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On The Univocity of Rawls's Difference Principle

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ABSTRACT

A double ambiguity has been charged against Rawls's difference principle (DP). Is it Maximin, Leximin, or something else? Usually, following A. Sen, scholars identify DP with the so-called Leximin. One argues here that one has to distinguish 1° the Leximin, 2° the Maximin (as rule of justice formally analogous to the maximin rule of decision), represented by the figure in L of the perfectly substitutable goods, and 3° the genuine DP. When the augmentation of inequality benefits the worse off, only Pareto-strong improvements are permitted. Leximin would also permit Pareto-weak improvements too (after the first maximum D), where only the richest improves: from (2, 3) to (2, 5), say. This is forbidden by DP. With two classes, unlike Maximin, DP has no curve of indifference and is always decisive, as Leximin is. For undecisive Rules of Justice, which admit indifferent curves, I propose to add a lexically secondary rule, to break ties. That move is able to clarify the links and the differences between on the one hand Maximin alone, with its typical indifference curves in L, and on the other hand, the DP properly understood and the Leximin, which both have no indifferent curves. With two classes of persons (best off/worse off), DP appears more egalitarian than Leximin, because it's secondary rule is MinIn (Minimization of Inequality). But the intuition behind the distinction is that it cannot possible "fair" that only the best off improves in a productive social cooperation.

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As is well known, the lexically third principle of justice proposed by Rawls is the "Difference Principle" (DP). It regulates the distribution of those social values or "primary goods" which may be unequally distributed for the benefit of all the participants in the social cooperation, via the division of labor. These primary goods, of which every rational citizen wants to have "more than less", are essentially wealth and income, clearly the fundamental goods the distribution of that social justice is concerned with, once basic liberties for all ("First Principle") and a fair equality of opportunities ("Second Principle (a)") have been guaranteed. Rawls does not contemplate golden age societies with only rich people, but concentrates on real societies, with fewer wealthy people and more poor people, if not very. That is, so to speak, a "circumstance of justice". The situation of the poorest should be maximally improved (DP), given the diversity of talents and the incentives that may encourage people to express them in their work. Given market arrangements, inequalities are more than probable. Unlike rights, which are given in a finite list, these primary goods may, according to Rawls, be unequally distributed if, but only if the inequality benefits every person or every class of persons.

Rawls set out to challenge utilitarianism by imagining a "veil of ignorance" (VI) more stringent that the one used implicitly by economist Nobel laureate John Harsanyi (1955) in his so-called "Impartial Observer Theorem"[1]. On Rawls's view, the circumstances of the "original position" would require the trustees of free and equal citizens to choose a non-utilitarian and genuinely tendentially egalitarian and distributive general conception of justice, of which the lexically ordered two principles conception is a specification. This General Conception of Justice is the following:

> All the social values -liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the social bases of self-respect- are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any, or all, of these values is to everyone's advantage.[2]

That is an intelligible and simple conception that I deem to be well-unified, organic, so to speak. Recall that much as Rawls regarded the duel between (average) utilitarianism and the Two Principles (three in effect) to be easily won by the latter, he admitted that a mixed conception[3], replacing the DP (Second Principle (b)) by average utilitarianism within the ordered Two Principles would give way to a more subtle and inconclusive opposition, if only because one cannot any more object to this modified (and pluralist) utilitarianism of sorts that "each person possesses an

[1] "Cardinal Utility in Welfare Economics and the Theory of Risk-Taking", *Journal of Political Economy*, 1955, quoted by Rawls in *A Theory of Justice* (*TJ*), 1999 {1971}, §5, note 9.
[2] *TJ*, §11.
[3] *TJ*, § 49; and Rawls's *Justice as Fairness, A Restatement*, Belknap Press, Harvard, 2001, § 34.

inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override."[1] That inviolability is firmly protected by the First Principle, which exhibits no utilitarian flavor. I maintain that mixed conceptions are but *ad hoc* juxtapositions of heterogeneous principles, when Rawls's conception is so to speak natural, more or less as a system of axioms should be.

But the main thing is that an inequality in wealth, say, can be tolerated *only if it benefits everyone,* including of course the worst-off, the DP even specifying that society should direct itself towards the feasible state that maximize the worst-off part. It is out of the question that richer people could be justly permitted to enrich and advance themselves, so to speak, while the poorest would be immobile and stagnating. Rawls's view of society is always that of an association of persons who recognize as binding certain rules that specify "a system of *cooperation* designed to advance the good of those taking part in it."[2] In a cooperation, typically constituted in complex societies by a subtle and complex division of labor, with the systematic use of more or less rare talents, as Adam Smith put it, everybody, even the unskilled worker, should benefit from the productive cooperation induced by common labor. It follows that if numbers designate expectations of wealth and income during a complete life, and if one distinguishes two classes in society, then, going from (2, 3) to (2, 5), is an unjust transformation. The worse-off, who is not necessarily always the one on the left[3] (even if he or she is in our example), has not at all benefited from the cooperation. One could suggest, using game-theoretic terms, that he or she would be the 'sucker', and the second a free-rider of sorts, benefiting from the work of the other without paying his or her due to the other. That would be a possible scheme of a Marxian 'exploitation'. And a cooperation for the production of a common good without fair distribution of the benefits of it.

All Rawls's formulations of the DP, in all his work since 1958, state that a social transformation is just if and only if it benefits (really) all parties (more or less). He reasoned in terms of class systems, even if the principle IIa ("Fair equality of opportunities") ensures that social mobility should be equally probable for all motivated people. Anyway, from the point of view of the DP, it could not be just to pass from (2, 3) to (2, 5), because that particular growth in inequality does not benefit everyone: some cooperators stay at the same level after the transformation.

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[1] *TJ*, §1, p. 3 (ed. 1999). A mixed conception affirms the rights of the persons as a prior principle. Rights are not any more 'nonsense on stilts' (Bentham). No trade-off between them and money, or, more precisely and generally, satisfaction of desire, is permitted. It is utilitarian only in the sense that it makes use of the utilitarian principle, but only at the end. Rawls remarks that if one uses it as a lexical first principle, no mixed conception would be possible: one would have to continue to maximize total utility, the supposed secondary principles being "otiose". If utilitarianism is first, it is unique (except for breaking ties) and the conception of justice (CJ) is monist; but if the conception is pluralist, mixed, utilitarianism is secondary.

[2] *TJ, ibid,* p. 4. My emphasis.

[3] Contrary to the vectors used in the Paretian idiom, the names in a Rawlsian state are not rigid designators.

But Rawls ingeniously succeeded in avoiding that kind of case, in framing the hypothesis of "close-knitness", as when one says that a unified community is "close knit". The close-knitness assumption means that every change in the situation of one class is accompanied by a (positive or negative) change in the situation of the other class(es). Then, a transformation from (2, 3) to (2, 5) is by definition impossible. Either the transformation would give, say, (1, 5), and it is clearly DP-unjust, so to speak, or it gives, say, (3, 4), and it is DP-just. Rawls added another important auxiliary hypothesis, namely that of "chain connection": if one contemplates the fact that there is as a rule at least one intermediate, middle class, the chain connection assumption means that when the best-off and the worst-off improve, in accordance with DP, even differentially, the intermediate class improves too[1]. There is a loose chain, so to speak, so that each class, on the slope of improving justice[2] to the maximum D, benefits to some degree. That was a bit astonishingly forgotten by scholars like Dworkin[3] and Parfit[4], when they argued that the DP was unsensitive to the lot of the less than best off but better than worst off. Given the chain connection assumption, there is no need for any prioritarism, all the more so that such a position is intuitionist in the moral sense, as Parfit recognizes[5], and that Rawls had shown that different weightings of equality and utility maximization, say, by two different intuitionists, would give way to intersecting indifference curves, corresponding to inconsistent social judgments[6]. No common principle of justice should be like this.

In his classic *Collective Choices and Social Welfare*[7], Amartya Sen famously introduced the idea of a lexicographic Maximin, afterwards called Leximin. When Maximin, or, for present purposes, DP, is indifferent between (10, 1) and (20, 1), its lexicographic extension plainly favors the second state: as the worse-off position cannot be improved *in that feasible set*, let us maximize the "second worst off", that is, here, the best-off: from (20 > 10), it follows that the second state is strictly superior to the first one. One should note that this reasoning would be accepted immediately in the "original position": since the VI conceals from me which of the places I would occupy, if it happens that I am in the second, I am indifferent (1=1), and if I am in the first, I do prefer the second state, so that I prefer it *tout court*. This is crystal clear (if the feasible set cannot be extended).

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[1] *TJ*, §13, fig. 9 and 10.
[2] *TJ*, §13, fig. 6. Below, fig. 1.
[3] *Sovereign Virtue: The Theory and Practice of Equality*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2000.
[4] "Equality or Priority", in *The Ideal of Equality*, ed. by M. Clayton & A. Williams, Palgrave, 2002, ch. 5 (with an Appendix: Rawls's View.)
[5] *Ibid.* p. 86.
[6] *TJ*, §7, fig. 2.
[7] Holden Day, 1970; expanded ed. Penguin, 2017, p. 195, note 12.

Nozick, in the pages he wrote about the Rawlsian notion of 'collective asset'[1] is wrong about it: he does not understand that it is not the set of our personal talents that is a collective asset, a "common resource", as he describes it, implying that my talents are different from me, my "purified self", and that they do not belong to me and belong to the Rawlsian "collectivist" society. It is in effect the (differential) *distribution* of our natural talents that can be viewed as a *common asset*: our differences are a rich basis for our complementarity through division of labor, as Adam Smith and Ricardo insisted. That deep misunderstanding will be (paradoxically) regarded as a compelling criticism of Rawls by the anti-liberal Michael Sandel[2].

Anyway, Nozick had one good argument in the footnote * of these two dense pages, that is, that DP would prefer (7, 5) to (8, 5), and therefore is not compatible with (all) Pareto improvements. That's true, and not avowed by Rawls. Sure, Nozick noticed that this could be avoided in applying Sen's lexical form of the DP, which is compatible with every Pareto-improvement (as utilitarianism is, I would add, to Harsanyi's satisfaction). But he nicely noted that Rawls's approach to the Leximin was nevertheless "unclear". That's right. But, contrary to what Sen, Cohen[3], Parfit, and others have argued, I submit that DP is not Leximin, and even not identical with Maximin as a rule of justice (RJ)[4]. We have to distinguish three different criteria, that is: Leximin, Maximin and the DP, eliminating a threatening double ambiguity that Rawls himself left comparatively in the dark. My conclusion will be that Leximin is not the 'canonical version' of the DP, as G. A. Cohen once put it, but another, less egalitarian PJ, and that the Maximin *qua* Rule of Justice (RJ) is only the fundamental part of the DP, which, like utilitarianism, needs a secondary rule to break ties.

Let me distinguish strict Rules of Justice, lacking any indifference curves, because they are never indifferent between two different social states, and unstrict ones, which indifference curves can be associated with. For instance, Rawls, following Sidgwick[5], admits that utilitarianism, associated with the indifference curves of the perfectly *substitutable* goods, may appeal to the egalitarian rule of justice, to order the states belonging to the same indifference curve: say, between (7, 3) and (6, 4), adding the rule that I would call MinIN (minimization of inequality), utilitarian

[1] *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, Basic Books, 1974, p. 228-30.
[2] *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982. "Nozick's misunderstanding", as one could call it, is repeated dozens of times in this book. It is also endorsed by authors as different as David Gauthier or John Rœmer, or by historian R. Pipes, in his *Property and Freedom*, Vintage Books, New-York, 1999, p. 61.
[3] *Rescuing Justice and Equality*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2008.
[4] In the second edition of *TJ* (prepared for the German translation of 1975, but astonishingly published in English only in 1999), Rawls claims (at the end of §13) that one should not call DP the "maximin principle" (as he himself previously called it), reserving that word for the well-known maximin rule of decision making (Wald's rule), that he himself uses under the VI, to found the choice of the two principles (and especially the First, but not the DP). I shall continue to use also "Maximin" as a name for the Rule of Justice (RJ) that is formally analogous to Maximin as a decision rule. This is because I intend to show that Maximin as a RJ is not the complete DP.
[5] *TJ*, §13, p. 67.

thinkers are able to select the second state, which would be perfectly equivalent to the first if only the utilitarian rule were used.

Let me use the sign + for "adding a secondary rule (SR) to break ties", and call the first rule, admitting indifference curves, the Fundamental Rule (of justice): FR. One can guess that for any unstrict FR, there is an SR to the effect that their lexical "sum" admits no more indifference curves (with two dimensions). Then, following Sidgwick and Rawls, let's call UtEG the following "sum":

$$\text{UtEG} = \text{Ut} + \text{MinIN}.$$

This is a strict RJ or conception of justice (CJ). That means utilitarianism is, possibly, but only lexically secondarily, egalitarian: but it continues to prefer (10, 1) to (6, 4), because 11 > 10. Anyway, with the addition of the SR MinIN, it is not any more "indifferent" between any two states: it is always decisive. There is only one order between possible social states (leaving aside the fact that (4, 6) is as just as (6, 4)). If we generalize that case, we shall find that any strict CJ is the "sum" of an FR and an SR. Leximin is so, but not Maximin, which admits the famous indifference curves in L of perfectly *complementary* goods. My claim is that the DP is as strict CJ as Leximin, but not as Maximin, which is (only) its FR, less strict.

Restricting ourselves to the two-variable case, as in the figures[1], let us then say that:

Leximin = Maximin (FR) + Maximax (SR)

while

DP = Maximin (FR) + MinIN (SR).

We could replace Maximax *qua* SR of Leximin by "MaxIn", but that would not be in the "spirit" of this PJ. It uses Maximax to break ties, not to maximize inequality. Anyway, it is clearly less egalitarian than the DP, which could be expressed also with the SR "MiniMax", but, still, it would not be in its spirit. It is not a question of minimizing the best-off *per se* (see the "levelling down objection"), by envy, as Nozick guessed, but only of minimizing unjust inequality. An improvement of the best-off is not unjust if and only if it is related to a strictly positive improvement of the worst-off, even if a smaller one.

Then, if one relaxes the close-knitness hypothesis, something Rawls never does, one obtains an infinite set of points with the same ordinate[2] (while the maximal point D, with close-knitness, is clearly unique). The point to the left of the horizontal segment is still D, and the point to the right,

[1] Except the figures 9 and 10 in *TJ* §13, illustrating the "chain connection", with three variables. MinIN is not enough as a SR for cases distinguishing more than two classes, even with the Chain Connection hypothesis; perhaps we should use more subtle criteria, like variance, or Gini.

[2] See our figure 2 below.

L (for Leximin). The essential idea is that D is still the first *weakly* Pareto-efficient point obtained when one starts from O, and the closest to the first bisector, the curve of pure equality. That is Rawls's result in a nutshell. Between D and L, and of course beyond, all points are weakly Pareto-efficient points, because it is impossible to improve both the x and the y. But L is the first strongly Pareto-efficient point obtained when one starts from the origin O, and again the closest one to the bisector. All states or points after it are also strongly Pareto-efficient points, and then also weakly ones. It is clear that close-knitness results in reducing the interval [D, L] to a single point, namely D. The DP then does not need to compare vectors with the same ordinate (when the worst-off are at the same level, and when therefore the only question is to decide whether to improve the situation or the best-off or not), because after D, the wealth of the worst-off always diminishes: all states on the right of Dare Pareto-efficient because the richest do not want to go up to D, and the poorest do not wish to lose more in going down to the x axis.

One can see the differences between DP and Leximin in comparing the figure 1 below (with D=L), inspired by the version which was given by economist Phelps in 1973[1] of the Rawlsian figure 6 in *TJ*, and our figure 2, where the close-knitness hypothesis is relaxed: in our figure 2, the interval [D, L] represents a set of weakly Pareto-efficient states, each one, except L, being weakly dominated by those that are on its right. L is the last weakly Pareto-efficient state not itself dominated by weakly Pareto-states, and the first strongly Pareto-efficient state on the curve OP. As Sen and Arrow[2] observed, Hammond and especially d'Aspremont and Gevers (1975)[3] proved that given some weak conditions (and non admitting interpersonal comparisons of cardinal utilities), only Leximin and Leximax were possible. The "aristocratic" Leximax and Maximax can be eliminated thanks to a so-called "condition of minimal equality". The main difference between Maximin and Leximin is that only the second admits all Pareto-improvements, including the ones that are not strong improvements, for instance the transition from (2, 3) to (2, 5), where only one individual (or class) benefits. Most economists, including Harsanyi, tend to regard the acceptance of these only weak improvements as a "moral truism"[4]. Once more, they would be rationally accepted behind the Rawlsian VI. This is a good point for Leximin. But Maximin can be defended anyway.

[1] "Wage Taxation for Economic Justice", in *Economic Justice,* ed. E. S. Phelps, Penguin, ch. 18, 1973.
[2] Kenneth Arrow, "Extended Sympathy and the Possibility of Social Choice", in *Collected Papers of K. Arrow,* Vol. 1, ch. 11, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1983.
[3] "Equity and the Informational Basis of Collective Choice", *Rev. Econ. Stud.,* 1977, *46.*
[4] "Morality and the Theory of Rational Behaviour", in *Utilitarianism and beyond,* ed. by A. Sen, & B. Williams, Cambridge University Press, 1982, ch. 2, §4.

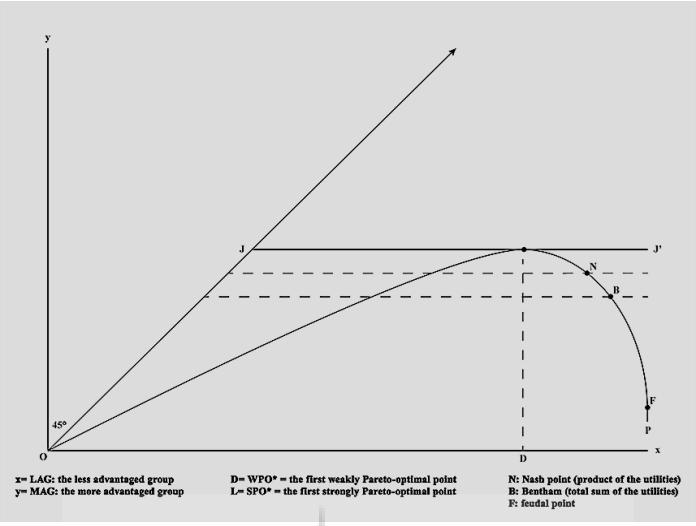

Figure 1.

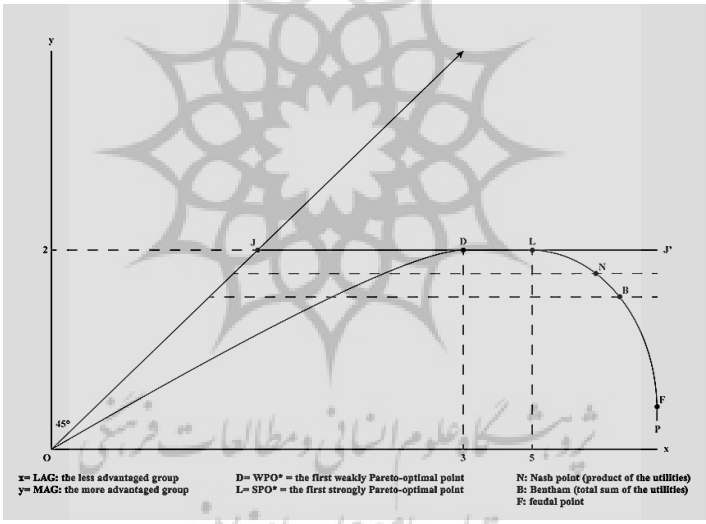

Figure 2.

Accordingly, the half-rights JJ belong to the indifference curves of the RJ Maximin, as they were the indifference curves of the *decision rule* Maximin that Rawls borrowed from economist Baumol[1]. The formal analogy seems to entitle us to reject later condemnation by Rawls of the practice of calling the DP "Maximin," even if we distinguish now the strict or complete DP from its "fundamental rule," namely, Maximin *qua* RJ. The Maximin has indifferences curves, as pure utilitarianism has, or pure egalitarianism (which by the way has in its better form only one indifference curve, the bisector North-East), but Leximin and the DP admit not such curves: they

[1] *TJ*, § 26, note 18; see now Baumol, *Economic Theory and Operational Analysis,* ch. 19, p. 469 (fourth edition, 1977).

decide always which state is the best. Pure egalitarianism, as a FR, can be related to the SR MaxUt (or to Maximin), to ensure that (3, 3) > (2, 2). But this strict CJ is not compatible with all strong Pareto-improvements, such as (2, 2) -> (3, 4), implied on the contrary by Maximin (and DP). I submit that a plausible RJ must be compatible at least with all strong Pareto-improvements (genuine unanimity).

Let us return to the passage where Rawls, quoting Sen, explains what he himself calls (imprudently) the lexical DP. In this important §13, he has just explained why he assumes close-knitness (unicity of D) and the chain connection. He then spells out "a further complication". The chain connection would ensure that an augmentation of wealth benefits also the middle classes. Every class is improved by productive social cooperation. But what if, so to speak, the chain connection was to work only for the "middle" classes? "It is clearly conceivable that the least advantaged are not affected by some changes in expectations of the best-off, even if these changes benefit others (…) close-knitness fails." Some enthusiasts of Leximin claim that it is much more sensitive to the lot of the intermediate classes than is the DP, but for Rawls, chain connection guarantees that the middle classes would benefit from growth towards D, even at a different speed from the other classes. No, the justification of Leximin for Rawls cannot be that point, which is also not an argument in favor of the intuitionist prioritarism brilliantly proposed later by Parfit and others[1]. Rawls calls on it in only to thwart the threat of a separation between the affluent class and the moderately rich ones at one extreme, and the poorest at the other. The lexical DP reminds us that the improvement in expectations that is induced by social growth, even if they benefit more the richest (typically, the big entrepreneurs) and the middle classes, must also maximally benefit those who are the worst-off (unskilled workers). Do not forget them, Leximin claims, so to speak: firstly, maximize *their* lot. Rawls maintains, correctly, that this method restores close-knitness: no class is equally ranked in two social states (*e.g.*, getting 2 in two states). There is not any indifference curves. But notice that that is the only sentence in all of Rawls's work that seems close to an endorsement of Leximin. I would agree with Nozick's claim that there is some "unclarity" in Rawls's supposed approval, and disagree with G. A. Cohen when he calls Leximin the "canonical version" of the DP, undervaluing a bit the maximin interpretation as the "familiar version" of the latter, and with Parfit, who eventually decides that Leximin is the best interpretation of Rawls's view of DP[2]. Now, Rawls continues his argument so:

"I think, however, that in actual cases this principle [the lexical DP] is unlikely to be relevant, for when the greater potential benefits to the more advantaged are significant, there will surely be

[1] Parfit, *art. quot.*
[2] *Ibid*, Appendix: Rawls's View, p. 120.

some way to improve the situation of thee less advantaged as well. The general laws governing the institutions of the basic structure ensure that cases requiring the lexical principle will not arise".
In actual cases, too bad for Leximin. The government, with its Musgravian branches[1], belongs to the basic structure, and even the VI does not deprive the parties of that general knowledge, I submit. And there can be no government or state without taxes. The adverb "surely", in my mind, is here quite strong: there is always a mean of transferring some money from the richest to the poorest, through a subtle system of taxes that ought not to interfere too much with the precious mechanism of incentives (*pace* Marxists as was G. A. Cohen). It follows that the hypothetical case contemplated by Rawls, where the affluent and the middle-classes alone benefit from social cooperation, leaving the poorest in the same situation, is blocked by the (very anti-Nozickean) so-called (Musgravian) "distribution branch of government". One need not have recourse to Leximin. Under the VI, all would choose (2, 5) and discard (2, 4), but if they know that the state (2+n, 5-n) is then "surely" also feasible, they would prefer the latter, by maximin considerations (n>0).

The only superiority of Leximin over Maximin alone and the DP (Maximin + MinIN) is that it admits all Pareto-improvements, including the ones that are only weak ones, that is, when at least one is better, and some others indifferent (their pay-off is the same). That is the model of voting. But DP demands more: that everybody *benefits* from a transition, interpreted as a social cooperation. If one of the cooperators were to gain nothing, he or she would be 'the sucker', we have conjectured, as the term is used in game-theory. The others would "exploit" him or her, or, in another idiom, would be free riders at his or her expense.

Commenting in *Justice as Fairness* on what corresponds to our figure 1, Rawls rightly adds this:

When these (OP) curves criss-cross, the one tangent to the highest JJ line is best; if they touch the same JJ line, the one whose tangent is to the left of the other is best.[2]

In our figure 2, it means that if there exists a feasible mode of production (including state intervention) that touches JJ at point 3, that (new) curve OP' whose D point (or D') has the value 3 for the best-off is better than the one whose D point has the value 5. It is not a just move to go from OP' to OP. The surplus created would be better used in finding a new OP" to go up to a new JJ line, with $x > 3$ and $y < 5$.

The untoward ambiguity noticed by Nozick, Cohen, Parfit, and others is now removed. The DP is not Leximin, and even not Maximin, which is its FR, and that one alone has indifference curves, "in L". If one discards the close-knitness assumption, D and L are on the same horizontal JJ, and even if L is the first strong Pareto-efficient state from O, D is the first weak Pareto-efficient state, and the closest to the bisector North-East of equality; it is closer to it than B, N and L are. The second assumption, the chain connection, contrary to what Rawls suggested, is perhaps not such a

[1] *TJ*, § 43.
[2] §18, note 32, p. 63.

simplifying hypothesis as close-knitness is: it is in my opinion a requirement of justice, which is not of concern only (though primarily) to the worst-off, the most vulnerable, but to the intermediate middle-classes too. A just improvement consequential on social cooperation must benefit all classes, even if not evenly. Before D, the government's policies should be oriented towards improvements that benefit all categories, accepting inequalities if & only if they are good for all. Surely, some conventions must be adopted to measure finer degrees of inequalities (Gini or others), and there has also to be a choice, which is conventional, of a class that represents the "worst-off". On the other hand, policies have their own dynamics, and it may be useful first to be more favorable to the middle-classes, say, than to the worst off, if & only if the intended likely result is eventually maximally to improve the lot of the latter.

The fundamental intuition behind Rawls's *TJ* is the intuition of cooperation. If only the richest improve their situation, the others are exploited, and there appears the ghost of a dualistic society, the richest enriching themselves, and the poor stagnating, as is currently the case in most countries. That was Marx's prediction, a condition implying the possibility and the necessity of the proletarian Revolution, abolishing the class of the rich owners of the means of production. Rawls admires Marx, but is no Marxist, and the ideal of a "class" collaboration between entrepreneurs and workers (preferably themselves shareholders) is akin to an approximation of the just society. Repeating the importance of the chain connection as a normative assumption may also have the result that the DP is still an RJ that can be fruitfully discussed, so that it may be that no other prioritarism is really necessary. Anyway, the main result of this paper, if any, is that DP, Maximin as its Fundamental Rule and Leximin are not the same notions. But DP has only one meaning[1].

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[1] For a different view, see Ph. Van Parijs, "Difference Principles", in S. Freeman ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 200-240.

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