



**University  
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination  
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

**ANGELIQUE AHLSTROM**

BA (University of Victoria, 2015)

**“The Indeterminate Subject: Urban Citizenship and the Aporias of  
Sovereignty”**

Department of Political Science

August 28, 2017

9:00 A.M.

David Turpin Building

Room A357

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Warren Magnusson, Department of Political Science, University of Victoria (Co-Supervisor)

Dr. Simon Glezos, Department of Political Science, UVic (Co-Supervisor)

External Examiner:

Dr. Reuben Rose-Redwood, Department of Geography, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Prof. Mark Gillen, Faculty of Law, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the possibility of urban citizenship, focusing on the relation between the 'urban' and 'citizenship' as an expression of the problem of sovereignty. It highlights a key aspect that prevailing accounts fail to address, arguing that urban citizenship is characterized by twin logics of 'urbanization' and 'citizenship' that express conceptual binaries and transition narratives between nature/culture, rural/urban, space/time, and past/future from which there cannot be any fixed solution to the question of non-statist urban subjectivity. This is demonstrated in regenerations of the exclusionary inside/outside logic of sovereignty identified in theories of urban citizenship. Following Jacques Derrida in his concept of 'aporia', I undergo a close examination of these two processes, arguing that their conditions of possibility contain the impossibility of their unification and necessarily invoke sovereign politics for securing their distinctions, while simultaneously rendering them inherently unstable. An analysis of the aporetic logic of sovereignty underlying two terms reveals that, rather than seeking closure to the question of urban citizenship, engaging with the aporia can open up political possibilities and challenges for future theoretical and empirical work for politics.