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Impacts of the Trump Administration's Policies on Immigrants and Refugees in Dayton

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The Social Practice of Human Rights: Charting the Frontiers of Research and Advocacy

2017 Conference of the University of Dayton Human Rights Center

Nov. 8-10, 2017, Dayton, Ohio

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Research Panel: Place-Based Rights: Connecting Global to Local

Presenters: Miranda Cady Hallett, University of Dayton; Theo J. Majka, University of Dayton

Title: Impacts of the Trump Administration's Policies on Immigrants and Refugees in Dayton

Abstract:

The Trump administration's executive orders and policy changes regarding refugee resettlement and stepped-up Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) actions are likely to create serious human rights and humanitarian impacts. These include separation of children from their parents, denial of due process in immigration courts, lengthy incarceration in detention centers, denial or loss of employment, denial of visas to citizens of some predominantly Muslim countries, denial of entry to previously vetted refugees scheduled for resettlement, and return (refoulement) of persons with well-founded fears of persecution or torture.

These actions will potentially impact key human rights areas and concerns, such as nondiscrimination, equality before the law, equal protection of the law, protection against arbitrary punishment, the right to asylum, and the special protections accorded to families. They involve the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and refugee and torture conventions protecting rights to asylum and protection from deportation when that is likely to result in persecution, torture, or death.

In this presentation, we will share the results of a study examining impacts of the administration's actions on immigrant and refugee populations in the Dayton, Ohio, area. Impacts may include increased fear and stress and changes in daily routines; detention or deportation; family separation; economic hardships; increased instances of discrimination and harassment; difficulty accessing institutional services; and restrictions on mobility or visits from family.

The research involves interviews with leaders of local immigrant and refugee communities and focus groups conducted with members of these communities during spring, summer, and early fall 2017. Staff of human service agencies who work with these communities will also be interviewed to examine the role of local institutions as intermediaries. The research team includes faculty and undergraduate students from the University of Dayton.

About the presenters:

Dr. Theo Majka (Professor of Sociology, University of Dayton) has taught Immigration and Immigrants (Soc/Ant 368) since 1999. Immigrant and refugee integration has been the focus of much of his recent research and community involvements. Two research projects on this topic that he coordinated resulted in three one-day conferences at UD in 2008, 2009 and 2012. An article he wrote with Jamie Longazel on Welcome Dayton, "Becoming Welcoming: Organizational

Collaboration and Immigrant Integration in Dayton, Ohio,” was recently published in the journal *Public Integrity*. He is also the co-author of *Farm Workers, Agribusiness, and the State*, with Linda Majka (1982) and *Farmers’ And Farm Workers’ Movements*, with Patrick Mooney (1995). A chapter he wrote with Linda Majka, “Institutional Obstacles to Incorporation: Latino Immigrant Experiences in a Mid-Size Rustbelt City” [Dayton] appeared in *Latinos In The Midwest*, edited by Rubén Martínez (2011). He was also a participant in the community conversations and subsequent committees that resulted in the Welcome Dayton: Immigrant-Friendly City initiative in 2011 and is currently a member of the Welcome Dayton Committee.

Dr. Miranda Cady Hallett (Assistant Professor of Cultural Anthropology, University of Dayton) is a legal anthropologist who has conducted ethnographic fieldwork in El Salvador since 1998 and with Salvadoran immigrant communities in the U.S. since 2004. Her interests, training, and expertise lie at the intersection of Latin American studies (with a particular focus on El Salvador and the Central American region); migration studies and border theory; law and society; labor studies; research on Latinx identities; and the history and anthropology of state violence. Her dissertation (Cornell University, 2009) examined Salvadoran migrants’ subjectivities and neoliberal ideologies in a small poultry industry town in central Arkansas. Her recent work focuses on mass detention and deportation as components of the regime of mass incarceration in the contemporary United States, exploring how these systems uphold broader mechanisms of labor exploitation and intersectional oppression. She has published on immigration and immigrants’ rights in numerous peer-reviewed journals, including *Latino Studies* and *Law and Society Review*.