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Cultural Differences in Support for Human Rights (abstract)

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

2015 Conference of the University of Dayton Human Rights Center

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Research Panel: Human Rights Attitudes in a World Society

Presenters: Sam McFarland and William Hornsby, Western Kentucky University

Title: Cultural Differences in Support for Human Rights

Abstract: This article reviews cultural (and country) differences in support for human rights through multiple conceptual and theoretical lenses. This review will include (a) discussion of the difficulties that language translation imposes of measuring human rights support consistently across countries, (b) studies of whether persons in different cultures have a common understanding of the meaning of human rights, (c) the general level of support for human rights across the world, (d) the stability of cultural differences in support for human rights across the years, and (e) evidence related to whether events that happen within a country (e.g., a terrorist attack) alter human rights support within that country.

Keywords: human rights attitudes, human rights support, world society, citizenship, women's rights, minority rights

Biographies:

William Hornsby is a student in the Gatton Academy Class of 2016 and in the Department of Psychology at Western Kentucky University. He has the distinct honor of being on the Western Kentucky University Dean's List for the fall semester of 2014.

Sam McFarland is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Psychology at Western Kentucky University. His teaching interests include social psychology and personality, and the psychology of religion. While serving as Director of the University Honors Program (1990-1998), he began an honors seminar entitled Understanding Human Rights. His research interests include human rights, prejudice, authoritarianism, and the psychology of religion. He served as a Fulbright Senior Scholar in the former Soviet Union (1989) and as President of the International Society of Political Psychology (2009-2010). In 1999, he was named a WKU Distinguished University Professor. A list of his recent work can be found here: <http://people.wku.edu/sam.mcfarland/>.