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Comparative Examination of Distributive Justice from the Perspectives of Henry George and Allameh Jafari with an Explanation of Its Educational Implications

ABSTRACT

The present study conducts a comparative examination of distributive justice from the perspectives of Henry George and Allameh Jafari, with an emphasis on outlining their educational implications. This research is a comparative study that adopts qualitative methods. At the outset, the researcher discusses the general foundations of the study, namely the importance of justice in individual and social life. By presenting the research literature, the theoretical foundations of the study are explained from the two viewpoints of Henry George and Allameh Jafari, including the conceptual analysis of justice and distributive justice and its impact on society. The research methodology is descriptive-analytical and comparative, and required information was collected and evaluated using Bereday's model. The statistical population consists of all books and articles written on distributive justice from the perspectives of Henry George and Allameh Jafari and the educational implications derived from these two viewpoints. Based on the findings of the present study: Henry George's view of distributive justice is grounded in the belief that land and natural resources naturally belong to all human beings. He argues that governments should use land rent and the income generated from it to fund public services so that support can be distributed fairly among all citizens. Allameh Jafari's perspective on distributive justice emphasizes that human nature encompasses diverse emotions and sentiments. George's orientation toward distributive justice reflects a critical approach and discourse-based perspective, while Allameh Jafari's view is characterized by moderation.

Keywords: distributive justice; Henry George; Allameh Jafari; educational implications

Introduction

Among the various forms of justice—political justice, judicial justice, moral justice, and administrative justice—the type that holds the greatest significance for us is economic justice, because this form of justice provides the foundation for all other kinds of justice. Today, the most fundamental topic within normative economics is economic justice, a concept in which distributive justice constitutes one of its most important components. Therefore, it can be stated that economic justice—

sometimes regarded as synonymous with distributive justice—is both the principal aspect of justice and the central pillar of normative economics (1).

The issue of justice and the equal distribution of resources among members of society has always been one of the most important and contentious topics within normative economics. Distributive justice concerns the perception of fairness in the allocation of resources. It refers to individuals' assessment of the fairness of what they receive in social exchanges (2). In its modern sense, distributive justice calls for the state to ensure an equal distribution of assets across society so that all individuals enjoy a specified level of material welfare. Contemporary debates on distributive justice often focus on how much of society's resources must be guaranteed and the extent to which the state should intervene in distributing these resources. What is at issue in distributive justice is the criterion that governments and public administrators should adopt—whether economic or political—when distributing public benefits and opportunities among citizens (3).

In the past, contractual arrangements were seen as institutions of private law, limited to personal relationships between the contracting parties. As questions emerged about the significant role of contracts in transferring wealth, goods, and services, scholars began asking whether justice in distribution could be achieved through contractual mechanisms. Could governments, through legislation or judicial intervention, rely on contracts as instruments to distribute resources, reduce poverty, and create equality and distributive justice? Does private contracting possess the capacity to bear such intervention and serve such lofty goals? Today, with affirmative answers to these questions and a wide acceptance of state intervention in contracts for achieving distributive justice, the focus has shifted to debating the quality, extent, and nature of this relationship, including the scope of contractual freedom and distributive justice (4).

In examining this research, we consider the following questions: from the perspectives of Henry George and Allameh Jafari, do rulers fulfill their responsibility to achieve equitable distribution of resources and wealth among all members of society—regardless of their socioeconomic status, whether wealthy or poor, active or inactive, socially beneficial or not—or should the criterion for fair distribution be based on individuals' needs or the amount of useful work performed by each person?

Across the works of Allameh Jafari and Henry George, discussions can be found concerning economic justice, from which principles related to distributive mechanisms may be extracted. In this research—where few similar studies exist—the focus is limited exclusively to the issue of distributive economic justice from the viewpoints of Henry George and Allameh Jafari, identifying their points of convergence and divergence without engaging in peripheral debates.

One proposed solution within distributive justice is equal and identical treatment of all members of society. Some argue that because human beings are intrinsically equal, justice requires equal treatment of all citizens, such that any form of differentiation or unequal behavior is deemed unjust (5).

Justice

The term “justice” in both language and scholarly usage carries various meanings, including “placing everything in its proper position,” “the mean between excess and deficiency in inner faculties,” and “equitable distribution.”

Martyr Murtadha Motahhari provides the following description of the terms justice and injustice as they apply to human behavior:

“A person who bears no ill intent toward others, does not encroach upon their rights, avoids any form of discrimination among individuals, behaves with complete impartiality in all matters under his governance, and supports the oppressed while opposing the oppressor, is regarded as possessing a form of perfection—namely justice—and such conduct is worthy of praise; thus, such an individual is considered just. Conversely, one who violates the rights of others, discriminates among individuals under his authority, supports oppressors, and remains indifferent toward the oppressed is considered to possess a deficiency

known as injustice. Such a person is deemed unjust, and his conduct is subject to condemnation.” Justice possesses an innate appeal and is valued by the moral conscience of humanity, for through justice, each person attains their rightful due, social transgression diminishes, and security and peace prevail throughout society (6).

Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) states:

“Be mindful of God and act with justice, for you criticize those who do not practice justice.”

Distributive Justice

Distributive justice is one of the primary manifestations of justice and is reflected in the relationships between individuals and the state and among individuals themselves. It represents the perception of fairness in the allocation of resources and rewards across society. Distributive justice serves as an important mechanism for eliminating discrimination and ensuring equitable access to both material and spiritual opportunities for all. From the perspective of contemporary society, distributive justice requires the state to guarantee that resources are distributed such that all individuals enjoy an equal level of material opportunity. Current discussions on distributive justice generally center on the extent of resources that should be guaranteed and the degree of state intervention necessary for this purpose (7).

Origins of Distributive Justice

From the moment Iranian society first encountered the modern world and began striving to overcome backwardness and achieve progress, national demands for justice—alongside calls for freedom and independence—emerged as key components of the vision for a developed society. Although these motivations were initially articulated by intellectuals, reformists, and later religious scholars, they gradually evolved into a widespread public movement during the Constitutional Revolution. Although much of the early focus on justice concerned the rule of law and the establishment of courts, inequalities in income, livelihood, social status, and political appointments were also present in the political culture of the Constitutional era and beyond. These dimensions of justice were closely tied to the distribution of resources, privileges, and authority.

Following the fall of the Qajar dynasty and the rise of the Pahlavi state, the expansion of modern (or semi-modern) governmental institutions into areas previously untouched by state intervention created conditions for new justice-oriented discourses. The spread of socialist ideas and the rise of Marxist movements after 1941, especially among the educated and middle classes, reflected this shift. In response, Islamic thinkers—including pioneers of religious neo-intellectualism—entered the debate, aiming both to defend the efficacy of Islam as a framework for social conduct and to articulate their own visions for an ideal society. They engaged these discussions by proposing ideas about social justice, banking, and property.

With the victory of the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the collapse of the monarchy, efforts to institutionalize national ideals—articulated in mass demonstrations and by revolutionary leadership—intensified. While the new system encountered varying degrees of success in preserving independence and protecting freedoms, its inability to institutionalize social justice has been more pronounced and troubling (8).

Now, four decades after the Revolution, Iranian society not only has failed to take effective steps to eliminate injustice but has also experienced widening gaps between rich and poor, increasing impoverishment among lower-income groups, and intensified gender, ethnic, religious, and sectarian discrimination. Additionally, theoretical debates on justice have advanced slowly, and the production and transfer of scholarly literature on justice remain limited. As a result, academic understanding of social justice and its interdisciplinary nature has not progressed meaningfully. In political practice, social justice has often been reduced to an electoral slogan, resulting in simplistic policies—such as distributing “justice shares” or paying cash subsidies—that rely on an oversimplified notion of justice as mere equality, unintentionally producing greater injustices. For

these reasons, in today's Iran, engaging with accumulated global knowledge on justice and developing new theoretical perspectives remains an urgent necessity. The dominant conceptual framework in social-justice theories is often referred to as "distributive justice," which concerns the morally defensible allocation of goods, resources, positions, and benefits within society. Laws, institutions, and policymaking structures all play a role in distributing advantages and disadvantages among members of society (8).

Martyr Motahari defines four characteristics of distributive justice:

"Balance and proportionality, referring to the order and equilibrium of the universe; equality and the denial of discrimination; observance of individuals' rights and granting each person their due; and the principle of merit, meaning the non-withholding of existence, blessing, or perfection from anything capable of receiving it." (9)

Building upon these philosophical discussions, we arrive at the concept of social justice, which rests on two essential elements: first, rights and priorities, meaning that individuals possess relative rights in relation to one another; and second, the inherent nature of human beings, which requires adherence to these rights and priorities for achieving well-being. These obligations and prohibitions acquire meaning within societies according to their customs and moral frameworks.

Philosophers believe that whatever form of justice is embraced by members of a society is also affirmed by the conscience of each individual, whereas injustice represents its opposite.

Economic Justice

Economic justice refers to the observance of individuals' economic rights within the sphere of economic and commercial behaviors and relationships. The word *justice* is one of the most valued moral concepts throughout the history of human civilization and has long attracted the attention of economic thinkers in theoretical debates. The non-intervention of government and the welfare-economics frameworks in free-market theory, as well as the abolition of private ownership of productive capital in socialist thought, have consistently reflected the concerns of economic theorists regarding economic justice (10).

From the perspective of Islamic thinkers, economic justice is an instance of justice in its broader meaning. Islamic scholars regard justice as balance, moderation, equality, the observance of entitlements, and the respect for individuals' rights.

According to Martyr Sadr, economic justice can be examined from two dimensions: social balance and social solidarity. In the economic sphere, social balance among human beings refers to equality in terms of social living standards rather than the manner in which economic income is earned. Equality in living standards means that capital must be accessible to individuals in such a way that they may benefit from modern living conditions appropriate to the contemporary economy (11).

Allameh Jafari's View of Distributive Justice

From Allameh Jafari's perspective, justice—analyzed within an approach that recognizes the balanced order of existence—becomes essential for regulating human life in both its individual and social dimensions. For him, every "movement," "transformation," or "becoming" that leads to growth and elevation in social life is dependent on justice. He defines justice as a condition of the human soul through which human behavior conforms to the necessary and worthy laws governing individual and social life. Thus, justice becomes an integral element of social life and *ḥayāt-i ma'qūl* (rational life), deriving from psychological moderation on both individual and social levels.

Regarding the modern discourse on equality—a theme that has strongly shaped Iranian intellectual and socio-political thought—Jafari situates the concept within a framework of moderation. By offering specific meanings and categories of equality, he differentiates his view from liberal individualistic interpretations. He identifies three types of equality, the third of which is most relevant to contemporary discussions in Iran:

- (1) equality in relation to the Origin and supreme principles of existence;
- (2) equality in the essential nature and characteristics common to all human beings;
- (3) contractual equality before natural and positive rights and other laws necessary for organizing human life.

In contrast to social justice, Jafari defines *zulm* (injustice) as transgression against the laws of rational life, including diminishing the value of labor, intellectual repression, and unmerited leadership. Any violation of rightful claims constitutes injustice. In contemporary Iran—shaped by the rise of modern civilizational thought—the concept of equality is often substituted for justice and is demanded through a numerical, quantitative, and non-systemic approach. Jafari, however, interprets equality through a geometric and systemic perspective (both ontological and social), understanding it as equality before the laws established for benefiting from natural and positive rights, accessing public resources, and observing obligations within civil and political life (12).

Individuals within a society possess diverse emotions and sentiments, and based on their motivations, outcomes, and inherent nature, they fall under specific moral and legal principles; deviation from these principles constitutes injustice, whereas conformity to them constitutes justice.

Conscience and moral intuitions, given their inherent dimensions, follow stable laws: behaving according to these laws is justice, while deviating from them—or remaining indifferent toward them—is injustice and oppression.

Laws and regulations enacted to improve social life function similarly: behavior aligned with these laws is justice, and behavior violating them—or showing disregard for them—is injustice. Jafari believes that fair distribution must be based on individuals' needs and capacities.

He holds that the state must support appropriate taxation and the equitable distribution of income to ensure protection of the needy. He argues that the distribution of wealth must be grounded in Islamic principles in order to achieve social justice.

Henry George's View of Justice

Henry George, due to his extensive writings and his contributions to cultural and educational studies, is regarded as one of the leading scholars of critical pedagogy in the world. During the 1980s, following the publication of influential works on critical education, he shifted toward cultural studies. In doing so, he drew inspiration from scholars such as Stuart Hall, who championed cultural-studies approaches, and from Walter Benjamin in expanding his cultural-analytical work. George sought to enrich the concepts of literacy and education by broadening their scope. This shift reflected his hope to reconstruct schools through a critical lens, enabling a better understanding of contemporary culture and society and promoting efforts to transform them.

During the 1970s and 1980s, George's work centered primarily on educational reform, transformative pedagogy, and enhancing education to foster radical democracy. Later, he endeavored to integrate new discourses such as post-structuralism, postmodernism, cultural studies, and identity and difference politics, applying them to racial, gender, and class discourse of the post-1960s era.

George, together with Aronowitz and Peter McLaren, contributed significantly to the development of critical pedagogy and resistance to neoliberalism through the publication of numerous influential works.

George's thought centers on four major areas:

1. efforts toward elucidating resistance theory and opposing domination;
2. examining the role of teachers as transformative intellectuals and emphasizing public intellectual engagement;
3. engaging with public culture through cultural analysis;

4. exploring issues beyond education but related to it, including children's cultural studies, cinema, critiques of neoliberalism, and neo-conservatism.
- George believes that land and natural resources inherently belong to all human beings.
 - He maintains that governments should use land rent and the income derived from it to fund public services, enabling equal support for all members of society.
 - According to his theory, only private ownership over land-based products (not land itself) should be protected.
 - He proposes the confiscation of all past and present land rents, arguing that such a policy would eliminate poverty and economic crises arising from land speculation. This constitutes what is known as the “single tax” (13).

Table 1. Research Background

Researcher	Year of Study	Research Topic	Main Findings
Hajizadeh et al.	2021	Distributive justice in the economic approach of Imam Ali	Imam Ali, by virtue of his knowledge, was able to direct the expenditures of the public treasury in a purposeful manner and strongly avoided the concentration of wealth and the creation of class gaps. (14)
Adabi Chermi	2021	Conceptual exploration of halal rights with emphasis on the concept of distributive justice	Halal rights, aimed at improving lifestyle and enabling human perfection through attention to justice, freedom, leisure, spirituality, and similar factors, are practically attainable. (15)
Vaez	2021	Social justice and its relationship with distributive justice	Every conception of distributive justice represents a form of social justice; however, not all theories of social justice can be reduced to distributive justice. (16)
Gholich	2019	The views of John Rawls and Martyr Motahhari on the criteria of distributive justice	Rawls' perspective on distributive justice holds that the distribution of primary goods, especially basic liberties, must be equal, and he accepts two conditions in distributive inequalities: receiving according to the level of effort in occupations and distribution in favor of the least advantaged groups. In contrast, Martyr Motahhari proposes a three-stage distribution system: equal distribution of primary facilities, distribution of generated income according to individuals' entitlements, and redistribution of assets to create social balance. (17)
Hadi Vaniya	2018	The view of the Holy Qur'an on distributive justice	In the Qur'anic theory, five distributive criteria play a role. The first and most general criterion is the reduction of income inequality. The four specific criteria are: real essential need, direct labor, moderate personal real need (at the level of sufficiency and status), and moderate real need of others (at the level of sufficiency and status). (18)
Alasvand	2017	Examination of Allameh Tabataba'i's view on legal differences between men and women (criterion of inequality in defining justice)	Equality and justice between men and women and their legal differences cannot be evaluated solely by the binary of justice and injustice; undoubtedly, other criteria must also be taken into account. (19)
Jamshidiha et al.	2015	The views of Farabi and Ibn Khaldun on justice	Ibn Khaldun understands social justice as securing the public interest and the primary foundation for achieving 'umrān (civilization), both of which rest upon justice. Islam not only legislates and enforces law but also regards the expansion of justice as dependent on zakat, social guarantees, circulation of wealth, cooperation, and the prohibition of usury. Islamic thinkers likewise do not consider justice as purely material or confined to this world. (20)
Hezarjaribi	2011	Examination of the sense of social justice and its influencing factors	Depending on the time, place, and prevailing economic, political, and social conditions in any society, the understanding of justice—especially social justice—exhibits specific differences. (21)
Sharifzadegan	2007	Strategies for economic development and social justice	Based on Rawls' ideas concerning economic and social justice and in light of debates on the welfare state, reformist perspectives, and approaches to economic growth and income redistribution, three strategies are proposed: “priority of growth over income redistribution,” “priority of income redistribution over growth,” and “growth combined with income redistribution.” (22)
Yao	2024	A comparative view of Sandel's theory of distributive justice based on the Marxist principle of distributive justice	Distributive justice is examined from a Western perspective, where utilitarianism, liberalism, and communitarianism represent three different approaches to distributive justice that all seek to address the same fundamental problem: inequality in income and wealth. (23)
Zafirovski	2023	Distributive justice revisited in a comparative setting: the fairness of wages in OECD	Modern Western and similar countries, particularly in terms of societal structures, exhibit substantial differences in distributive justice. This article

		countries and modalities of society	aims to contribute to a better theoretical understanding and empirical estimation of distributive justice and injustice in contemporary societies. (3)
Nitya Nand Pandey and Mukti Jaiswal	2022	Comparative study of the theory of justice with reference to Rawls and Nozick	The study addresses the concept of justice in different types of societies and interprets the views of scholars in each society regarding distributive justice. (5)
Jimenez	2017	Distributive justice and contract law based on Hohfeld's theory	Many legal issues cannot be resolved solely through logic; rather, they must be addressed through rules and norms grounded in policy and principle. Since the essence of contract is distribution, and distributive justice is itself a policy and principle pursued by contemporary states, distributive justice must therefore be realized through regulations and norms based on that policy and principle. (24)
Magnan and Mariel Faber	2017	Modern contract law, ERCL 2017	According to contract law, individuals are the best judges of their own interests. Even contracts that involve forced choices are not necessarily detrimental to the weaker party. Standard-form contracts drafted by one party, due to their efficiency, reduce the prices of goods and services. (25)
Beever	2015	Forgotten justice: forms of justice in the history of legal and political theory	A focus on distributive justice, which concerns the relationship between individuals and the state, has diverted attention from corrective justice, which governs relations between individuals. This neglect of corrective justice is viewed as a grave and harmful philosophical error, leading us to see human beings primarily as members of a collective while overlooking their individuality and elevating the state's importance and dominance. (26)
Guillermina Jasso et al.	2015	Distributive justice	The absence of justice in society leads to large-scale theft, whereas justice fosters participation by all social groups and strengthens social cohesion. (27)
Roedl and Florian	2013	Contractual freedom, contractual justice, and contract law theory	Concluding a contract is an exercise of individual freedom and choice, and the law exists to regulate and protect this freedom. After the contract is formed, corrective justice governs its breach, meaning that the party who violates the contract must compensate for the damages arising from their fault. (4)
Voyiakis	2012	Contract law and reasons of social justice	Distributive outcomes (as an aspect of social justice) arise from the basic structure of society. Such a social structure is just only if the distribution of resources it generates is justifiable and defensible for those individuals who are the subjects of that society. (28)

Methods and Materials

The present study is conducted within a qualitative paradigm and is a comparative research study employing an analytical-comparative method. Using Bereday's model, the information needed on distributive justice from the viewpoints of Henry George and Allameh Jafari is collected and then examined, analyzed, and compared separately. This method consists of four stages, as follows:

1. Descriptive stage;
2. Interpretive stage;
3. Juxtaposition stage;
4. Comparative stage.

Given the research method, the statistical population of this study includes all documents, records, and previously examined sources related to the topic under investigation. Data collection has been carried out through consulting online databases, articles, books, credible scientific documents, and electronic resources in this field, within which distributive justice from the viewpoints of Henry George and Allameh Jafari is examined in the framework of distributive justice as outlined above.

Findings and Results

In the present research, distributive justice from the perspectives of Henry George and Allameh Jafari was examined. The discussion initially addressed the concept of justice, followed by economic justice, and finally distributive justice. Distributive justice was explored through the viewpoints of both thinkers, and its educational implications were analyzed. The research questions are now examined and evaluated.

Main Question:

How do the views of Allameh Jafari and Henry George on distributive justice compare, and what are the educational implications of these views?

Question 1 – What is Henry George’s view on distributive justice?

According to the belief of Henry George, one of the renowned scholars of critical pedagogy in the world, land and natural resources naturally belong to all human beings. He adopts a critical lens toward issues and strives to connect new discourses—such as post-structuralism, post-modernism, cultural studies, and identity politics—with racial, gender, and class discourses.

According to George’s theory, knowledge, values, and attitudes become clearer through discourse. In critical pedagogy, dialogue is a method through which students in the classroom connect with each other using language (verbal and non-verbal), symbols, and images, thereby influencing one another. Therefore, effective educational dialogue, by creating a shared space and reciprocal interaction between learners and between learners and teachers, establishes conditions for social exchange. This, within the teaching–learning process, creates the conditions for transformation.

Table 2. Foundations and Type of Distributive Justice from George’s View

Foundations of Distributive Justice (George)	George’s Discourse Tools	George’s Perspective on Issues
Land and natural resources naturally belong to all human beings	Post-structuralism, post-modernism	Critical
Reciprocal interaction between learners and teachers, shared space, social exchange	Language (verbal & non-verbal), symbol, image	Discursive

Question 2 – What is Allameh Jafari’s view regarding distributive justice?

Allameh Jafari—commentator of *Nahj al-Balāgha*, jurist, mystic, philosopher, scholar of Rumi, and one of the founders of Islamic human rights and the Cairo Declaration—believes that the order of existence necessitates justice for organizing human life in both individual and social domains. According to him, every “movement,” “transformation,” and “becoming” that leads to growth and elevation in social life depends on justice. Allameh Jafari views justice as an element essential to the rational life (*ḥayāt ma‘qūl*) of human beings. In social life, justice—under the title of social justice—means preserving equality while also giving each person their rightful due; thus, both individuals and society possess rights. In other words, in Allameh Jafari’s view, justice within the balanced framework of the socio-political system in political and social matters, and within the balanced Islamic economic and financial system in economic affairs, ensures that excess or deficiency leads to deviation and collapse of society and the ruling order.

Table 3. Foundations and Type of Distributive Justice from Allameh Jafari’s View

Foundations of Distributive Justice (Jafari)	Jafari’s Perspective
The order of existence requires justice for regulating individual and social life; both individuals and society possess rights	Moderation-oriented approach

Question 3 – What are the educational implications of Henry George’s view on distributive justice?

According to Henry George’s theory, all human beings should benefit equally from public services, and governments must allocate land taxes and rents toward public services. However, resource scarcity, ethical considerations, human rights, egalitarian concerns, and human agency in determining one’s destiny compel distributive justice to be a practical necessity rather than an idealistic claim. George proposed the confiscation of all past and present land rents, arguing that this would eliminate all poverty and economic crises attributable solely to land speculation. This is the “single tax” system. (13)

According to George, philosophical thought fails when it ignores the social and cultural language of human beings. (23)

Table 4. Educational Implications of Henry George’s View

Foundations of Henry George’s Educational Implications	George’s Principles
1. All human beings should benefit equally from public services.	Single Tax

2. Scarcity of resources, ethical considerations, human rights, and the need for equality make distributive justice a necessity, not merely an ideal.

1. Education must transcend boundaries and be connected to broader cultural and social realities.

Modernity

2. Philosophical thinking fails whenever it ignores the social and cultural language and lived experiences of human beings.

Question 4 – What are the educational implications of Allameh Jafari’s view on distributive justice?

The two concepts of justice and freedom are central issues in contemporary Iranian intellectual, cultural, and socio-political life. Left-leaning tendencies inspired by socialism and Marxism, and right-leaning tendencies rooted in liberalism, each promote specific meanings for justice and freedom. Allameh Jafari critiques both extremes, arguing that these popular definitions do not align with Islamic principles and classical Islamic philosophical tradition. While he affirms the necessity of justice and freedom for political life in Iran’s modern era, he offers meanings compatible with Islamic doctrine and philosophical foundations—neither excessively individualistic (as in liberalism) nor excessively collectivist (as in socialist and Marxist thought).

Allameh Jafari considers justice an essential element of rational human life. In social life, justice—under the heading of social justice—preserves equality while also ensuring that each person receives their rightful due. Based on this, all individuals possess rights, and society likewise possesses rights. In Jafari’s view, justice within the balanced framework of the socio-political system and within the balanced Islamic economic and financial system ensures that excess or deficiency leads to deviation and societal downfall.

Allameh Jafari argues that the order of existence necessitates justice for regulating human life in both individual and social dimensions. For him, any factor contributing to growth and elevation in social life depends on justice. He views justice as a disposition of the soul through which human behavior aligns with essential laws governing individual and social life, distinguishing his view from liberal individualistic conceptions. Conversely, he defines injustice (*ẓulm*) as transgression against the laws of rational life, including diminishing the value of labor, intellectual repression, unqualified leadership, and the violation of any rightful claim.

Allameh Jafari, through his model of “rational life” (*ḥayāt ma‘qūl*), identifies the primary goal of human society as rational education—developing the power of thought to transition from ordinary life to rational life through two means: knowledge and religion. Thus, the educational system must adopt a rational approach in both areas, offer effective strategies for deepening human understanding, and cultivate curiosity and inquiry in learners, preparing society for rational living. What is vital in *ḥayāt ma‘qūl* is human intellect and intellectual activity.

Table 5. Educational Implications of Allameh Jafari’s View

Foundations of Jafari’s Educational Implications	Jafari’s Principles
Justice within the balanced socio-political and Islamic economic–financial system; any excess or deficiency leads to societal deviation	Social Justice
The educational system must be based on rationality and employ effective strategies for deepening human understanding	Rational Life (<i>ḥayāt ma‘qūl</i>)

Question 5 – What are the differences between Henry George’s and Allameh Jafari’s views on distributive justice?

Allameh Jafari understands justice and freedom on the basis of the comprehensiveness and perfection of the religion of Islam, such that these concepts are simultaneously compatible with the Islamic doctrinal system and philosophical foundations, and represent a moderate alternative to the extreme individualism of liberalism and the extreme collectivism of socialist and Marxist thought.

According to George’s theory, there is no such thing as public ownership in the sense of a metaphysical or religious collective right; the only form of ownership that must be protected is private property, and the state should allocate the income

derived from land rents to public services in order to support all members of society. In George's view, distributive justice is an extra-religious concept, not tied to a particular faith tradition.

From Allameh Jafari's perspective, people's orientation toward justice and law-abiding behavior may have several causes:

1. Historical events and external constraints may compel a person to behave in accordance with the law, for example when all forms of choice are removed and the individual is forced to follow a predetermined path. In such a case, although the resulting behavior appears to conform to the law and may be labeled "justice," it does not fall within the domain of moral value, because genuine choice is absent.
2. Some citizens, due to physical or mental disabilities, are unable to work and thus face serious difficulties in earning a livelihood; others may participate in economic activity but their income is insufficient to cover all their basic needs. In addressing the livelihood problems of these groups, the Islamic distributional system invokes the element of "need" and includes them in another stage of distribution, which thinkers have called the redistribution of wealth and income.

According to Islamic scholars, true ownership of all things—including human beings and their property—ultimately belongs to God, and all forms of wealth are considered a trust placed in human hands by the Almighty.

Table 6. Core Ideas of Allameh Jafari and Henry George

Allameh Jafari	Henry George
Principle of worthy life	Effort toward clarifying resistance theory and the struggle against domination
Principle of human dignity, divided into inherent dignity and elevated moral dignity	Emphasis on the role of teachers as transformative intellectuals and attention to the public intellectual
Principle of education	Cultural work focused on public culture
Principle of responsible freedom	Engagement with issues beyond formal education but related to it, such as children's cultural studies, cinema, and critiques of neoliberalism and neo-conservatism
Principle of equality of all individuals before the law	

Table 7. Allameh Jafari's and Henry George's Views on Distributive Justice

Allameh Jafari's View	Henry George's View
Human nature is endowed with diverse emotions and affections, and in light of their motives, consequences, and essential character, these tendencies fall under specific laws; deviation from these laws is injustice, whereas behavior consistent with them is justice.	George believes that land and natural resources naturally belong to all human beings.
Conscience and moral attraction, given their dimensions, follow fixed laws; behavior consistent with these laws is justice, whereas deviation from them or indifference toward them is injustice and oppression.	He holds that the state should use land rents and the income arising from them to fund public services so that it can support everyone fairly.
Human social life is governed by laws and regulations established to bring about ease, tranquility, and improvement; acting in accordance with these laws is justice, while violating them is injustice.	According to George's theory, only private ownership of land and its products should be protected.
He believes that fair distribution must be based on individuals' needs and capabilities.	He proposes the confiscation of all past and present land rents and claims that such a policy would eliminate poverty and economic crises arising solely from land speculation; this is the "single tax."
Allameh Jafari maintains that the state should support appropriate taxation and the distribution of income so that those in need are protected.	
He believes that the distribution of wealth must be implemented according to Islamic principles in order to establish social justice.	

Question 6 – What are the similarities between Henry George's and Allameh Jafari's views on distributive justice?

From the perspectives of Henry George and Allameh Jafari, rulers are obliged to ensure the equitable distribution of resources and wealth among all members of society—regardless of their status, whether rich or poor, active or inactive, socially beneficial or not—or, in the process of fair distribution, to consider either the degree of people's needs or the amount of socially useful work performed by each individual as the criterion.

Across the views of these two philosophers, several areas of relative similarity and several points of divergence can be observed. George's ideas are more closely aligned with liberal and critical principles, whereas Allameh Jafari's views are primarily rooted in Islamic principles.

Table 8. Similarities Between Henry George's and Allameh Jafari's Views on Distributive Justice

Henry George's View	Allameh Jafari's View
Government officials are duty-bound to implement the fair distribution of resources and wealth equally among all members of society, regardless of their status, whether rich or poor, active or inactive, socially beneficial or not, and to do so in the best possible manner.	The economic distribution system consists of three important stages. The pre-distribution stage must ensure equality of basic liberties and primary opportunities; during distribution, proportional shares must be based on merit, fairness, and entitlement, so that each person receives a share in accordance with their competence and contribution to production.
	If some people, due to divinely given weaknesses or natural and non-natural events, are unable to obtain a share of resources and wealth, the state must, through redistribution, come to their aid and establish a relative balance and equilibrium at the general level.
	In the process of fair distribution, either the amount of people's needs or the quantity of their socially useful work should serve as the criterion.
George's ideas are more closely aligned with liberal and critical principles.	Allameh Jafari's ideas are derived from Islamic principles.

According to the findings of all researchers working in the field of distributive justice, the ultimate goal of distributive justice is the reduction of inequality in society.

According to Vaez (2021), every conception of distributive justice is a form of social justice, but not all theories of social justice can be attributed to distributive justice (16). Similarly, based on the research of Gholich (2019), Rawls' view of distributive justice is that the distribution of primary goods, particularly basic liberties, must be equal, and he accepts two conditions in distributive inequalities: receiving according to occupational effort and distributing in favor of the least advantaged groups (17). Martyr Motahhari, on the other hand, proposes a three-stage distribution system: equal distribution of primary facilities, distribution of generated income according to individuals' entitlements, and redistribution of assets to create social balance.

According to Yao (2024), distributive justice is examined from a Western perspective, where utilitarianism, liberalism, and communitarianism represent three distinct approaches to distributive justice that nevertheless aim to solve the same problem: inequality in income and wealth (23).

According to Beever (2015), a focus on distributive justice, which concerns relations between individuals and the state, has led us to neglect corrective justice, which governs relations between individuals; this neglect is regarded as a serious and harmful philosophical error that causes us to see human beings primarily as members of a collective, overlook their individuality, and render the state more important and dominant (26).

Overall, distributive justice serves to reduce theft and embezzlement and to ensure the fair distribution of wealth among all segments of society.

Conclusion

The comparative examination of distributive justice in the thought of Henry George and Allameh Jafari demonstrates that although these two thinkers emerge from entirely different intellectual, cultural, and historical contexts, their reflections converge on certain fundamental principles concerning justice, social welfare, and the ethical obligations of governments. At the same time, their perspectives diverge in foundational assumptions, philosophical grounding, and the normative frameworks within which they articulate distributive justice. Together, these convergences and divergences offer a rich platform for expanding contemporary discussions on justice and for extracting meaningful educational implications suitable for modern societies.

Henry George approached distributive justice primarily through an economic and structural lens, emphasizing the inherent belonging of natural resources to all human beings. His perspective is grounded in the belief that societal inequities stem in large part from improper distribution of land-based wealth, resulting in systemic poverty and cycles of economic crisis. George advocates for a system in which land rents are collected and redistributed for public purposes, enabling equal access to services and opportunities. This approach is functional, pragmatic, and tied closely to notions of economic efficiency and structural reform. The educational implications of this view emphasize dialogue, civic engagement, and critical pedagogy as tools for developing citizens capable of recognizing and challenging unjust structures and advocating for fairer systems of wealth distribution.

Allameh Jafari, in contrast, situates distributive justice within a metaphysical and spiritual framework. For him, justice is not merely a matter of resource allocation, but an essential condition for achieving a meaningful human life. He interprets justice as a balanced and moderate order that aligns with the nature of existence, guiding both individual behavior and social organization. In this view, distributive justice becomes an ethical and spiritual necessity, reinforcing the rights of individuals and society while encouraging responsible freedom, dignity, and the pursuit of rational and moral flourishing. The Islamic distributional model that Jafari supports addresses not only material needs, but also the ethical and existential dimensions of human development. Educationally, this view underscores the need for a system that cultivates rationality, nurtures inner moral growth, and prepares individuals to transition from ordinary life to a higher, rational form of living.

The comparison between these two thinkers reveals that both see justice as a precondition for social stability and human flourishing. Both argue that inequalities hinder social cohesion and that governments have a responsibility to ensure fair distribution of resources. Both also insist that ignoring distributive justice leads to deep social fractures, loss of trust in institutions, and diminished opportunities for individual and collective progress. Yet, their emphasis differs: George focuses on structural inequities and policy mechanisms, while Jafari emphasizes spiritual, ethical, and metaphysical foundations alongside social and economic mechanisms.

Their complementary insights show that distributive justice must be viewed through both material and ethical lenses. A society that addresses economic inequality while neglecting moral development risks creating citizens who lack the sense of responsibility, empathy, and civic virtue needed to sustain a just social order. Conversely, a society that focuses on moral education but ignores structural inequalities risks deepening socioeconomic divisions and perpetuating injustice. A comprehensive approach to distributive justice must therefore integrate both dimensions—structural reform and moral cultivation.

With respect to educational implications, both thinkers underscore the transformative role of education in shaping attitudes toward justice. George highlights critical dialogue and civic awareness as tools for empowering citizens to challenge injustice, while Jafari emphasizes the importance of nurturing rational understanding, moral character, and a deep sense of human dignity. Taken together, their views suggest that modern educational systems should balance critical pedagogy with moral-spiritual development, preparing learners not only to analyze structural injustices, but also to embody principles of fairness, compassion, and responsible freedom in personal and communal life.

In conclusion, the comparative analysis of Henry George and Allameh Jafari illustrates that distributive justice is a multidimensional concept that requires both economic and ethical considerations. Their thought collectively provides a comprehensive vision for societies seeking to reduce inequality, promote fairness, and cultivate human flourishing. The integration of their perspectives offers valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and scholars committed to building more just and humane societies, making distributive justice not merely an economic ideal but a fundamental principle of human existence and social well-being.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

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Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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