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Human Rights Attitudes of College Students in the United States (abstract)

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Research Panel: Human Rights Attitudes in a World Society

Presenters: K. Russell Shekha, Denison University; Brian K. Gran, Case Western Reserve University

Title: Human Rights Attitudes of College Students in the United States

Abstract: This study focuses on universal human rights knowledge, endorsement, and commitment of college students in the United States. Using a newly constructed human rights attitudes questionnaire, the authors analyze the determinants of human rights attitudes using college aged samples in two universities located in the United States. This study builds on scholarship emphasizing the impacts of citizenship, immigration, and social identities constructed around contested cultural norms on the endorsement of and commitment to universal human rights. At the same time, this study analyzes knowledge of universal human rights to act as a measure for gauging understanding within the nation.

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

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Brian K. Gran is an associate professor of Sociology and Law on the faculty of Case Western Reserve University. A former lawyer, Gran’s sociological research focuses on human rights and institutions that support and hinder their enforcement, with a particular interest in whether law can intervene into private spheres. With David Brunsma and Keri Iyall Smith, he edited The Handbook of Sociology and Human Rights, which received the Gordon Hirabayashi Human Rights Book Award Honorable Mention. A co-founder of the ASA Human Rights section, Gran serves on the Steering Committee and Council of the Science and Human Rights Project of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. For his research on independent children’s rights institutions, Gran has enjoyed support as a Visiting Fellow of the Swiss National Science Foundation and as a Fulbright Scholar to Iceland. He serves as co-editor of the journal Societies Without Borders.

K. Russell Shekha is an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology/Anthropology at Denison University in Granville, Ohio. His teaching and research interests are in human rights, the welfare state, Latin America, global justice, and quantitative methods. His current research focuses on the impacts of universal human rights on welfare state spending and inequality in Latin America and the determinants of attitudes towards human rights and welfare states in international samples. He serves as the current Secretary-Treasurer and Newsletter Editor of the American Sociological Association’s Section on Human Rights.