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Citizenship: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Concept

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Abstract

In this book Andreas Fahrmeir provides a much-needed historical perspective on contemporary debates about immigration and the nature of citizenship. By tracing the origins of citizenship in four Western countries (Britain, France, Germany, and the United States) from c.1700 to the present, he convincingly demonstrates the contingency and changeability of the

concept.

The emergence of these modern nation-states brought a deceptively simple opposition of “citizen” versus “alien,” in contrast to the complex relationships between individuals and communities in ancien régime societies, Fahrmeir argues. He charts the demise of traditional ways of distinguishing insiders from outsiders; discusses the relation of political participation, economic privileges, and social rights to legal citizenship; and considers whether state citizenship remains a relevant concept in the circumstances of today.

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