A Feminist Approach to Immigrant Admissions

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Answers to the question of immigrant admissions (what policies governing the admission and exclusion of nonrefugee foreigners may states justly adopt?) have been debated extensively by political philosophers since the 1980s. A wide variety of normative approaches to the question have been taken, but very nearly zero have been expressly feminist. Generalizing from Alison Jaggar's articulation of a feminist methodological approach to the political morality of abortion, this article proposes a feminist methodological approach to immigrant admissions. This article does not defend a substantive view on what policies states ought to adopt, but it does describe several features of our social world that are salient for a feminist methodological approach to the assessment of the justice of states' immigrant admissions policies.

Political philosophers have approached the topic of immigrant admissions from a variety of theoretical perspectives.[1] Some argue that states ought to be regarded as unconstrained by principles of justice in their selection of policies for admitting foreigners as immigrants.[2] Others argue that states are bound by nationalist principles of justice to adopt certain types of immigrant admissions policies, namely, those that promote the national interest (however that is conceived by the particular theorist).[3] Yet others maintain that although principles of justice constrain what immigrant admissions policies states may adopt, the content of these principles is cosmopolitan rather than nationalist; on these views, the interests of the receiving state and its citizens have no special weight. Among defenders of this third view, some maintain that certain types of restrictions on immigration are justified (impartially),[4] whereas others say that the relevant principles of justice entail a duty of (liberal) states to eliminate formal barriers to immigration (that is, to adopt a policy of open borders).[5]

Almost entirely absent from philosophical debates about immigrant admissions is a feminist perspective.[6] Philosophers who are feminists have certainly written on immigrant admissions (see O'Neill 1992; Tamir 1993; Benhabib 2004; Wilcox 2007; Brock 2009; and Fine 2010). It is probably true, as well, that some of the particular

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positions defended on the topic could be justified in terms of feminist principles. Moreover, feminist philosophers have written (from a feminist perspective) on the phenomenon of global migration in relation to other philosophical questions it raises (such as, for example, the status of women immigrants in receiving states) (for example, Narayan 1995; Jaggar 2002; Wilcox 2005; Jaggar 2009b; Kittay 2009; and Reed-Sandoval 2015). These facts make it both less and more curious that a feminist approach to immigrant admissions has rarely been explicitly articulated: less curious because they show that feminist philosophers have been engaged with normative questions about immigration generally, and sometimes *as* feminists; more curious because the question "When may states justly restrict immigration, if at all?" has been the marquee question of political philosophy on immigration since the 1980s. It is true (in all areas of philosophy) that feminist philosophers are not always as riveted by the questions that are treated as most important in the philosophical mainstream; feminist philosophers often regard these questions as the wrong ones to ask.

But it is hard to see why this would be the case for immigrant admissions. Global migration is a gendered phenomenon. In some categories of immigration, women are the majority (Castles, de Haas, and Miller 2014, 16). In the categories of immigration for which men are the majority, the phenomenon is still gendered (and the question "Why aren't women migrating for this reason?" is raised). Even in categories of immigration for which there is no significant gender discrepancy, the conditions and consequences of migration are likely to be different for women and for men, given the ways the social institutions of gender pervasively affect individuals' life circumstances. For example, college-educated women emigrate from countries of the global South in numbers equal to but at rates higher than those for college-educated men, suggesting that both "push" and "pull" factors are gendered (Gibson and McKenzie 2011, 117; Docquier and Rapoport 2012, 688–89).

My goal in this article is not to explain the (near) absence of an explicitly feminist philosophical position on immigrant admissions. I won't even try to offer one, since the task would far exceed what could be accomplished in a single article.[7] In this article, I seek to outline what a feminist approach to immigrant admissions might look like and say what I think is salient from a feminist perspective on the topic. This article does not defend a substantive view on what specific policies for admitting or excluding foreigners states ought to adopt, though the considerations that I argue are relevant from a feminist perspective may suggest certain substantive views. Insofar as this article has a thesis (in the sense of a proposition for whose truth I will argue) it is that there can and ought to be explicitly feminist positions on the justice of states' immigrant admissions policies.

In this article, I take the feminist approach to the political morality of abortion defended by Alison Jaggar in "Abortion Rights and Gender Justice Worldwide: An Essay in Political Philosophy" (Jaggar 2009a) as a model for articulating a feminist approach to assessing the justice of states' immigrant admissions policies. I describe Jaggar's view on what makes an approach to the political morality of abortion feminist in the next section of this article (section I). Generalizing from the approach to abortion Jaggar defends, I present (in section II) some of what I take to be salient

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from a feminist perspective for assessments of the justice of states' immigrant admissions policies, focusing on features of the social world relevant to policies that make a person's economic status a significant determinant of the likelihood of their admission. In section III, I conclude by indicating some substantive implications of a feminist approach to immigrant admissions. Specifically, I argue that a feminist approach uniquely illuminates, first, that which immigration policies are just may vary considerably from one country to the next as a result of morally salient empirical differences between national social contexts, and second, that determining which immigration policies are just for each country is probably an interdisciplinary project in which philosophers play but one necessary role.

I. Reasoning from a Feminist Perspective

In defense of a position on the political morality of laws and public policies that limit or facilitate abortion, Jaggar argues that, "Because unwanted pregnancy confronts women and men in ways that are systematically different, the social concerns it raises, including the possibility of abortion, cannot be considered adequately without taking into account questions of sex and gender" (Jaggar 2009a, 121). Similarly, I wish to argue that factors that gives rise to patterns of global migration, which receiving states' immigrant admissions policies not only respond to but are also part of the cause of, systematically affect people in ways that vary according to the categories of social identity they occupy (very centrally including their gender, among other equally relevant categories); for this reason, the justice of states' immigrant admissions policies cannot be adequately discerned in approaches that are insensitive to categories of social differentiation, such as gender.

This standard (the requirement of "taking into account questions of sex and gender") begins to approximate what it means to take a feminist approach to some issue for Jaggar. More precisely, Jaggar posits that "In political philosophy, feminism is defined by its commitment to gender justice" (Jaggar 2009a, 127), where gender refers to "a complex set of social institutions, both formal and informal, that organize most aspects of most peoples' lives … according to their socially assigned sex" (127). Noting that social institutions tend, by their nature, systematically to advantage or disadvantage members of social groups implicated in them, Jaggar argues that "a commitment to gender justice requires designing social institutions that do not allocate unfair or disproportionate social benefits and burdens on the basis of gender assignments" (127). One might say on the basis of this, then, that the essential component of a feminist approach to a question of political morality is that it examines relevant social institutions (as they are, or as they are proposed to be) according to whether they allocate unfair or disproportionate social benefits and burdens on the basis of gender assignments.

Jaggar argues that much philosophy on the ethics and political morality of abortion is not feminist in this sense, to its detriment.

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> Philosophers who discuss abortion frequently use an idealized approach, though often they do not acknowledge that they do so. For instance, some disregard the fact that no woman gets pregnant without active male participation; others talk about the obligations of "parents" to children, disregarding the very disparate social as well as biological roles of men and women in procreation. Some focus entirely on the physical facts of pregnancy, ignoring its social meanings . . . . some even condemn the "serious immorality" of abortion without mentioning women at all. (Jaggar 2009a, 129)

The general problem Jaggar is intimating here is that real-world gender and sex differences, gender inequalities, and failures of gender justice are (despite what is implied by their frequent omission from philosophical discussions) centrally relevant to normative analyses regarding abortion. In the context of philosophical questions about abortion, this means, Jaggar argues, that adequate analyses will consider the real-world circumstances of gender justice, such as: that "most people are assigned a masculine or feminine gender identity on the basis of their sex categorization" (130); that "institutions of gender regulate most aspects of most people's lives" (130), including what labor they perform and what value it is accorded; that "masculinity is attributed to things perceived as dominant or more admirable and femininity is attributed to whatever is perceived as inferior or subordinate" (131); that women rather than men bear children, and that childbirth, which follows a roughly nine-month period of gestation, is usually very painful; and that in most societies, a disproportionately large share of the labor involved in caring for children is assigned to women (132).

What Jaggar's list indicates more generally is that a feminist approach to questions of political morality by its nature treats as relevant empirical facts about our social world as it is, however contingent. The importance of reasoning from the empirical realities of our social world to a feminist analysis of questions of political morality is underscored by the familiar fact that formally gender-neutral policies and institutions frequently affect people in ways that vary according to their gender, as Jaggar observes: "because individuals assigned to each sex occupy systematically different positions, even institutions that appear to be gender-neutral often have systematically disparate consequences for men and women respectively" (Jaggar 2009a, 127). This means, further, that approaches that seek to justify positions on immigrant admissions (or access to abortion) merely by deducing the logical implications of abstract principles of liberalism,[8] for example, or by applying intuitions generated in thought experiments set in far-removed possible worlds[9] are not only not feminist, but also limited in their potential for success (at least insofar as the people whose lives are implicated in the issue in question are subject to the social institutions of gender).

A feminist approach to questions of political morality examines social institutions according to whether they allocate unfair or disproportionate social benefits and burdens on the basis of gender assignments, and such investigations require careful attention to the contingent empirical features of our social world that are shaped by

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gender. However, a feminist approach to questions of political morality does not by itself entail any particular substantive conclusions. Jaggar argues, for example, that "Feminist thinking on abortion is not distinguished by commitment to any particular substantive position but rather by its insistence that reasoning about the issue should give due weight to considerations of gender justice" (128). In particular, Jaggar clarifies that "feminism cannot be equated with the package of views on abortion often characterized as 'liberal'" (127). Similarly, I would not argue that a feminist approach to immigrant admissions is defined by support for certain policies and opposition to others, or that a feminist approach itself guarantees a certain view on the justice of different policies states might adopt to regulate immigrant admissions.

One could say more, to be sure, to add complexity and nuance to an account of what constitutes a feminist approach to questions of political morality. Jaggar's purpose in describing a feminist approach is to articulate a too frequently marginalized perspective in philosophical debates about the political morality of abortion (rather than to stoke controversy among feminists). My purpose parallels Jaggar's. Building greater complexity into the account of what constitutes a feminist approach to reasoning about questions of political morality is certainly possible and would be justified in a different sort of project, but would pose three disadvantages here. First, further complexity would unnecessarily invite objections. Inviting such objections is unnecessary because, second, the purpose of this article is not to defend novel insights about what it means to do political philosophy from a feminist perspective. Instead, it is to articulate a largely overlooked approach to reasoning about immigration justice (namely, a feminist approach). Finally, the complexity of a more complex account would likely render the resulting conception of what counts as a feminist approach more narrow, and thus, exclusive. Although it is necessary that boundaries be placed on what can correctly be called a feminist approach, an account that demanded more than a commitment to gender justice (as Jaggar conceives it) could very well be perniciously exclusionary.

II. Real-World Circumstances of Immigration Justice

A feminist approach to immigrant admissions examines relevant social institutions (for example, actual or proposed immigration policies) according to whether they allocate (expressly or indirectly) unfair or disproportionate social benefits and burdens on the basis of gender assignments.[10] This entails a requirement of careful attention to the contingent empirical features of global migration and related phenomena that are shaped by the social institutions of gender. I do not think, however, that a feminist approach to the justice of states' immigrant admissions policies should or even can attend solely to gender, among categories of social identity, for at least two reasons.

First, once the relevance of considerations of gender to immigrant admissions is acknowledged, it becomes arbitrary to say that other categories of social identity are not relevant. Among categories of social identity, race and economic class are surely

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as relevant as gender to immigrant admissions in most societies (even if the particular classifications within each category and their contents vary). Other categories of social identity, such as sexuality, religion, age, nationality, and (dis)ability, will often be very or equally significant as well, as social demarcations in consequence of which immigration policies affect individuals.

Second, it is often not true that a state's immigrant admissions policies will affect people simply *as* women (or *as* men). The intersectional nature of oppression and privilege might often make it the case that a policy affects white women in a way that differs from the way it affects women of color, but not simply because women of color are persons of color and white women are not; the same policy might affect men of color and women of color differently (see, for example, Spelman 1988; Crenshaw 1989; and Crenshaw 1991). For this reason, it may often be meaningless to speak of the way immigrant admissions policies affect women as such. Worse, it may be falsely universalizing and perniciously exclusionary, since the tendency the talk about the circumstances of women *simpliciter* quite often implicitly positions as paradigmatic the circumstances of white (class-privileged, heterosexual, able-bodied) women.

In what follows, I list some features of our social world that I take to be salient for a feminist approach to the assessment of the justice of states' immigrant admissions policies. This list is very, very far from exhaustive (of course). In particular, I focus here on features of the social world that are especially relevant for feminist assessments of policies that make foreigners' economic status or potential a significant determinant of the likelihood that they will be able to immigrate legally, whether overtly (by according preference in admission to foreigners judged by the receiving state as having sufficiently high economic status or potential) or indirectly (by eliminating formal barriers to immigration for all). Policies governing the movement and status of refugees also seem apt for feminist examination, even more so in light of the Syrian civil war, as do immigration policies that treat family relationships or cultural affinity as especially weighty for admission, but I do not attempt these tasks here.

(i) More than 2.2 billion people are either near or living in absolute poverty, measured multidimensionally to include deprivations in health, education, and living standards (UNDP 2014, 41). Seventy percent of the world's poor, who live "without freedom of action and choice that the better-off take for granted" (World Bank 2001, 1), are women (Jaggar 2002, 124). Conditions of absolute poverty, such as malnutrition, susceptibility to easily preventable diseases, and lack of access to safe drinking water, foreclose the possibility of immigration to wealthy liberal states in North America and Europe for the majority of the global poor. Even the elimination of formal barriers to their immigration would do little to make the global poor more free to move about internationally because their exclusion from wealthy, liberal countries of the global North is, in almost all cases, overdetermined. The ability to migrate transnationally demands material means that, for the most part, only those who are relatively privileged, economically and educationally, possess (Castles, de Haas, and Miller 2014, 78). That this is the case is corroborated by the facts that most migrants to North America and Europe are middle-class in their country of origin, and that

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the majority of immigrants in North American and European countries have originated in countries that, by UNDP standards, are high- and middle-development (Pogge 1997, 14; Brock 2009, 193; Shachar 2009, 84; Castles, de Haas, and Miller 2014, 6). These considerations suggest that one ought to be wary of philosophical proposals for immigrant admissions policies whose justification depends on misleadingly idealized conceptions of the (international) mobility of the global poor.[11]

(ii) There is a second way in which philosophical proposals for immigrant admissions policies may rely for their justification on misleadingly idealized conceptions of the capacities of the globally disadvantaged.[12] The potential for freedom of international movement (in the sense of an absence of formal state barriers) to benefit a person depends on the extent to which she is privileged or disadvantaged by social structures related to gender, race, and class (among other things). Ayelet Shachar comments that the redistributive potential of freedom of international movement requires, on the part of migrants,

> sufficient knowledge of where to move in order to improve one's economic prospects and to gain greater political freedom, in addition to basic linguistic and occupational skills, the willingness and ability to leave family members and a familiar cultural context behind, and related factors that deeply, and often unequally, shape the potential mobility of men and women in international patterns of migration. That is, there is a problem of gender, resource, and information asymmetries, which could potentially create a bias against those who may be most in need of the redistributive (and arguably also the liberating) dimension of global migration. (Shachar 2009, 76–77)

Shachar's point underscores the need to attend to socially created inequalities in the construction and evaluation of immigrant admissions policies, in the absence of which the justification of immigrant admissions policies is likely to depend on a misleadingly idealized conception of the social wherewithal of most potential migrants. It also shows that the structural causes of social disadvantage in virtue of which persons are vulnerable to severe poverty and oppression are not themselves addressed by changing potential migrants' locations of residence. This means that, even if affluent countries of the global North, in addition to eliminating formal barriers to migration, subsidized the cost of migration for the poor, it is unlikely that this would alter in significant respects their material circumstances—an idea that seems plausible only if one neglects the structural causes of global poverty and oppression and assumes instead that they result primarily and fundamentally from factors internal to certain societies.[13]

The argument I am making here parallels Jaggar's critique of what she calls the "Injustice by Culture" thesis, the idea that women in poor, nonliberal societies are oppressed primarily in virtue of local cultural traditions (Jaggar 2005, 59–65). Many philosophical proponents of reducing liberal states' formal barriers to immigration appear to assume that severe poverty and oppression in the global South can be diminished in their extent if people leave the places where they are suffering and move to liberal societies; this implies the view that severe poverty and oppression in

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the global South are fundamentally locally caused. However, as Jaggar argues, (gendered) poverty and oppression in the global South have structural causes based in "Western-imposed principles and policies of neoliberalism" (62). Jaggar's purpose in calling attention to this is to show that Western feminist criticism of illiberal cultural traditions is often misdirected and that, therefore, changing cultural traditions in accordance with this criticism would be insufficient for eliminating (gendered) poverty and oppression in the global South. My purpose is to expose the dubious nature of the thought that changing people's locations of residence will substantially alter their positions in relation to the global social and economic structures that cause their disadvantage.[14]

(iii) In some cases, international migration might not merely fail to benefit, but may also be harmful for migrants, especially migrants who would occupy oppressed categories of social identity in the receiving society. Many migrants to wealthy liberal states, most of whom are women and/or members of racialized groups that are disadvantaged in the receiving country, experience new forms of oppression in the receiving country as a consequence of their migration. Geraldine Pratt and Brenda Yeoh argue that the kind of transnational mobility that would be fostered by porous national boundaries in liberal states does not necessarily help the global poor. Since other structures of inequality, such as gender, are left intact, transnational mobility merely tends to change the ways in which the global poor are harmed. Pratt and Yeoh explain:

> Women transmigrants, during the sojourn as labour migrants, often find themselves accorded few citizen's and civil rights in destination countries and trapped within patriarchal notions of "women's work" and "women's place." The rules of marginality and "otherness" which operate to keep transmigrant contract workers in their place are often refracted through the gendered lenses of the host nation; as a result, women transmigrants, when put into a comparative frame with their male counterparts, find their bodies subject to a more oppressive disciplinary framework, their skills further devalorised, and their spaces even more circumscribed. (Pratt and Yeoh 2003, 162)

Women constitute nearly half of the world's 213 million documented migrant workers (UN Women 2013, 183); thus, it would be an error to think that what Pratt and Yeoh describe merely represents the experience of the most disadvantaged, whose circumstances do not obtain for the typical (documented) migrant.

This is in part because the plurality of female migrant workers work in areas that usually do not fall under national labor laws and are therefore unregulated, such as domestic work and sex work. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports that

> During every stage of their migratory experience, women migrant workers may be more exposed to human rights violations compared to their male counterparts. They frequently have to deal with difficult living and working conditions, increased health risks, a lack of access to social services

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> and various forms of abuse such as the confiscation of passports by their employers. Women migrant workers usually enter gender-segregated sectors that are largely informal and unregulated and therefore offer them little or no protection. These women often have limited or no bargaining power and few or no opportunities for establishing networks to receive information and social support . . . . Often times, they face incarceration and/or deportation if they attempt to leave their employer. (IOM 2009, 9)

More generally, "migration may also reinforce gender stereotypes that limit women's autonomy, as well as their lack of power in decision-making processes, and their vulnerability to the systematic violation of their human rights" (UN Women 2016, 2). A feminist approach to the normative assessment of states' immigrant admissions policies uniquely recognizes these gendered aspects of the conditions and consequences of global migration as salient, and is therefore necessary "to avoid male migrants' experiences being taken as the norm when designing policies" (UN Women 2013, 7).

Many women migrants work in the homes of their employers performing domestic service. Even among documented migrants, Jaggar argues, "employers often take advantage of their vulnerability to force them to work long hours, to withhold pay, to subject them to violence and sexual abuse, and sometimes to hold them in conditions close to slavery" (Jaggar 2009b, 42). International migration plays a role in creating and maintaining, Jaggar contends, a cycle of gendered vulnerability that is transnational in scope, as "performing this labor also often increases the domestic burdens of migrant women's female family members who must take on the work of caring for the children that migrants have left behind, so reinforcing the gendered vulnerability of migrant women's mothers, sisters, and daughters" (42). Global migration, as this discussion reveals, affects women (usually of color, relative to the receiving society's racial classification scheme) disproportionately negatively, in ways that are not apparent in a so-called gender-neutral analysis of its consequences.

(iv) Philosophical debates about immigrant admissions often assume that there are two parties whose interests and rights may be considered: the receiving state (including its citizens) and potential migrants. This assumption is untenable, however, since many foreigners are not potential migrants in a meaningful sense; barriers related to class, race, and gender restrict freedom of international movement even when formal state barriers are lowered. Only once this is acknowledged is it possible to notice that not all foreigners are affected in the same way by the same immigration policy.

The emigration of skilled,[15] college-educated, middle-class professionals in large numbers from the poorest countries can harm those who remain in several ways, but, in the most general sense, it does so by undermining prospects for human development. Large-scale emigration may, in fact, initiate a self-perpetuating cycle of underdevelopment in already poor countries, since lost human development prospects both discourage emigrants from returning and encourage more residents to leave. In this way, it threatens both to intensify and to increase the incidence of extreme poverty. The evidence that the immigration policies of wealthy countries may have this consequence, sometimes called "brain drain," is not speculative. It is already the case

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that the world's wealthiest countries give preference in admission to, and sometimes recruit college-educated professionals from poor countries in order to enhance their own global economic competitiveness. Such policies can produce a variety of morally serious harms (which may very well be magnified in the absence of restrictions on immigration), the impact of which increases as the country's population size and human development decreases (that is, the smaller or poorer the country, the more harmful brain drain is likely to be) (Gibson and McKenzie 2011, 117; Docquier and Rapoport 2012, 684, 702, 725).

The emigration of health professionals from poor countries is among the gravest harms caused by wealthy countries' admissions policies (Brock 2009, 198–200). Since 2000, there has been an 80% increase in the migration of doctors and nurses from countries with severe shortages in health workers, as defined by the World Health Organization, to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development OECD countries (OECD 2015, 13). By 2011, the doctors and nurses emigrating from countries with severe shortages of health workers to OECD countries constituted 20% of the healthcare workforce needs in their countries of origin—up from 9% in 2000 (OECD 2015, 12). In Africa, the countries with the greatest prevalence of HIV have the highest rates of medical brain drain, which is shown to increase adult deaths from AIDS and to bring about significant deterioration of child health indicators (Docquier and Rapoport 2012, 713–14).

The loss of professionals in other fields is significant as well. The proportion of college graduates who immigrate to OECD countries exceeds 80% in Guyana, Haiti, and Jamaica, and is over half in many sub-Saharan African countries (Docquier and Rapoport 2012, 686). In addition to bringing about the loss of vital services, the emigration of educated professionals generally may be among the causes of political instability in some poor countries, as it deprives countries of residents best positioned and able to challenge government corruption and democratically illegitimate military rule (Tanner 2005, 4; Castles, de Haas, and Miller 2014, 78; Brock and Blake 2015, 39–40). Finally, immigration polices of wealthy countries that favor college-educated professionals substantially diminish tax revenues for poor sending countries (Desai, Kapur, and McHale 2004, 675–76; Brock and Blake 2015, 38).

In contrast to the foregoing three sets of considerations, the human development costs of large-scale emigration from the global South to the global North are already acknowledged in much of the philosophical literature on immigrant admissions. A feminist approach is, thus, not required for the moral significance of this aspect of global migration to be recognized. Nevertheless, a feminist approach—which requires attending to the contingent empirical features of global migration and related phenomena that are shaped by the social institutions of gender—will accord high salience to the human development costs of wealthy countries' immigration policies for countries of the global South, particularly when those costs are likely to be borne disproportionately by women. Since "push" and "pull" factors for college-educated migrants appear to be gendered, resulting in higher rates of migration for college-educated women than men in the global South (see above), a feminist approach is, moreover, likely to make distinctive assessments of the justice of various immigration

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policy options. For many extant philosophical approaches to immigrant admissions, the distribution of social benefits and burdens engendered by an immigration policy is not centrally relevant to its justice (see Higgins 2013, chapter 5 especially).

(v) Many migrants send remittances to family members in poorer parts of the world. The World Bank estimates that migrant remittances to lower- and middle-income countries totaled $321 billion in 2010, a figure that significantly exceeds official development assistance (Castles, de Haas, and Miller 2014, 73). However, there are reasons to be skeptical that remittances reduce global poverty or counteract the harmful effects of brain drain, especially once (as a feminist approach highlights the need for) their effects are disaggregated along the lines of categories of social identity. Economic status is particularly relevant, but so are race and gender (since economic status is strongly correlated with race and gender).

First, the primary beneficiaries of remittances are migrants' family members, who tend to be socially situated in most ways very similarly to one another. Since most migrants are not poor in an absolute sense, the recipients of remittances generally are not either; most remittance households are middle-class by global standards (Desai, Kapur, and McHale 2004, 676; Tanner 2005, 9; Brock 2009, 205; UN Women 2013, 88; Castles, de Haas, and Miller 2014, 75). Since women and girls usually have less command over household income than do men and boys, it is not surprising that (although female migrants remit a higher share of their earnings than do male migrants) recipients are more likely to decide how remittances are to be used when the recipient is male, whereas remitters are more like to decide how remittances will be used when the remitter is male (UN Women 2013, 80–81).

Further, remittances often do not simply fail to benefit the poorest and the most disadvantaged; they may also make those living in absolute poverty, who are disproportionately women and girls, worse off. In recipient communities, remittances cause price inflation for scarce resources, including housing, agricultural land, and building materials; thus, for many families whose poverty prevents them from sending a relative abroad to work and send money home, affording basic necessities has become increasingly difficult (UN Women 2013, 88; Castles, de Haas, and Miller 2014, 13). This and the previous point explain why Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas, and Mark Miller maintain that "discourses celebrating migration, remittances, and transnational engagement as self-help development 'from below' are partly driven by neoliberal agendas and shift attention away from structural constraints and the limited ability of individual migrants to overcome these" (Castles, de Haas, and Miller 2014, 80).

III. Some Implications of a Feminist Approach to Immigrant Admissions

These five sets of empirical considerations cast doubt on the justice of immigrant admissions policies that make foreigners' economic status or potential a significant determinant of the likelihood that they will be able to immigrate legally, whether overtly (through economic criteria of admission) or indirectly (by eliminating formal barriers to immigration for all). I do not claim to have demonstrated that such immigration

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policies are unjust; it is plausible that there are other factors that bear on their moral evaluation. I argue that these five sets of considerations are relevant in an important way to the moral evaluation of states' immigrant admissions policies, and that their relevance is illuminated especially well if not uniquely by a feminist approach to the political morality of immigrant admissions. A feminist approach to questions of political morality examines social institutions according to whether they allocate unfair or disproportionate social benefits and burdens on the basis of gender, and this entails a requirement of careful attention to the contingent empirical features of our social world that are shaped by the social institutions of gender. In the context of immigrant admissions, the absence of a feminist perspective facilitates falsely gender-, race-, and class-neutral analyses that both (1) tacitly assume a misleadingly idealized conception of the (international) mobility and social wherewithal of those who could, but often only in principle, migrate to liberal societies of the global North, and (2) fail to disaggregate the effects of immigrant admissions policies on differently situated social groups.

My defense of the possibility and importance of a feminist approach to the political morality of immigrant admissions is motivated by the thought that immigration policies affect people not simply as individuals *per se*, but as members of social groups that are brought into existence by the ways formal rules, informal norms, and stable practices (that is, social institutions) unequally distribute opportunities among those implicated in them. That is to say, the way an immigration policy affects a person is rarely idiosyncratic, but rather is a function of that person's gender, race, economic class, sexuality, (dis)ability, age, religion, and nationality. For this reason, one cannot wholly determine whether an immigration policy is just in our social world, given its present nature, unless one's principles for making such assessments treat gender, race, economic class, and so on as salient categories of analysis.

The institutions that characterize our social world vary to a considerable extent from one society to the next, both in terms of the social groups they create and the way they distribute opportunities among groups. This observation suggests two substantive implications of a feminist approach to immigrant admissions that I wish to briefly indicate by way of concluding. The first is that (regardless of which substantive principle of political morality one favors for assessing the justice of immigration policies), it is likely that a different set of immigration policies will be just for each country, owing to salient empirical differences between states that bear on the moral evaluation of immigration policies in each national social context. (For example, the elimination of formal barriers to migration, that is, open borders, between two countries may be justified in some cases but not in others.) The most important of these differences is what social groups are most likely to be affected (and how) by a state's immigration policies. But this factor is influenced by a number of others, including: the overall level and kinds of economic development in each state; what social groups exist in each state, and how they are affected by different quantities and kinds of immigration; and the patterns of migration into and out of each state (and, particularly, how this affects social groups in other societies). The latter is itself determined by factors that vary significantly from state to state, including: historical patterns of immigration and emigration; historical relations between a state and other states;

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contemporary trade relations and agreements between states; the state's geographical location relative to other states; and how a state is positioned relative to others, economically, in the region. The factors in this list are especially (and perhaps, with respect to some, uniquely) recognizable as salient in the assessment of the justice of a state's immigration policies under a feminist approach.

What this long and probably incomplete list indicates, second, is that one cannot determine what immigration policies are just for any given state prior to thoroughgoing empirical investigation of the national social context (again, regardless of which substantive principle of political morality one favors for assessing the justice of immigration policies). Philosophers are usually not trained to undertake the sort of empirical research I have suggested is necessary on a feminist approach to immigrant admissions to determine how any particular principle of political morality for assessing the justice of immigration policies applies. It seems likely that a coordinated and cooperative effort involving both philosophers and social scientists in a variety of specific disciplines will be necessary to reach substantive conclusions on the justice of immigrant admissions policies about which we can have rational confidence.

Notes

1. By "immigrant admissions," I mean policies by which states admit nonrefugee foreigners for permanent residence.

2. There are several variations on this view, all of which qualify their claim about states' moral discretion in some way. See Walzer 1983; Scanlan and Kent 1988; Wellman 2008; and Pevnick 2011.

3. Nationalist approaches to the political morality of immigrant admissions tend to conceive of immigration as (at least potentially) harmful to the receiving society, but not all do. Therefore, they vary in terms of the permissiveness of the policies they advocate. See Walzer 1983; Miller 1995; and Macedo 2007.

4. These views are quite varied in terms of the reasons they argue that immigration restrictions can be impartially justified. See Chapman 2000; Dummett 2001; Wilcox 2007; Ypi 2008; Blake and Risse 2009; Brock 2009; and Higgins 2013.

5. Most of these views argue for open borders on facially nonconsequentialist grounds by appeal to the implications of fundamental principles of liberalism. Others are straightforwardly consequentialist. See Carens 1987; Dummett 1992; Cole 2000; Kukathas 2005; Exdell 2009; Huemer 2010; Wellman and Cole 2011; Carens 2013; and Mendoza 2015.

6. My own previous work has approached the topic of immigrant admissions from a feminist perspective (see Higgins 2013). To my knowledge, the only other attempt to articulate the implications of an explicitly feminist approach to the political morality of immigrant admissions is a short piece (three pages in length) in *Hypatia* by Annette Baier applying the ethics of care to immigrant admissions policies (see Baier 1995).

7. I have approached this task in Higgins 2013.

8. This is a common approach in the philosophical literature on immigrant admissions. For prominent examples, see Carens 1987; Dummett 1992; Steiner 1992; Cole 2000; Wellman 2008; Blake and Risse 2009; and Carens 2013.

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9. This sort of approach, along with the methodologically similar strategy of arguing from analogies to immigration, is also common. Clear examples include Walzer 1983; Huemer 2010; Wellman in Wellman and Cole 2011; and Pevnick 2011.

10. Such benefits and burdens need not be conceived as limited to the grant or denial of a visa. Immigration policies, including criteria of admission and exclusion, can affect an individual in more ways than simply allowing or prohibiting her entry.

11. People who are poor in absolute terms do cross national boundaries, but usually only from their country of origin to a neighboring, equally poor country, often driven by violent conflict. What is rare is the immigration of a person who is poor in absolute terms to a wealthy country of the global North. Prospective migrants to wealthy countries are almost never poor in an absolute sense, though they are often poor relative to the standards of the receiving state. Measured by the UN Human Development Index, Syria is a "medium-development" country, but patterns of refugee emigration caused by its civil war exemplify this point. Notwithstanding a significant number of Syrians who have resettled in Germany and Greece, the vast majority of refugees of the Syrian civil war are now living in neighboring countries (Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan).

12. I say "misleadingly idealized" to avoid the implication that idealization is necessarily pernicious, or never useful, in philosophical reasoning. The sort of idealization I criticize in this article is of the kind Onora O'Neill distinguishes from mere abstraction (O'Neill 1996, 40–41) and that Charles Mills refers to as "ideal-as-idealized-model" (Mills 2005, 167–68).

13. For a comprehensive challenge to this assumption, see Pogge 2008.

14. This point certainly does not apply to refugees, traditionally conceived, for whom a change of national location will significantly alter their life circumstances. As in the rest of this article, I am speaking here of potential migrants who would not count as refugees on the conventional definition.

15. A prospective migrant is considered "skilled" when she is educated and trained in a field of work that is regarded as economically productive in the receiving country. For this reason, the notion of "skilled migrants" is normatively laden, and is often attended by gender and cultural bias.

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