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Toward inclusive citizenship: analysing morality within citizenship participation

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Abstract
The problem of attaining citizenship expansion has always been a question of how does one intervene in the political domain when one is not recognized as a political subject with a concomitant capacity for political participation. Historically, progress has been achieved by refiguring political agency as based on performance rather than entitlement. As such, many theorists concerned with attaining political citizenship for oppressed groups of people evoke protest and enactment as a means of citizenship expansion. While there is no doubt that such enactments and protests have been formative to highly developed civil rights, the ability to enact those rights can often be denied. In this paper, I argue that the current incongruence between civil rights and one's ability to politically participate occurs due to a twofold problem. Firstly, is a failure within citizenship theory to acknowledge that a specific morality, historically embedded in citizenship rhetoric, continues to perpetuate cultural concepts of what is “good” despite claimed moral neutrality. Secondly and consequentially, current citizenship rights, won through public protest, have not been initially granted due to public acceptance of resistant categories as often theorized. Rather the “act” of public protest demonstrates a protestor’s ability to enact those moral qualities such as autonomy and courage, which signify and validate “traditional” citizenship morality. The protestor is thereby morally recoded as displaying a capacity to be one of “us” despite their possessing an exclusionary category. Thus, the category of exclusion, be it woman, black, Aboriginal, gay, lesbian, ethnic or religious, becomes culturally tolerated as one aspect of an otherwise apparently “good” citizen. Examples drawn upon in this paper include discourses and events surrounding the Cronulla Riots, The Sydney Gay Mardi Gras, and feminist analysis of the continuing lack of full political participation for women.

Keywords
toward, morality, analysing, participation, citizenship, within, inclusive

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“A cold week away from civilization”

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