

Quality of Government and the Treatment of Immigrants

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Normative questions concerning the treatment of immigrants can be approached from various perspectives: consequentialistic, deontological, fairness-based, rectificatory, or similar. In this paper, the implications of the idea of quality of government for the treatment of immigrants are examined. It is argued that an acceptable definition of quality of governance includes a principle of beneficence, which prescribes a beneficial treatment of immigrants whenever laws and policies allow. The principle, which is not novel in itself, is presented in a more specified form and is provided with a philosophical justification.

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In this paper, I will address the general question: what responses to immigration are morally required. I will do so in a rather indirect way, and through only a limited perspective: by exploring the normative implications of an idea of quality of government on public authorities' treatment of potential citizens. Given that one accepts a particular normative conception of quality of government, then one is *prima facie* also morally committed to certain normative requirements regarding the treatment of potential citizens.

The discussion will proceed as follows. First, after a short presentation of the idea of quality of government, I will defend the significance of such approach to normative questions concerning immigration. Many will perceive the drawing of implications from a particular conception of quality of government as irrelevant to normative issues concerning immigration. It should be the other way around, it is sometimes argued: that one must start with the normative requirements concerning immigration and from there draw out implications on what quality of government is. I will therefore expound what I believe to be the benefits of starting with a particular conception of quality of government. Second, I identify and describe a particular component of quality of government – *the principle of beneficence* – as particularly pertinent to our normative thinking concerning immigration. In the third part of the paper, I provide a justification for why the principle of beneficence should be

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