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Reframing inclusive education: educational equality as capability equality

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In this paper, I argue that rethinking questions of inclusive education in the light of the value of educational equality – specifically conceived as capability equality, or genuine opportunities to achieve educational functionings – adds some important insights to the current debate on inclusive education. First, it provides a cohesive value framework which clarifies the relationship of education with the aims of a just society. Second, it suggests a focus on the demands of equality, as well as the quality of educational provision as perhaps more fundamental than questions on the location of education, which have long dominated the inclusive debate. At the same time, it places the well-being and the agency of all children, and children with disability and difficulties in particular, at the centre of the educational process. These dimensions entail reconsidering schooling systems not only in terms of policy, but also of curricular elements and teaching and learning strategies.

Keywords: inclusive education; capability approach; justice; educational equality; capability equality; well-being; agency

Introduction

The terms ‘inclusion’ and ‘inclusive education’ are relatively recent. While the concept of inclusion has emerged in the last 30 years within European social theory and has been used to qualify interventions aimed at including individuals and groups living at the margins of society (Jayal, 2009; Sen, 2000), the idea of inclusive education has been broadly defined in terms of educating *all* children in regular schools which had previously excluded them (Terzi, 2010). Despite their recent origin, these ideas have been readily adopted in academic research as well as in social and economic policy, both nationally and internationally. In education, ‘inclusion’ is now a recognised field, characterised by a vast literature and a wide range of perspectives and policy initiatives.

The prompt adoption and the considerable influence of ideas of inclusion and inclusive education attest to their theoretical significance and their immediate, positive appeal. The 1994 UNESCO Salamanca Statement introduced the concept of inclusive education in terms of a right to education in regular schools, in particular for children with disability and difficulties,¹ and as a means to the establishment of an inclusive society (UNESCO, 1994). Inclusive education is, therefore, broadly understood in the field as related to the values of a democratic society, and as

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generally enhancing educational provision for children with disability and difficulties (Norwich, 2013).

Despite these positive connotations, however, the concepts of inclusion and inclusive education, and their field, are not without problems. While there is little agreement on the precise value and meaning of inclusion and its relation to the aims of society, the policy enactments and the pedagogical implications of such ideas are equally disputed. The debate is characterised by an extensive spectrum of positions which lie on a continuum, from views defining inclusion as a radical social and educational project, to positions expressing a commitment to inclusion ‘as far as possible’ (Norwich, 2013, p. 131). For example, some see inclusive education as a fundamental process which defends the view that all children should be educated in mainstream schools, which should be flexible and able to respond to differences without any additional or special provision (Liasidou, 2012). Other perspectives see inclusive education as concerned primarily with providing an optimal education, and as entailing additional or special support in order to meet children’s individual needs. The level of policy is also complex; for example, in England the educational system is characterised by inclusive and special schools, which result in wide inequalities in provision (Terzi, 2008). Pedagogies for inclusion are also disputed. The main questions here concern the meaning and usefulness of inclusive pedagogic approaches; whether these imply a specialised pedagogy for children with disability and difficulties, and, if so, to what extent the latter is related to the identification of disabilities and learning difficulties, the adoption of specific teaching strategies, and the location of education (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Norwich, 2013).

Nearly three decades after its emergence, and against the background of these theoretical and policy debates, there is currently a call for a reconsideration of the concept of inclusive education. While some of the scholars who first embraced it are advocating a re-thinking of its theoretical stances and more practical implications (see, for example, Slee, 2011; Thomas, 2012), the current UK Coalition government is reframing provision for children with disability and difficulties in England, while aiming to end an allegedly inclusive ‘bias’ in recent educational policy (Department for Education, 2011; Runswick-Cole, 2011).

In this paper, I attempt to respond to the call for reconsidering inclusive education by arguing that reframing questions of provision for children with disability and difficulties in the light of the value of educational equality – specifically conceived as capability equality and based on Amartya Sen’s capability approach – adds some important theoretical and practical dimensions to the current debate. First, it provides a cohesive value framework while establishing an important relationship with the aims of a just society, thus clarifying some of the value tensions emerging in relation to inclusion. Second, it suggests an important focus on the demands of equality, as well as quality of educational provision as perhaps more fundamental than questions on the specific location of education, which have long dominated the debate. Simultaneously, it places the well-being and the agency of all children, and children with disability and difficulties in particular, at the centre of the educational process. These dimensions entail reconsidering schooling systems not only in terms of policy, but also of curricular elements, and teaching and learning strategies. Although this paper builds on my previous work on the capability approach to educational justice and equality (Terzi, 2008), it develops new insights on the ideal of capability equality in relation to the questions of inclusion.

The paper is organised in three sections. The first highlights some of the important questions around the concept of inclusive education. The second section discusses the ideal of educational equality in terms of capability equality; while the final section shows how the ideal of educational capability equality may contribute to a timely reconsideration of provision for children with disability and difficulties while suggesting insights on some of its more contentious aspects.

1. Inclusive education: a promising or a flawed idea?

As I noted at the outset, the idea of inclusive education emerged in relation to that of inclusion in society, which aimed to address the vast number of problems associated with social exclusion, poverty and disadvantage. The idea of inclusive education is therefore linked with a social dimension, as well as with addressing forms of exclusion. These important features have remained a constant source of reflection within the field, for example in relation to children at risk of exclusion from school, such as young children in care or young offenders, or in relation to concepts of Education for All, involving for instance the schooling of girls and young women in developing countries (Liasidou, 2012), or indeed in relation to broader discussions of social justice in education (Slee, 2013).

The application of the idea of inclusion to the educational provision for children with disability and difficulties has, however, given it a more specific and yet more complex dimension. In particular, three main interrelated questions characterise the field. First, although inclusive education is seen as having an ethical dimension and as enacting values broadly related to justice, equality and rights, this dimension is often stated more than analysed, and there are contrasting views on its value (Barton, 1998; Warnock, 2010). Second, according to some perspectives, inclusive education is interrelated to broader societal aims, and in particular to the aims of an inclusive society; however, other views question this relationship in favour of an emphasis on the specific aims of education. Thirdly, inclusive education entails considerations of how best to provide education for children with disability and difficulties, but what constitutes an appropriate provision is highly debated, and different views are underpinned by different conceptions of disability and difficulties. In this section, I highlight the main controversies surrounding these questions. I start by analysing the ethical dimension of the idea of inclusive education, and proceed to discuss its relation to values in society and to appropriate provision.

Undoubtedly, given its conceptual origin and its aims, inclusion implies an ideal, ethical dimension. A broad value position is clearly embedded within all rights-based views of inclusion, from important international declarations such as the 1994 Salamanca Statement, as mentioned earlier, to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities UN, 2006, to more specific policies at national level, for example the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 in the UK, which stipulates that discrimination of disabled students is unlawful. Several scholars in the field explicitly recognise the ethical dimension of inclusive education. For example, Reindal (2010, p. 8) reminds us that inclusion implies participation in ‘something that is valuable’, while Slee maintains that inclusive education is ‘a statement of value’ (quoted in Norwich, 2013, p. 131) and Allan argues ‘for inclusion as an ethical project and as involving an ongoing struggle’ (quoted in Norwich, 2013, p. 131). Among others, Norwich has focused particular attention on the values underpinning inclusion (Norwich, 2008, 2013). He notes that ‘Inclusion can be seen

to represent a contemporary mixture of the values of equal opportunity, social respect and solidarity' (Norwich, 2013, p. 2). It is this combination of values which, in his view, creates the ambiguities and different policy enactments of inclusive education, and leads to tensions and dilemmas involving difficult choices. Norwich identifies three main dilemmas. The first, known as the dilemma of difference, concerns the tension between recognising children's differences in order to enhance provision, with the risk of negative connotations, and emphasising commonalities, with the risk of less-appropriate provision (Norwich, 2008; Terzi, 2005). The second dilemma relates to tensions between participation and protection. While an inclusive ideal aims for full social and educational participation, in his view this may only be achieved by enacting forms of protection for some children. Norwich refers here to the tensions arising between the value of children's participation in terms of expressing their views on educational matters, for example, and the possible limitations which might be experienced by children with 'learning disabilities' (Norwich, 2013, p. 119). In these instances, he argues, some forms of 'advocacy' or 'guardianship' may be enacted in order to facilitate participation (Norwich, 2013). Finally, according to Norwich, tensions emerge in relation to elements of choice and equity. While school choice may meet parental legitimate demands, for example choosing a special over a local, mainstream school, an unregulated choice system can have a detrimental effect in relation to provision for vulnerable children, who are sometimes considered 'more difficult to educate' (Norwich, 2013, p. 128). Norwich maintains that these values of difference, commonality, participation, protection, choice and equity are all constitutive of the concept and practice of inclusion. Instead of representing a single unitary value position, therefore, inclusive education is, and should be, recognised as inscribed in a 'plural values dimension' (Norwich, 2013, p. 155). According to Norwich, this plurality of values does not allow for universal solutions to the tensions caused, and consequently, the ethical and more practical endeavour of inclusive education consists of aiming for 'resolutions ... which combine plural values as far as possible with these resolutions open to change over time' (Norwich, 2013, p. 155).

Not all scholars endorse inclusive education as a positive value. For example, Law (2007, p. 9) questions whether a society 'undertaking all the transformations that would be required to accommodate all the special needs of all those groups which have them' is actually a feasible prospect. Baroness Warnock, who oversaw some of the most important changes in educational provision for children with disabilities in the UK, following the 1978 Warnock Report, is also critical of inclusion both as a social, and even more, as an educational ideal (Warnock, 2010). These critiques involve the question of the relationship of inclusion with broader societal values, and in particular the aim of creating an inclusive society. I now turn to this controversial issue.

The 1994 Salamanca Statement establishes a clear relationship between inclusive education and an inclusive society by defining inclusive institutions as 'the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all' (UNESCO, 1994, p. 10). Positions defending inclusive education as a radical change of systems and the abolition of all forms of separate provision fully endorse this relationship, and see education as fundamental to the achievement of an inclusive society. As Barton (1998, p. 84) states, 'inclusive education is not an end in itself, but a means to an end, that of establishing an inclusive society'. He, moreover, maintains that,

‘the question [of inclusive education] is fundamentally about issues of human rights, equity, social justice and the struggle for a non-discriminatory society. These principles are at the heart of inclusive educational policy and practice’ (Barton & Armstrong, 2007, p. 6). Other positions present a slightly more complex picture, which involves considering both the aims of education and those of society within a project of inclusion, while for others, like Warnock, inclusion is a flawed ideal which leads to negative social and educational results. Reindal, revisiting positions on inclusion, reminds us that

parents send their children to school to be educated, not to be included. Inclusion is something one expects from the school’s practices so that their children will be treated fairly, protected from harm, and taken care of as well as not being excluded and isolated from classmates. (Reindal, 2010, p. 10)

Reindal maintains that the main mission of schools is that of educating children by providing fundamental skills. As such, inclusive education should be theorised and enacted within the context of core educational values, while still relating to broader societal aims of justice, fairness and participation (Reindal, 2010). As stated earlier, it is Warnock, however, who articulates a stringent critique of the ideal of inclusion in society and its enactment in education. According to Warnock, while the ideal of inclusion has some positive elements, since ‘it is essentially connected to citizen’s rights’ (Warnock, 2010, p. 133) and to an anti-discriminatory stance, its extension to all aspects of society, and in particular its application to education are ‘surely disastrous’ (Warnock, 2010, p. 135). Warnock’s position on inclusive education is twofold: first, she argues that schools should not be considered as political entities, or ‘microcosms of society’ (Warnock, 2010, p. 136), and should therefore not reproduce society’s values and aims. Schools, in her view, should be considered in relation to the aims of educating children and as devoted to teaching and learning, even if education involves some preparation for life in society. Therefore, schools are not means to the end of an inclusive society. Second, Warnock maintains that the ideal of educating all children ‘under the same roof’ (Warnock, 2010, p. 101) has yielded extremely exclusionary results for some children, particularly those with behavioural and emotional difficulties or children on the Autistic Spectrum Disorder. For these, and other vulnerable children, an inclusive education often results in physical inclusion but emotional exclusion, mainly due to instances of peer discrimination, or poor provision overall. For these children, Warnock maintains, inclusive education is disastrous. Small, specialised settings, capable of meeting their individual needs and supporting their learning, should instead be provided (Terzi, 2010, p. 157; Warnock, 2010, p. 133).

Interrelated to the debates on the value of inclusion and its relation to an inclusive society are the different and contested understandings of what constitutes an appropriate educational provision, perhaps the most vexed question in the debate. Here again, positions vary mainly in relation to their stances on the value of inclusive education and their different conceptions of disability and difficulties. Perspectives supporting a fully inclusive system, and the radical change of existing arrangements, defend the view that every aspect of schooling, from policy to curriculum to pedagogical elements to leadership, to ethos and culture, should change in order to educate children within a common framework. As Liasidou (2012, p. 9) notes, ‘Inclusion requires educational systems to be radically restructured so as to provide quality education for all students, especially the most vulnerable ones,

irrespective of their individual characteristics and diverse biographical and developmental trajectories'. An inclusive provision 'constitutes a response to the flawed ways in which the education of disabled students has so far been predicated' (Liasidou, 2012, p. 6). This view adopts the social theorisation of disability as attributed to structural and ideological barriers which undermine the atypical developmental trajectories of individuals with impairment. Proponents of this position assert the value of common schooling as the optimal provision for all children, and denounce any recourse to additional or special forms of support as discriminatory and 'flawed'. Perspectives more favourable to incorporating elements of additional or different support as part of inclusion propose instead a 'two-track system' of special and inclusive schools, or a continuum from more special to more inclusive settings, as more appropriate in order to meet children's individual needs (Liasidou, 2012; Norwich, 2013; Warnock, 2010). As Law (2007, p. 10) notes, these positions entail 'mainstream schools resourced and progressively developed to provide inclusive provision for the maximum number of those with special needs who can benefit from it, and specialist provision optimally located for those who need it'. On this view, disability and difficulties arise from the interrelation of individual features and schooling environments, and are mostly identified in terms of individual or special educational needs.

What ultimately emerges from this overview is a complex and at times contradictory framework, where inclusion is debated not only as a valuable ideal, but also in relation to the values it enacts, as well as in relation to the aims of society. As Norwich (2013) aptly notes, this coexistence of multiple values and conflicting interpretations leads to tensions, dilemmas and different practices. In short, as Graham and Slee (2008, p. 83) posit, inclusion is 'troubled by the multiplicity of meanings that lurks within the discourses that surround and carry it'. These conflicting value positions and contrasting conceptions share, however, a major concern: the question of what constitutes an appropriate educational provision for children with disability and difficulties. Against this complex background, I suggest that the ideal of educational equality as capability equality can provide some fruitful insights to questions of inclusion. The next section explores the ideal of educational equality within the capability approach in more detail.

2. Educational equality as capability equality²

The ideal of educational equality is fundamentally grounded in the egalitarian principle that social and institutional arrangements should be designed to give equal consideration to all; it rests on the ideal of the equal respect due to all individuals and, as such, it is a fundamental value of social justice (Terzi, 2008). According to this value, educational institutions should be designed to enact the equal entitlement of every child to education, while acknowledging and respecting individual differences. This broad principle entails a distributive element: equal respect requires and is enacted by a fair distribution of educational resources, however fairness and resources are conceptualised (Terzi, 2008). As we have seen, the fundamental question of how best to theorise and enact the equal entitlement to education is particularly contentious in relation to children with disability and difficulties. In this section, I outline a perspective on capability equality in education, drawn from Amartya Sen's view of equality as equal, effective opportunities to lead valuable lives, and show how it responds to the demands of justice in education for children

with disability and difficulties (Sen, 1992, 1999, 2009; Terzi, 2008). I start by articulating some elements of Sen's capability approach, and then proceed to discuss the notion of capability equality in education.

Given its influence in academic and policy arenas over the last two decades, it is perhaps well known that Sen developed the capability approach within political philosophy and economics, in order to re-examine the normative bases for the assessment of individual well-being and the justice of social and institutional arrangements, and to present a different account from perspectives based on income or resources. According to Sen, what is important in evaluating the relative position of individuals, their advantages or disadvantages, is not the amount of goods at their disposal, but what individuals can do with the resources they have. Sen articulates this central idea in terms of functionings and capability. Functionings are modes of doing and being, or actions and states that people want to achieve and engage in. They are innumerable and different: from reading to voting, to working, to practising sport, to being healthy, educated or nourished (Sen, 1999). Capability represents the genuine, effective opportunities that people have to achieve valued functionings. The idea at play here is that a 'capability set', as Sen specifies it, is a combination of possible functionings, and is expressed in terms of opportunities for a range of activities and states (Sen, 1992). As Robeyns (2005, p. 95) explains, 'the distinction between achieved functionings and capabilities is between the realized and effectively possible; in other words, between achievements on the one hand, and freedoms or valuable options from which one can choose on the other'. Capabilities are therefore freedoms to choose among valuable livings, and achieved functionings constitute the various kinds of lives that people actually manage to achieve. Sen emphasises the importance of the element of freedom as essential to well-being. In his words,

[I]n noting the nature of human lives, we have reason to be interested not only in the various things we succeed in doing, but also in the freedom that we actually have to choose between different kinds of lives. The freedom we have to choose our lives can make a significant contribution to our well-being. (Sen, 2009, p. 18)

Sen furthermore maintains that moral agency plays a crucial role in leading a good life, and therefore for well-being. He understands agency in terms of 'what a person is free to do and to achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important' and accounts for agency in individuals' enactment of freedom (Sen, 1985, p. 206). Finally, he adds an important consideration, hitherto neglected by other perspectives of justice, and places it at the centre of the comparative evaluation of people's well-being: the element of human difference. This is considered in its complexity, and as encompassing physical, social, cultural and environmental differences, as well as a personal difference in terms of how each individual makes different use of resources, what Sen calls the different 'conversion' of resources into well-being (Sen, 2009). The example of a pregnant woman who needs more food to function appropriately in her environment than a non-pregnant one aptly illustrates the conversion factor. Based on these fundamental ideas, Sen argues that the justice of social and institutional arrangements should be evaluated in terms of capability, and hence in terms of people's effective opportunities to lead good lives. Equality, in this view, consists of providing people with equal, effective opportunities to achieve well-being; conversely, an inequality of capability amounts to disadvantage, and poverty is defined as capability deprivation (Sen, 1992, 1999, 2009). It is

important to note that Sen has avoided compiling a list of capabilities which should be equally provided, and has only specified that equality should be sought primarily in those capabilities which are essential to well-being, such as being nourished, sheltered, healthy, educated and participating in society without shame (Sen, 1992). Sen has left his approach intentionally open while emphasising the importance of processes of public reasoning, scrutiny and democratic deliberation in the choice of the capabilities that are deemed important (Sen, 2004). This allows for different conceptions of a good life, on the one hand, and for choices specific to particular situations, on the other.

As I have explained at length elsewhere (Terzi, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2013), two important insights follow from Sen's approach. First, the centrality and comprehensive view of human diversity is particularly important for reconceptualising disability and difficulties in terms of capability limitations, as well as inherently relational, and as one among the many aspects of human diversity (Terzi, 2005). Second, the idea of capability equality provides important theoretical elements towards a conception of equality which is sensitive to the demands of justice for people with disabilities. To reiterate the idea expressed earlier, Sen maintains that social and institutional arrangements should seek to equalise people's capabilities, or their effective opportunities for functionings. It is through such equalisation that the fundamental principles of equal consideration and equal respect for all are enacted. It follows, therefore, that individuals with disabilities, if their capabilities are limited, should receive appropriate resources in order to enjoy equal, effective opportunities to achieve the functionings they have reason to value, thus to achieve well-being, as a matter of justice (Terzi, 2008). Sen's capability approach provides, therefore, a normative framework which offers justified answers to long-debated questions concerning disability and justice. In my view, it offers also the normative foundation for a conception of educational equality, which is sensitive to the demands of a just educational provision for children with disability and difficulties. I now turn to this aspect.

As mentioned earlier, Sen identifies being educated among the capabilities fundamental to well-being, and therefore among those that should be equally provided. Education, in his view, contributes not only to individual well-being but also to developing a conception of the good life – the life that one has reason to value – together with promoting effective forms of participation in society. Indeed, the role of education is broadly recognised within the capability approach as crucial, both for the individual and for society, since it develops essential functionings that are important intrinsically, and for the enhancement and expansion of other capabilities as well as the general enhancement of social arrangements (Robeyns, 2006). This entails some further important considerations. First, since it is essential to well-being, and hence to freedom, a deprivation of the opportunity for education is a fundamental disadvantage, which leads to limited agency and constrained freedom. Second, individuals interrelate with their social, cultural and economical environments in complex ways, and this interrelation greatly influences the possibility of functioning and participating in society, and hence has implications for a person's well-being. Basic educational functionings such as literacy and numeracy, but also more complex ones, as well as forms of civic and indeed economic participation, play an important role in determining one's well-being, while providing the necessary resources for the exercise of freedom. Therefore, among the innumerable capabilities that education and schooling can develop, just educational systems should develop

and enhance the capabilities necessary to participate as equals in society, or as Anderson has aptly expressed in her view of democratic equality, the capabilities to stand as equals in society (Terzi, 2008). Participating as equals in society, according to Anderson, encompasses real opportunities to lead a meaningful life, free from the constraints of inequality and capability deprivation, and being able to choose among possible livings, those that one has reason to value. An effective equal participation entails, furthermore, engaging in forms of economic, political and democratic activities, and exercising one's agency in achieving valued aims, aspirations and changes in one's life and in society. The aim of standing as equals in society, moreover, entails the removal of forms of oppression and discrimination (Terzi, 2008). Finally, this view of education requires equal opportunities to achieve educational functionings to a level necessary for equal participation in society, a view of democratic education (Gutmann, 1987).

Based on these insights, it is now possible to outline a fundamental capability entitlement to education in line with the aim of placing well-being at the centre of educational concerns and the equalisation of opportunities as the principle supporting it. Thus, a fundamental educational entitlement – what we owe to each child – consists of equal, effective opportunities to achieve the educational functionings necessary to participate in society as equals. Equal participation, on this view, does not entail the maximisation of opportunities, but rather the projected achievements of a threshold level of functionings required for equal standing. Although ideally the content of the threshold level should be the result of processes of democratic deliberation, given its foundational dimension it should involve the

cultivation and expansion of literacy and numeracy, as well as forms of scientific understandings, dispositions to sociality and participation, and to learning functionings such as being able to concentrate, to pay attention and to engage in activities, but also to exercise and to play. (Terzi, 2008, p. 150).

Moreover, it should entail forms of practical reasoning, such as relating means and ends and reflecting on one's actions. The threshold functionings suggested, ultimately, aim at equipping children with the basic transformational resources that will enable them to participate as equals in society. Furthermore, it is worth noting that opportunities are conceived here in the broad sense of educational resources, including educational facilities, human and physical resources, as well as supporting social and cultural policies. What a democratic society owes to all its children is their effective opportunities to achieve educational functionings at the level necessary for equal participation in society, since these constitute the necessary resources to achieve well-being and enact freedom. Since children with disability and difficulties might experience limitations in functionings, and consequently a limitation of opportunities to be educated, they should receive additional resources that will secure their equal functionings and, ultimately, their equal participation in society, as much as reasonably possible (Terzi, 2008). This entitlement stipulates that allocating more resources to a child with a disability or a learning difficulty in order to achieve the threshold level established for all is legitimate and just. Moreover, this entitlement is set within a normative framework where competing demands of equality for children with disability and difficulties and other learners are evaluated comparatively.³ Beyond the threshold level of equal participation in society, perhaps opportunities should be distributed differently, allowing for more resources to be effectively deployed along different principles of justice. This fundamental framework for

educational equality⁴ responds to the demands of justice in education for children with disability and difficulties, while considering their position in relation to that of their non-disabled peers. Furthermore, it places the projected achievement of essential educational functionings within the aims of participating in social arrangements in different ways, both ‘typical’ and ‘atypical’.

This framework of educational equality as capability equality, in my view, can offer some insights on the questions currently debated in inclusive education. In the next section I attempt to address this claim.

3. Reframing inclusive education: the ideal of educational equality

The ideal of educational capability equality, as we have seen, responds to the demands of a just educational provision for children with disability and difficulties. It relates to the broader educational aims of participating in society as equals, and therefore to an inherently ‘inclusive’ view of society. A society of equals, at least at the level of a principled formulation such as the one suggested earlier, is a society where forms of oppression and discrimination are disestablished, and where equal participation consists both in relationships of equality – the standing as equals suggested by Anderson (1999) – and in equal opportunities to choose among possible livings, and hence to achieve well-being.

How can this perspective of educational equality inform the debate on inclusive education? I argue that it offers three main interrelated insights. First, while the ideal of educational equality is inscribed within an ethical framework for justice, it also offers a cohesive and unitary principled framework. This helps in reconsidering some of the tensions between different values in inclusive education, and to specify their meanings. Second, the ideal of capability equality establishes a significant relationship between education and the just design of social and institutional arrangements, while emphasising the aims of education and its fair provision. It therefore helps in reconsidering the contested relationship between inclusive education and the aims of an inclusive society. Finally, the ideal highlights an important insight towards the vexed question of provision. This insight is twofold. First and foremost it advances a principled framework for just provision, and therefore focuses on the well-being of children and on equality and quality of education, over its location, and second, it suggests an education based on notions of well-being and agency, which, in turn, can significantly inform policy, curricula and pedagogies (Boni & Walker, 2013; Walker, 2006). I now turn to each insight more closely.

The principled framework for capability equality in education, as we have seen, is inscribed within the capability approach to justice, which provides a normative view based on the expansion of freedoms and the equalisation of opportunities for well-being. While the approach does not constitute a fully fledged theory of justice, it does however provide significant insights on the careful evaluation of different values and their respective positions towards a just society. These insights are reflected in the ideal of educational equality as capability equality, which in turn provides a normative, principled view of how to enact the equal concern and respect due to all children, through the design of just educational arrangements. While not presenting a full theory of educational justice, the suggested framework of educational equality subsumes and enacts the values of equal respect and concern defended by different perspectives of inclusion, and, moreover, relates them to the broader aims of a just society. Furthermore, the principled framework for

educational equality, as we have seen, considers the reciprocal and legitimate demands of children with disability and difficulties alongside the demands of their non-disabled peers, thus facilitating a comprehensive evaluation of relative disadvantage. Educational equality as capability equality, therefore, might suggest ways forward for considering the tensions emerging from the plurality of values characterising inclusive education. In particular, the capability perspective helps go beyond the tensions of difference and commonality, by evaluating disability as an aspect of human difference, and by focusing on equal provision (for an extended discussion of this aspect, see Terzi, 2005). It also offers some insights towards reconsidering the tensions between the values of participation and protection, both in its defence of the idea of participating in society as equals and in stipulating specific forms of provision and support for children with disability and difficulties to that end (more on this later on). Finally, it gives attention to elements of choice and equality, since choice among possible livings is constitutive of well-being and of its equal pursuit; and while admittedly these considerations are expressed at the level of ideals, and therefore more needs to be said on their enactment in educational policy and practice, this seems nevertheless to provide some fruitful insights for the current debate.

The second insight advanced by the ideal of educational equality as capability equality relates to the clarification of the inextricable link between an equal educational entitlement to participate effectively in society as equals (an expression of democratic equality) and the establishment of an inclusive society. Although, as Slee (2014) notes, this is not a new idea, since others have emphasised the importance of an education for democratic participation, the insight provided by capability equality consists of its expression in relation to notions of equal standing in societal arrangements and to the enactment of well-being, on the one hand, and on the other, its simultaneous focus on the actual aims of an appropriate education. Stipulating that educational equality consists of equal effective opportunities to achieve fundamental educational functionings that will enable children to be equal participants in society places the core aims of education at the centre of the aims of society, while preserving the crucial aspect of educating the child for his or her well-being. This seems important in addressing the concerns expressed by some critics of an excessive focus on the instrumentality of inclusive education towards the achievement of an inclusive society, to the detriment of educational aims.

The third and perhaps more important contribution of the ideal of capability equality in education, however, relates to the contentious questions surrounding provision. In my view, two important considerations can be drawn from both the principled framework of educational equality suggested, and from the broader aims of Sen's capability approach. First, a focus on the demands of educational equality for children with disability and difficulties, while placing their well-being at the core of educational provision, implies a broader reconsideration of education, which addresses, but perhaps goes beyond the contention of special versus mainstream schools. Second, placing the well-being and the agency of children at the core of questions of fair provision offers significant insights towards a reconsideration of policy, curricula and pedagogies. In addressing the first consideration, a few important preliminary thoughts are worth mentioning. As Buchanan, Brock, Daniels, and Wikler (2000, p. 20) have noted in relation to 'the morality of inclusion' for genetic choice, 'increasingly human beings can exert some control over the character of the basic cooperative framework' of their societies, and such a choice has profound

implications for whether some people will be able to participate and at what level, since it stipulates the kinds of abilities and features necessary for participation. Buchanan et al. (2000) compare the choice of a dominant co-operative framework to the choice of the rules of a game: the setting of the rules will have important implications in determining who will be able to participate in the game and at what level. If the rules are extremely demanding, only a few individuals will be able to take part in the game. However, they further argue, 'there is an important but often ignored obligation to choose a dominant cooperative framework that is inclusive' (Buchanan et al., 2000, p. 21) while considering the morally legitimate interests of people, and indeed societies, in having access to the most enriching, productive and challenging schemes in which they can participate. This requires, therefore, a careful evaluation of the reciprocal benefits and burdens placed on individuals by the choice of a specific design. As Wikler (2010) reminds us, moreover, there may be important reasons for setting the threshold of participation at some chosen level, say more efficient and demanding, rather than others, providing that there are important measures in place to ensure a just overall design. These points have an important bearing on the question of determining what constitutes a just educational provision for children with disability and difficulties. In this sense, while the choice of the design of the most inclusive educational framework is morally required as more just, this choice must take into account the interests of children with different characteristics and dispositions in a balanced, fair design. Second, it is perhaps worth noting that an equal educational entitlement is not equivalent to 'the same education' for all. What an equal educational entitlement entails is the equal access to genuine opportunities to achieve fundamental educational functionings necessary to participate in society. These considerations, together with the fundamental importance of considering the well-being of each and every child and the expansion of their capabilities, result in a focus on equality and quality of educational provision, rather than on the absolute imperative of securing an education in a mainstream school. More specifically, in my view, while there is a crucial moral obligation to design and provide the most inclusive settings possible, there is also a moral demand to ensure the well-being and the expansion of the capabilities of each child. This may result in a provision which secures a fair and good quality education for children with disability and difficulties in settings different from mainstream schools, with the proviso that these are freely chosen among equally valuable educational options. A further important comment relates to questions of the quality of provision. The framework for educational capability equality suggested here places an important requirement on the equality of opportunities to educational functionings, in that, if the opportunities enjoyed are to be truly genuine, they must be not only effectively available, but also of equal quality. Educational opportunities, as noted earlier, entail a broad understanding including human, physical and educational resources, settings such as buildings and other facilities, and external conditions such as supportive policies and cultural conditions. Consequently, the quality of diverse educational settings has to be secured for effective, genuine opportunities to be available. Indeed this is an important insight of capability equality in education, over different views of equality of opportunities. Ultimately, the equality and quality of educational provision thus specified, and the focus on each individual child's well-being, allow for different educational settings to be part of a just provision for children with disability and difficulties. This is perhaps illustrated by the examples of Jamie, BéRubé's son (BéRubé, 2010), and Kittay's daughter Sesha (Kittay, 2010). While Jamie, who has

Down syndrome, has been educated in regular schools and has achieved high levels of functionings in a wide range of skills, so that he can now speak French better than his academic father, while enjoying a life he is reasonably choosing for himself, albeit with some forms of support, Kittay's daughter Sesha, who is profoundly cognitively impaired, is living her life in a specialised setting where her disposition towards communicating through music and body language is fostered and supported. Both these young adults are enjoying appropriate levels of well-being and a valuable life perhaps due to their different educational paths.

The second consideration relating to provision refers to the specific design of policy, curricula and pedagogies in support of the principled framework for educational equality suggested. As Boni and Walker (2013, p. 5) note in relation to a university education, 'if we pursue Sen's argument that ultimately what matters "is what freedom does a person have"', then notions of well-being, capabilities and agency are all key concepts in re-imagining a different schooling system, in terms of policy, curricula and pedagogy. While the principled framework for educational capability equality should inform and underpin policy design, curricula and pedagogies need to be reconsidered in the light of children's well-being and agency too. Deprez and Wood (2013) address the question of 'what would education look like if the individual well-being of every student was the key aim' in relation to the design of university curricula. They suggest that, while securing a wide-ranging knowledge base, 'the curriculum ought to be responsive and flexible and connect to students' concerns, desires, interests and aspirations' (Deprez & Wood, 2013, p. 147), while supporting careful listening and students' participation. Furthermore, Walker addresses questions of pedagogies in relation to higher education and identifies some dimensions that emerged from learners' and teachers' own valued experiences, including 'scholarly expertise, creativity, openness, responsiveness, commitment to learning, and reflexivity in mediating subject knowledge acquisition' (Walker, 2006, p. 68). Although more research is needed in relation to a capability approach to pedagogies for children with disability and difficulties, the insights drawn from research at university level can inform the debate on pedagogies for inclusion. Indeed, the valued pedagogical dimensions articulated in capability terms for higher education seem to be complementary to the main aspects of inclusive pedagogy as identified by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), who argue for a focus on the idea of learning for all, a rejection of established views of abilities and a fundamental respect for the dignity of learners as full members of the community of the classroom.

Ultimately, the ideal of educational equality in terms of capability equality seems to provide some fruitful insights to the current contentious questions characterising inclusive education, and may suggest a reframing of educational provision for children with disability and difficulties which places their equal opportunities for well-being and the expansion of their capabilities at its core.

In this paper, I have argued that reconsidering some of the contentious questions in inclusive education through the ideal of capability equality may help in reframing the current debate in significant ways. While each of the insights suggested need more careful examination, in particular in relation to policy and practice, a reframing of educational provision in the light of the value of educational capability equality could, if nothing more, at least address some of the most pervasive educational inequalities that still characterise the education of children with disability and difficulties.

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Notes

1. I adopt here the terms used recently by Norwich (2013) to identify children with disability and difficulties in learning, since this terminology encompasses both concepts of disabilities and special educational needs.
2. This section draws on my previous work on the capability approach for justice and equality in education (see Terzi, 2008, 2010, 2013, in press).
3. It is important to note that the framework suggested considers the competing demands of children with disability and difficulties alongside the demands of other learners. This is a crucial and often neglected aspect of the debate on inclusion (see Terzi, 2008, pp. 150–158). As Haydn (2014) has recently argued, for example, a major inequality in schools in England arises when the rights of children with behavioural difficulties supersede the same rights of other children to be educated in a ‘reasonable working atmosphere’. However, this crucial question is beyond the immediate scope of this paper and it is therefore not addressed here. I am very grateful to an anonymous reviewer for this valuable insight.
4. I have extensively discussed this framework for educational equality in Terzi (2008). This entails the application of Rawlsian principles to the framework articulated, beyond the threshold level established for all.

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