Immigration raises a number of important moral issues regarding access to the rights and privileges of citizenship. At present, immigrants to most Western democracies do not enjoy the same rights as citizens, and must satisfy a range of conditions before achieving citizenship. Ruth Rubio-Marín argues that this approach is unjust and undemocratic, and that more inclusive policies are required. In particular, she argues that liberal norms of justice and democracy require that there should be a time threshold after which immigrants (legal and illegal) should either be granted the full rights of citizenship, or be awarded nationality automatically, without any conditions or tests. The author contrasts her position with the constitutional practice of two countries with rich immigration traditions: Germany and the United States. She concludes that judicial interpretations of both constitutions have recognized the claim for inclusion of resident aliens, but have also limited that claim.

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Immigration as a Democratic Challenge

Citizenship and Inclusion in Germany and the United States

Ruth Rubio-Marín
To my mother, Joana Marin
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