



Media Release

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Matthew Hayes Named Canada Research Chair in Global and International Studies — Research Will Examine North-South Transnational Migration and Global Inequalities

A young scholar whose work sheds light on the roots of global inequality and how contemporary processes are recasting and reproducing disparities of wealth has been appointed a Canada Research Chair at St. Thomas University.

Matthew Hayes, a professor in the Department of Sociology, will be examining north-south transnational migration and global inequalities in his new role as the Canada Research Chair in Global and International Studies. The announcement was made at the University of Toronto today by the Hon. Kirsty Duncan, Minister of Science.

“Professor Hayes is a creative researcher who is a recognized expert on lifestyle migration and transnationalism. With an already impressive publication record and a network of international research collaborators, he is at the ideal stage in his career to be a Canada Research Chair,” said Dawn Russell, St. Thomas University president and vice-chancellor.

“This appointment is also reflective of many other positive developments. Over recent years, STU has internationalized and globalized its curriculum. We boast a critical mass of scholars involved in international, transnational, postcolonial and global research that focuses on every region of the world addressing topics such as conflict resolution, cultural hybridity, migration, minority communities, and trade. It is another dimension of our strong liberal arts curriculum,” she added.

As the Canada Research Chair in Global and International Studies, Hayes will examine the effects of north-south transnationalism, with a focus on how northern migrants and local communities experience north-south migration.

Hayes explained that over the last two decades, an increasing number of citizens from countries in the global north have relocated permanently or semi-permanently to areas in the global south, especially in Latin America, North Africa and Southeast Asia. While many are retirees, some are working-age adults motivated by the lower cost of living.

Hayes’s research has so far mostly been located in southern Ecuador, which has become a popular tourist and lifestyle migration destination. He has conducted qualitative interviews there with North Americans who have relocated, mostly since 2008, concentrating on how they adjust to living in a different cultural environment and what impacts they have on receiving communities.

“These newcomers have important effects on receiving communities. Often, North American migrants talk of the beneficial impact they have, but they also act as transnational gentrifiers, bidding up the prices of real estate, and changing the uses and meaning of space within cities or in rural

areas. Studying these migrations and their effects provides a unique ethnographic window into globalization and persistent global inequalities,” he said.

“North American migrants to Ecuador often relocate because of economic insecurity here in Canada or the United States—many of them are economic migrants. Migration also enables them to experiment with new forms of aging, and to live out desires to build new lives in different cultures. These are possibilities that are not open to all migrants, as exhibited by the ongoing refugee crisis in the Mediterranean region, or in the forced detention and abuse of migrants in offshore concentration camps run by Australia.”

Hayes believes that his research will be useful for thinking more deeply about global inequalities, and the meanings that North Americans and West Europeans give to their migrations.

“Often, they don’t think of themselves as migrants at all,” he said. “Many of the advantages North Americans have in Ecuador, including that things seem inexpensive, stem from colonial social relations of domination and subordination that also call attention to the inequalities between local elites and working people. People justify these and other inequalities in a variety of ways, and my work also pays close attention to those justifications.”

Hayes grew up in Dalhousie, New Brunswick and holds a PhD in sociology from York University in Toronto. He joined the faculty at St. Thomas in 2009. He has authored several peer-reviewed journal articles or book chapters in highly respected, international venues. He has published in three languages, English, French, and Spanish, and his research networks have been aided by his ability to speak and work in two others, Italian and Portuguese.

“Growing up in Dalhousie, NB, a bilingual community, made it a lot easier to learn other languages, and this has helped me collaborate with other scholars whether they speak English or not,” he said.

Hayes is the fifth Canada Research Chair named at the university since 2005. Currently, Professor Tony Tremblay is the Canada Research Chair in New Brunswick Studies and Professor Clive Baldwin is the Canada Research Chair in Narrative Studies.

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