

Theory and Practice of Citizenship Education. The Case of Policy, Science and Education in the Netherlands

Teoría y práctica de la educación en la ciudadanía. Política, ciencia y educación en los Países Bajos

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Abstract

Citizenship education is a concept encountered in many debates and publications. This concept though is often very differently addressed in politics, in conversations in schools, in public opinion and among scholars. Debates on citizenship education can be very lively, as is the case in the Netherlands. The concept of citizenship itself is continuously broadened and deepened. It is broadened in the sense that citizenship is no longer limited to the nation state (the Netherlands), but also relates to European citizenship and even global citizenship. There is a deepening of the concept, because citizenship no longer exclusively relates to the political level, but also extends to the social and the cultural levels and even to the interpersonal level – how people live together. The broadening, and especially the deepening of the concept means that citizenship increasingly relates to a person's identity. Moral development and citizenship development are linked. Citizenship education encroaches upon the development of identity of young people.

In this article we will analyze several themes that play a role in these debates and link them with research into citizenship education. Special attention will be given to differences in defining the concepts of citizenship and citizenship education, the introduction of other cultures, and the school as a practice ground. The second part analyses the developing of citizenship education and its possibilities at two policy levels: government, and schools. At the system level, we will consider: the educational policy discourse; curriculum policy; civil society; autonomy of schools; differences between schools, and the pedagogical discourse. At the school level we will analyze the place of citizenship education in the curriculum, ownership

of teachers, pedagogical-didactic approach and student views on citizenship education. The article ends with a plea for a more critical-democratic citizenship education.

Keywords: educational change, citizenship education, autonomy.

Resumen

El concepto de educación en la ciudadanía es objeto de numerosos debates y publicaciones. Es un concepto que, no obstante, en política, en el seno de centros educativos, en la opinión pública, y entre estudiosos, suele abordarse de formas muy diversas, llegando a generarse en torno a él encendidos debates, como es el caso en los Países Bajos. La propia idea de ciudadanía vive un proceso continuo de ampliación y profundización. Ampliación, en el sentido de que no se limita a un único país como, por ejemplo, Holanda, sino que también tiene que ver con la ciudadanía europea e, incluso, global. Profundización, porque el concepto de ciudadanía ya no sólo guarda relación con el nivel político, sino que afecta, además, a los niveles social y cultural, alcanzando el interpersonal –cómo conviven las personas–. La ampliación, y especialmente la profundización, del concepto implica que la relación entre ciudadanía e identidad personal se va haciendo cada vez más estrecha. El desarrollo moral y ciudadano están conectados. La educación en la ciudadanía influye en el desarrollo de la identidad de los jóvenes.

En este artículo analizaremos algunos temas presentes en estos debates, y los pondremos en relación con la investigación en curso sobre educación en la ciudadanía. Prestaremos especial atención a las diferencias a la hora de definir el concepto de ciudadanía –y de educación en la misma–, a la introducción de otras culturas, y al centro educativo como banco de pruebas. En la segunda parte estudiaremos el desarrollo de la educación en la ciudadanía, y sus posibilidades en dos niveles de política: el gubernamental, y el del centro educativo. En el primero de dichos niveles trataremos el discurso de la política educativa, la política curricular, la sociedad civil, la autonomía de los centros educativos, las diferencias entre centros educativos, y el discurso pedagógico. En el nivel del centro educativo analizaremos el papel de la educación en la ciudadanía en el currículo, a qué profesores es encomendada, el enfoque pedagógico-didáctico, y cómo perciben la educación en la ciudadanía los alumnos. El artículo termina sugiriendo un mayor grado de educación crítico-democrática en la ciudadanía.

Palabras clave: cambio educativo, educación en la ciudadanía, autonomía.

Introduction: Developments in the Concept of Citizenship Education

Educational institutions are supposed to give attention to citizenship education. The concept of citizenship itself is continuously broadened and deepened. It is broadened in the sense that citizenship is no longer limited to the Netherlands, but also relates to European citizenship and even global citizenship. There is a deepening of the concept, because citizenship no longer exclusively relates to the political level, but also extends to the social and the cultural levels and even to the interpersonal level – how people live together. The broadening, and especially the deepening of the concept means that citizenship increasingly relates to a person's identity. Citizenship education encroaches upon the development of identity of young people. Education always had a socializing effect on people, usually through the “hidden” curriculum. The required explicit focus on citizenship education means that the role of education in the development of identity is recognized and that a conscious attempt is made to influence this development of identity.

The broadening and deepening of the concept of citizenship have made its meaning broader but also more diffuse: citizenship incorporates a large part of a persons' life. Furthermore it is recognized in particular in the social sciences that an identity is not a unit, but is a build-up from various cultural orientations. We encounter this perception of multiple or many-voiced identities in psychological literature (Haste, 2004) as well as in cultural sociological approaches (Banks, 2004). Citizenship identities are then a connection of many forms of participation. Citizenship and the related citizenship practices can acquire meanings that partly supplement each other, but may also overlap or even conflict with each other. There are multiple identities of citizenship.

From a critique on the linking of the concept of citizenship to one's own country, a more morally inspired cosmopolitan citizenship has been advocated (Nussbaum, 1997). This is about moral values that concern responsibility for the whole world and all its inhabitants. An open attitude towards other people is one of its important aspects (Hansen, 2008). Recently this morally inspired global citizenship has been criticized for its lack of attention for political power relations (Mouffe, 2005; Thayer-Bacon, 2008; Veugelers, in press). A stronger relation between the moral and the political are advocated here: moral values should be analyzed within social and political relations. Veugelers (in press) studied the views of teachers with regard to global citizenship. In the theoretical orientation a distinction was made between an open global citizenship, a moral global citizenship and a social-political global citizenship. The interviews with teachers made clear that they prefer a moral global citizenship to be the pedagogical

goal. Teachers are also aware of social-political relations, but they are reserved when it comes to focusing on political relations.

Because of the deepening of the concept of citizenship, current ideas about citizenship encroach more and more upon the identity of people. In Dutch politics we see this aspect in the emphasis on desired manners, on national identity and on attention for world views. The government even specifies the manners it desires, informally as well as formally. It does the same for the identity of the country, by referring to “cultural heritage” and “canon”. With regard to world views the Dutch government is more reserved, but schools are required to pay attention to world view movements and to develop respect for other world views.

Citizenship education within this framework encroaches deeply upon the identity of people. This is of course not entirely new; it always happened. The whole system of education is imbued with values and these values influence the development of identity. What is new, is the conscious focus in citizenship education on values and the development of identity and the recognition that there is diversity in identities. That diversity in identity has long been hidden under a semblance of uniformity. Diversity in identities furthermore increases through immigration; internationalization is in presence through the media, and the citizen himself increasingly visits various foreign countries.

In learning this broadening of the concept of citizenship is also present. Haste (2004) shows that identities are changing and that new forms of participation are tested. Citizenship education is thus connected more and more with moral development (Oser & Veugelers, 2008). In Dutch politics the emphasis in citizenship education is upon active participation and social integration. In the social sciences, the political dynamics are usually described with the concept of democracy (Gutman, 1987; Parker, 2004; Veugelers, 2007; De Groot, in press). Following Dewey, democracy is seen as a “way of life”: democracy is more than formal procedures, it is a way of living together, of bridging differences of opinion and of protecting minorities.

We will now specifically address three themes that are central in the Dutch discourse about citizenship education:

- Different types of citizenship
- To get familiar with other cultures
- The school as a practice ground

Types of citizenship

It is often suggested that everyone gives the same meaning to citizenship, that we all know what good citizenship is. In many empirical studies though, we have found that there are different understandings of citizenship and citizenship education. We find these differences among teachers, school leaders, parents, and students as well. We could distinguish between three types of citizenship: adaptive, individualizing and critical democratic citizenship (Veugelers, 2007; Leenders, Veugelers, & De Kat, 2008a, 2008b). These three types have different combinations of clusters of pedagogical goals: discipline, autonomy and social involvement. The adaptive type combines discipline in social involvement, the individualizing type combines autonomy and discipline, and the critical democratic type autonomy and social involvement.

A survey among teachers in secondary education showed that 53% of the teachers aim at a critical democratic type of citizenship, 39% at an adaptive type, and 18% at an individualizing type. In vocational education the emphasis was slightly more on adaptation, while in pre-university educations a individualizing type was slightly preferred (Leenders et ál. 2008a). It is remarkable that parents, teachers and students alike, indicate that the cluster of discipline is more easily realized than the clusters of autonomy and social involvement.

The three types of citizenship education have a differing emphasis in their goals and are connected with differing pedagogical and didactical practices. Methodically, the adaptive type emphasizes the transfer of values and the regulation of behavior; the individualizing type independent learning and developing critical thinking, and the critical democratic type cooperative learning and developing critical thinking through inquiry and dialogue (Leenders & Veugelers, 2006). Westheimer and Kahne (2004) found a similar three-split (see also Westheimer, 2008 and Johnson & Morris, 2010). They identify a personally responsible citizen, a participating citizen and a citizen who strives for social justice. These studies show that developing citizenship is not a linear process from passive to active, but that citizenship can have different meanings and socio-political orientations.

To get familiar with other cultures

The introduction to other social and cultural groups is seen as an important aspect of citizenship education. Putnam (2000) points out that a person's social capital is composed of bonding (exclusive) and bridging (inclusive). Bonding is a social-

psychological necessity for a person in order to join and hold one's own in a cultural group. What Putnam calls bridging, connecting with other people, is what a society needs to function as such, to create social cohesion. Bridging can take on various forms: being considerate, being involved, or showing solidarity with others.

In the framework of citizenship education, schools are explicitly asked to bring different groups of young people together in order to introduce them to each other, to promote their mutual understanding and appreciation, and to further the cooperation between groups. In social psychology much research has been done into the conditions under which such meetings of differing groups does promote understanding and appreciation. These studies show that this kind of learning processes are rather complex and that the results are usually not predictable. Schuitema and Veugelers (2011) studied several projects in which students from different social and ethnic groups meet each other. The study shows that effects are hard to prove, but that it is important that joint activities are undertaken during the meetings and that there is interaction at the individual level. The contacts between students in the projects could under favorable conditions stimulate an open attitude and awareness of one's preconceptions about the other groups.

The school as a practice ground

Sociology of education has shown how schools employ rules and behavior for socializing young people, especially in an adaptive sense (Brint, 1998; Veugelers, 2008). Many psychologists on the other hand emphasize the student's self-regulation in his learning, for instance the control over one's own learning process. Bandura (1995) and Dieleman and Van der Lans (1999) see this self-regulation as being a form of developing identity, as a control over one's life course. Educationalists place the emphasis more on learning social and democratic behavior. Dewey (1923) and De Winter (1997) see the school as a practice ground for citizenship and argue for more democratic forms of school culture.

More democratic forms of the organization of education can be found in the Moral Education tradition in the Just Community Schools (Power, Higgins & Kohlberg, 1999; Althof, 2003) and in the Critical Pedagogy tradition in Democratic Education (Giroux, 1989; Apple & Beane, 1995; Parker, 2004). Actively participating in democratic practices in the school should provide students with valuable learning experiences. Participation as such is not sufficient; it needs to be participation in democratic relations and an orientation on justice, dialogue and social action (Veugelers, 2009).

The metaphor “the school as a practice ground” hints at a school culture with an active participation of students in organizational and policy aspects. The curriculum could include democratic and dialogical ways of communication as well. Schuitema, Veugelers, Rijlaarsdam and Ten Dam (2009) showed that a dialogical approach of citizenship education as an integral part of history classes helps students with developing a well-founded opinion about moral issues in the subject matter.

Citizenship education still in progress

Reflection on and practices of citizenship and citizenship education are still being further developed. The concept of citizenship is broadened and deepened and encroaches more and more upon people’s identities. Citizenship and citizenship education can have different meanings. Citizenship can aim for various pedagogical goals and citizenship education can have a variety of educational practices. Central to citizenship is the relationship of people with other social and cultural groups and the way in which a society is organized. Participation takes place in any kind of society, what matters is therefore are the leading political and pedagogical principles in citizenship education: is it adaptation, is it individualization, or is it a critical democratic development?

Citizenship education at various levels

In the second part of the article an analysis will be made of citizenship education at the various levels of the educational system and of the level of the school.

Citizenship education at the system level

At the system level, we will consider: the educational policy discourse; curriculum policy; civil society; autonomy of schools; differences between schools, and the pedagogical discourse.

Educational policy discourse

Educational policy is the result of discourse and decision making about education. Spring (2004), in his book “How educational ideologies are shaping global society”,

distinguishes three important educational ideologies: 'Nationalist Education in the Age of Globalization'; 'Schooling Workers for a Global Free Market' and 'Globalizing Morality'. The nationalist educational ideology emphasizes the native language, the national culture, the national history, nation-building and security. The global free market ideology emphasizes comparability and standardizing, economic and technological development, and the international competitive position of countries. In subject matter the emphasis is placed on languages, on mathematics and science. This ideology is strongly promoted by organizations like the World Bank and the OECD. The globalizing morality ideology emphasizes human rights, democracy, cultural diversity and sustainability. In content, the emphasis is on moral development and a morally founded sustainable global citizenship. This ideology is especially promoted by Unesco and NGO's.

According to Spring, each educational system possesses a specific combination of these ideologies. He presents case studies from several countries. It would be interesting if similar educational sociological research was undertaken in the Netherlands. Which ideological mix is found in the Netherlands, especially in relation with citizenship education? With some caution we present the following analysis. The nationalist ideology with its emphasis on the national culture and history and much attention for security and safety is strongly present in the Dutch educational policy discourse on citizenship education. There is also attention for the global morality ideology, but is not as strong as for the nationalist ideology. The global free market ideology is dominant in the Dutch political educational discourse and is even strong enough to marginalize the nationalist ideology in educational policy. The emphasis in the Dutch educational policy is on the international competitive position and the "knowledge society": languages, mathematics and science. Citizenship education in its global, but especially in its nationalist perspective is important in Dutch national policy, but subsidiary to the "knowledge society".

Curriculum policy

In spite of the non-dominant position of citizenship education, the Dutch government does pay a lot of attention to citizenship as a content area. Since 2006, schools are required to give attention to citizenship education. The government points out its importance, but leaves it to the schools to organize this subject area. The government, under reference to the freedom of education and the autonomy of the schools, is very reluctant when it comes to specifying a curriculum. Contrary to other subjects areas lacks citizenship education a subject title, exam requirements, goals and qualifications. The curriculum is quite open. An interesting question is how the possible advantages

of this freedom relate to the existing subjects. In these other subjects, schools and students are under much tighter control. At present, schools find it very difficult to provide the content area of citizenship education with a firm place in the school curriculum.

The national curriculum institute SLO is developing frameworks and example materials (Bron, Veugelers & Van Vliet, 2009) but the materials can only be examples and not descriptive. The National Educational Council and SLO have declared the desirability of a core curriculum for citizenship education. Such a core curriculum could reinforce the focus on this subject and establish a minimum with which schools have to comply. A more elaborate description of the subject matter and the attainment levels could enhance the visibility and programmability of citizenship education.

Denominationalism in Dutch education and civic society

An important characteristic of the Dutch educational system is denominationalism. Two-thirds of the schools are denominational schools, although they are state financed and have to use the required curriculum. Denominational schools are allowed to develop their own subject matter for world view education. Citizenship education is of course closely connected to denomination. This is a major reason for the government to be reluctant in further specifying the subject matter of citizenship education.

The national organizations of denominational education are very active in the area of citizenship education and they are developing their own vision, provide examples and start research programs. But the relationship between the national organizations of denominational schools and the schools themselves is presently, now traditional religious institutions have been weakened, not that close anymore that these organizations could put requirements on the schools. The government has given denominational education much space. There are some interesting projects, but denominationalism has lost to a large extent its grip on education.

The influence of civil society, including denominations, can be strengthened by a stronger emphasis on the relationship between education and society. The further specification of citizenship education could be undertaken in close cooperation with students, parents and society. Networks of schools would have to take up their responsibilities for the regional community as a whole, not just for their own cultural community (Veugelers & O'Hair, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink 2006).

Autonomy of schools

Over the past 15 years, the autonomy of schools in the Netherlands has increased. Many schools take interesting initiatives, in the area of citizenship education as well.

But the School Inspectorate, the National Educational Council and SLO conclude that this development stagnates and that the schools are unsure about what is expected from them. Schools use their autonomy only sparingly. Of course one might say that not making a big deal of citizenship education is a form of autonomy as well.

Hargreaves and Shirley (2008) show that the autonomy of schools in many countries is in practice limited to the organization of classes and the distribution of financial means. With regard to subject matter, governments have even tightened their grip on attainment levels, examination and inspectorate. This analysis is also relevant for Dutch education, where the school inspectorate is much stricter than in less centralized educational systems. In the case of citizenship education too, the government tries to monitor through the school inspectorate where serious problems are registered and remedies demanded. Because of the lacking attainment levels, subject title and examination for citizenship education, it is of course much harder for the Inspectorate to supervise citizenship education than the strongly structured school subjects.

The unclear mutual expectations of schools and inspectorate are the cause of uncertainty on the part of the schools and sometimes even of irritations between school and inspectorate about what is to be expected in citizenship education. Within a more elaborated framework, the government could ask the school to further detail their visions, attainment levels and activities. It is an interesting question whether a stronger accountability would make the schools more, or less, dependent on the school inspectorate.

Separations between schools and school types

Discourses on citizenship education often refer to the importance of introductions to other social and cultural groups (see also *To get familiar with other cultures*). Dutch schools are not only separated along denominational lines, but in secondary education they are also separated into school types. Schools can encompass several school types or they can be organized categorical. When there are several school types within one organization, the connections between the different types can also be designed in various ways (separate buildings, separate classrooms after the first year or heterogeneous classrooms, etcetera).

For higher school types (especially pre-university), parents often prefer a categorical school. Schools follow the preferences of parents by separating the higher school types from lower types. The free choice of school in secondary educational system with separate school types implies that groups of students are also separated, especially with regard to their social environment and its related ethnicities and cultures. In combination with the free choice of a school of a certain denomination, this causes many students to grow up

in social and cultural isolation. Citizenship education will then be strongly focused on the own group and will not teach making connections and handling diversity.

The government acknowledges this problem, but the policy of fusions of school types and denominations has no priority in present educational policy. Growing up in one's familiar environment seems to be more important than working on social cohesion and democratic relations through education. The government does require schools to organize activities where the various groups can meet. This causes enormous irritations in secondary schools with a student population with a less valued social and cultural capital. They claim that government policy first separates the students and next demands artificial meetings. From the perspective of a democratic citizenship education, further cooperation and integration of various school types and various denominations would be preferable.

Pedagogical discourse

The dominant pedagogical discourse in Dutch secondary education is a combination of child oriented, advancing autonomy, and an individualized form of equal opportunity thinking. These pedagogical accents are also promoted in academic disciplines. In pedagogy the center stage is taken by the individual and his development and well-being. In educational psychology it was until recently that autonomous learning was dominant. A more social oriented organization of learning processes hardly received attention. Sociology of education promotes individualization by a dominant focus on selection and equal opportunities and the complete disappearance of any attention for socialization and for the content of the curriculum.

Presently it seems that a rectification might be underway, certainly in those academic disciplines, possibly out of criticism on over-the-top individualization in Dutch society. The problem though lies as much at a more theoretical level, where the individual is disconnected from the social, where the person is not situated and society is not characterized by connections but by total of freely floating individuals.

The individual oriented pedagogical discourse does not succeed to make connections between the individual and the social. Attention for the social is demanded within the dominant approach of individualization. Therefore this attention for the social will remain limited to regulating the behaviors between individuals. From the perspective of democratic citizenship it would be desirable to regard the individual as being situated and connected. This means a central place for democracy as a concept of society, more learning in groups, and connecting persons and institutions, also outside one's own community.

Citizenship education at the school level

The developments as mentioned above at the system level, have a major influence in actual education. The possibilities for citizenship education can also be studied at the school level.

Ownership of citizenship education

Who owns the subject area of citizenship education in the schools? At the level of the teacher organizations, it is especially the teachers of the subject religion and world views who claim a big share. The more personal developing of identity is claimed by the students' mentors. At the level of the school, it seems to be a matter of personal preferences of teachers. The school management often selects one person who is given the responsibility for developing a vision and making an inventory, sometimes also for initiating new activities. It is desirable to give the responsibility for the subject area of citizenship education to a group of teachers, for instance social studies, world view and the mentors. That way, citizenship education will become a recognizable subject with coordinated activities at the school level.

The question remains whether separate classes for citizenship education would promote its development. For instance two classes of one hour weekly in each year. The title of the subject could be "personal and social education". This title does more justice to the deeper effects of citizenship education in developing identity and the broadening of citizenship from the political level to the social level of the Netherlands and abroad. Even then links could be established with other subjects and projects.

Position in the curriculum

At present, citizenship education lacks a clear position in the curriculum. Its position in relation to the traditional school subjects is therefore very weak, especially within the dominant educational ideology of the Global Free Market. Citizenship education is oriented towards knowledge, skills and attitudes. In educational subjects there is always the risk that assessment tends to stress only knowledge and skills, and usually the kind of knowledge that does not require much insight and the skills that are mainly instrumental. But citizenship education needs a strong attitude component: whether aimed at proper behavior, democratic stance or social action, it always concerns the will to give evidence of that behavior. This attitude though is not easily measured or assessed. It is important to recognize that assessing attitudes is difficult, while at the same time not to limit the pedagogical goals matters that are easily measured. Furthermore, schools ought to be

reluctant when assessing attitudes. A critical democratic view on citizenship stresses free speech, dialogue and inquiry. The law and the democratic state of course are the frames of reference here. But this does not mean that teachers shouldn't challenge their students to reflect on their attitudes and have a dialogue about them with others.

Pedagogic-didactical approach

Critical democratic citizenship education demands a dialogical, reflexive and socially embedded learning environment. In our studies, teachers often indicate that the large number of students and the filled schedules of students and teachers make it very difficult to coach dialogical and reflexive educational processes. And class teaching is still the norm in most schools, sometimes supplemented with individualized forms of teaching. More cooperative forms of learning are seldom seen and appear usually more often in cognitive areas rather than in educational processes. Controllability seems to be more important for teachers than pretty pedagogical goals (Veugelers, 2008). Real space and attention for dialogue, reflection, giving meaning, and identity development can only seldom be found in the classroom. The competences of the teachers in this area are of course important too, but the influence of the conditions for these learning processes seems greater than a possible lack of teacher competences.

In Dutch education, small groups are only found where there are big problems with learning and behavior, when there is dangerous machinery, or in the case of optional subjects with only a few students (often in the higher school types). Proper citizenship education demands halved classes or even better two teachers in a group. This increases the possibilities for dialogical and reflexive learning processes. Team teaching makes it possible to split the class and teachers together can cooperate and reflect on their pedagogic-didactical approaches.

Student participation and teachers' behavior by example

What do students feel about citizenship education? The results are very diverse (see e.g. Veugelers, 2008). Students think that it is the teacher's task to discipline the students (preferable of course the other students) and students like to further develop their autonomy through citizenship education. Social involvement and developing a critical democratic citizenship is overall less important to them, except in some special situations. In several studies we have found that students like to broaden their horizon and that they, even more than the teachers, want to discuss politics in the classroom. But our research had also shown that students have the opinion that teachers should not interfere too much with their identity development.

In their pedagogical relations, teachers must find a balance between on the one hand providing space and keeping their distance, and on the other hand supporting students in their identity development. When students experience dialogical and reflexive learning processes, intercultural contacts and democratic relations, that will hopefully contribute to developing a critical democratic citizenship.

Conclusion

In this article we have shown that Dutch educational policy pays attention to citizenship education, but that this attention is subordinated to preparing students for the “knowledge economy”. We have also shown that government is reluctant in specifying the content of citizenship education, because of denominational education and increased autonomy of the schools. Still, the Dutch government does have some general ideas about the content matter of citizenship education and tries to get a grip on its deployment in the schools through the school inspectorate.

Differences between schools and between school types greatly influence the possibilities for citizenship education. Students from different social, cultural and religious groups grow up in their own environments. The child oriented and individualizing pedagogical discourse does not stimulate a critical democratic citizenship either. The poor framing of citizenship education within a strongly structured educational system in turn does not strengthen the position of this content area in the school and in the curriculum. Students are required to actively participate in citizenship education, but real participation is hard to realize in strongly structured education.

The practice of citizenship education in the Netherlands shows more adaptive and individualizing tendencies than some politicians, but certainly many teachers, parents and students wish. A more critical democratic citizenship education requires education policy as cultural politics, a linking of schools and society, social oriented pedagogical thinking and especially more dialogical, reflexive and socially integrative educational practices.

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