

Rawls' Difference Principle as a Possibility and an Opportunity to Improve Education Analysis of Two Different Case Studies: Treatment of Students With Special Needs and Rights at Kranj School Centre Vocational College and English School Inspection

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This paper is based on Rawls' fundamental viewpoints on social justice. We mainly focus on the last part of his fundamental starting point, i.e. the difference principle. We will study whether this principle is applied in schools as well and in what way. The first research problem is associated with the treatment of students with special needs and rights at Kranj School Centre Vocational College in the recent years. Schools have to adjust their approach to different students in different ways, so we introduced the differentiation between external and internal adjustments to different students, which could help us in our efforts to address this problem. The second research problem has to do with conceptual changes introduced over the last thirty years in England and an approach that indicates the application of the difference principle. Based on a concrete example (reform of the English school system and related implementation steps), we will show and, at the same time, analyse why the same approach of the school inspection team to all schools could no longer be effective. The third research question has a comparative basis: what these two extremely different examples (in terms of time, problems they address and concepts) have in common and whether it is possible, in both cases, to identify common points that indicate the application of Rawls' difference principle.

Keywords: John Rawls, difference principle, special needs and rights at a vocational college, school management and control, risk analysis

Introduction

In this paper, we will study how it is possible, based on concrete examples, to recognize elements of Rawls' difference principle. For this reason, the introduction will exclusively review his fundamental viewpoints on social justice. At the end of this chapter, research problems and questions will be set. We will try to determine Rawls' fundamental starting point, entirely summarised in the next paragraphs:

- (a) Each person has the same indefeasible claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal fundamental liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme of liberties for all; and
- (b) social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: first, they are to be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and second, they are to be to the greatest benefit of the least-advantaged members of society (the difference principle). (Rawls, 2001, pp. 42-43)

We will mainly study the second part, more precisely, the final section of the second part, explaining that all social and economic inequalities must “be the greatest benefit to the least-advantaged members of society (difference principle)” (Rawls, 2001, pp. 42-43).

We will focus on the application of Rawls' difference principle in practice. This is a complex process of transferring/transforming theory into a variety of possibilities offered by concrete social life—our case highlights education.

The aim of this paper is to describe two different examples and to determine how elements of the difference principle can be recognized in practice.

The goal of the paper is to compare methods employed in both examples and identify potential common characteristics or, in other words, extend knowledge about the difference principle and especially those principles that allow and reinforce it.

By discussing Rawls, we want to present fundamental theoretical findings, based on which our research questions will be addressed. His difference principle also acts as a bridge that links the theoretical and the empirical part of this paper on a conceptual basis.

Rawls was aware that individual religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines were foundations of the modern world, yet he was evidently sure that, within a civil state, it was still possible to reach common agreement between these three doctrines. Rawls (1969) wrote that his “aim is to present a conception of justice which generalises and carries to a higher level of abstraction the familiar theory of the social contracts as found, say, in Locke, Rousseau and Kant” (p. 116).

Differentiation Between the Rational and the Reasonable

“Justice as fairness” is based on two fundamental and complementary ideas, which Rawls consistently differentiates between: the rational and the reasonable. If we take individuals who are the same and cooperate in the same project, reasonable individuals will propose principles of cooperation, or accept them if they are proposed by other individuals. These principles should be such that others view them as fair terms of cooperation. Later on, reasonable individuals come to understand that they must respect the principles they agreed on, even at the expense of their own interests, if others can be expected to respect them to the same extent. It may happen, however, that some will hold greater political power or find themselves in a more favourable position. To benefit from it would be *rational*, but also *unreasonable*. Common sense perceives the reasonable as moral sensitivity (Rawls, 2001, p. 19).

In a reformulation of his theory, Rawls interprets the concept of justice as fairness in a political context. A democratic society cannot be a community if the term *community* means people who accept an entirely or partly comprehensive doctrine. A democratic society is not an association if we enter it voluntarily. In a society with free institutions, *reasonable pluralism* is applied (Rawls, 2001, p. 20). A well-governed society in which everyone accepts the same comprehensive doctrine is therefore not possible.

According to the idea of the original position, no individual knows what position they will be in when the agreements they have reached will have to be honoured. The concept of *the original position* means that one has to be aware that anyone could find themselves even in a less favourable or even very unfavourable social position—when trying to reach an agreement or a social contract, which is a fundamental structure in Rawls' view, we have to consider especially those members of the society who are in the least favourable position.

Difference Principle

According to Rawls, social and economic inequalities must comply with two conditions: first, they are to be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and second, they are to be the greatest benefit of the least-advantaged members of society (the difference principle). We will address exclusively the last statement.

Kaufman (2018) argues: “The difference principle is not the most fundamental element of Rawls’s second principle of justice – in fact, it is lexically subordinate to the principle of fair equality of opportunity” (p. 16). If we strive to create a better society, this principle should not be overlooked. Furthermore, if we want Rawls’ idea of fair society to become reality, the difference principle must become reality, too. Otherwise, we have only reached a part of our goal.

Naturally, general guidelines must be observed in the education sector as well.

Schools should be protected educational sites because of the inclusion, equity and individual and collective well-being they support—and also reimagined to better promote the transformation of the world towards more just, equitable and sustainable futures. (International Commission on the Futures of Education, 2021, p. 4)

Three research problems will be set:

The first research problem is associated with the treatment of students with special needs and rights at Kranj School Centre Vocational College in the recent years since 2013, when the college formally accepted two sets of regulations addressing this field.

The first research problem is as follows: what practical changes occurred in the treatment of students with special needs and rights at Kranj School Centre Vocational College?

The second research problem addresses educational policies and comprises the following research questions: what conceptual changes occurred when school management and control systems were being established in the last 30 years in England and what role the difference principle assumed in this? Which approach allows the application of the difference principle?

On a concrete example from the field of educational policies (reform of the English school system and related implementation steps), we will show and, at the same time, analyse why the same approach to all schools could no longer be effective. The real answer to this is the good old justice rule: equal individuals should be treated equally, and unequal individuals differently.

In the context of the third research problem, we will compare answers to the first and second research problems: is it possible, when comparing two examples set at a different time and in a different space, to identify points indicating the application of Rawls’ difference principle in individual school subsystems?

Method

By presenting Rawls’ findings in the introduction, we want to establish theoretical starting point(s) that will act as basis for later examination of our research questions.

As stated by Ridder (2017, p. 282), case study research allows an in-depth scientific examination of an occurrence from real life and in its environmental context. This occurrence could be anything; an individual, a group, an organisation, an event, a problem, etc. As opposed to quantitative research experiments, context conditions are not controlled and not associated with random sampling. Contrary to quantitative logic, an occurrence is selected because it is interesting. Potential advantages of individual studies are reflected in the

description and analysis. Through a detailed description and analysis, we can better understand how and why things are happening.

It should be stressed that two examples will be examined, but it would be reasonable to select more examples from the educational sector in a similar way and compare approaches leading to the application of Rawls' difference principle. In this sense, each example could be analysed independently, allowing a comparison of the identified mechanisms, based on which wider theoretical conclusions could be drawn (Vaughan, 1992, p. 178).

To address the comparative research question, we used a comparative method. "Comparison is a fundamental tool of analysis. It sharpens our power of description, and plays a central role in concept-formation by bringing into focus suggestive similarities and contrasts among cases" (Collier, 1993, p. 105).

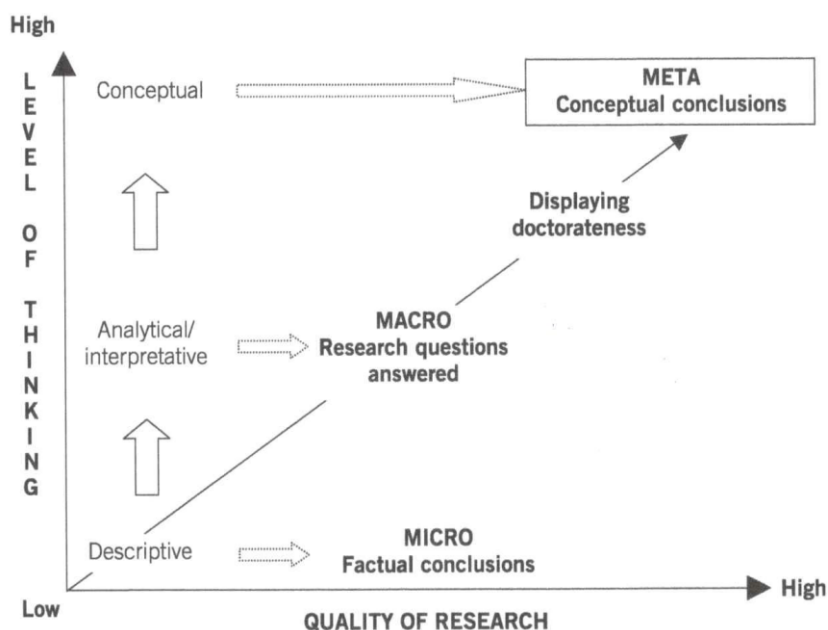


Figure 1. Levels of thinking, quality of research and conclusion.

Source: Trafford and Leshem (2012, p. 134).

Using the description method, we described fundamental facts found in the reviewed literature and sources. When our research shifted to the macrolevel, we used the critical and analytical method, associated with interpretation and the theoretical level.

Case Study of Treatment of Students With Special Needs and Rights at Kranj School Centre Vocational College

Kranj School Centre Vocational College has a longstanding development programme, the first strategic goal of which is: "student-oriented and focused studies" (Kranj School Centre Council, 2020, p. 8). It should be stressed that the said goal is very broad, as it includes gifted students, learning outcomes, etc., but in this paper, we will address an example associated with students with special needs and rights. In doing so, we will focus on the comprehensive approach to different students who enroll to one of our higher education programmes with the intention to finish their studies successfully. However, at that time, not everyone is in the same original position.

Some students' difficulties were recognised at previous stages of education, so they had already been given a placement decision, including adjustments recommended by a state-level expert group who had drafted the

decision. Considering the fact that such students already had certain adjustments in previous stages of education, the headmistress first discusses these adjustments with individual students. The student may say that certain changes have occurred or indicates that certain adjustments have especially benefited them. By filling in an application, the student can acquire a status of students with special needs or rights. This is granted by the school committee in accordance with two sets of school regulations: Regulations of Study Adjustments for Students with Special Needs and Regulations of Study Adjustments for Students with Special Rights. Students are also assigned a tutor (one of the lecturers).

The next chapter describes an example of treatment of students with special needs and rights since the two sets of regulations have been adopted, i.e. in the last nine years. At the beginning, a so-called "equal approach" was adopted towards students with different statuses. Right after school registration, the student had a conversation with the headmistress, to whom they showed the placement decision for children with special needs or rights, relevant certificates issued by sports organisations, etc. During the conversation, the student explained what adjustment they had required in high school. The school administration office helped them fill in an application for the study committee. However, differences in the number of adjustments required by certain students showed that equal students should be treated equally, and different students should be treated differently. Moreover, students with special needs or rights also required different adjustments as well as special assistance. The importance of context perceived by school employees from the first contact with such students, and perhaps even their parents, was acknowledged.

During the study year, tutors reported about potential problems on a daily basis, and they provided a more detailed description of their tutorship once a year during annual discussions. At the end of the study year, tutors detailed their cooperation and potential problems with their student in a written report.

Tutors' feedback indicated even more clearly that there were significant differences between students with a status. Some students barely needed a tutor, others needed them from time to time, while the third category of students with a status was exceptionally complex, as in some cases parents wanted to participate in the treatment of the student or were included in the process by the student or tutor themselves, due to different circumstances.

As we wanted to put students with special needs in the same original position, the deprived had to become privileged. In doing so, we allowed those students with special needs and rights requiring more assistance to also be given it. In order to conduct research more easily, we made an internal distinction between "external" and "internal" adjustments.

Examples of external adjustments are the coordination of periods of class and practical training attendance with lecturers and company mentors, prior agreement about methods and deadlines for test examinations and other study obligations (for instance, for students with the status of a professional athlete, motherhood), etc. In fact, it is not at all problematic to comply with external adjustments; all that is required is only a different organisation scheme for individual students, which, however, requires a certain time investment of the tutor or headmistress. Nevertheless, when students are, for instance, granted an extraordinary examination term, they fulfill their obligations without difficulty, and the same applies to practical training within a company.

Others, in order to study with no disruptions, however, require additional internal adjustments. Placement decisions for children with special needs state the following internal adjustments: the school has to provide the student with an appropriate space for individual work other than classrooms; the student must have the possibility to work in silence; they have to be given more time to give an answer to a question; the questions they are asked need to be short; when addressing the student, the teacher has to form short and clear phrases; written

communication must be ensured, as well as conversation with the lecturer and tutor; third person's assistance in communication, if needed, has to be provided; and students' understanding of the established communication must be examined (different types of special needs, etc.).

From the lecturers and school management's point of view, it is more difficult to ensure internal adjustments, normally associated with autistic disorders and the like. The headmistress and/or tutor had a conversation with the parents at their request, sometimes a meeting with lecturers was called for an individual time period and/or special cases had to be presented even at a faculty meeting.

According to self-evaluation results, there are certain signs indicating that tutorship will be challenging. The complexity of tutorship is indicated when parents try to contact the headmistress or employees before their child's enrollment, possibly in an informal way (for instance, they previously called the office or asked for additional information about the treatment of students with special needs after information days).

Based on the self-evaluation results, our strategy had to be changed. We agreed that students who required less attention because they only needed external adjustments were allowed to approach their tutor themselves whenever they needed anything. This was also taken into account by the headmistress when assigning them suitable tutors. However, tutorship of students who require more assistance is more challenging for the lecturer, as it requires the establishment of a very good relationship between the student and the tutor, which plays a significant role, especially in reaching agreements and ensuring coordination in a broader sense.

Based on a risk analysis conducted by the headmistress following a conversation with a student who wanted to be granted the status of a student with special needs, we can deduct that certain context circumstances indicate the complexity of each case. With our school providing higher education in form of a vocational college, where first- and second-year students spend 10 weeks in practical training in a company, it is very important to convince the student to address potential adjustments they need during the initial conversation with their mentor within the company. Due to GDPR restrictions, the organiser of practical training is not allowed to do that, unless in case of a life-threatening situation.

An interesting example is a case of a student with Asperger's syndrome, whose tutor intensively cooperated with his company mentor at his request. The student studied in the field of information studies, and he was a very successful student; however, he had problems communicating effectively. Following previously received information, his company mentor and his associates understood the student's problems; furthermore, they were impressed by how exceptionally and accurately he fulfilled his work obligations. At the end of this practical training, the student got a job in the company, as they knew it was hard to get another as diligent and hard-working employee as he was. They were aware that he could not, for instance, hold meetings or delegate work to other people, etc., but he was able to accomplish a certain technical task from his field extremely effectively.

Based on the school system classifying students into those requiring only external adjustments and those requiring also internal adjustments, we were allowed to dedicate more attention to those who really needed our help and assistance. As Rose (2001) has remarked, "the teaching methods and practices required for the provision of effective inclusion are easier to identify than they are to implement" (p. 147).

Adaptive teaching is an educational approach that clearly recognizes differences between learners—especially cognitive differences or other specific characteristics. Teachers accept that their students differ in capabilities and take these differences as a starting point for teaching and learning (Van den Berg, Slegers, & Geijssel, 2001, p. 246).

The practise of including students with special needs in the school system at Kranj Vocational College can be supported with this statement by Zgaga:

The concept of inclusion has become one of the central concepts in education in the past few decades, not only in professional discourse, but also among the general public; as well as being on the lips of policymakers, researchers, teachers and so on, it is especially familiar to parents. (Zgaga, 2019, p. 7)

Case Study of an English School Inspection

This case was selected because it clearly shows the application of the difference principle in practise. Therefore, we want to stress that this article does not focus on the English school inspection itself, but on the fact that problems were then being solved in a different way, since it had been determined that the established model had no longer been successful. This chapter analyses the English school system of approximately 30 years ago, when it was established that this school system was not effective and needed to be changed.

The *White Paper* (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1997) is based on a critical analysis of the situation at that time, stating concrete data the English government was not satisfied with. An additional chapter about school performance (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1997) indicates that too many children were failing to realise their potential: in the 1996 national tests, only six in 10 11-year-olds reached the standard in Maths and English expected for their age, and a similar phenomenon was observed in 14-year-olds. As stated in this chapter, according to the OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education), 2%-3% of schools were failing, one in 10 had serious weaknesses in particular areas and about a third were not as good as they should be.

Due to the said shortcomings, a thorough modification of the school system was required. We would like to first focus on the preparation of the *White Paper: Excellence in Schools* (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1997). The introduction written by English Secretary of State David Blunkett highlights that changes were desired in two directions: equal opportunities and high standards for all (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1997, p. 3). Since his goal was to overcome social disadvantage and make equality of opportunity a reality, under-achievement in the most deprived parts of their country could not be overlooked. In order to improve children's achievements, external expertise (OFSTED) and the correct balance between pressuring and helping schools were required.

The common approach, as presented in the *White Paper: Excellence in Schools* (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1997, pp. 5-49), was based on six fundamental principles, summarised hereinafter together with their fundamental goals: (1) education will be at the heart of government; (2) policies will be designed to benefit the many, not just the few; (3) the focus will be on standards, not structures; (4) intervention will be in inverse proportion to success; (5) there will be zero tolerance of underperformance; and (6) government will work in partnership with all those committed to raising standards. The *White Paper: Excellence in Schools* (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1997) sets high standards that should be reached by the majority, but at the same time, its authors were aware of groups of students who require additional and targeted support due to specific circumstances. Socio-economic factors, sometimes associated with special needs, also had to be considered, and ethnic minorities could not be overlooked.

School Inspection in England (OFSTED)

As previously stated, the 1990's represented a turning point in the educational sector in England.

We want to determine how the application of the above principles of equal educational opportunities was reflected through school inspections and what approaches were used in terms of an equal original position. If we

want to place students who are different by nature into the same original position, the privileged should be deprived, or the deprived should be privileged.

In 1992, the *Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)* was established, determined by chapter 38 of the Education (Schools) Act. It lays down the structure of the Inspectorate and tasks of the Chief Inspector. Their main mission is to control standards and quality in English schools, report about them, and ensure their improvement. It tasks the Chief Inspector with informing the Secretary of State about: (1) the quality of the education provided by schools in England; (2) the educational standards achieved in those schools; (3) whether the financial resources made available to those schools are managed efficiently; and (4) the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of students at those schools (*Education (Schools) Act 1992*, chapter 38, point 9 (4)).

Chapter 57 of the School Inspection Act 1996 coordinates provisions of the Education (School) Act 1992 with part V of the Education Act 1993. Effective management of the school inspection system is ensured by OFSTED's Her Majesty's Inspectorate for England, tasked with appointing inspectors (The UK Policy Governance Association, 1996, art. 1).

The OFSTED operates according to the principle of encouraging "improvement through inspection". For this reason, a lot of attention is paid to the management and control of the inspection system, training of inspectors, inspection quality assurance, collection of inspection data, reporting about achieved standards, etc.

When an inspection is scheduled at school, a meeting is organised prior to the inspection (The UK Policy Governance Association, 1996). Following an inspection, inspectors prepare a report, and the governing body draws up an action plan (The UK Policy Governance Association, 1996). A high-school inspection takes one week, with 12-15 inspectors mostly observing classes.

The OFSTED allows appeals against inspections and inspectors, yet one cannot file a complaint against evidence and judgements (Alexander, 1999, p. 123).

The inspection framework standards set how a school inspection is carried out in terms of preparation, discussion about schools' improvement, previous student, and parent surveys, etc. Special attention should be paid to the four-point grading scale (grade 1—outstanding; grade 2—good; grade 3—requires improvement; and grade 4—inadequate) (Ofsted, 2018, p. 38). If the worst grade is given, the school is presented with special measures to improve their system. Inspection judgements also act as basis for national school examination and the yearly report drafted by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) in England (The Stationery Office, 1995, p. 8).

The first cycle of high-school inspections started in the autumn of 1993 and ended with primary-school and special-school inspections in the summer of 1998. By the autumn of 1997, several schools had been inspected for the second time.

First-cycle inspections carried out by the OFSTED in 1993 had at least an indirect effect on discipline.

Student attendance increased by less than 10% was associated with the effect of the OFSTED inspection, but this is more significant in high schools than in primary schools. Student expulsion reduced by 41% was associated with an OFSTED inspection of 16 schools. (Kogan & Maden, 1999, pp. 18-19).

Importance of the Socio-Economic Context, as Determined After the First Cycle of School Inspections

The first cycle of inspections in England took place in September and October 1993, and following numerous comments in inspection group reports, different analyses were conducted. The analyses point to different studies examining the negative impact of a poor socio-economic status of students on their school

performance and discipline: "The ability to protect OFSTED's motto 'improvement through inspection' will turn out as limited, at least in terms of the social context in which schools develop" (Law & Glover, 1999, p. 149).

As indicated by the OFSTED in its reports, some schools "failed", so school management and anxious school employees as well as the Local Education Agency (LEA), to which the school belongs, were pressured to improve the situation (Law & Glover, 1999, p. 150). However, such pressure may pose a certain threat to measurement and improvement efforts or create concerns that these schools have found themselves in a poorer position because of the report. What, therefore, to do with such schools? If evaluated in terms of conventional results, for instance, GCSEs (*General Certificate of Secondary Education; academic qualification after the 4th level, when students are aged from 14 to 16 years*), according to the number of absent students and teachers, etc., in short, according to OFSTED's standards, it seemed impossible for such schools to become successful. "Failure seems as an integral characteristic of schools in some areas" (Law & Glover, 1999, p. 150).

Reports for schools which did not achieve the required standards were added a summary of the socio-economic context of each school (for instance, unemployment rate in a certain area, circumstances students live in, house or apartment ownership, proportion of single-parent families, number of those who speak English as a foreign language, and other individual parent-related problems). According to one of the reports, the number of children receiving free school meals (FSMs) was three times above the state average, etc., even though the proportion of FSMs was only one of the criteria determining the level of poverty. Law and Glover (1999) agree that the report reveals several potentially significant correlations. Correlation between the number of students entitled to school FSMs and the proportion of expelled students, calculated through a regression analysis, is outstanding, as it amounts to 42%. This high proportion reflects problems faced by employees at schools in socially disadvantaged areas. Based on the results of Law and Glover's analysis, the most distinct correlation is the one between the proportion of FSMs and the quality of learning, as opposed to teaching (Law & Glover, 1999, pp. 151-152).

The authors also stress that the category of "excusable failure" does not include those schools where problems arise as a result of operational and managerial shortcomings.

Table 1

Correlation Between the Proportion of Students Entitled to Free School Meals (FSMs) and Teaching and Learning Performance

% FSMs	% A-C grades	% included in education	% effective teaching	% effective learning
> 15 (13 schools)	48 (33-65)	72	36	38
16-30 (8 schools)	32 (21-46)	54	41	27
> 31 (10 schools)	16 (6-30)	46	25	23

*FSM (free school meal)

Source: Law and Glover (1999).

We are able to conclude that the first cycle of inspections clearly showed the importance of the context in which schools operate; in our case these are socio-economic circumstances of the area where students come from.

Introduction of Risk Assessment and School Self-evaluation in the Period 2001-2005 as Important Developmental Changes

The initial phase of the OFSTED was extremely intensive. Between March and September 1992, it had to develop an inspection framework and manual, employ thousands of inspectors and qualify them before the first

inspections took place in 1993, and then review and classify schools according to a seven-level grading system, ranging from “excellent” (1) to “very poor” (7), which ensured a thorough overview over schools. As written by Matthews and Sammons (2004, p. 15), the OFSTED acquired, by conducting inspections, “one of the largest longitudinal worldwide collections of data about schools, combining both qualitative and quantitative data”. Such a collection is as important for school management as it is for scientific research.

In the period 2001-2005, significant conceptual shifts occurred.

Based on these changes, different conclusions were drawn, related to the effect of social circumstances on school performance. As stated by Elliot (2012, p. 2), schools in poor districts had been achieving extremely poor results for several years, while schools in rich areas were managed well. Moreover, parents coming from poor areas did not want to be familiarised with details about inspections.

Elliot (2012) has added that inspections carried out in the period 2001-2005 were becoming “less bureaucratic and more responsive to circumstances of individual schools” (p. 2), as well as more proportionate. The duration of inspections was shortened, and the number of inspection groups was reduced.

By drawing these conclusions, we arrived at an answer to the second research problem. The same approach to all schools could not be effective. Until the approach included the importance of context associated with the socio-economic situation of families, status of immigrants, etc., improvement could not be achieved. On the other hand, it was determined that some schools operated so well that inspections were not required as often, allowing the Inspectorate to devote more attention to those schools who actually required it. The real answer is the good old justice rule, stating that the equal should be treated equally, and the unequal should be treated differently.

Comparison of Both Cases

The goal of the third research problem is to compare answers to the first and second research problems. Is it possible, when comparing two examples set at a different time and following different concepts, to identify points indicating the application of Rawls' difference principle in individual school subsystems?

The first common characteristics (students with special needs and rights in the first case, and failing schools in the second one) are students or schools who are different from others because they have less opportunities to be as successful as them.

The second common characteristic is the importance of understanding context to be able to solve the problem in both cases, as certain contexts reduce the possibility for certain students and schools to be as successful as others.

The third common characteristic is the application of the difference principle based on a risk analysis and self-evaluation results. The risk analysis should be proportionate, allowing one to channel their efforts to the area where they have the greatest influence. Inequalities identified based on the first two characteristics are of the greatest benefit to the least-advantaged members of society (Rawls' difference principle).

In addition, it was determined by the European Commission (Publications Office of the European Union, 2015) that external evaluation analysis revealed two interesting practices: “The analysis of the process put in place for external evaluation also reveals two interesting practices that are used in a handful of countries: risk-based approach and profile-raising activities.” (p. 7).

Discussion and Conclusions

This paper presents two examples that do not describe the same situation nor they are set in the same time period. Despite the said differences, we determined that the approaches used in both examples were similar.

Apparent equality to all unequal is not real equality. Real equality begins where the equal are treated equally, and the unequal are treated differently.

Risk analysis is an important element in this context. It is a method allowing the realisation of the difference principle, introducing context in which an individual is set to better understand the overall situation.

These two examples are relevant to demonstrate and understand effective school management models, which could serve as basis for future models, including quality and agile management. We should stress that the difference principle was most commonly studied in relation to economic and social areas, but these two examples prove that the difference principle could be applied to other areas as well.

Brčić (2010, p. 77) estimates that Rawls, by using the difference principle, tried to establish a new relationship between politics and economy, while the difference principle is in fact a key to a more just and more democratic society. Other authors agree with this statement. Freeman (2008) wrote: "One economic system is more just than another in the extent where it gives advantage to economic interests of the poor." (p. 99).

Is it possible to paraphrase this citation in the sense where one school system is more just than another in the extent where it gives advantage to educational interests of those who have, due to different reasons, less or the least opportunities to be successful.

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