

Refugees and Family Unification

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Abstract: The topics of refugee protection and family migration have both received significant attention in the philosophical literature. However, until recently, issues at the intersection of these two subjects were rarely discussed. In this entry, we outline and explore some of the most important questions concerning these issues of refugee family unity, separation, and reunification, considering what obligations (if any) states might have to respect and protect the value of family life for refugees in light of the different sorts of situations refugees may be in. In particular, we consider how the family unification rights of resettlement refugees may differ from the rights of first-asylum refugees, and how these issues might be complicated when unaccompanied minors are involved. Along the way, we discuss a number of related questions, such as: why should states respect and protect the unity of refugees' families? which family members do refugees have rights to reunite with? and, how much weight should the importance of family life have in non-ideal circumstances when places for refugees in safe states are scarce?