The Practice of Equality
A Critical Understanding of Democratic Citizenship Education

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Abstract

This essay proposes a conception of citizenship that highlights its political aspects. Based on the work of Balibar, Rancière, and Biesta, it is argued that democratic citizenship education must include the education of equality. This means that students must have the opportunity to experience not only the membership aspect of citizenship that subjects them to the state but also the democratic aspect of citizenship that positions them as equals to each other and capable of political intervention. The increasing emphasis in state policies on the membership aspect of citizenship must be counterbalanced by an emphasis in education on the democratic aspect of citizenship: the education of equality. The proposed conception of citizenship can be used to evaluate approaches to citizenship education.

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Introduction

CITIZENSHIP IS A contested concept. As Mike Bottery (2003) explains, citizenship involves, fundamentally, the relationship between individuals and a political body, and "at the present time the political body defining the terms and boundaries of citizenship is something called 'the nation state'" (p. 102). However, the nation state is a historically contingent, and not a necessary or self-evident, form of political organization. "A growing awareness of this artificiality and of its claims to citizen allegiance is increasingly one of its weaknesses" (p. 104). For example, transnational people such as the Kurds, the Roma, and the Saami are members of nations that stretch across multiple states. For transnational people, an allegiance to the nation does not map onto an allegiance to the state in which they happen to live.[1] Some of the indigenous peoples of North, Central, and South America are also transnational in the sense that their nations span the borders of current states such as Canada and the United States or the United

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States and Mexico. In addition, the concept of citizenship is problematic for indigenous people upon whom the current political body that defines citizenship has been imposed. For example, Marie Battiste and Helen Semaganis (2002) write that Canada's history of treaty federalism—that is, of "written [nation-to-nation] agreements between First Nations and the Imperial Crown" (p. 99)—explains why Canadian citizenship, defined as the mutual relation between individuals and the current political body of the Canadian state, is highly problematic. "As protected nations under their prerogative treaties, Aboriginal peoples were never subject to the authority of the imperial Parliament, but remained as sovereign nations under the prerogatives of the Crown rather than as subjects of the Crown" (p. 100).

In spite of its contested nature, the concept of citizenship has not disappeared from either political or educational theory. In fact, Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman (1994) observe that, after the concept of citizenship went out of favor in the 1970s, it saw a resurgence in the 1990s. Scholarship on citizenship and citizenship education has continued since then, which perhaps can be explained by a combination of factors such as low voter turnouts and concerns about civic disengagement, increasing cultural diversity and concerns about social cohesion, and growing awareness of large-scale problems such as climate change that require commitments of individual citizens and larger political bodies alike (see Kymlicka & Norman, 1994, p. 352).

The contemporary scholarship on citizenship education seems to be driven in particular by the desire to foster individual autonomy as well as contribute to the social and political fabric. However, concerns have been raised about education's emphasis on the personal and the social and the lack of emphasis on the political aspects of citizenship. Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne (2004), for example, charge that "a vast majority of school-based service learning and community service programs embrace a vision of citizenship devoid of politics; they often promote service but not democracy" (p. 243). This concern echoes Kymlicka and Norman's (1994) earlier observation that

in the absence of some account of legitimate and illegitimate ways to promote or enforce good citizenship, many works on citizenship reduce to a platitude: namely, society would be better if the people in it were nicer and more thoughtful. (p. 369)

In this essay I propose a way of understanding citizenship that places political aspects firmly in the center. For this framing I draw from philosophical work that I describe as post-Marxist: recent work by the French philosophers Etienne Balibar and Jacques Rancière.[2] In particular I am interested in how these thinkers talk about the role of equality in citizenship and politics today. First, I describe and explain Rancière's view of democratic citizenship as always focused on the disruption of the existing social order. I expand Rancière's views with Balibar's conception of citizenship as a dialectic between inequality (i.e., citizenship as status accorded by the state) and equality (the enactment of citizenship in holding the state to account). From these

theoretical perspectives, I draw the conclusion that citizenship-as-equality should be the focus of citizenship education today. Finally, I examine two cases of citizenship education curriculum and policy from British Columbia, Canada, to see how they hold up under this theoretical lens.

Democracy, Institutions, and Disruption
The work of Rancière affords a particularly critical lens for thinking about questions of democracy and citizenship in education. I appreciate Rancière's (2002) uncompromising insistence on equality as a premise, an axiom, not a goal:

Equality is not a goal that governments and societies could succeed in reaching. To pose equality as a goal is to hand it over to the pedagogues of progress, who widen endlessly the distance they promise they will abolish. Equality is a presupposition, an initial axiom—or it is nothing. (p. 223)

Rancière's counterintuitive stance on equality is sometimes misunderstood as a refusal or failure to acknowledge the seriousness of social and, especially, material inequality. This is a significant misunderstanding, indeed, as Rancière's work highlights the scandal between the inequality of social conditions and the equality of consciousness—or, in Rancière's (1987/1991) terms, the "equality of intelligence"—that all men and women share. Todd May (2009) explains that "intelligence" in this Rancièrean sense is quite straightforward:

We are, unless we are deeply damaged in some way, capable of creating meaningful lives with one another, talking with one another, understanding one another, and reasoning about ourselves and our situations. Our social and political contexts, while sometimes difficult and complex, do not involve essential mysteries that we are in principle incapable of comprehending without the assistance of a savant of some sort. In short, we are capable of formulating and carrying out our lives with one another. (p. 7)

In positing equality as "initial axiom" (Rancière, 2002, p. 223), Rancière inverts the usual order of observing inequality today and aiming for equality tomorrow; instead, he argues, we should presuppose equality between human beings and seek to verify it in our actions. Taking equality as presupposition means we don't ask how we may help people achieve the equality of consciousness that would allow them to reflect on their situation intelligently; rather, we ask what new possibilities emerge when people are treated as if they already have equality of consciousness and already reflect intelligently upon their situation (see Ruitenberg, 2008). I will return to these points.

I have also been inspired by Rancière's insistence on the centrality of disagreement in the democratic process, especially because, certainly in Canada, there is a strong desire for agreement and consensus in education, and the dominant approach seems to be deliberative. Deliberative conceptions of democracy and citizenship education range from those that emphasize the Habermasian ideal speech situation and the promotion of

communicative skills and dispositions for rational deliberation, to those that acknowledge the messiness of the democratic process and the need to balance deliberative and more confrontational approaches. Among the latter and, in my view, more productive approaches are Nancy Fraser's (1990) appreciation for the dissenting force of subaltern counterpublics and Iris Marion Young's (2001) critical understanding that "individuals and organizations seeking to undermine injustice and promote justice need both to engage in discussion with others to persuade them that there are injustices that ought to be remedied and to protest and engage in direct action" (p. 689). Peter Levine and Rose Marie Nierras (2007) supplement Young's observation with a qualitative study involving 60 interviews with activists and organizers of deliberation. They find that, in practice,

organizers of deliberation hold less rigid views of their own work than might be inferred from classic philosophical texts that define deliberation as the essence of democracy, that equate it with reasonableness or rationality, and that overlook situations in which more confrontational tactics are appropriate. (n.p.)

In spite of this acknowledgement of disagreement by some deliberative scholars, I turn to the work of contemporary French scholars Rancière and Balibar because they emphasize not just the importance of disagreement but, more particularly, disagreement about and in the name of citizens' equality. I discuss this feature of their work in the next section. For the moment, let me address in greater detail their conception of political disagreement and where it occurs.

Like Chantal Mouffe, Rancière argues that disagreement is not a problem to be overcome in democracy but rather a constitutive feature of it (see Ruitenberg, 2009). However, I am concerned with Rancière's dismissal of the institutions that organize society as places where democracy and politics by definition do not occur. Rancière (1995/1999) considers the social order and its institutions "the police" because this order "defines the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying, and sees that . . . bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task" (p. 29). He reserves the name "politics" only for activity that disrupts this order, that "shifts a body from the place assigned to it or changes a place's destination" (p. 30). For Rancière, then, political activity does not occur within the institutions of any social order, but only in the disruption of those institutions.

Educational scholar Gert Biesta (2011a) discusses Rancière's insistence on democracy and politics as taking place only in the moments of disruption of any established order. Biesta chooses to combine the views of Rancière with those of Mouffe so that we can see democratic politics taking place also in moments of disagreement and disruption *within* the institutions of a given order, not only in, as Rancière would have it, the moments of establishing a new order: "Whereas for Mouffe there is democratic 'work' to be done within the domain of politics, that is, within a particular political order, Rancière's anarchic approach in a sense denies that anything politically relevant might happen within the police order" (Biesta, 2011a, p. 148).

Balibar (2008) expresses his appreciation for and agreement with Rancière's argument that democracy should be understood as a struggle, that is, as the ongoing "*democratization of democracy* itself (or of what claims to represent a democratic regime)" (p. 526). However, Balibar also expresses his disagreement with what he calls "a neglect of the *institutional* dimension of democracy" (p. 526). Like Mouffe and Biesta, Balibar believes this institutional dimension "cannot be left aside because equality also has to be written in institutions . . . and the democratization of institutions, including 'public' institutions, should not become confused with the problem of the construction of the sovereign state" (p. 526).

I agree with Rancière that the moment of the political is the moment of contestation of the exclusions of a social order, but I agree with Mouffe that such contestation can happen both within the institutions and at the borders of that order. Like Balibar, I believe it is a mistake to leave the institutional dimension out of our thinking about democracy, even if we emphasize the inevitably conflictual or agonistic nature of democracy. In this paper, therefore, I examine Balibar's work on citizenship in order to locate Rancière's argument for the centrality of equality and to arrive at a fuller conception of citizenship to guide the critical evaluation of concrete citizenship curricula and policies today.

Rancière is more interested in democracy and politics than he is in citizenship, because he sees the latter concept as constantly being pulled away from democracy and politics by the forces of the police order. A recent example of such forces would be the push for Big Society by the UK government, a policy initiative launched in 2010 that includes measures that "encourage volunteering and involvement in social action," "encourage charitable giving and philanthropy," and "support the creation and expansion of mutuals, co-operatives, charities and social enterprises, and support these groups to have much greater involvement in the running of public services" (UK Cabinet Office, 2010). This conception of citizenship as civic involvement is visible as well in a curriculum framework issued by the British Columbia Ministry of Education (2001) called *Social Responsibility*, which I discuss toward the end of the paper. Rancière (1995/1999) writes about such developments with thinly disguised contempt:

To those who deplore the loss of republican citizenship, postdemocratic logic responds by proclaiming generalized citizenship. And so the town is called on to embody the identity of urban civilization with the community of the polis animated by its community soul. The citizen-enterprise is called on to show the identity of their productive and appropriating energy with the part played in the building of the community and the putting together of a microcosm of this community. (p. 114)

It is clear that, for Rancière, if citizenship is interpreted as the civic spirit of community building, it has little to do with democracy and politics. Rancière believes citizenship should and can be seen in a more political way, but it is difficult to keep it from being pulled back into the police order. In order to explain this, I turn to the work of Balibar, who has written in greater detail about the concept

of citizenship and whose analysis helps to understand the opposing forces of what Rancière calls politics and the police within citizenship itself.

Citizenship as a Dialectic between Inequality and Equality

Balibar (1988) traces the idea of citizenship historically and identifies two central aspects that remain in citizenship today:

"Citizenship" . . . has always marked two distinctions: it is bound to the existence of a state and therefore to a principle of public sovereignty, and it is bound to the acknowledged exercise of an individual "capacity" to participate in political decisions. (p. 723)

The first aspect of citizenship Balibar identifies here, that of its tie to the state, is what he elsewhere calls the "statutory" or legal aspect by which those who have the status of citizen in a particular state can be distinguished from those who do not have this status:

By definition, citizenship can only exist where we understand a notion of city to exist—where fellow citizens and foreigners are clearly distinguished in terms of rights and obligations in a given space. . . . In this respect, the modern nation is still, and must still consider itself, a city. (Balibar, 1996, p. 358)

The very concept of citizenship involves both a bounded space and the exclusion of those who are noncitizens from agreements of rights and responsibilities in that space. This first or statutory aspect of citizenship introduces inequality as it places citizens and noncitizens living in a given "city" in a hierarchical relation to the state that will or will not grant them citizenship. This is the membership aspect of citizenship that outlines one's rights and responsibilities in a contract with the state of which and to which one is (a) subject. Today, since the state is almost always the nation-state, this is citizenship understood as nationality.

The second aspect of citizenship Balibar (1988) identifies is the capacity of the individual to participate in public decisions. Elsewhere he describes this as the aspect of self-constitution, "the expression of a collective political capacity to constitute the state or the public space" (Balibar, 1996, p. 364). In other words, where the statutory aspect of citizenship shows how the citizen is subject to the state, this constitutive aspect of citizenship shows how the state is subject to the citizen. "It is this notion," explains Balibar (1996), "that provides the link between the idea of citizenship and that of equality" (p. 364). This second aspect of citizenship emphasizes the capacity of citizens to create and change the borders of the community to which they belong, and to hold the governance of this community to account.

Balibar (1996) further explains these two aspects of citizenship in relation to the two conceptions of "the people," in the first or hierarchical sense as "community, affiliation or identity" and in the second or egalitarian sense as "will and egalitarian collective power" (p. 369). It is important to note that, according to Balibar, these two aspects are *both* undeniably present in contemporary citizenship: the hierarchical or statutory aspect and the egalitarian

or constitutive aspect are poles in a permanent dialectic. In a more recent article, Balibar (2010a) uses the concept of *antinomie*, a contradiction of laws or principles, to argue that "citizenship's problem, in its various historical figures, with all their enormous differences, lies in its antinomic relationship to democracy" and that, from his dialectical perspective, "this kind of antinomy forms the essential driving force of historical transformations" (pp. 1–2). Put differently, it is precisely because citizenship involves both submission to the state and constitution of the state, and because these statutory and egalitarian aspects are inherently in tension, that change is possible.

Balibar observes that, today, especially under the influence of European anxieties about migration, increasing weight is being placed on the statutory aspects of citizenship. Achieving legal status in the European Union has been made so difficult that scholars and media commentators now speak of Fortress Europe (see Geddes, 2000). This reinforcement of the statutory aspect calls for a reconsideration of the egalitarian aspect: "By a symmetry inscribed throughout the history of the concept of citizen, the emphasis on the statutory and hierarchical aspect of citizenship allows us to reformulate the question in reference to its egalitarian aspect" (Balibar, 1996, p. 367). In other words, if the state occupies itself more with the delimitation of citizenship in the sense of membership and obligation, citizens should occupy themselves more with their constitutive powers, their capacity to decide the borders of the *demos* and to hold the state to account. Biesta (2011b) has argued:

Citizenship is not so much a status, something which can be achieved and maintained, but . . . it should primarily be understood as something that people continuously do: citizenship as practice. . . . Citizenship is . . . not an identity that someone can 'have,' but first and foremost a practice of identification . . . with public issues that are of a common concern. (p. 13)[3]

Based on Balibar's analysis, I would modify Biesta's argument slightly: While citizenship is both a status and a practice, the emphasis that nation-states and supranational governments currently place on the statutory aspect demands a greater focus on citizenship as a practice of identification with public issues that are of a common concern.

Rancière (2006) captures these two aspects of citizenship when he notes that "citizen" can be a political name, but is not automatically so. "Citizen" can be used to denote a place and role (status) in the "police order" and, in that mode, the name "citizen" designates the exclusion of "such and such a part of the population from citizenship or . . . such and such a domain of collective life from the reign of civic equality" (p. 301). By contrast, "citizen" can also be used as a political name—or, more precisely, as the name of a political activity—and, in that mode, "'citizen' opposes the rule of equality fixed by law and by principle to the inequalities that characterize 'men,' that is, private individuals subjected to the powers of birth and wealth" (p. 301). The two aspects of the concept of citizenship thus refer to two types of relation with the state.

The Need for an Education of Equality Today

Whether one believes, as does Rancière, that equality is inherently primary and central in democracy and politics, or whether one believes that a greater emphasis on the egalitarian aspect of citizenship is needed today to restore a critical balance with the membership aspect, the end result for citizenship education is similar: it must emphasize equality. I mentioned earlier that, for Rancière, equality is not a goal but a presupposition. Let me explain in greater detail what he means by that, and how it affects citizenship and citizenship education. For Rancière, equality is a fundamental and inalienable quality of persons and interpersonal relations; it is not, and cannot be, a quality of society: "The community of equals can never achieve substantial form as a social institution. . . . Equality may be the law of the community, but society inevitably remains in thrall to inequality" (Rancière, 1992/1995, p. 84). Society by definition introduces inequality because it creates order by assigning people a place and rank. This inequality, however, can never annihilate the equality that already exists between people and is constantly reasserted: the equality of intelligence, of "a community of speaking beings" who, together, invent discourse simply by wishing to speak and wishing to hear (p. 82, 85). That, then, is the fundamental assertion of equality: By speaking to you, I assume we are equals, me capable of saying something intelligible, you capable of understanding what I say. Or vice versa: By listening to you, I assume we are equals, you capable of saying something intelligible, me capable of understanding what you say. As soon as the people speaking and listening do so within a social order, the inequality of their places and ranks in that order—whether of kinship, of class, of gender or any other system of places and ranks—begins to chafe against this fundamental equality.

The egalitarian aspect of citizenship refers to the idea that citizenship is not a right one earns based on age, education, or effort; it is the aspect at an unbridgeable distance from all meritocratic systems of society. As Rancière (2004) puts it: "Democracy is the power of those who have no specific qualification for ruling, except the fact of having no qualification" (p. 305). This also means that, to the extent that education is approached meritocratically, there is a tension between the egalitarian aspect of citizenship and the idea of citizenship education. Borrowing May's (2011) description of the immeasurable nature of equality in Rancière's work, I say that the egalitarian aspect of citizenship signifies that one cannot not be a "better" or a "worse" citizen, or a citizen in light of particular qualities, but only a citizen—*period*. It is the fundamental right to speak and to be heard, to be counted. To truly believe in democracy, then, is to commit oneself to equality, in the full sense of commitment as a faith and an enactment. Biesta (2011b) affirms that "'commitment' is in this regard quite an appropriate term," as it involves not just a rational understanding but an emotional involvement. "The democratic subject, so we might say, is the one who is driven by a *desire* for democracy" (p. 96).

Schools, as social institutions, are by definition places of multiple inequalities: of age and grade level, of marks and degrees. For that reason, asserting equality in a school is no easy task (see Ruitenberg, 2008). Insofar as citizenship education is concerned

with equality, the school may not be the best or primary location for such education. However, since schools remain the greatest common denominator among children, the possibilities for democratic citizenship education that exist within them, even if limited, should not be discounted.[4]

Schools are often deeply invested in the idea of education as preparation. For example, if citizenship is understood narrowly as focused on voting, and youth in elementary and secondary schools do not yet have the right to vote, then citizenship education can be seen as preparation for the future identity of citizen. Biesta (2011b) puts it as follows:

If . . . the 'essence' of democracy can . . . be expressed as a particular, well-defined singular order, then citizenship can be understood as a positive identity—that is, an identity that can be fully expressed and defined—and thus civic learning can be fully understood in terms of the acquisition of this identity by individuals. (p. 87)

From the preceding argument, it should be clear that neither Biesta nor I believe that citizenship is an identity that can be fully expressed and defined, or that citizenship education should be understood as the acquisition of that identity. In order to distinguish citizenship education as preparation for a well-defined identity of citizen from citizenship education as fostering commitment to equality, Biesta (2011b) introduces the helpful concept of (political) *subjectification*, which he distinguishes from the socialization conception of civic learning. The latter

would see the aims of civic learning first and foremost in terms of the reproduction of an existing socio-political order and thus of the adaptation of individuals to this order, while [the subjectification conception of civic learning] would focus on the emergence of political agency and thus sees the aims of civic learning first and foremost in terms of the promotion of political subjectivity and agency. (pp. 86–87)

I have argued that citizenship education today must emphasize the egalitarian aspect of citizenship, and this egalitarian aspect is best served by an approach that emphasizes political subjectification, so this subjectification conception should take center stage in the framework with which we evaluate citizenship curriculum and policy. How do we know whether a curriculum or policy gives room to political subjectification? Two key features emerge. The first is the extent to which the curriculum or policy emphasizes the egalitarian or constitutive role of citizens, that is to say, the extent to which it acknowledges and addresses citizenship as the democratic, political role of holding the state to account. The second is the extent to which the curriculum positions citizenship as something that can be enacted now rather than something for which the student is being prepared. These two features need to be seen in conjunction with each other: if a curriculum or policy presents citizenship as consisting in civic qualities such as helping one's neighbor, then the absence of the aspect of citizenship as constitutive force means that the emphasis on enactment in the here and now does not become political and enforces only the submissive, statutory aspect of citizenship. And if a curriculum or policy

presents citizenship as consisting in democratic participation and contestation but offers this idea of citizenship only as information about historical events or as relevant to the student's future as full-fledged member of the polity, then the absence of opportunities to enact citizenship and experience democratic commitment today means that the emphasis on the constitutive and egalitarian aspect of citizenship rings hollow and remains caught in an idea of citizenship as a predefined role.

Citizenship Curriculum in British Columbia

Let me now turn to two cases of citizenship education curriculum and policy and see how they hold up under this theoretical lens. While this is not a full curriculum or policy review, I hope these two examples are illustrative of the framework I have laid out.

Under current graduation program requirements, all students in British Columbia must complete one of the following three courses: Social Studies 11, BC First Nations Studies 12, or Civic Studies 11. The course that is most obviously and directly concerned with citizenship education is Civic Studies, a course that was first implemented in BC in 2005. The official curriculum document, known in British Columbia as the *Integrated Resource Package* (IRP), states the following aims of the course:

The aim of Civic Studies 11 is to enhance students' abilities and willingness to participate actively and responsibly in civic life. Civic Studies 11 offers opportunities for students to deliberate individually and with others on civic matters—local to global—for the purpose of becoming informed decision makers empowered in civic action. The course is intended as a study in civics, where the study about civics is a means to that end. Civic Studies 11 offers opportunities for students to form reasoned views on issues, and to participate in socially relevant projects and real-life learning for the purpose of developing civic mindedness. This course enables students to relate their learning in school to their civic duties and expectations, enhance their sense of membership in society, and increase their ability to take more active roles as citizens of Canada and the world. (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 11)

One of the promising qualities of this course rationale is the understanding that a study *about* civics is not enough and in this course is considered a means to the end of a study *in* civics, which includes opportunities to participate. However, the participation that is so commendably part of the course is described in social, not political, terms as participation in "socially relevant projects." While the terms *democracy* and *democratic* are used elsewhere in the document, their absence from the course rationale is noteworthy. The civic action, civic mindedness, and citizenship that feature so prominently in the course aims are not characterized here as democratic. In addition, by qualifying citizenship as citizenship "of Canada and the world," the idea that citizenship is about belonging to a community is emphasized.

Civic Studies 11 takes a clearly deliberative perspective on citizenship education. This is evident not only in Civic Deliberation being one of the four sets of prescribed learning outcomes (PLOs) (in addition to Skills and Processes of Civic Studies,

Informed Citizenship, and Civic Action) but also in the emphasis on deliberation in other parts of the curriculum. For example, under Civic Action it is mentioned that students should be able to "apply skills of civic discourse and dispute resolution, including consensus building, negotiation, compromise, and majority rule" (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 23). The concern this deliberative angle raises is that it de-emphasizes the egalitarian, constitutive aspect of citizenship, which positions the citizen not as rational, deliberative contributor to the state but as a critical assessor of the state and potentially in disagreement with it. Indeed, key to the work of Rancière, Mouffe, Balibar, and Biesta alike is that they emphasize disagreement in democratic politics and are critical of the deliberative approach. Balibar (1996), for example, insists "that we not exaggerate the importance of consensus to the detriment of conflict" (p. 370). And Rancière (1995/1999) puts it more forcefully: political activity, the disruption of a social order, is an expression of disagreement with the imposition of inequality and begins with the perception that equality has been wronged.

While curriculum documents are an important source of information about curriculum, their interpretation and use by educators in the field can shed light not only on the areas explicitly prioritized and emphasized in the text but also on the space left for educators' own priorities and emphases. Paul Orlowski taught the Civic Studies 11 curriculum in a Vancouver high school in 2005/2006 and reflected on the experience in the article "Youth 'Participaction' & Democracy: Reflections on Teaching Civic Studies 11 in British Columbia" (2008). Already an experienced social studies teacher, Orlowski looked not for what the curriculum *told* him to do but what it *allowed* him to do. He notes that "several of the prescribed learning outcomes in the course IRP create the possibilities for counter-hegemonic discourses to take root—provided the teacher holds the belief that teaching is a political act. I am one such teacher" (p. 113). Orlowski made enthusiastic use of these possibilities and connected the prescribed curriculum to current political events and developments in British Columbia, Canada, and abroad. For example, he found that "the PLO on political ideologies gave [him] state-sanctioned permission to teach about different versions of the good citizen, as well as current social and economic issues, in municipal, provincial, national, and international contexts" (p. 115).

His experience teaching Civic Studies 11 was clearly positive, and he provides several examples of the ways in which his students fulfilled the civic action component of the course, thereby indeed enacting citizenship as practice. In particular, he recounts how one of his students wrote "an unsolicited speech . . . about her outrage" at a member of Parliament who changed his party allegiance ("crossed the floor") after having been elected. The student then read her speech in a public park during a political protest. This example and Orlowski's experience more generally suggest that the course can create opportunities for students to become not just rationally and deliberatively but also passionately involved in political issues. Moreover, the student who wrote and delivered a public speech against floor-crossing parliamentarians enacted her equality: She clearly did not feel limited in her speech by the fact

that she was not yet of voting age. Her speech was not about the right to speak based on her status as citizen-voter but about the right to speak based on her equality as citizen-participant.[5]

The second example is not a course curriculum but a curriculum framework called *Social Responsibility* (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2001). This framework is not mandatory, so schools choose whether, and to what extent, they try to meet these performance standards. The standards fall into four sets of expectations: (a) contributing to the classroom and school community, (b) solving problems in peaceful ways, (c) valuing diversity and defending human rights, (d) exercising democratic rights and responsibilities (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 4). The curriculum framework seems to be of two minds about citizenship. The first two sets of expectations suggest a social and personal orientation; the latter two use the firm political language of "defending human rights" and "exercising democratic rights." In spite of the claim that "this framework focuses attention on the participatory view of citizenship that is valued in Canadian policy and curriculum documents" (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 5), the dominant tone of the document is one that emphasizes social responsibility as a desirable quality of individual students, which will reduce problems among students and in the school more generally:

Currently the standards are being implemented in schools throughout the province as a way of: monitoring school improvement; improving school and classroom climate; dealing with school issues (e.g., fighting, vandalism); enhancing subject-specific learning activities or units (e.g., study of the Holocaust); giving direction to leadership, service and social justice clubs; assessing the progress of individual students. (p. 7)

There is nothing in this list that suggests a political or democratic priority in the sense of students' equality and their capacity to monitor the state. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the document identifies that its "standards for social responsibility . . . are a continuation of the work begun in the reference sets *Evaluating Group Communication Skills Across Curriculum* and *Evaluating Problem Solving Across Curriculum*" (p. 5). Indeed, group communication skills and problem-solving skills, while they may be useful, are quite different from the commitment to equality or "desire for democracy" that are needed for democratic citizenship education.

The emphasis of the BC *Social Responsibility* framework on reducing conflict and working together in one's community is not unique in citizenship education. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) notice a lack of attention to the political dimension of citizenship in many citizenship education programs and take a clear stand against this lack: "Personal responsibility, voluntarism, and character education must be considered in a broader social context or they risk advancing civility or docility instead of democracy" (p. 244). Similarly, in his analysis of Scottish citizenship education, Biesta (2011b) observes that it reveals a social more than a political approach to citizenship, in which the relationship of individuals to each other and to their communities is prioritized over their relationship to the state (p. 24). The point is not that students should be unpleasant to each other and careless about their communities, but I agree with Biesta that

an almost exclusive emphasis on these aspects runs the danger that the political dimensions of citizenship, including an awareness of the limitations of personal responsibility for effective political action and change, remain invisible and become unattainable for children and young people. (p. 26)

The *Social Responsibility* framework emphasizes community membership in much the same way the UK Big Society initiative does: It encourages youth to be respectful and active members of their neighborhoods and communities, but it remains limited to what Westheimer and Kahne (2004) have called the "personally responsible" and "participatory" (p. 242) conceptions of citizenship. The egalitarian, constitutive aspect of citizenship that I have emphasized, and that fits in what Westheimer and Kahne have called the "justice-oriented" (p. 242) conception of citizenship, is significantly different from the neighborliness encouraged by *Social Responsibility* and Big Society. Contestation of the state and the way it orders society is entirely lacking in neighborliness, and it is not essential or promoted in the types of social (rather than political) participation that these approaches advance.

Conclusion

I have argued that citizenship should be understood not only in its statutory sense but also—and, in today's world, *especially*—in its sense of the equal capacity of everybody to voice and enact citizenship. In other words, I have argued for the strengthening of the political and democratic aspect of citizenship in citizenship education.

There are elements of citizenship education in elementary and secondary schooling that are legitimately about civic socialization. That is to say, they are concerned with citizenship in its statutory aspect. These elements are what school curriculum has in common with the prep guides for those who wish to become legal citizens of a particular country. For example, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2014) advises those who wish to apply for Canadian citizenship that as part of the citizenship test, they will be asked questions on subjects such as:

the rights, freedoms and responsibilities of Canadian citizens, Canada's democracy and ways to take part in Canadian society, Canadian political and military history (including the political system, monarchy and branches of government), Canadian social and cultural history and symbols, and Canadian physical and political geography.

This is not dissimilar from the Informed Citizenship category of the curriculum for Civic Studies 11, which advises teachers:

It is expected that students will: demonstrate a knowledge of historical and contemporary factors that help define Canadian civic identity . . . ; identify historical roots of the Canadian political and legal systems; describe the division of powers in Canada among federal, provincial, territorial, First Nations, and municipal governments; describe Canada's electoral systems and processes. (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2005, pp. 22–23)

The reason I say it is legitimate to include such elements of civic socialization in the curriculum is that several studies suggest that there is a connection between political knowledge and political engagement. William Galston (2001) summarizes the research as follows: "The more knowledge citizens have of civic affairs, the less likely they are to experience a generalized mistrust of, or alienation from, public life" and "the more likely they are to participate in public matters" (p. 224; see also Torney-Purta, 2002). Biesta (2011b) acknowledges that "young people themselves have indicated a lack of knowledge and understanding in this area" and that this is good reason not to dismiss entirely some of the more traditional approaches to citizenship education (p. 6). However—and this is a big *however*—if educators, curriculum designers, and educational policymakers wish to take democratic citizenship in its democratic aspect seriously, they must ensure that the curricular elements of civic socialization do not overshadow the opportunities for civic subjectification. Or, to put it in the language of Balibar: for education to take democratic citizenship seriously in its global context today, it must place considerably greater emphasis on the egalitarian aspect of citizenship than it has traditionally done. This egalitarian aspect cannot be taught in the relative tidiness of the classroom but must include opportunities for students to enact and practice their equal capacity as speaking beings outside of the classroom—in the larger school community but also in social movements and in the media. The work of the Council of Youth Research, in which Los Angeles high school youth critically questioned politicians, school superintendents, and policymakers, is a good example of this (Mirra, Morrell, Cain, Scorza, & Ford, 2013).

While the egalitarian aspect of citizenship is important—and currently arguably the most important—it is not the only aspect of citizenship. The statutory aspect of citizenship reminds us of the fact that citizens are also subjected to the state. The conditions of that subjection, especially the borders that separate those who can consider themselves a part of the state from those who cannot, are important targets of democratic interrogation. Citizens, in the sense of those who are recognized by the state as legitimate members of the *demos*, have the ability to exert pressure on the state on precisely this point of legitimate membership. Seyla Benhabib (2004) has argued that "people" in the sense of *ethnos* and in the sense of *demos* do not coincide and that the demos can both invoke and revoke its own constitution in a process she calls "democratic iterations" (pp. 180–181). Balibar (1996), likewise, insists that there is a difference and "tension between the idea of *peuple* as a community (*Ein volk* [sic] [or *a* people]) and the idea of *peuple* as a principle of equality and social justice (*das Volk* [or *the* people])" (p. 372). I believe that precisely this contestation of the borders and composition of the demos must be part of citizenship education today. Biesta (2011b) argues that "questions about the definition of citizenship" and "a critical examination of the conditions of young people's citizenship" should be part of citizenship education (p. 16). Such a self-reflective citizenship education, a citizenship education that considers its own conditions and boundaries, would include, for example, discussion about which members of society do not have rights as members of the polity. It would discuss how people can enact citizenship-as-equality even if they have not achieved citizenship-as-status. It would educate students about "the daily process of resistances and vindications of basic rights on the part of the foreigners, which make them members of an active community of citizens, even before they are granted formal citizenship" (Balibar, 2010b, p. 320). And it would afford students opportunities to publicly voice their views about, or participate in, such resistances and vindications.

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Notes

1. I am indebted to Shayna Plaut for educating me about this issue.

2. Both Balibar and Rancière were students of Louis Althusser at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris and coauthored the book *Reading Capital* (*Lire le Capital*) with him, but only Balibar is mentioned as coauthor in the English translation of the book available today. So, there certainly are differences in the relation these authors have to the work of Althusser (and to Marxism more generally), but in this paper, I am not concerned with the extent to which their work is faithful to Marxism or not.

3. Adrian Oldfield (1990) and others have earlier made this distinction between citizenship as status or identity and citizenship as practice. Audrey Osler (2005) further adds to these two dimensions the third dimension of citizenship as feeling.

4. I am indebted to Kathy Bickmore on this point.

5. In 2012/13 only 1,006 BC students who wrote an exam in one of these courses did so in Civic Studies 11. The vast majority (45,366) did the exam in Social Studies 11 (BC Ministry of Education, 2013). So, if we are looking at the Civic Studies 11 curriculum, we should keep in mind that this course does not (yet) reach a great number or percentage of the BC students.