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### Continuity and Change: Asylum Policy and Detainee Treatment During the Obama and Trump Administrations

Scott Musikar

*Binghamton University--SUNY*

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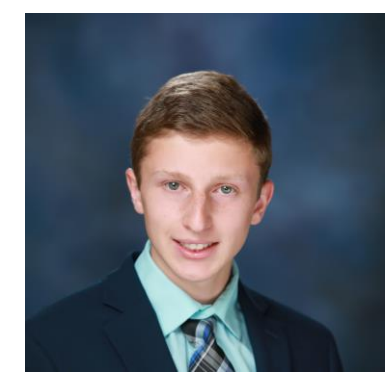
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**Continuity and Change:**  
*Asylum Policy and Detainee Treatment During the Obama and Trump Administrations*



PRESENTER:  
**Scott Musikar**

**BACKGROUND:**

- In the 2016 presidential campaigns, the surge of those crossing the border was a very pressing issue, causing many Americans to start talking about illegal immigration and asylum seekers
- In 2018, Trump generated media controversy for separating families and putting children in cages
- The Republican defense was either denial or blaming the cages on Obama
- Were the asylum policies and treatment of detainees that different between the two administrations?

**METHODS**

1. Collected information from various sources including:
  - Reporters touring the detention facilities
  - News articles demonstrating public opinion
  - White House website archives
  - Government documents
  - Political speeches
  - First-hand accounts of the asylum system
  - Analytical scholarly articles
2. Separated scholarly literature into categories: Obama, Trump, Comparative
3. Classified scholarly literature into different methodologies: theoretical, quantitative, legal, humanitarian, historical

**RESULTS**

- Both presidents: harsh asylum policies that were not always humanitarian
- Trump's abrasive rhetoric and more extreme stances established distinct differences between the administrations
- Continuities and changes going from Obama to Trump

While both Obama's and Trump's policies toward asylum seekers were **very similar** in being **strict and harsh**, Trump's **abrasive rhetoric** and more **extreme stances** established **distinct differences** between the two administrations.

Continuities	Changes
Poor conditions inside of detention facilities	Trump's 2018 Zero Tolerance Policy of family separation
Methodology of the externalization of the U.S. Border	Trump's use of Title 42
	Trump's harsher rhetoric and more extreme stances



**IMPORTANT NOTES ON KEY AREAS OF CONCERN FROM RESULTS**

- Conditions in detention centers were terrible under both administrations
  - EX: Cold temperatures, large cages, incorrect grouping based on criminal history, unprofessional staff, delayed medical care, lack of cleanliness, and limited hygienic supplies
- Trump took Obama's family detention a step further by separating children from their parents under his 2018 Zero-Tolerance policy for deterrence
  - Obama stopped due Flores Settlement violation in 2014
  - Obama only separated children from their parents if the parents posed a threat to the children
- Using the justification of COVID-19 health concerns, Trump nearly dismantled any semblance of due process for asylum seekers by evoking Title 42
- Both presidents externalized the US border: the practice of making it harder for asylum seekers to reach US soil in the first place to declare asylum

**REFERENCES**

Blue, Christi, Frye, Hansen, Lind, Llamas, Martin, Nazario, Perez, Reilly, Roth, Shah, Thomson-DeVeaux, Todres, Wasem



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