
In this book, Joseph Carens brings together his longstanding work on integration and border control practices into a very comprehensive debate on the ethics of immigration policies.

The raison d'être of the first part of the book is that the legitimacy of a liberal democratic state in regulating its borders vindicates no absolute moral permissibility for every single immigration and integration policy. Thus, Carens starts his 'political theory from ground up' (p. 9) on the policies as such by assessing the social, economic and political rights assigned to different migrant statuses, such as children of immigrants, permanent residents, guest workers, irregular migrants and their children, from an ethical perspective.

Carens successfully infers the limits of the different inclusion and exclusion practices, both by grounding them on democratic ideals and principles, and by appealing to the conventional morality that birthright citizenship is based on, namely, that it is protecting the interests of the individual shaped by the scope of her community, identity and prospects. Democracy as a guiding framework in all of these empirically well-established debates is therefore centred around the idea of social membership based on 'residence over time' (p. 160) from which different levels of interests and claims are assessed in relation to the length of residence.

In the last two chapters Carens questions the very assumption that the state has a discretionary right over its border control, and he delineates the limits of exclusion in first admission policies. For Carens, none of the communitarian claims justifies the stance against open borders, including the claims to sovereignty, security and the prioritisation of communal bonds. Although his idea of social membership does not contribute to this debate, it is not incompatible with it.

The book in general, and particularly in the first part, is designed as an inquiry into the moral permissibility of different inclusion and exclusion practices such as naturalisation and the conferment of socio-economic rights, and therefore is not a deeply philosophical work. To some extent the book is a critical depiction of conventional immigration practices rather than self-reliantly contemplative. Although there is a pro-inclusion stance in each of the cases studied, it stays within the framework of pro-exclusion arguments and does not seem to leave adequate space for contemporary moral cosmopolitan debates on immigration, especially in the Part I. Regardless, this book offers a very well-written and insightful introduction for scholars of migration in general, not simply for ethicists.

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