

## **EXAMINING REACTIONS TO REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS USING THE IS-UGHT PROBLEM IN MORAL PHILOSOPHY**

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This paper explores the is-ought problem in moral philosophy by applying it to understanding the real world issue of refugees and migrants. The ‘*is – ought*’ problem which was articulated by David Hume (1711-1776), is considered a central problem of moral philosophy. Hume believed that what is the case and what ought to be the case look different. G. E. Moore (1873-1958) and Karl Popper (1902-1994) subscribe to similar views. However, others like McInerney (1929-2010) and MacIntyre (1929) propose a different position. They suggest that there should be no ‘gap’ between is and ought. In other words what is, is also what should be (ought). Thus far this disagreement has remained largely in the realm of conceptual analyses. In this paper the ‘*is – ought*’ problem is used to understand real world issues. The focus of this paper is the much-discussed issues surrounding refugees and migrants in Europe. When this problem is applied to understanding reactions against refugees and migrants it leads to two questions; one, about how refugees are treated (is) and two, how they should be treated (ought). The paper examines statistical data from organizations working with refugees and migrants as well as the utterances of key political and civil society figures, especially in Europe. To understand the ‘ought’ such documents as the UNHCR Refugee Convention is analysed. The analysis shows that a gap exists between is and ought on this particular issue, on several fronts. The paper will also explore how the issue of refugees and migrants might be tackled by using moral philosophy.

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