

Transforming Citizenship? : (Re) making sexualised borders of in/tolerance.

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### Abstract

Since the 1990s, which also saw the development of queer theory and politics, a form of sexual politics has emerged that has been highly influential in redefining the political goals and strategies associated with lesbian and gay activism. Rather than critiquing social institutions and practices that have historically excluded them, as did lesbian and gay movements in the 1960s and 70s, over the last two decades 'LGBT' politics has increasingly been about seeking inclusion into mainstream culture through demanding equal rights to citizenship. (It is recognised that there are specific issues for B and T; however the focus of this paper will be on LG.) To some extent one could see these contemporary movements as harking back to an earlier period. Normalising arguments were evident in the 1950s and 60s when, on the whole, activists adopted the political strategies of a minority group seeking tolerance from the heterosexual majority. More recent citizenship demands have, to a degree, been answered via a raft of recent legislation in the UK including the Adoption and Children Act 2002, Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, Gender Recognition Act 2004 and the Civil Partnership Act 2004, and by associated changes in policy making and practice that emphasize 'Equality and Diversity'. These developments have important implications for understandings of citizenship, democracy and sexuality and, as we argue, the changing nature

of sexualised forms of prejudice and intolerance. In considering these issues, this paper will also discuss how these changes are related to processes of privatization and individualization associated with neoliberalism. To illustrate the discussion the paper draws on findings from an ESRC funded study of sexualities equalities initiatives in the UK.

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