

A378\_2016AbstractReganCoreyN

## Abstract

When discussing the topic of social progress and possible futures, a common argument is that so-called "utopian" ideas are implausible due to the limitations of human nature. This paper attempts to explain the faults in that argument by pointing out common flaws in the typical understanding of "human nature" and the history and direction of social progress. The belief that human nature is universal and constant is countered by evidence that human psychology and behavior are largely culturally formed and change across time and geography due to macro-cultural factors. Furthermore, social progress has continually advanced throughout history, despite modern skepticism, and maintains a positive trajectory to this day. With these two arguments, it can be concluded that, as societies become more pro-social, human nature itself will follow suit, changing the limitations of human nature and thus the potentials for social progress.

*Keywords:* human nature, social progress, cultural psychology

Honors College  
Ball State University  
Muncie, IN 47306