

Gender, Migration Policy and the Open Borders Debate

Erica Nieblas

PhD Candidate

University of Colorado, Boulder

erica.nieblas@colorado.edu

Abstract: The UN's adoption of the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants presents an opportunity for philosophers interested in issues of global justice and the ethics of migration to work towards assessing the practical reach of their moral theories. A key feature of the declaration is a commitment to work out among the 192 signatories (all but one UN member states) a Global Compact that aims to ensure that international migration is "safe, orderly and regular." The signatories agree that the targets in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should guide this compact, and thereby recognize a link between migration regulation and issues of global development. These changes in international policy commitments, including a commitment to "strengthen the global governance of migration," signify a move from a focus on state-centered policy evaluations to a global perspective that can place constraints on national immigration policies. From this global perspective, whether nations ought to implement border controls, whether they are morally prohibited from doing so, and which specific immigration policies might be permissible may depend on broader background structural and institutional features and arrangements than are commonly assumed in debates about the moral status of immigration. Now, with the prospect of international cooperation on the table, it is timely to explore what principles ought to serve as moral guidelines for a proposed global compact. I will consider one important aspect of globalization, namely the gendered character of migration, to determine the extent to which considerations of gender justice in today's global context affect the moral legitimacy of border restrictions. With this focus, I hope to motivate the development of a *gender-responsive* framework that can guide nations in making ethical admissions policies.

Bio: Erica Nieblas is a PhD candidate at the University of Colorado at Boulder. She is interested in social and political philosophy, applied ethics, and feminist philosophy. Her current research is on immigration and global justice. In particular she is working on how current methods and theories in global *gender* justice can be applied to philosophical debates around the moral legitimacy of border restrictions. In addition, she is researching how feminist philosophy can help provide recommendations for international policy on migration, which takes seriously a commitment to gender justice.