id, aprilaniravita@mail.unnes.ac.id

SOCIAL JUSTICE issues can occur in relation to practically any aspect of society where inequality can arise as a result of unjust prejudices or policies.[1] Social justice issues can be delineated into two categories, although they are often co-dependent: Inter-Social Treatment and Unequal Government Regulation.[2]

Unequal Government Regulation involves laws and regulations that purposefully or otherwise create conditions that obstruct, limit, or deny a group(s) access to the same opportunities and resources, relative to the rest of society. These laws can intentionally (explicitly) or unintentionally (implicitly) create the conditions for social injustice. Areas in which government policy often gives rise to social inequality and injustice include:[3]
1. Voting Laws (i.e. redistricting and voter ID)
2. Policing Laws (i.e. traffic, search and seizure, and drug scheduling)
3. Environmental Laws (i.e. clean water and air, industrial waste disposal)
4. Health Care Laws (i.e. insurance mandates and coverage eligibility)
5. Education Laws (i.e. public school segregation and integration)
6. Labor Laws (i.e. worker's rights, occupational health and safety)

Social justice is a concept of fair and just relations between the individual and society. This is measured by the explicit and tacit terms for the distribution of wealth, opportunities for personal activity, and social privileges. In Western as well as in older Asian cultures, the concept of social justice has often referred to the process of ensuring that individuals

---

[1]   https://www.pachamama.org/social-justice/social-justice-issues
[2]   *Ibid.*
[3]   *Ibid.*

fulfill their societal roles and receive what was their due from society.[4] In the current global grassroots movements for social justice, the emphasis has been on the breaking of barriers for social mobility, the creation of safety nets and economic justice.[5]

Social justice assigns rights and duties in the institutions of society, which enables people to receive the basic benefits and burdens of cooperation. The relevant institutions often include taxation, social insurance, public health, public school, public services, labor law and regulation of markets, to ensure fair distribution of wealth, and equal opportunity.[6]

In the further context, social injustice can be described as a situation in which dominant population is made known of the inequity that leads for others due to their relative position in the structure of power. Social injustice is also the way unjust actions are done in the society. Social injustice occurs in a situation where the equals are treated unequally and the unequal is treated equally. Three common examples of social injustice include: discrimination, ageism, and homophobia.[7]

One of social injustice is discrimination, and discrimination itself is found in education, housing, employment, voting, lending and credit, land use, health care services, transportation, public accommodations, and government benefits and services. Discrimination is described as unequal treatment of persons, for a reason which has nothing to do with legal rights or ability. Discrimination is considered illegal by the federal and state laws of the United States of America. These laws prohibit discrimination in employment, availability of housing, rates of pay, right to promotion, educational opportunity, civil rights, and use of facilities based on race, nationality, creed, color, age, sex, or sexual orientation. Discrimination

---

[4] Aristotle, *The Politics* (ca 350 BC); Clark, Mary T. (2015). *"Augustine on Justice,"* a Chapter in *Augustine and Social Justice*. Lexington Books. pp. 3–10. ISBN 978-1-4985-0918-3*;* Banai, Ayelet; Ronzoni, Miriam; Schemmel, Christian (2011). *Social Justice, Global Dynamics: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives*. Florence: Taylor and Francis. *ISBN 978-0-203-81929-6.*

[5] Kitching, G. N. (2001). *Seeking Social Justice Through Globalization Escaping a Nationalist Perspective*. University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press. pp. 3–10. ISBN 978-0-271-02377-9. Hillman, Arye L. (2008). "Globalization and Social Justice". *The Singapore Economic Review*. 53 (2): 173-189. DOI*: 10.1142/s0217590808002896;* Agartan*,* Kaan (2014*).* "Globalization and the Question of Social Justice". *Sociology Compass*. 8 (6): 903–915. DOI: 10.1111/soc4.12162*;* El Khoury, Ann (2015). *Globalization Development and Social Justice : A propositional political approach*. Florence: Taylor and Francis. pp. 1–20. ISBN 978-1-317-50480-1*;* Lawrence, Cecile & Natalie Churn (2012). *Movements in Time Revolution, Social Justice, and Times of Change*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Pub. pp. xi–xv. ISBN 978-1-4438-4552-6.

[6] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (1971) 4, "the principles of social justice: they provide a way of assigning rights and duties in the basic institutions of society and they define the appropriate distribution of benefits and burdens of social co-operation."

[7] Chinemerem Isioma, Social Injustice: Discrimination, *Elevate - The Honor Society Magazine*, April 14, 2016, https://www.honorsociety.org/articles/social-injustice-discrimination

always promotes or reveals unfair treatment of a person or a particular group of people on the basis of prejudice and partiality which could lead to emotions such as frustration and anger. Discrimination seen or considered as a mild or serious form of suffering, with anger sometimes, in particular, if applicable, anger at the person or persons who caused it. This is why discrimination is considered or seen as a social injustice issue in our society today.[8]

In the other hands—the Industrial Revolution 4.0 Era—brings it own challenges, especially for social justice and law protection for people. Beth R. Holland emphasized that technology has always instigated revolution—whether the development of tools to progress from the stone age to an agricultural society, advancements in steam and electricity to propel the Industrial Revolution, or the introduction of computers into the labor market to activate the knowledge economy. In 2016, at the World Economic Forum, scholars, entrepreneurs, and thought-leaders announced the arrival of a new, 4th Industrial Revolution. One marked not by a single technology but by the fusion of digital, physical, and biological systems that could fundamentally change the nature of what it means to be human.[9]

The 4th Industrial Revolution requires us to be human and humane, knowledgeable and adept at seeking out new knowledge, capable of building connections as well as seeing them within a complex network of digital sources. Education will require more than just the acquisition of basic skills and will need to include the ability to forge connections with others—both in person and online, to promote the shared values of society, and to recognize the role of technology in fostering a global community. In this new era, technology brings the promise of equity in access to information and the possibility for advancement in society. However, for this revolution to occur, we—as educators—need to stop talking about technology as boxes, wires, and tools. Instead, we need to recognize it as an opportunity to prepare all students for success in a global community. Failure to do so would be nothing short of social injustice.[10]

In the same context, Christophe Degryse, stated that 4th industrial revolution also contains its share of new risks in the world of labour, including the 'remake' of existing jobs, the destruction of many of them, the relocation of countless others. For society as a whole, it is a prospect accompanied by the threat of increased polarisation between the 'winners' and the 'losers' of the digital economy.[11]

---

[8]   *Ibid.*

[9]   Beth R. Holland*, Technology: The Social Justice Issue of the 4th Industrial Revolution,* 2017, https://brholland.com/technology-the-social-justice-issue-of-the-4th-industrial-revolution-2/

[10]   *Ibid.*

[11]   Christophe Degryse, Here Are the New Social Risks of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, *Social Europe,* February 29, 2016, https://www.socialeurope.eu/here-are-the-new-social-risks-of-the-fourth-industrial-revolution

Even, it is also stated that Industrial Revolution 4.0, set to trigger fundamental socio-economic transformations across the globe. The complexity, scale and depth of this industrial revolution are expected to transcend those of its predecessors, as the bulk of imminent technological breakthroughs are likely to have an impact on the organization of our daily lives.[12]

The 4th Industrial Revolution also gives the potential for extensive social challenges, tensions and erosion of certain values is also colossal as we approach a new Industrial Revolution. To start with, increased automation and widespread use of robotic technology might substantially disrupt the existing structure of labor markets and escalate unemployment and could yield to greater economic inequalities over time. The gap between highly skilled, highly paid white collar employees and low skilled, low paid blue collar labor is set to increase at a greater pace with the added importance of technological integration and emphasis on innovation, which might, in turn, gradually weaken the middle classes and stimulate democratic apathy.[13]

But more importantly, intense exposure to mass communications, integrated knowledge systems and digital marketing is likely to eradicate the sense of personal and communal privacy. Both employees involved in the production and distribution stages of the economic cycle, and individual consumers will be closely monitored through artificial intelligence and digitization, which will leave very limited space for personal privacy. Furthermore, increased automation and digitization is bound to accelerate the isolation of individuals as economic units and weaken existing bonds of family and kinship. Traditional social relations that start from the family and expand through neighborhood groupings, religious affiliations and hometown associations could weaken, producing a vacuum of belongingness over the course of the paradigmatic transition. Common values transferred from one generation to the next, such as faith, ethics, decency, respect, tolerance, justice and compassion might be increasingly difficult to disseminate as humanity is surrounded by an integrated network of machines, robots and computers.[14]

Social challenges are mainly the immense risk of cybercrime due to increased connectivity, and job losses due to the automation of large segments of operations in many industries as part of Industry 4.0. Although new opportunities may appear for high-skill categories, as argued by Drucker[15], but will the volume of these new jobs meet the supply of labour?

---

[12] "Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Social Values: Industrial Revolution 4.0, set to trigger fundamental socio-economic transformations across the globe", *Daily Sabah*, February 25, 2017, https://www.setav.org/en/industrial-revolution-4-0-and-social-values/

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] P Drucker, 2014. *Innovation and Entrepreneurship.* New York: Routledge; Rabeh Morrar, Husam Arman, Saeed Mousa, The Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0): A Social Innovation Perspective, *Technology Innovation Management Review*, November 2017, Volume 7, Issue 11, pp. 12-20. http://doi.org/10.22215/timreview/1117

In addition to automation, the rapid development and recent successes of artificial intelligence in business domains have raised the bar. IBM has already made leaf frog development of system solutions in different obvious fields, and Watson of IBM is a striking example[16].

Finally, as emphasized by some previous research, that The 4th Industrial Revolution has it own challenges and opportunities for society, as well as for empowering society in various sectors, such as education, culture, social, economic, and law with its protection.[17]

References

Aristotle, *The Politics* (ca 350 BC)

Agartan*,* Kaan (2014*).* "Globalization and the Question of Social Justice". *Sociology Compass.* 8 (6): 903–915. DOI: 10.1111/soc4.12162

Ariyanti, D.O., & Ramadhan, M. (2019). Legal Education against the Impact of Social Media in the Era of Information Disclosure for Pringgokusuman Residents in Yogyakarta, *Indonesian Journal of Advocacy and Legal Services*, 1(1), 129-134.

Banai, Ayelet; Ronzoni, Miriam; Schemmel, Christian (2011). *Social Justice, Global Dynamics: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives*. Florence: Taylor and Francis. ISBN 978-0-203-81929-6.

Beth R. Holland*, Technology: The Social Justice Issue of the 4th Industrial Revolution,* 2017, https://brholland.com/technology-the-social-justice-issue-of-the-4th-industrial-revolution-2/

Christophe Degryse, Here Are the New Social Risks of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, *Social Europe,* February 29, 2016, https://www.socialeurope.eu/here-are-the-new-social-risks-of-the-fourth-industrial-revolution

---

[16] Waters, R. 2016. Artificial Intelligence: Can Watson Save IBM? *Financial Times,* January 5, 2016, https://www.ft.com/content/dced8150-b300-11e5-8358-9a82b43f6b2f; Rabeh Morrar, Husam Arman, Saeed Mousa, The Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0): A Social Innovation Perspective, *Technology Innovation Management Review*, November 2017, Volume 7, Issue 11, pp. 12-20. http://doi.org/10.22215/timreview/1117

[17] Nur Moh. Kasim, Sri Nanang Meiske Kamba, Implementation of Assistance for Victims of Domestic Violence, *Indonesian Journal of Advocacy and Legal Services*, Vol. 1 No. 1, 2019, pp. 147-156; M. Shidqon Prabowo, Anto Kustanto, Harmonization of Law No. 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage in the Preservation of Cultural Heritage Objects of Semarang City, *Indonesian Journal of Advocacy and Legal Services*, Vol. 1 No. 1, 2019, pp. 135-146; Dwi Oktafia Ariyanti, Muhammad Ramadhan, Legal Education against the Impact of Social Media in the Era of Information Disclosure for Pringgokusuman Residents in Yogyakarta, In*donesian Journal of Advocacy and Legal Services*, Vol. 1 No. 1, 2019, pp. 129-134; Sarno Setiawan, Muhammad Afis Saifunuha, Jauza Lasta Kautsar, Cahya Wulandari, Community Empowerment on Establishment of Friendly-Village for Women and Children, Indonesian Journal of Advocacy and Legal Services, Vol. 1 No. 1, 2019, pp. *Indonesian Journal of Advocacy and Legal Services*, Vol. 1 No. 1, 2019, pp. 5-22.

Chinemerem Isioma, Social Injustice: Discrimination, *Elevate - The Honor Society Magazine*, April 14, 2016, https://www.honorsociety.org/articles/social-injustice-discrimination

Clark, Mary T. (2015). *"Augustine on Justice,"* a Chapter in *Augustine and Social Justice.* Lexington Books. pp. 3–10. ISBN 978-1-4985-0918-3

Drucker, P. 2014. *Innovation and Entrepreneurship.* New York: Routledge

El Khoury, Ann (2015). *Globalization Development and Social Justice : A propositional political approach.* Florence: Taylor and Francis. pp. 1–20. ISBN 978-1-317-50480-1

Hillman, Arye L. (2008). "Globalization and Social Justice". *The Singapore Economic Review.* 53 (2): 173-189. DOI: 10.1142/s0217590808002896

https://www.pachamama.org/social-justice/social-justice-issues

"Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Social Values: Industrial Revolution 4.0, set to trigger fundamental socio-economic transformations across the globe", *Daily Sabah*, February 25, 2017, https://www.setav.org/en/industrial-revolution-4-0-and-social-values/

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (1971) 4, "the principles of social justice: they provide a way of assigning rights and duties in the basic institutions of society and they define the appropriate distribution of benefits and burdens of social co-operation."

Kasim, N.M., & Kamba, S.N.M. (2019). Implementation of Assistance for Victims of Domestic Violence, *Indonesian Journal of Advocacy and Legal Services*, 1(1), pp. 147-156.

Kitching, G. N. (2001). *Seeking Social Justice Through Globalization Escaping a Nationalist Perspective.* University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press. pp. 3–10. ISBN 978-0-271-02377-9.

Lawrence, Cecile & Natalie Churn (2012). *Movements in Time Revolution, Social Justice, and Times of Change.* Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Pub. pp. xi–xv. ISBN 978-1-4438-4552-6.

Prabowo, M.S., & Kustanto, A. (2019). Harmonization of Law No. 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage in the Preservation of Cultural Heritage Objects of Semarang City, *Indonesian Journal of Advocacy and Legal Services*, 1(1), 135-146.

Rabeh Morrar, Husam Arman, Saeed Mousa, The Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0): A Social Innovation Perspective, *Technology Innovation Management Review*, November 2017, Volume 7, Issue 11, pp. 12-20. http://doi.org/10.22215/timreview/1117

Setiawan, S., Saifunuha, M.A., Kautsar, J.L., & Wulandari, C. (2019). Indonesian Journal of Advocacy and Legal Services, 1(1), 5-22.

Waters, R. 2016. Artificial Intelligence: Can Watson Save IBM? *Financial Times,* January 5, 2016, https://www.ft.com/content/dced8150-b300-11e5-8358-9a82b43f6b2f