Chapter 5
The Metaphor of Civic Threat: Intellectual Disability and Education for Citizenship

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5.1 Introduction

The philosophical study of the role of schooling in preparing democratic citizens has tended to presume an able-minded learner. Indeed, dominant philosophical and theoretical models of democratic education consider neither the civic preparation of individuals with perceived intellectual disabilities in particular, nor the presumptions of able-mindedness that are built into theorizing about democracy and citizenship. As a result, democratic citizenship aims are frequently conceptualized according to an unevaluated assumption that civic preparation requires a particular level and display of intellectual ability, communicative competence, social independence, and behaviour. This unevaluated assumption parallels the presumed incompetence of individuals with perceived intellectual disabilities in other areas of education, a phenomenon that has been well documented by scholars of disability studies. Theory and research in Disability Studies in Education (DSE) and other areas of critical educational studies challenge this assumption by showing that the ability to reason effectively and to develop, exercise, and display intellectual abilities is highly contextualized and dependent on multiple factors, including access to education and the opportunity to benefit from it (e.g., Kliewer et al. 2015; Rubin et al. 2001; Schalock 2011). A number of scholars (e.g., Baglieri and Shapiro 2012; Kliewer et al. 2015) have concluded that because the demonstration or exhibition of intellectual ability is highly contextualized and dependent for its measurement on subjective factors of assessment and inferences based on behaviour or communication, there is a question of whether it makes sense to continue to refer to "intellectual disability" as a discrete phenomenon having material basis. For example, in their recent article "At the End of Intellectual Disability", Kliewer et al. (2015) argue that:

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> Intellectual disability (and its immediate categorical antecedent, *mental retardation*) is no more objectively real than the label *witch* imposed by male authorities onto some unfortunate women to explain and control their supposedly disturbing and troubling behaviour … Intellectual disability does not exist independently of the observer but is, in fact, always an inference made by those in positions of power and control over those accused. (p. 22)

In what follows, I take up what Kliewer, Biklen, and Peterson refer to as the "metaphor" of intellectual disability, the sense in which "We do not literally see mental retardation; we infer its existence" (Kliewer et al. 2015, p. 22). This metaphor emerges within the context of citizenship education in particular and troubling ways. *We do not see intellectual disability; we infer its existence through manifestations of non-citizenship.* As I will discuss, intellectual ability—and disability—is actively constructed by and through gendered and racialized attachments to the notion of the ideal citizen. Individuals who are perceived to manifest undesirable differences in cognition, behaviour, communication, or performance appear to threaten notions of civic well-being, of nationhood, and of social reciprocity. In this sense, intellectual disability becomes a metaphor for civic threat. Consequently, educational theorizing around democratic citizenship education advances the metaphor of intellectual disability through a process of negation: the citizen is that which the person with intellectual disability is not *or* intellectual disability is that which is not citizenship.

This chapter begins with a broad discussion of the place of dis/ability, implicit and explicit, within educational theorizing about citizenship aims. As I discuss in the first section, the future citizen is constructed as an able-minded learner. I then describe how people who are considered to have questionable cognitive status are positioned as non-citizens often in virtue of undesirable traits perceived through gendered and racialized norms of civic worth. More specifically, I develop the notion that intellectual disability is a metaphor for civic threat. Finally, I consider the deconstruction of the discourse of civic threat, paying particular attention to the dearth of *imaginative* possibilities for citizenship.

5.2 The Future Citizen as Able-Minded Learner

The aspiration that schools be places where democratic citizens are created or shaped is foundational to public schooling in the USA, Canada, and other Western countries (although certainly not exclusively). Scholars of all educational subdisciplines and stripes have written about the role of education in preparing young people for active engagement in their national polity and, increasingly, in the global world. Scholarship and research in DSE and inclusive education are no exception; indeed, a foundational argument for inclusion that has emerged from these fields is that all children receive better civic preparation when they learn together, regardless of ability level. Says Minow (2013), "Integration in the context of disability holds promise for enhancing social understanding and the sense of 'we' among all students" (p. 52). While many philosophers and theorists of education share the view

of the importance of diversity and inclusivity for democracy, few outside of DSE explicitly address disability as one such instance of diversity. Yet if being a good citizen involves being exposed to a diversity of perspectives and experiences, then it follows that schools should endeavour to facilitate cross-positional learning. When students are educated together, citizenship can be enacted in the classroom through the development of understanding, patience, empathy, respect, and belonging—at least this is the aspiration. Thus, the school as an institution and the classroom community can be regarded as unparalleled environments for incubating civic knowledge, skills, and virtues that are attentive to ability differences.

Many scholars in the field of philosophy of education have shared this view of the relationship between schooling and the civic preparation of diverse groups of students, albeit with different manifestations.[1] Nevertheless, considerations of the full inclusion of young people with significant disabilities have not emerged as clearly (Terzi, 2008 is a notable exception). For the most part, and whether they are more concerned with the reproductive dimensions of citizenship or with the transformative dimensions thereof, philosophers of education have focused on the extent to which democratic decisions are made and community is created within conditions of interest plurality and identity difference, with strong emphasis on socioeconomic, religious, cultural, linguistic, and racial identities in particular. Nevertheless, questions within these discussions about the capabilities and dispositions that students need to engage effectively and cooperatively in democratic politics across even extreme differences in worldview are always questions about the "ability expectations" (Wolbring 2012, p. 156) that potential or developing citizens must have in order to do so. Frequently, students judged capable of democratic citizenship education are framed as possessing, or possessing the potential for, particular abilities that correspond to desirable skills, knowledge, and dispositions or character (see Biesta 2006). This is especially so within, although not exclusive to, the liberal democratic philosophical tradition in philosophy of education (see Erevelles 2002, for discussion). The delineated capacities usually include high (although not usually specified) levels of cognitive ability, economic or civic reciprocity of a particular level and kind, intellectual and social independence, a disposition towards respecting democratic values, and normalized communication and behavioural expressions. As I will explain, these presumed capacities or ability expectations create significant challenges for envisioning people with disabilities, and perhaps especially people with intellectual disabilities, as future citizens. This is so not only because these capacities correspond to expectations of ability based on normalized constructs of human functioning, but also because they promote a view of the citizen as primarily cooperative and unfettered by an existing history of distrust for civic norms.

According to Wolbring (2012), ability expectations are the developed capabilities (and sometimes innate capacities), dispositions, behaviours, and virtues that are desired and sometimes even expected within a particular contextualized frame-

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[1] Certainly John Dewey is of particular noteworthiness here, as Danforth has pointed out (2001).

work of education (see also Biesta 2006; Hehir 2002); they "influence the very meaning of citizenship" (Wolbring 2012, p. 156) and are shaped by a dominant view of what citizenship requires. Some ability expectations are benign, even beneficial; for example, the expectation that individuals have the ability to be free from oppression and social marginalization. However, others function as prescriptions of the *necessity* of abilities that might otherwise be considered merely *desirable*. Such a move can rise to a form of ableism[2] when and because those abilities considered normal and therefore socially desirable are instead promoted as necessary. For example, it may be desirable for civic participation that a person is able to read, but making literacy a requirement of citizenship has historically amounted to oppression, promoting a view of the citizen as a white, property-owning male (Kliewer et al. 2004).

The slide from desirable to necessary can be seen in the frequent and perhaps dominant emphasis on deliberation or some variation of dialogic civic exercise within liberal democratic philosophical conceptions of democratic participation. According to Gutmann and Thompson (2004), deliberative democracy is "a form of government in which free and equal citizens (and their representatives) justify decisions in a process in which they give one another reasons that are mutually acceptable and generally accessible, with the aim of reaching conclusions that are binding in the present on all citizens and open to challenge in the future" (p. 7). The deliberative model of citizenship is quite demanding of citizen participants: the democratic person is one who is motivated to engage in public discussion with others whose views or interests are conflicting; she is open to listening to others and to being persuaded to change her position; she is able to engage in reasoned debate, presenting reasons to support her position and listening to the reasons of others; and she is capable of autonomous decision-making, acting independently and freely in giving reasons and forming consensus or disagreement. These ability expectations would seem to pose significant problems for people labelled with intellectual disabilities (although not only this group). In fact, Clifford (2012) charges that deliberative democracy is "implicitly coded as able-boded" (p. 218). I would add that it is also coded as able-minded, in that it places a strong emphasis on reasoning abilities and on independent decision-making. Moreover, deliberation relies on "communicative reciprocity" (Clifford 2012, p. 221), implicitly—or at least by omission—marked by normatively valued or understood modes of communication. Individuals who experience significant limitations in communicative ability—who do not communicate verbally, whose speech is slow or hard to decipher, who use assistive devices to communicate and so on—are significantly disadvantaged by deliberative democracy. This is because verbal communication (as a privileged form of communication) is presented as not merely *desirable* but actually *necessary* for one's inclusion in civic activities.

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[2] The term "ableism" has been used in many different ways. Here I define ableism as the systematic privileging of those abilities considered normal within a particular social context as well as the systematic marginalizing of individuals perceived as disabled or as having undesirable ability characteristics.

Presumptions about communication, as well as behaviour and cognitive and social independence, are woven as invisible and invisibilized threads into the fabric of deliberative theory. The emphasis on communicative reciprocity is particularly problematic as a foundational component of an aspirationally inclusive civic society. Indeed, people with intellectual disability labels and other disabilities affecting communication or comprehension are left on the margins of citizenship, to borrow Alison Carey's (2010) apt terminology, by the deliberative model. Importantly, it is not just expectations of capacity that contribute to this marginalization but also the emphasis on norms of reasonableness, dispassionate dialogue, open-mindedness, and "civic magnanimity" that "other" people with disability labels (see McGregor 2004, p. 95). Some educational scholars, and feminist scholars in particular, have pointed out how democratic deliberation, contrary to its inclusive and transformative intentions, may actually place unfair demands on those who lack power or undermine the authority of those whose lived experiences differ from dominant norms (Ellsworth 1989; Jones 1999; Levinson 2003; McGregor 2004). According to Levinson, for example, deliberation calls for "social trust" among parties in a dialogic exchange (2012, p. 37). The problem of social trust can be seen as particularly troubling for people labelled with intellectual disabilities as individuals and as members of a group. As frequent recipients of care, of external life management, and of decision-making support or substitution, such individuals are frequently positioned in situations where, as adults, they must place a great deal of trust in caregivers, teachers, service professionals, and so on—often of necessity. Yet, these relationships of personal trust are required despite a long history of abuse, exploitation, and social marginalization and exclusion that people labelled with intellectual disabilities have experienced. It isn't clear why or how one can be expected to develop personal trust given this history, and it would be perfectly reasonable in many cases for individuals so labelled to experience a great deal of social *dis*trust.

For both these reasons, namely that dominant conceptions of citizenship reflect the necessity of capacities that do not reflect all individuals' abilities and because they ignore important social histories, feminists and critical race theorists have critiqued the reliance on Westernized individualism in conceptualizing citizenship more generally. Philosophers, and especially feminist philosophers of disability, have moved this discussion into the realm of dis/ability, especially through the critique of discourses of independence and reciprocity as foundational to citizenship (e.g., Erevelles 2002; Kafer 2013; Kittay 2001). For example, Nirmala Erevelles (2002) writes that, "notions of autonomy and rationality are, in fact, closely tied to the historical and material conditions of capitalism where certain definitions of reason and autonomy become more plausible than others" (p. 13). For Alison Kafer (2013), civic and other forms of belonging are always tied to a notion of expected futurity, wherein a person's actual civic worth is tied to their potential growth and development towards an expected vision of future contribution. Kafer writes, "Ideas about disability and disabled minds/bodies animate many of our collective evocations of the future; in these imaginings, disability too often serves as the agreed-upon limit of our projected futures" (2013, p. 27). As I will explain in the next section, worries about the future—the future of the nation, the future of the citizen,

the future of the family—have historically dominated discourses of citizenship in ways that position some individuals, by virtue of their embodied alterity, as threats to civic well-being and growth.

5.3   The Construction of the Civic Threat

Notions of able-bodiedness and able-mindedness are the backdrops against which the ideal citizen is imagined and against which schooling practices and processes are measured. Built into any notion of citizenship is the construct or image of the *good* citizen; it is a normative assessment. This normative assessment corresponds to dominant views of the social good, socially desirable behaviour, and socially desirable embodiments. Thus good citizenship is also a binarized construct, depending on its social "other"—the socially undesirable other—for description and assessment. In this section, I will discuss how the racialized and gendered positionality of *civic threat* forms the foil to the good citizen and positions intellectual disability as a metaphor for civic unfitness.

Disability studies scholars have documented how the linking of able-mindedness to potential or actual civic status is a highly racialized and gendered process. This process is perhaps most clear and familiar within examples of the construction of the concept of feeblemindedness, what James Trent (2004) calls a "catch-all" term for people considered not only mentally/intellectually deficient but also morally defective and of questionable civic worth. Writes Trent:

> What made this new image [of the feeble-minded] so threatening and ensured acute concerns and shrill warnings was the increasing insistence in the first and second decades of the new century that mental defectives, in their amorality and fecundity, were not only linked with social vices but indeed were the most prominent and persistent cause of those vices. Graduating from being merely associated with social vices to being their fundamental cause, mental defectives became a menace, the control of which was an urgent necessity for existing and future generations. (2004, p. 141)

The construction of feeblemindedness as a metaphor for civic threat was disproportionately damaging for new immigrants and poor women, especially those perceived as racially impure. New immigrants arriving at Ellis Island were screened for apparent markers of physical and mental disability through medical inspections and intelligence testing (Baynton 2013). A suspect screening could be readily used to disqualify them from seeking residency in the United States. Importantly, it was taken as self-evident that individuals who exhibited markers of disability would be excluded from entry, a position buttressed by the twin notions of heredity and contagion linked to disability.

Figure 5.1 demonstrates the linking of undesirable race, gender, and sexuality in the construction of the civic threat. The image, titled "Inheritance of 'Mongolian' Deficiency", appears in *Applied Eugenics*, a 1918 textbook (Popenoe and Johnson 1920). It depicts a woman and a child in separate side-by-side photographs. The woman is unsmiling and appearing of darker complexion. Her race or ethnicity is

INHERITANCE OF "MONGOLIAN" DEFICIENCY.

A common type of feeble-mindedness shows external indications by a type of feature which is called "mongoloid," because of a certain resemblance to that of some of the Mongolian races. The woman at the left has this appearance, yet the tests showed that she was normal mentally. She was admitted as an immigrant, and by a normal husband gave birth to the child at the right, which not only had the mongolian characteristics exaggerated, but was a pronounced imbecile. The child was deportable, and the mother of course went with him. There is nothing in the immigration laws at present to prevent the entry of such women as these, if they themselves can pass the mental tests, although it is evident from many such cases as this, that they transmit feeble-mindedness to their offspring, even though they themselves may seem to be normal. (Frontispiece.) (See page 122.)

Fig. 5.1 Inheritance of 'Mongolian' Deficiency (1918)

not explicitly identified but it is clearly referenced. The child appears to be a toddler with a full head of dark hair, a wide forehead, and what might be considered a "deformed" ear. The caption reads:

> A common type of feeble-mindedness shows external indications of a type of feature which is called "mongoloid" because of certain resemblance to that of some of the Mongoloid races. The woman at the left has this appearance, yet the tests showed that she was normal mentally. She was admitted as an immigrant, and by normal husband gave birth to the child at right, which not only had the Mongolian characteristics exaggerated, but was a pronounced imbecile. The child was deportable, and the mother of course went with him. There is nothing in the immigration laws at present to prevent the entry of such women as these, if they themselves can pass the mental tests, although it is evident from many such cases as this, that they transmit feeble-mindedness to their offspring, even though they themselves appear to be normal (Popenoe and Johnson 1920, p. 174).

In this image, disability is presented as both a heritable trait and a contagion, transmissible through parentage as well as through the suspect sexuality of the questionable and racialized motherhood. This woman's child "outs" her as parentally and civically unfit because she is linked to the child's supposed feeblemindedness, itself exemplified by the child's racialized ("mongoloid") characteristics. This woman's status as a citizen is called into question by her relationship to apparently feebleminded offspring, thus solidifying the contradiction between citizenship and disabilities of the mind.

In addition to policies and practices that aimed to prevent putatively deviant individuals, and especially women, from procreating, eugenics authorities promoted a system of education designed to encourage the socially and civically desirable to

procreate, and to become vigilant about the undesirable elements of society. Ideals of whiteness, desirable gender behaviour, and mental health and ability were linked together as social—and educational—goals to which citizens ought to aspire. Indeed, many of these eugenics narratives became public lessons of civic responsibility displayed in textbooks, at state fairs, and through public health pamphlets and circulars (Ferri and Connor 2006). The creation of the notion of feeblemindedness solidified a binary notion of citizenship that depended on the exclusion of some to uphold the membership of others. The increased public awareness and vigilance allowed individuals to retain their civic membership through working towards ideals of able-mindedness.

It may be tempting to consider this cultural artefact and these stories as confined to the past; indeed, doing so not only allows us to distance ourselves from these disturbing histories, but also situates responsibility for their perpetuation squarely with individuals who are long since gone. But the notion of civic threat and the fact of contemporary complicity remain strong in our contemporary world. Policies and statutes governing public health and political activity continue to concern themselves with the cognitive or mental health status of individual members of society. One need only look as far as recent voter ID laws in some US states that disproportionately limited the voting opportunities of poor African Americans and Latinos (Childress 2014), or discourses about immigrants and refugees as national threats and contagions, for example, Chavez (2013); see also Schweik (2011). An image from a recent public health campaign in NYC is likewise a striking example of the discourse of civic threat. The campaign, which involved a series of subway and bus posters with messages about the dangers of teen pregnancy, positioned teenaged mothers as contributing to and even responsible for the potential ill health of the polity through their "choices" to bear children into situations of poverty, lowered educational opportunities, and single-parenthood. For example, Fig. 5.2 shows a toddler, who has light skin and ambiguous racial and ethnic identity features and who is crying. The caption reads, "I'm twice as likely not to graduate high school because you had me as a teen", followed by a slightly more detailed statistical statement putatively confirming this caption (Taylor 2015). The campaign not only appeared to attribute the perpetuation of systemic social conditions—of poverty, lack of education, and so on—to individual women, but also positioned children born to such women as problems. Here civic competence—and incompetence—is presented as inherent to the individual.

While these examples implicitly reference ability and ability expectations of citizens—often by negation—other policies and practices pertaining to nationhood, social reciprocity, or civic well-being are more explicit in their management of dis/ability. For example, legal statutes governing the political activity of individuals perceived as having lowered cognitive status are especially illustrative of the continuance of the discourse of civic threat or liability in the contemporary period. At present all but 11 states have laws that can restrict the voting rights of people with disabilities, usually because of their assessed intellectual abilities or mental health status. Additionally, many states outright bar individuals who are placed under guardianship from voting (14 in 2012, according to Pan 2012). Such restrictions

Fig. 5.2 NYC Teen Pregnancy Prevention campaign poster (2013)

continue despite the fact that guardianship restrictions have been widely criticized as oppressive by the disability community and beyond (see Rood et al. 2015). Legal guardianship, which is ostensibly about an individual's ability to make decisions on their own behalf, therefore becomes equated with and indeed enacts a loss of civic status, as I will explain.

The legal process of guardianship involves a court appointing an individual or individuals to make decisions for and on behalf of an individual who is deemed incapable of making those decisions for herself or of acting in her own best interests. As Rood, Kanter, and Causton (2015) argue, guardianship processes are based in and promote a particular view of disability that is aligned with the presumption of incompetence rather than a presumption of competence; a disability is considered "*synonymous* with an inability to make decisions in one's own best interests" (Rood et al. 2015, p. 319; emphasis in original). The presumption of guardianship for individuals with intellectual disabilities therefore demonstrates the reliance on the idea that certain people globally lack competence by virtue of their cognitive status. Thus, while many alternatives exist, including formal and informal supported decision-making, person-centred planning practices, and limited guardianship, full guardianship dominates (Rood et al. 2015). These legal impositions can occur even when the individual in question exhibits high levels of social, political, and personal competence. Such a paradox is evident in the recent case of Jenny Hatch, a young woman in her early 20s who had a rewarding job, a happy living arrangement, and an active role in local politics when she was placed under the legal guardianship of

her parents and removed to a group home living arrangement that she did not desire and that limited her social activities (Vargas 2013). In an unprecedented demonstration of competence, and with the support of friends, Hatch undertook and won a legal battle petitioning for the right to choose her guardians (Vargas 2013). Here we see an example of how supporting relationships, when harnessed as competence-facilitating rather than competence-impeding, can produce opportunities for civic exercise (in this case a legal challenge over rights).

When one is placed under guardianship, however, one's access to civic opportunities is reduced, whether as a matter of overt and/or non-overt political consequences (e.g., overt denial of political opportunities like voting or potential denial of access to information necessary to take advantage of those opportunities). The logic of political restrictions for those under guardianship appears to be that individuals either lack competence to engage in such political activities because they lack competence to make decisions on their own behalf or that they cannot justifiably take part in political practices like voting because they are at risk of being coerced by their guardians. Certainly the latter worry—of manipulation and abuse in decision-making—is real and concerning. However, it is curious that this should motivate further restrictions on individuals under protection rather than motivate further inquiry into safeguarding against coercion, manipulation, and abuse in civic practices. Indeed, restricting the rights and opportunities of labelled individuals as a result of such risks situates the threat to political power as within those individuals. Why should the individuals who experience the restrictions be situated as *threats* and bear the consequences thereof? The case of Jenny Hatch, alongside other instances of guardianship restrictions, illustrates how states of dependency and lowered cognitive status can be confused with, and perhaps even naturalized, as a lack of civic potential. Such a confusion can be seen as continuous with the historical positioning of the socially undesirable as threats to the civic well-being.

5.4 Deconstructing the Metaphor of Civic Threat: Potentialities of Imagination

Despite Kafer's (2013) critique about the lack of (civic) futurity that is projected onto individuals with significant disabilities and that can be seen in the failure to conceptualize disabled citizenship, some educational practices do in fact quite overtly consider the future of individuals with intellectual disabilities. So what kind of civic future is envisioned and enacted through these practices? Unfortunately, the answer is often one that corresponds to norms of able-bodiedness and able-mindedness. One example that I will discuss is legally mandated transition planning, which is part of the individualized education planning process for adolescents with identified disabilities in the USA. As I will explain, this educational mandate, aimed at advancing the social, economic, and political opportunities of labelled

individuals, nevertheless bumps up against dominant notions of civic participation that are able-bodied and able-minded.

The democratic or civic potential of many of the educational practices that are *nominally* aimed at advancing the democratic inclusion and participation of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities can actually function as programs of social regulation, exacerbating the gap in political opportunities that labelled individuals experience. For example, Peterson (2009) illustrates how practices of self-determination in schools can devolve into narrow expectations of close-ended performance standards. In this context, learning aimed at democratic inclusion can instead play out as a practice of normalization rather than autonomy-facilitation within transition planning in schools (Cowley and Bacon 2013; Peterson 2009). Peterson (2009) offers the example of Shana, whose nominal self-determination process involved not only the ignorance of her true preferences, but also highly circumscribed opportunities for "choice". Peterson observes that "a great schism existed between self-determination as a democratic ethos and the reality that ensued when attempting to support self-determination" (2009, n.p.). This example illustrates how education for citizenship, when confronted with the able-bodied and able-minded norms of the schooling context, can become a mandated program rather than a democratic process, practice, or experience (Leake 2014; Powers 2005; see also Cowley and Bacon 2013). However, it is not simply the encounter with the schooling context that can render civic education practices as circumscribed programs. Rather, the very definition of citizenship tied to a dominant ideal of independence and autonomy can permeate practices ostensibly aimed at emancipation. In fact, as Aspis (1997, 2002) points out, self-determination and self-advocacy discourses and practices appear to support a narrative of citizen that is highly individualistic, despite originating from a tradition of social research tied directly to significant disability. While ostensibly aimed at developing students' abilities to become citizen participants or civic agents—to make decisions and act on their own behalf, and to turn that decision-making outwards towards political action—the democratic dimensions of these frameworks are lost amongst the fog of programmatic and standardizing practices.[3]

It is certainly clear that a problem exists where frameworks of social inclusion and political participation that have transformative potential—like self-advocacy—simply reinforce the status quo of alienation, regulation, and social control of people labelled with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We might look at how this co-option of self-advocacy can reaffirm individuals' social distrust of care providers, service-professionals, educators, and so on, rather than enhancing opportunities for civic valuation and participation. How does a lack of attention to the *methods* of support itself impede opportunities for citizenship? Is it individual incapacity or external power that prevents civic growth and agency?

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[3] It is important here to distinguish between the self-advocacy movement as a whole and the experience of self-advocacy as institutionalized within educational and service contexts. I am decidedly *not* making an argument that self-advocacy work necessarily fails as a civic project.

These questions are especially pertinent in considering how the need for sometimes-significant support is taken as a threat to a person's ability to exercise political agency. This double-bind is seen in Jenny Hatch's experience. In a discussion of the need for increased legal and policy emphasis on supported decision-making (in contrast to guardianship), Hatch's lawyer, Jonathan Martinis, describes how when Hatch asks for help it disqualifies her from being independent, whereas when a non-labelled person asks for help it can be taken as *evidence* of independence ("Introduction", 2014). Says Martinis:

> Think about the way you [non-labelled person] make decisions in your life. Think about the things you do every day. If you have a big decision that you have to make, do you just make it with your gut all the time? No, you do research. You ask people for information. You go out and get the support and information that you need to make the best decision that you can. And when you do that people tell you that you're smart. People tell you that you're making an informed and intelligent decision. ("Introduction", 2014, p. 8)

Hatch's existing label/diagnosis as intellectually disabled means that she is already held suspect. Certainly this double-bind illustrates the necessity for a sustained conversation on prejudice against individuals labelled with intellectual disabilities—indeed, for a sustained conversation on ableism in general. Yet even if educators, support people, and others fully understand this prejudice against the capacities of individuals with intellectual disabilities, they may not correspondingly understand the bias *towards* a particular view of citizenship that permeates—namely that citizenship is expressed through normalized displays of communication, behaviour, and cognition. And here we see the complexity: that challenging the able-minded presumption of citizenship involves challenging the very notion of citizenship itself—perhaps most importantly the idea that civic participation is precluded by the need for complex support, by a limitation in or lack of verbal communication, or by the presence of socially devalued behaviour.

A view of citizenship as based in able-bodied and able-minded norms will fail to be *relevant* to the lives of such individuals. For individuals labelled with significant disabilities, and perhaps especially those for whom reasoning, decision-making, and communication are highly dependent on others, any notion of citizenship that privileges cognitive and communicative independence will also fail to be inclusive. It will privilege the capabilities of those already in positions of dominance within the educational sphere, reinforcing the chasm that already exists in civic opportunities.

Disability activist Simone Aspis (2002) has argued that the self-advocacy movement must involve attention to the problem of social power if it is to be transformative. Others diagnose the problem of self-advocacy co-option as in part emerging because the people who are intended to support and empower labelled individuals are themselves frequently socially, economically, and culturally disenfranchised (Powers 2005, p. 169).[4] Disenfranchisement compounds disenfranchisement. These

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[4] Eva F. Kittay has made the argument that just caring for individuals labeled with significant disabilities requires justice in (gendered) caring relations, including attention to the social, economic, and political positions of caregivers. See Kittay (2001).

material conditions that jeopardize civic status should certainly be the focus of critical work on civic inclusion and beyond. I would propose, however, that such critical work also requires an understanding that the problem of the civic exclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities, both from within theorizing and within concrete social policies and educational practices, is also a profound problem of imagination. This vacuum of imagination persists in the failure to imagine significant disability tied to meaningful citizenship—or indeed to imagine citizenship otherwise than able-minded or able-bodied. As Maxine Greene so eloquently puts it, "Imagination alters the vision of the way things are; it opens space in experience where projects can be devised, the kinds of projects that may bring things closer to what ought to be" (Greene 2009, p. 141). Imagining citizenship otherwise involves asking: What does civic participation look like for individuals with significant intellectual and other disabilities? What does civic agency look like? Imaginative answers to these questions are urgent. Without such imaginative answers a clear reinforcement of the discourse of vulnerability and incompetence prevails, buttressed by highly racialized and gendered historical narratives of civic unfitness. Without such answers "intellectual disability" will continue to operate as a metaphor for civic threat.

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