Social Justice in Social Policy

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Abstract
It is claimed that social justice is firmly on the political agenda and is a major concern of numerous policy documents, think tanks and research units. However, ‘social justice’ can be seen as a poorly defined ‘motherhood and apple pie’ term. Virtually everyone is in favour of ‘social justice’ but their interpretations of the term vary widely (there are many different varieties of apple!). We examine how the social policy literature defines social justice. First, we develop a template from the social justice literature of concepts (for example, patterned versus process; equity versus equality; autonomy versus solidarity; distributional criteria) drawing upon the work of the most influential authors in this area (eg Rawls, Nozick, Plant, Miller etc). Then, we report some early findings from a project designed to explore the concept as it is codified in different aspects of the social policy literature.

Introduction
At a time when public resources have become a battleground and the state is in the process of withdrawing welfare support in so many different directions the subject of ‘social justice’ has become of increasing importance (Policy Exchange 2010, 2011). However, although its significance is almost universally accepted, social justice remains a highly contested concept, and nowhere are these two assertions more evident than in the establishment of the Commission for Social Justice by the Labour Party in 1992, and the Conservative’s Centre for Social Justice in 2004 (see Burchardt and Craig, 2008).

Miller (1999: ix) writes that social justice is an idea that is central to the politics of contemporary democracies. Spicker (1988: 135) claims that the concept of
Social justice has attracted more attention in recent years than any other question in political theory. However, if social justice is a vital concept for politics, political theory and society as a whole then we would argue that it sits at the very heart of what social policy is about. For example, Lavalette and Pratt maintain that ‘at the heart of social policy debates lies a series of ‘contested concepts such as equality, justice and rights’ (2006: 105). Similarly, Daly (2011) argues that welfare is bound up with moral discussions about precepts such as equality, justice, freedom and rights, and implicit in this is the recognition that different ideas about social justice are fielded in different time periods, places and policy contexts (Newman and Yeates, 2008).

The quality of these debates and their relationship to knowledge in allied areas has been a source of frustration for some commentators, where many principal works in modern political theory have been divorced from the reality of social and political issues:

…the space travellers in Ackerman’s (1981) bizarre discussion of social justice. When well-respected books moulder about the ‘right to walk on my hands’ (Raz, 1986) or whether we can have a library in our back yard (Nozick, 1974), I have to curb my exasperation (Spicker, 2006: vi).

In a similar vein Piachaud (2008) could suggest: ‘For practitioners of social policy, concerned with the practical policies reflecting many motivations, social justice is often a remote reference point, as abstruse as a lecture on thermodynamics to someone on the footplate of a steam engine’. Burchardt and Craig (2008) aimed to bridge the gap between political philosophy and social policy by taking into account the practical limitations of the former, and the unwillingness of the latter to adequately refer to theories of social justice.

The meaning and application of social justice in social policy writing is the subject of this paper. What we present here is the first part of an extensive project examining the meaning and applicability of social justice more broadly as a core social scientific, philosophical and political ideal. The findings are drawn from a two-stage comparative documentary analysis of two front-line
Social Justice

There are various definitions of social justice. In the tradition of typical social policy students we commence with a definition from Wikipedia: ‘Social justice generally refers to the idea of creating a society or institution that is based on the principles of equality and solidarity that understands and values human rights, and that recognises the dignity of every human being’. The traditional definition of social justice is in terms of distributive issues, and social justice and distributive justice are often used interchangeably (eg Miller, 1976, 1999). Rawls (1971) regards justice as fairness. Harvey (1973: 97) argues that justice is essentially a principle (or set of principles) for resolving conflicting claims. Miller (1976) defines social justice by its root meaning ‘suum cuique’ - ‘to each his own’. Miller (1999: 1) defines social justice as ‘how the good and bad things in life should be distributed among the members of a human society’. However, there has been a recent trend to define social justice in terms of recognition as well as redistribution (see below; eg Miller, 1999: 15-7).

There are a number of typologies of social justice. One differentiates ‘patterned’ from ‘historical’, ‘processual’, ‘procedural’ or ‘entitlement’ views (eg Nozick, 1974). A historical view examines the process by which distributions came into being. According to Nozick (1974: 151), ‘a distribution is just if it arises from another just distribution by legitimate means’. In other words, it is necessary to inquire how a particular distribution came about. Patterned distributions are broadly based on ‘to each according to their x’, where x is a principle such as need, merit or desert. Patterns can be based on arithmetic equality (cutting a cake into equal slices) or proportional equality (where unequal slices are justified on some other principle).

Discussions in the social justice/philosophy literature discuss different elements or bases of social justice. For example, Sen argues that patterned principles of social justice can be seen in terms of “to each according to his or
her X”. There is a range of competing principles: for example, merit, desert, worth, entitlement, need (Plant et al., 1980) need, worth, work and merit (Titmuss, 1968); need, contribution to the common good and merit (Runciman, 1966; Harvey, 1973); and rights, desert and need (Miller, 1976). There are large debates about the categorisation and content of these principles. Moreover, few of the above writers have made significant attempts to apply their criteria to welfare distributions.

According to Harvey (1973: 99-100), several criteria have been suggested: inherent equality; valuation of services in terms of supply and demand; need; inherited rights; merit; contribution to common good; actual productive contribution; efforts and sacrifices. These eight are not mutually exclusive and they obviously require much more detailed interpretation and analysis. He follows Runciman (1966) in a weak ordering of need, contribution to common good, and merit. Harvey (1973: 98) writes that ‘unfortunately there is no one generally accepted principle of social justice to which we can appeal.’

**Methods**

Using Web of Knowledge we searched articles in two social policy journals: *Critical Social Policy* (CSP) and *Social Policy and Administration* (SPA) over a ten year period (2000-2010) using a set of key search terms. As discussed earlier we intend to extend this work much further, but facing limited time and other restrictions, we elected to start with these journals because they represent the mainstream (SPA) and more critical/radical (CSP) wings of social policy scholarship.

Table 1 gives the ‘raw’ numbers and the number of full text articles read after excluding articles focused on legal/criminal justice; gender equality. We decided to exclude these articles as studies on (eg) intergenerational fairness, gender and ‘race’ equality, equal opportunities tend to draw on their own conceptual literature rather than the wider and broader social justice literature. In addition, we ‘hand searched’ titles and abstracts to capture articles without the relevant key words but with some discussion of social justice.
Table 1

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There is a small element of ‘double counting’; for example Smart (CSP) includes equal and rights, and so is counted under both terms.

Table 1 shows results from three journals. It is clear that there are relatively few finally included articles. Across the three journals, there are 9 articles on rights, 6 on equality, 4 on justice, 3 on need, 1 on merit and none on desert. Citations of included articles seemed fairly low, with the leading articles being Such and Walker (2005) [15], Dean (2003), Kerr (2003), Osborne (2003) [all 13], Powell and Boyne (2001) [12] and Rummery and Glendinning (2000) [10]. One of the articles that most engaged with social justice (Kangas 2000) received no citations.

The discussion below reports only on the critical evaluation carried out on the articles sampled from CSP and SPA. A number of strong inter-related themes emerged from the initial critical evaluation. Perhaps the strongest of these was the limited extent to which the authors discussed the overall meaning of social justice.

Social justice as a general ‘hurrah’ concept
When social justice was mentioned as a general principle efforts to describe and define it were sometimes surprisingly shallow and patchy. Certainly the philosophical divisions and models were rarely called upon to orient such discussions (see below). There were degrees and variations of this. At one level there were authors who referred to social justice with no attempt to
define it, even where it had a central role to play in their argument. Noteworthy was Connor’s (2007) employment of a critical discourse analysis to evaluate New Labour’s anti-fraud campaign directed at benefit fraud, and his conclusion that it signified moral authoritarianism combined with a desire for social justice; social justice was left to hang as if its meaning were uncontested.

Moving away from the tendency to merely present social justice as a generalised phrase was the approach of setting it out with a few component parts. For example, Hopton (2006) discusses the role of critical psychiatry in questioning the basis for social justice, fairness and equality, but does not really attempt to unpick these notions except to specify that equality means access to treatment and services. This gives the reader more to work with but still falls short of providing a coherent analytical framework.

Another alternative was to define social justice in the negative, as per the declaration by Thomas et al. (1998) that social justice cannot simply be achieved by redistributing resources and removing inequality. Conversely, Law and Mooney (2006: 537) in reviewing Scottish social policy, suggest that: ‘With the Scottish Executive, social inclusion, antisocial behaviour, community, social capital and the pursuit of social justice are understood as principally economic issues, encapsulated in policy discourses of ‘competition and cohesion’. Social justice for them clearly does not reside in policies that facilitate market-driven inequalities.

Next in this category was the equation of social justice with another loosely defined concept. A very common feature of the articles sampled was to simply equate social justice with social democracy and in turn to see social democracy as the engine of the post-war welfare state (Sales, 2002; Mizen, 2003; Orton, 2004; Beresford, 2005). Bringing this up-to-date in terms of political commentary, Sevenhuijsen (2000) attempts to enhance the ‘new social democracy’ (NSD) of Giddens by adding an ethic of care as a right of democratic citizenship. In this formulation NSD has four core ingredients: social justice, emancipation, equality and social cohesion. However, where
social justice was considered as a concept in its own right it was presented as a simple composite of emancipation and equality. How this then fed back into the structure of NSD was not entirely clear. At a lower level of conceptual abstraction, some authors regarded social inclusion as the basis of social justice (Baker et al., 2006).

A variant of the equation approach involved talking about the means to achieve social justice without spelling out exactly what it meant. Powell (2000) refers to the reliance of the Old Left on the welfare system, the New Right on the market and the Middle Way’s belief in social investment in human capital. Although the work of Levitas (1998) on competing discourses is cited, this does not fully address the deficit. Some articles, then, referred to social justice while avoiding defining it clearly, resulting in social justice being a rather vague and broad ‘hurrah’ concept like ‘motherhood and apple pie’.

**Social justice as a ‘Humpty Dumpty’ concept.**

Some other writers tended to use social justice as a ‘Humpty Dumpty’ concept (when I use a word, it means just what I want it to mean). For example, most articles tend to assert bases of social justice without much discussion, and social justice is often limited explicitly or implicitly to one element such as ‘need’. Sometimes ‘equality’ is discussed without reference to different types of equality (see eg Le Grand, 1982). However, Prabhaker (2009) discusses White’s (2003, 2006) *Civic republicanism and* reciprocity principle. Izuhara (2003) points out that fairness tends to be associated with procedures rather than with outcomes. Taylor-Gooby and Martin (2010) distinguish a number of approaches to do with criteria of equality, need and desert

Perhaps the most detailed discussion of social justice can be found in Kangas (2000) who explores distributive justice and social justice, using Rawls (and despite the potential value of this work has never been cited). According to Kangas, everyone probably agrees that justice should be one of the most central principles of institutions responsible for distributing societal resources. Justice in redistribution is a matter of finding the right balance between duties
and entitlements, of having the proper ratio between benefits and burdens. We can quite safely assume that there is general public agreement on this as well. What soon splits the consensus is putting the principle of just distribution into practice. What should be distributed? To whom? How much? Even a quick glance at politics—the motor of distribution of common resources—shows that all sorts of distributional demands are being backed up by calls for justice. Justice is in everyone’s bag of tricks (see also Goodin, 1988, 1993; Arthur and Shaw, 1991; Campbell, 1990; Le Grand, 1991; Miller, 1976; Nussbaum and Sen, 1993; Schmidt and Goodin, 1998) (p. 510). He continues that he is aware, to be sure, that the Rawlsian approach to justice is only one among many (see, e.g., Nozick, 1974; Miller, 1976; Macintyre, 1981; Walzer, 1983; Sen, 1992; Campbell, 1988; Roemer, 1996), and that Rawls does not reflect in much detail on the central issue of how socio-political benefits and burdens should be divided in order for justice to be served. The “justice as fairness” principle Rawls advocates does not give much pragmatic guidance. Neither is the maximin principle unambiguous: how could we, for example, know when the lot of the most miserable members of society is maximized? What is the counterfactual situation, which the present situation should be compared with? What is the time span studied? I am also quite aware that my comparisons do not represent all countries equally, because much depends on the indicators chosen and the value systems behind them (p. 512). He continues that it should be emphasised that inequality per se is not necessarily unjust or unfair. Much depends on the mechanisms that produce inequalities. Some people work harder, educate themselves, make better use of their resources, etc. Therefore, it is justifiable that some people deserve more than others do. That is why Rawls is nowhere near as enthusiastic a proponent of greater equality in the distribution of societal goods as Scandinavian public opinion is. According to Rawls’s concept of justice, inequality is acceptable under certain conditions. First, it is acceptable if based on factors that do not differentiate between people. Even large income differences are permissible if the institutions producing such differences are equally accessible to all. If income differences are based, say, on educational attainment, and education is available to everyone, wage differences may be seen as justified. Equal opportunity guarantees justice.
Thus, justice is a virtue of an open society. In order to get a clear idea of poverty, it is therefore not enough to look at cross-sectional data, but longitudinal data on poor families need to be investigated as well. What opportunities are there to rise from a disadvantaged position to a better one? (p. 520). He concludes that rather than sorting out which countries are good, which are bad, and which are simply ugly, the paper has tried to initiate a discussion on how to combine philosophical ruminations with comparative empirical research on social policy.

Generally, philosophical discussions on justice have been dry runs in the sense that practical issues have been taken into account fairly seldom (however, there are also interesting exceptions, e.g., Goodin, et al. 1999; Le Grand, 1991; Rothstein, 1998; and various works by Amartya Sen). Grand ideas and slogans far divorced from practical issues have been at the forefront, and when practical questions have been touched upon, it has been done too easily and without precise information on the functioning of socio-political systems, the logic of the operations, and the paradoxes of redistribution. Correspondingly, among other social sciences, not much interest has been shown in the philosophical dimensions of socio-political distribution issues. By combining these two approaches, our love of wisdom will surely be rewarded (pp. 525-6).

Powell and Boyne (2001) discuss the differences between the ‘default position’ of equality and equity, or proportional rather than arithmetic equality. Sen argues that patterned principles of social justice can be seen in terms of “to each according to his or her X”. There is a range of competing principles: for example, merit, desert, worth, entitlement, need (Plant et al., 1980); need, worth, work and merit (Titmuss, 1968); need, contribution to the common good and merit (Runciman, 1966; Harvey, 1973); and rights, desert and need (Miller, 1976). There are large debates about the categorisation and content of these principles. Moreover, few of the above writers have made significant attempts to apply their criteria to welfare distributions. They continue that the problems of turning concepts into empirical measures were recognised by Miller: it was “impossible to dispel a good deal of the vagueness which
surrounds the ordinary concepts of rights, deserts and needs”. Moreover, “none of the three criteria . . . was sufficiently precise for its practical application to be a straightforward matter. Moreover, even when the principle of distribution (the “X” in Sen’s formulation) has been chosen, the form of response to that principle may vary. The general form is: equal Y for equal X. For example, equal inputs for equal needs and equal outputs for equal needs are both possible responses. In other words, there are many possible equality statements of the form “equal Y for equal X”: “equality” becomes “equalities”.

It is clear (Table 1) that writers tended to equate social justice with equality, rights and needs rather than with merit or desert. Weale (1983:158) Since the break-up of the Poor Law with its notion of ‘less eligibility’ and the passing of attitudes like those of the COS with its distinction between the deserving and the underserving poor, the idea of desert has had little currency in social policy. Yet it can be argued that the idea of desert has a powerful influence within the economy and society at large operating to justify economic and social inequalities. However, popular conceptions of social justice tend to draw more on these concepts (see below).

Social Justice as a ‘Simples’ (Meerkat) Concept
Walzer (1983) argues for a pluralist and complex notion of social justice. In other words, different criteria of social justice should apply in different cases. As most writers in our sample focused on one service (eg NHS), it was difficult to tell if they considered if different criteria ought to operate in other services. However, Powell and Boyne (2001) suggest that it may be necessary to differentiate between different principles for national from local services. The welfare state is usually considered in terms of the nation state. However, the national welfare state and national citizenship of Titmuss, Marshall and Beveridge neglects both the local welfare state and local citizenship of localists such as W. A. Robson, and the importance of the local welfare state historically in Britain and in other countries. National services such as income maintenance and the NHS aim to deliver uniform standards throughout the nation. It follows that deviations from centrally decided norms
are illegitimate inequalities. On the other hand, the role of local government is to respond to the wishes of the local population. As John Stewart puts it, local government is the government of difference, unlike national services, for which territorial justice is an appropriate analytical tool, local services face a trade-off between territorial justice and local autonomy, O'Higgins (1987) has compared this problem to that identified by Nozick (1974) of patterned distribution. “In a polity in which local authorities are free to make their own decisions about service priorities and resource allocation, equality of outcome across services as between different local authorities cannot be guaranteed. Territorial justice can only be ensured by continually intervening to restrict or direct the choices which local authorities make”. Thus, it can be shown that regarding geographical inequality as a defect to be eradicated makes an important implicit assumption. While inequality may be seen as a problem of a national service, for local services the yardstick of equality is not the only appropriate measuring rod. Rather than merely pointing out the existence of geographical variation, it is important to examine the underlying reasons for it.

Far from being seen as evidence of failure, geographical variations may be regarded as evidence of the success of responsiveness to the local population. In particular, it is important to examine whether variations result from local political choice or constraints. For localists, national uniformity might be seen as a failure. “Local autonomy” and “equality” are both seen as “good things”. However, these concepts are in tension. Generally, more local autonomy leads to greater geographical differentiation and greater centralization leads to greater uniformity. However, many commentators seem to want to have their analytical cake and eat it. They complain about greater geographical inequality and greater central control during the Conservative period of office in the 1980s and 1990s. There is a danger of a “Catch 22” situation where a centralist government is criticised for greater central control, while a localist government is criticised for greater geographical inequality. In order to avoid this it is important to bear in mind the distinction between national and local welfare services, and the trade-off between territorial justice and local autonomy. A more recent example concerns the policy differentiation associated with political devolution. From the point of view of
uniformity across the UK, this led to an increase in inequality, but from a Scottish point of view, it illustrated the success of devolution. Social policy analysis needs to be more sophisticated than an “inequality-finder general”, condemning all inequalities, regardless of type, context, or cause. From a localist perspective, some inequalities may be “acceptable”. If the “default value” is that all detected geographical variations are automatically assumed to be a defect, then the arguments for localism are doomed to failure. Similarly, Trydegard and Thorsland (2010) explore the dilemma or tension between the national welfare state principles of universalism, generosity and equality on the one side, and the varying local implementation of the policy on the other, has been stressed by numerous researchers, and many studies have demonstrated large local variation in different forms of social services.

**Social policy writers as ‘philosopher-kings’?**

Miller (1999: 59) writes that some recent social philosophers such as Walzer are more interested in what ordinary people think about distributive justice, while others such as Nozick appear happy to ride roughshod over many everyday beliefs in the name of a single principle claimed to rest on a fundamental moral insight. Rawls occupies the middle ground, arguing what a conception of justice a person might hold under his ‘veil of ignorance’.

A final theme that emerged strongly from our analysis was the lack of engagement with the attitudes or views of citizens. A few articles specifically explored user views about the intersection between welfare and justice (Dwyer, 2002). Moffatt and Higgs (2007) point out that the term ‘entitlement’ was used often by participants in their survey. This was generally linked to the idea of “earning” entitlement as a result of contributions made throughout their working lives: This more articulate view of the principles behind the system invoked both the importance of contributions as well as the notion of entitlement as desert rather than the often-mentioned perception that such help constitutes charity. Pinker (2006) cites his earlier famous view that: ‘As we grow up ‘the most authentic rights we acquire and exercise are those we use in the roles of buyers and sellers in the market-place. We do not have to be persuaded that we have rights to what we buy.’ By contrast, ‘the idea of
paying through taxes or holding authentic claims by virtue of citizenship remains largely an intellectual conceit of the social scientist and the socialist; consequently most applicants for [statutory] social services remain paupers at heart’ (Pinker, 1971: 141-2).

Pinker (2006) makes a broader point, citing Titmuss’ (1968: 14) opening essay on ‘The Subject of Social Administration’ was based on the lecture he had given at the first meeting of the Social Administration Association in the previous year. On the purposes of the new Association, he suggested that ‘we are not here to found a branch of the Conservative, Labour or Liberal Parties’ or to advance ‘any particular political ideology. Our first duty and our last duty is to the truth . . . and to expose more clearly the value choices that confront societies in the arena of social welfare’. However, Pinker adds that, having distanced both the Association and the discipline from any ideology, and having committed both of them to the pursuit of truth and to the ‘exposure of value choices’, Titmuss then proceeded to define the study of social needs as an intellectual enterprise that was normatively autonomous and institutionally divorced from the values and activities of competitive markets. It would seem, therefore, that in the making of value choices between public sector and private sector policy options in the meeting of needs, further debate was unnecessary. He cites Arthur Seldon of the IEA that ‘the difficulty of conducting a debate with Professor Titmuss is that he makes his adversary feel not only wrong but also wicked. His Achilles heel is that he knows (or, more accurately, feels) he is right’ (Seldon, 1968).

Taylor-Gooby and Martin (2010) distinguish a number of approaches to do with criteria of equality, need and desert (Miller, 1999: ch. 2). Desert is complex and may be based on notions of moral worth or social or economic contribution. The core themes are reflected in comparative analysis in Esping-Andersen’s initial threefold categorisation of regime types: the Nordic social democratic focuses on equality; the corporatist-conservative places more emphasis on desert and links this to contribution through social insurance and to status; while the liberal market-oriented approach restricts the state to meeting need (Mau and Veghte, 2007: 6–8). (pp. 86-7). They discuss popular
discourses about desert (for example, van Oorschott, 2006) to emphasise the degree of effort involved in realising opportunities (Roemer, 1996: 5–8). The key point is that fairness involves an allocation which would give people the same outcomes, provided they contribute the same degree of effort, taking into account differences in their social circumstances, which affect not only the amount of effort needed, but the capacity of different groups to exert effort effectively (Roemer, 2005). The distinction between the two approaches introduces the issue of responsibility into the debate, whether lying primarily with the distributor (the state) as in the first approach, or with the individual as in the second (pp. 87-8). There is considerable evidence of similarity in hierarchies of deservingness in European countries. In general, elderly people are seen as most deserving, closely followed by sick and disabled people, then unemployed people and immigrants (van Oorschott, 2006: 23).

There are significant debates about whether to ‘bring the public back in’ (Burnstein, 1998). Miller (1976: 341-2) takes issue with Rawl’s approach to social justice from behind a ‘veil of ignorance’: the whole enterprise of constructing a theory of justice on the basis of choices hypothetically made by individuals abstracted from society is mistaken’. (But see Plant et al., 1980: 14-17 for a critique of Miller’s approach). Miller (1999: ix-x) advocates discovering the underlying principles that people use when they judge some aspects of their society to be just or unjust. In order to achieve this, he looks fairly closely at empirical research on popular conceptions of justice. ‘If we want to describe what social justice means in contemporary political debate, than sooner rather than later we must look at what the people themselves think. However, he adds that this does not mean that ‘our theory of justice should be nothing more than an aggregate opinion poll’. Plant (1991: 327-8) points out that Ackerman’s spacecraft (cf Rawls original position) is rejected by Walzer, and goes on to argue that another way of doing philosophy is to interpret to one’s fellow citizens the world of meanings that we share. Justice and equality can conceivably be worked out as philosophical artifacts, but a just or egalitarian society cannot be. Instead of asking Rawlsian questions behind the veil of ignorance, we should rather concentrate on the more specific question ‘what would individuals like us choose, who are situated as
we are, who share a culture and are determined to go on sharing it? What choices have we already made in the course of our common life? What understandings do we already share? Questions of political philosophy are questions about specific societies with particular values. Justification, argumentation has to take place within such contexts and not external to them (pp. 343-4). As Plant et al. (1980: 151) ask, who needs citizens, when the social planner can construct the just world by thought-experiment, without bothering to consult their views?

There have been some cases of seeking popular views about social justice and redistribution (eg Applebaum, 2002; Arts and Gelissen 2002; Jaeger 2006; Kangas 2002; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Kluegel et al., 1995; Mau and Veghte, 2007; Svallfors, 1997, 2003; van Oorschot, 2000). Runciman’s (1966) work has been termed by Plant et al. (1980) ‘the most profound study of values and inequality in the postwar period’. Saunders (1996: 88-90) claims that the ‘deserving’ versus ‘underserving’ distinction is important; many people angry that their hard work is being taxed in order to support those who will not work. Popular support for egalitarianism is always qualified by the question of just desert. He cites a survey where 90% agreed that ‘people’s incomes should depend on hard work and ability’. He interprets this as ‘strong support for meritocracy’ and that views depend on ‘whether inequality is justifiable’ (for contemporary parallels see O’Brien, 2010). He discusses Marx’s ‘communist principle’ - from each according to their ability; to each according to their need- which recognised that such a system could only work in a society which had overcome scarcity – a society where resources are ‘lying around’ in bountiful supply waiting to be allocated Marx's ‘socialist principle’ was very different: ‘to each according to his work’ recognised that the right of the producers is proportional to the labour they supply; the equality consists in the fact that measurement is made with an equal standard, labour. But one man is superior to another physically and mentally and so supplies more labour in the same time … This equal right … tacitly recognises unequal individual endowment and thus productive capacity as natural privileges. It is, therefore, a right of inequality’. Marx’s principle of socialist distribution was essentially a meritocratic principle (p. 86).
Citation Analysis
In addition to exploring what our included journal articles said about social justice, we also examined what social justice writers they drew upon. We examined the bibliographies of our articles in order to determine which social justice writers were referred to. It is clear that relatively few social justice writers are cited. Many social justice works and writers are cited in few articles. The most utilised authors were:

- Edwards (5)
- Hayek (5)
- Rawls (5)
- Nussbaum (4)
- Sen (4)
- Turner (4)

Some leading writers such as Ackerman, Rae and Walzer were cited only once, with no citations of leading writers like Anthony Flew at all.

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<td>Kangas (2000); Powell and Boyne (2001)</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>Taylor-Gooby and Martin (2010)</td>
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<td>1974</td>
<td>Nozick</td>
<td>Smith (2005)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Nussbaum</td>
<td>Sevenhuijsen (2000)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Plant</td>
<td>Sevenhuijsen (2000)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971/2</td>
<td>Rawls</td>
<td>Dean (2003); Haagh (2006) Kangas (2000);</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Runciman (1966)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Powell and Boyne (2001)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sugden</td>
<td></td>
<td>Izahara (2003)</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>White (1998)</td>
<td>Powell</td>
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</table>
Alongside the general trends outlined above, there were some quite
significant variances between the journals that are worth highlighting, some
would seem to make ‘face’ sense. For example, as might be expected Nancy
Fraser appeared in CSP but not in SPA, presumably because she talks about
recognition as an important dimension of social justice, and this would also,
though more implicitly, explain the imbalance in the citations of John Edwards.
Ultimately the pattern would reflect the editorial philosophy of CSP. Others are
equally noteworthy but would not at first sight be as readily explicable. Rawls,
while a prominent presence in the SPA, does not appear at all in the CSP,
and the same pattern with Miller, Walzer and Rae. These are patterns that we
aim to explore more fully in the larger work.

Conclusions
Our findings from this preliminary exploration of social justice are rather
tentative as they are based on exploring two journals over the last decade.
They are also expressed to be deliberately provocative. However, we have
found that the strength and depth of social justice discussions in much of the
social policy literature remains shallow and patchy. Moreover, social policy
views appear to be somewhat out of tune with public attitudes.

This may be due to the themes of the importance of the normative, and a
single value orientation of Titmussian social administration (Mishra, 1989).
This affirmed the role of values in social science. Choice of ends and means
involved particular forms of social and distributive relations (such as
egalitarian or inegalitarian). It was the task of social policy studies to spell out
the options available and their implications. Titmussian social administration
was firmly anchored in the values of Fabian collectivism. There was little by
way of a normative debate. This resulted in the field of social policy coming to
be defined ‘in terms of a struggle between the forces of good and evil’ with a refusal to examine social welfare as a problematic or contested notion. This gave rise to the paradoxical situation in which social administration stressed the importance of values and choices, but paid scant attention to its own value-orientation, giving social administration an ideological character which was scarcely recognised (pp. 77-8). Similarly, Flew (1983: 159-60) cites David Donnison: the case for egalitarianism is ‘muddled because its academic spokesmen were never challenged by sufficiently tough opposition to compel them to clarify their views’. Finally, Spicker (2008: vi) points to the ‘problem of ideologies’- students lack the material to examine the precepts critically, and all too often they lead to a view of the world divided between Angels and Devils, where nothing the Devils say makes any sense at all. We are uncomfortable with the implicit casting of ‘ordinary citizens’ as Devils.

References


Swain, J. and Cook, T. (2001) ‘In the name of inclusion: 'We all, at the end of the day, have the needs of the children at heart', *Critical Social Policy*, 21(2): 185–207.


