

Nov 8th, 1:30 PM

# State Sovereignty and Human Security: The Migration-Securitization Nexus in the Global South

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Sensenig, Eugene R., "State Sovereignty and Human Security: The Migration-Securitization Nexus in the Global South" (2017). *The Social Practice of Human Rights: Charting the Frontiers of Research and Advocacy*. 1.  
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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:** The State and the Refugee Regime

**Presenter:** Eugene Richard Sensenig

**Title:** State Sovereignty and Human Security: The Migration-Securitization Nexus in the Global South

**Abstract:**

This paper deals with the issues of state sovereignty and refugee policy in insecure and marginalized regions of the Global South. Using the displaced Syrian populations (UN-recognized and undocumented) in Lebanon as a case in point, the attempt will be made to portray and discuss the responses of underdeveloped host communities to overwhelming increases in the size of their non-national population. Lebanon has faced various waves of refugees since its independence in 1943, making up between 2.5% (Iraqis) and 25% (Syrians) of the entire citizen population, currently estimated to be slightly over 4 million. Almost 500,000 Palestinian refugees are registered in Lebanon.

The Lebanese state and proverbially diverse Lebanese civil society have responded similarly to each wave of refugees. Relying largely on the largesse of international donors, the country was able to provide huge numbers of non-citizens with the basics for survival while simultaneously integrating them into the largely unregulated domestic economy. The lack of a functioning welfare state proved to be an asset in this process by providing businesses and municipalities a free hand within their local communities. The resulting exploitative and discriminatory practices were largely seen as a win-win situation and resulted in comparatively low levels of anti-refugee sentiment.

The terrorism-related militarization of the border regions in Lebanon has led to a new discussion on the sovereignty rights of the government and the need to create a more systematic and less laissez-faire approach to the refugee issue. This paper will juxtapose the military, internal security, and welfare state arguments used by proponents of a more rigorous approach to refugees with a human security- and human rights-based understanding of the issue. In this context, the vibrant role of the three Christian social justice traditions – Maronite-Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant – will be reviewed and compared.

**About the presenter:**

Eugene R. Sensenig is an Austrian-American associate professor for political science and a senior research fellow at the Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC), both at Notre Dame University (NDU), Lebanon. He has a master's in German literature and PhD in international relations from the Paris Lodron University Salzburg. In this capacity, he participated in the University of Dayton SPHR conference in 2015. He has published various books and scholarly articles on labor migration and industrial relations; Central European Orientalist literature; Armenian Genocide studies; Anabaptist history; gender, minority, and diversity studies; and work-life-balance and father-friendly policies. He is an activist scholar, participating in Lebanese civil society campaigns since 1999; a senior member of the

council of elders at the International Community Church (ICC) in Beirut; and an organizer in Initiatives of Change (IofC) in sustainable development, conflict transformation, and business ethics.