



WHAT DOES INEQUALITY MEAN?

“Despite thousands of researchers dedicating their careers to studying inequalities, surprisingly there are practically no rigorous definitions of the concept (...). Put simply, it is used with the assumption that we know what it means, without clarifying **why we feel entitled to call certain things or situations “unequal” and not others.**”¹

According to John Rawls, “regarding inequality it is best to understand not *any* difference between offices and positions, but **differences in the benefits** and burdens attached to them either directly or indirectly: such as wealth”². In that case, would the relationship between an English

aristocrat and a Guatemalan field worker be necessarily unequal? Yes, **if we understand “inequality” to mean the lack of balance between situations or people.**

Applying the thinking of the philosopher Searle, the answer to this question will depend on the perspective of the observer. In other words, according to Searle, the concept of inequality entails certain subjectivity. However, it would seem reasonably objective to affirm that there is indeed true inequality in cases in which the distance between the people involved generates stigmatism and perpetuates social rupture.

¹ NOGERA, José Antonio, *Sobre el concepto de desigualdad en ciencias sociales*.

² RAWLS, John, *Justice as Fairness* (1958) in *Justice as Fairness* (Madrid, Tecnos, 1986), p.80



INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The right to equality implies that **everyone, in any part of the world, is entitled to exercise all their rights and freedoms**. This is true regardless of the “race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”³ In this respect, **in order for everyone to exercise their fundamental rights in complete equality, there is a direct relationship with the idea of social justice**.

Social justice is a fundamental principle for peaceful and prosperous coexistence. Social justice exists where we break down the barriers that generate gaps between people. In accordance with the Social Justice in the EU Index Report 2017⁴, the presence or absence of social justice in a State can be measured by taking the following six values into consideration:

- **Preventing poverty:** based on the unemployment, social exclusion, material deprivation and incomes of families.
- **Equity in education:** the socio-economic origin of students cannot determine their academic results.
- **Quality labour market:** data related to the salary level, youth unemployment, labour

opportunities for people with little training or the percentage of informal job positions held are taken into account.

- **Social cohesion and non-discrimination:** this measures the extent to which each society tends to polarise, or if there are exclusion and discrimination phenomena for certain groups. The social inclusion, integration and non-discrimination policies in each country are analysed.

- **Universal healthcare cover:** increased poverty cannot mean more people that do not access essential treatments. Healthcare policies and life expectancy reveal important information linked to social justice.

- **Intergenerational justice:** this fundamentally refers to the fact that current generations should not take on the expense of future ones. Unfair transfers have very negative economic, social and environmental consequences, and must be avoided.

These and other dimensions are included within the ten targets of Sustainable Development Goal 10, which seeks to reduce inequalities both within and among countries.



³ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 2.

⁴ Social Justice in the EU – Index Report 2017, *Social European Journal*



REDUCING INEQUALITIES IN THE BROADEST OF SENSES

SDG 10 is one of the broadest and most ambitious targets put forward in Agenda 2030. It addresses very diverse problems, all essential for **reducing inequalities in and between the countries**.

The first three targets of this goal highlight **key aspects of the right to equality**: to achieve income growth of the poorest populations (target 10.1), to promote both social inclusion (target 10.2) and equal opportunities (10.3).

Next, SDG10 refers to **requirements for making this right to equality a reality**: improving policies and regulations for markets and social protection (targets 10.4 and 10.5), and promoting the Official Development Assistance (ODA) (target 10.b).

Moreover, **this broad objective is aimed specifically at favouring the most vulnerable people and countries**.

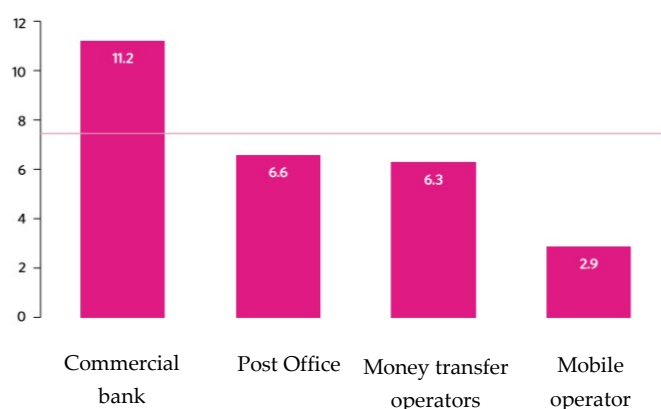
In particular, in terms of the most disadvantaged countries, Agenda 2030 indicates a need to ensure their enhanced representation and voice in international decision-making (target 10.6).

Regarding the most vulnerable people, it focuses on migrants, calling for the facilitation of “orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration

and mobility of people” (target 10.7). With regard to these migratory movements, SDG 10 is particularly concerned with one key issue: remittances and the high cost of transferring money to their home countries.

The benefits generated by international migrants on the finances of their families in their countries of origin are highly significant. However, the value of these remittances is notably reduced by the high cost of transfers. Globally, the cost of remitting money is more than 7% of the total amount sent, and commercial bank or postal office remittances are the most expensive option. Target 10.c aims to keep this cost below 3%, but to achieve this, new technologies must reach all parts of the world (mobile operators).

Total average cost of sending money via remittance service providers, first quarter of 2017 (percentage of the total amount sent). Source: SDG Report 2017.





WHO CAN DO WHAT?



ON AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) is the international organisation that deals with the regulations governing trade between countries. Their aim is to help goods and service producers, exporters and importers to develop their activity. In accordance with the WTO agreements, target 10.a proposes to apply the principle of the special and differential treatment for the least developed countries so as to improve their trade relations.



ON A NATIONAL LEVEL

It is essential that Spain, and each country on an internal level, applies “orderly and well-managed migratory policies” as established in target 10.7. EU countries should be required to comply with target 10.7 when faced with the cruelty of the crisis that refugees fleeing from conflict in their countries are undergoing.



Cruz Roja

ON A LOCAL LEVEL

The Red Cross is one of the organisations that participates in managing the welcome programme for people requesting international protection in each city in Spain. Discover its work in [this video](#).



AND WHAT CAN YOU DO?

“When you are born poor, studying is the greatest act of rebellion against the system. Knowing breaks the chains of slavery” (Tomás Bulat).

Infant and Primary Pupils

Have you ever stopped to think why “skin” colour paint is pale, when in reality there is an infinite number of skin colours? You could create a mural with your pupils in which they draw people with all the “skin” colours of the world. For inspiration, watch [this video](#) made by Ubuntuland in class. Discover their initiative for painting skin colours on their [website](#).

With Primary pupils you could reflect on why we discriminate against people because of the colour of their skin when we are all “skin coloured”.

Secondary and Baccalaureate

Achieving SDG 10 depends on creating a global, inclusive and equitable citizenship. Watch [this video](#), which explains the genetic inheritance between ethnic groups, and create an activity in which each student makes a genealogical tree. Their predecessors will be from different regions or countries. Either individually or in groups, they could choose one of these regions or countries and perform a brief demographic study through history to learn which populations have lived in this region (if it is Spain: Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Visigoths, Muslims, etc.). You could reflect on the genetic inheritance that we have thanks to the migratory patterns in the past.

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