

The Effect of Ideological Gaps in the Classroom on Students' Reluctance to Express Their Political Views and Their Appreciation of Teachers

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In recent years, public Israeli discourse has seen a rise in accusations regarding left-leaning political bias in Israeli academia, and accusations regarding attempts of lecturers to take advantage of their courses using it as a platform in order to indoctrinate their views. However, so far no research has been done in Israel in order to test these claims in a sound and rigorous method. Our research for the first time in Israel examine the connection between the students' political orientation and the students' perception regarding teachers' efforts to influence their political stances, with the student's evaluation of his teachers, and his fear to express his political views in the classroom. We hypothesized that a perceived ideological gap between the students' own political orientation and his impression of the political orientation of his teachers tend to lead him to a perception that there are teachers who try to indoctrinate him with their opinions. Such perception tends to lead to a greater reluctance of the student to express his political views in the classroom which can result in a lower appreciation of his teachers.

Using questionnaires that were distributed in three departments of the faculty of Social Sciences at the Hebrew University, we were able to establish our hypotheses. A perceived ideological gap does affect the level of perceived political indoctrination which, in turn, substantially affects the students' reluctance to express their political views and the students' appreciation of their teachers. We conclude with a discussion about these findings and their possible implications, and with an analysis of an additional finding that bears importance to the Israeli academia.

Introduction:

The public Israeli discourse has seen a rise in accusations against what is perceived as a left-leaning political bias in Israeli academia in recent years. This has been exemplified in the reports on the subject that the “Im Tirzu” organization has published, along with an Israeli publicist who had accused university teachers of abusing their status in the classroom in order to spread left wing political propaganda (אם תרצו 2010 ; ימיני 2010). Moreover, students' evaluation surveys have shown that students who are right-leaning politically from the Tel- Aviv University are afraid to express their own views during class for fear that it will affect their grades (קשתי 2009). Nonetheless, it seems hard to accept the notion that a number of students' complaints against their teachers may serve as an indication to a wider set of discrimination against a certain student public or for the existence of political indoctrination behind university walls.

Allegations such as the above deserve to be taken seriously, and it is our intention in this research to do exactly so, by subjecting them to a rigorous empirical research, something which has not been done yet in Israel (ibid.). It is our intention to investigate one particular aspect of this discourse by focusing on the subjective positions that students hold of their own teachers - especially on the relationship between the students' political position and their appreciation of their teachers and exactly how much they feel free to express their views.

Theoretical background

Allegations concerning political bias and propaganda on university campuses are not a new phenomenon.¹ Nevertheless, it has been only in recent years that serious studies have been conducted in order to examine the effect that academic studies hold on the political positions of students. These studies have shown that, although political science students tend to adopt more liberal positions during their studies, political science studies have also a sort of “moderating” effect on these students; those who hold radical positions, whether from the left or right, tend to shift their positions towards the center of the political map during their studies.²

As of regarding teachers' influence on their students, it is surprising to note that all studies conducted on the topic have shown that there is no clear indication that students tendencies to adopt more liberal views derives from their teachers' influence (Mariani and Hewitt 2008; Woessner and Kelly-Woessner 2009). However, while this does not necessarily rule out the possibility that students who *do not* study political science are indeed influenced by their teachers in some other way, or alternately, that there are teachers who *do* try to indoctrinate their students, these findings do not eliminate the possibility that students who are exposed to political positions that contradict their own in the classroom will feel uncomfortable and even afraid to express their own views.

¹ In the United States, For instance, where most teachers hold Liberal political positions (Mariani and Hewitt 2008), there is a wide discussion regarding the political bias' in campuses since the 1950's (Linville 2011). Where, similarly to Israel, accusations are made against teachers for trying to indoctrinate their students (Salerno 2003; Horowitz 2006), whilst on the other side, there are those that contend that these accusations are meant to inhibit academic freedom. (Mariani and Hewitt 2008).

² In a somewhat surprising way there is no explanation in any of the articles surveyed for this effect. Instead, what is known as the “Liberalizing effect” that academic studies have on students is emphasized (Woessner and Kelly-Woessner 2009). However, it is likely to presume that the “moderating effect” is in accordance with Habermas' claim that deliberation between people who hold different political positions leads to a view that holds other positions as being more legitimate (Habermas 2006), since during their studies, students are more exposed to different opinions other than their own, which in turn leads to an increase in political tolerance (Stolle 2007: 669).

It is worth mentioning that people do not accept easily new information or adapt new positions that stand in opposition with their knowledge and beliefs which may lead to a feeling of discomfort. This psychological phenomenon, known as “cognitive dissonance”, states that when people are exposed to information that is in contrast with their own beliefs, they will develop a tendency to doubt its source and its motives. Hence, it should come as no surprise that students who are exposed during class to a teacher who expresses opinions different than their own will think less of him and might even regard him as being a propagandist, especially since he holds authority over them. Indeed, a recent study (Kelly-Woessner and Woessner 2006) has shown that the bigger the gap between the students’ political orientation and what he believes to be his teachers’ orientation is, the student tends to value less the quality of the class and to have a low estimate of the teachers’ objectivity and his concern for the welfare and success of his students. However, this study examined only political science students and did not consider the impact of other variables, such as the students’ level of general trust in other people or his grade average, on explaining the evaluation of his teachers or his reluctance to express political opinions which are different from his teacher.

As noted above, a comprehensive study of this subject has yet to be conducted in Israel. And while it is generally assumed that there is a majority of left-leaning academics in Israel’s universities (קשת 2009), it is found appropriate to ground the allegations mentioned above on empirical facts. Therefore, it is our intention to examine whether when students are exposed by their teachers to political opinions other than their own, they feel that their teachers are trying to influence their positions, and in the case that

they do, to examine if this lowers their willingness to express their own political opinions and also lowers their appreciation of their teachers.

Research question

What is the correlation between social science or humanities students' subjectively perceived gap between his own political position and his teachers' (hereafter referred to as “perceived ideological gap”- PIG) and his own perceived freedom to express his political opinions in class and the way he evaluates his teachers?

Hypotheses

1. The bigger the PIG (the independent variable) is, the higher the level of political indoctrination that the student will attribute to his teacher (mediating variable), which will lead to a higher reluctance on his behalf to express his own political opinions (first dependant variable).
2. The bigger the PIG is, the higher the level of attempted political indoctrination that the student will attribute to his teacher, which, in turn will lead to a lower appreciation of the teacher on behalf of the student (second dependant variable).³

By “political position” we mean to the “left-right” ideological axis in Israel, which relates mostly to matters of Israel’s foreign policy and the occupied territories. (Shamir and

³ A schematic presentation of our model appears in Figure 1.

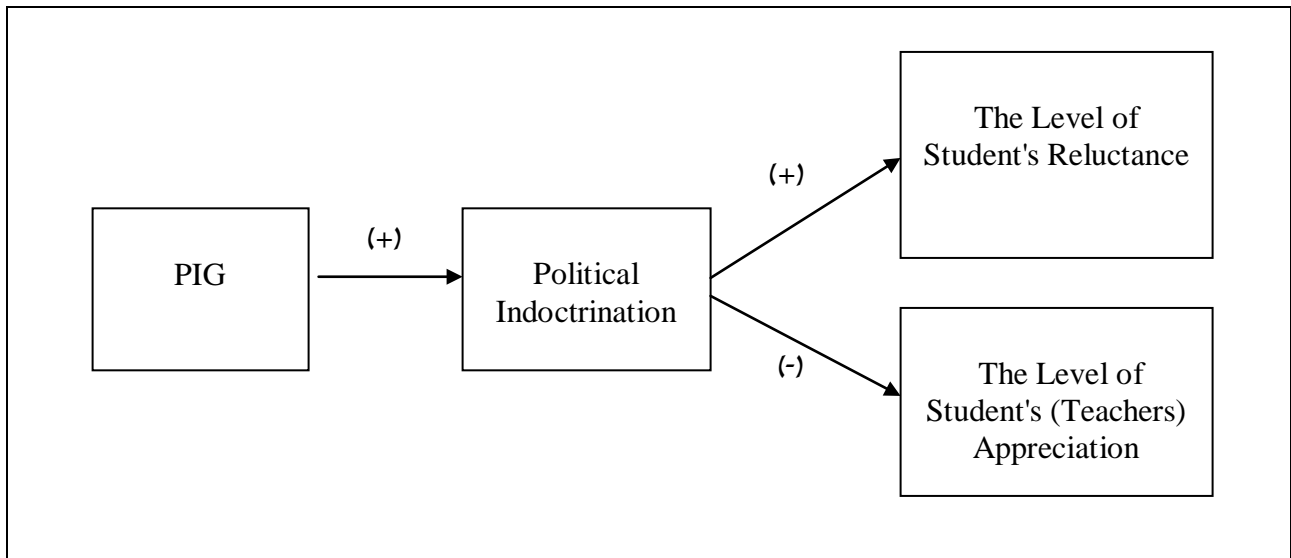


Figure 1. The research hypothesis formal model

Sullivan 1985: 149).⁴ By “level of political indoctrination” we mean the extent of which the student thinks that the teacher is trying to extend his influence over the students in his class. By “reluctance to express political opinions” (hereafter referred to as “reluctance level”) we mean how much the student purposely avoids expressing his political opinions in his studies for fear of doing so will affect his grades and the way he will be perceived by his teacher. By “lower appreciation of the teacher” (hereafter referred to as “appreciation level”) we mean how the student perceives the amount of effort and care that the teacher bestows upon his students.

We assume that a PIG between a student and his teachers will lead to a higher reluctance on the students’ side to express his opinions and to lower his appreciation of his teachers. However, the connection between these variables is mediated through the variable of *political indoctrination*. We contend that a PIG between a student and his teachers will result with the students’ perception that the teacher is trying to influence his

⁴ For convenience, henceforth any political position or opinion in this article will be in reference to this axis.

students' political positions in class; this will be in accordance with the effect of the aforementioned cognitive dissonance along with the authority that teachers hold over their students. At the same time, a student's perception of attempted political indoctrination on behalf of his teachers will result with his reluctance to express his political opinions and a lower appreciation of his teachers. This is presumed on the grounds that if a student assumes that his teachers are trying to convince him that he is politically in the wrong, he will be more reluctant to express his political opinions, since by doing so he may feel that he is jeopardizing his grades (Kelly-Woessner and Woessner 2006). Therefore the student would also appreciate his teachers less, since they will be viewed by him as abusing their position in order to influence students to change their political positions.

Research design

As mentioned above, the fact that previous researches have only dealt with political science students, and considering also that previous studies in the field have found that other classes that students take may also influence their political positions (Woessner and Kelly-Woessner 2009), we decided to examine our hypothesis on a number of different departments in the faculty of Social Sciences at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. This is in accordance with the nature of these studies, where various politically charged issues are frequently brought up for debate by both students and teachers in the classroom.

Our research included a questionnaire which was handed out to students participating in mandatory courses in their first and second years of the Bachelors degree. This was done in three departments: political science, sociology and anthropology

(hereafter- sociology), and communication and journalism (hereafter- communication). These departments were not selected at random, but rather as a result of combining both convenience and interest (42-41 : 2005 הריוסן). Since this is a pioneering research in Israel, in order to examine our hypotheses, we have selected faculty departments which we believed had a more than average dealing with political issues in their classes and were able to secure the teachers' agreement to conduct the survey in their classes.

Altogether, questionnaires were handed out in six different classes, which had over one hundred students listed in each of them. This was done in order to reach a maximal number of participants who were exposed to the same teachers. Altogether 313 questionnaires were collected; 110 from the department of political science, 85 from the department of sociology and 118 from the department of communication.⁵

Research variables

We would like to start out by clarifying that the questionnaire examined how the student perceived the *majority* of his teachers. This stands in contrast to previous studies that dealt with the students' perception of only *one* of his teachers (Kelly-Woesnner and Woesnner 2006, Kelly-Woesnner and Woesnner 2009). We believe that this will enable us to estimate the student's general outlook of his teachers and to avoid a misconception in case one teacher would wrongly represent the whole department.

The independent variable, the PIG, was established by first asking the student to rate his own political position choosing a number from a "left-to-right" scale of 1-9, (the students' political orientation) and then subtracting that number from the number the student gave, using the same scale, to what he believed to be the political orientation of

⁵ 19 questionnaires were disqualified since they did not provide the relevant data.

most of the teachers in his respective department (the “perceived teachers political orientation”). Although some students may not correctly estimate their teachers' political orientation, a previous study has shown that most students are able to do so with relative great success (Kelly-Woesnner and Woesnner 2006). The mediating variable- the level of political indoctrination, was made out of five questions in which the student had to rate, using a 1-5 scale, the level of political indoctrination he felt was taking place in the class (Cronbach's Alpha=.823).

The first dependant variable- the reluctance level, was made out of two questions in which the students had to rate on a scale of 1-5, how much he was afraid to express his own political opinions in various aspects of university life (Cronbach's Alpha=.820). The second dependant variable- the appreciation level, was made out of three questions in which the student had to rate on a scale of 1-5, how much he appreciates the teachers involvement and concern for his students welfare and success (Cronbach's Alpha=.694).

Control variables

The first control variable is the *student's level of generalized trust*. It is plausible to assume that this variable may also affect the students' appreciation of his teachers, when we assume that if someone generally believes that most people cannot be trusted and look out only for themselves, he will be more likely to believe that same goes for his teachers, regardless of any differences in opinion they might have. This variable was created by asking the student three different questions which form a known index used for estimating the general level of trust of an individual. (Newton 2007: 345-346; cf. Uslaner 2002: 69-74) (Cronbach's Alpha= .747).

The second control variable is the *students' level of success*. For obvious reasons, it is also plausible that a student's appreciation of his teacher is affected by how he is fairing in said teacher's course. This variable was achieved by asking the student to expose his grade point average in the courses taken in the department where he studies. Students were also asked to provide general socio-economic data such as age, sex, and religion.

Results

In the beginning of this section we will present the statistical data concerning the main variables of the study in various divisions: by department, by political orientation and by religion. We will then move on to present the results of the multivariate regression models in which the hypotheses were tested.

General sample

Table 1 presents data concerning the main variables in the general sample. It can be seen that, on average, there is a gap between the average student's political orientation and his perceived political orientation of most teachers. Also, students in general feel that most teachers *do* try to influence their political positions in a relative moderate way. Students in general are only mildly reluctant to express their political opinions. Also, the average appreciation of most teachers is relatively high.

Variable	Student Political Orientation	Teachers Political Orientation	PIG	PIG - Absolute Term	Political Indoctrination	Student's Reluctance	Student's Teachers Appreciation
Average	5.09 (1-9)	2.91 (1-9)	2.18	2.67	2.32 (1-5)	2.29 (1-5)	3.90 (1-5)

Table 1. Averages of the main research variables in the entire sample
In parentheses are the scales for each variable.

Different departments

Table 2 divides the main variable data by faculty department. It can be seen that there are only minute differences between the students' political orientation and the way they perceive their teachers political orientations.⁶ The differences regarding the main variables between students by department are shown to be not significant.

In all three university departments students tend to position their teachers on the left side of the political map, while they tend to position themselves in the center. There is also no significant difference between the three departments as regarding the absolute PIG variable, which is designed to examine the average absolute PIG. Additionally, there is no difference between the departments with regards to the mediating variable and the dependent variables. We believe that this enables us to integrate the data collected from the three departments into the same multivariate regression models in order to achieve a wider base to test our hypotheses on.

⁶ While there are no significant differences in students' political orientation when divided by departments, there is a significant difference in the way that communication perceive their teachers' political orientation and the way that political science students do (LSD, Post-hoc Test <.05) and the way that Sociology students do as well (LSD, Post hoc Test <.01).

Department	Student Political Orientation	Teachers Political Orientation	PIG	PIG - Absolute Term	Political Indoctrination	Student's Reluctance	Student's Teachers Appreciation
Political Science	5.06	2.79	2.28	2.71	2.32	2.38	3.95
Sociology	4.85	2.67	2.18	2.76	2.38	2.29	3.82
Communications	5.28	3.19	2.10	2.56	2.29	2.20	3.90
Anova P value	.369	.020*	.873	.752	.699	.532	.425

Table 2. Differences in the main research variables, by department

Legend: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

Political orientation

Table 3 divides the data regarding the main variables into three different politically oriented groups: Left, Center and Right. These groups were made up according to the left-right scale, where students who marked numbers 1-3 were categorized as “Left” (N=86, 27.5% of the sample), those who marked 4-6 were categorized as “Center” (N=128, 40.9% of the sample) and those who marked 7-9 were categorized as “Right” (N=99, 31.6% of the sample).⁷

As can be seen from table 3, there are major differences in some of the main variables of the study. While all students from different orientation groups perceive their teachers' political orientation in the same way, there is a significant and substantial difference between the three groups as regarding the absolute PIG variable (Anova<.001). The PIG between the student and his teacher continues to grow the more right-leaning the student is, which is accordance with the widespread opinion that university faculty in Israel tend to be associated with the political left (2009 קשתי).

⁷ A similar division exists in the different departments: the percentage of students categorized as left ranged between 22%-30.9%, the percentage categorized as Center ranged between 36.4%-44.9% and the percentage of those categorized as Right ranged between 28.2%-33.1%.

Groups – Left-Right	Student Political Orientation	Teachers Political Orientation	PIG	PIG - Absolute Measure	Political Indoctrination	Student's Reluctance	Student's Teachers Appreciation
Left	2.34	2.92	-.58	1.05	1.76	2.12	4.00
Center	4.95	2.91	2.04	2.13	2.36	2.35	3.86
Right	7.66	2.89	4.77	4.77	2.65	2.47	3.86
Anova P value	.000***	.993	.000***	.000***	.014*	.000***	.228

Table 3. Differences in the main research variables, by political orientation group

Legend: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

There are also significant differences between the groups when levels of political indoctrination and reluctance are considered.⁸ Left-leaning students feel that their teachers are trying to influence them less than center and right-leaning students, and they are less reluctant to express their positions in comparison to center or right-leaning students. However, there are no significant differences in the appreciation level between the groups. In the multivariate regression we shall analyze political orientation, absolute PIG and indoctrination level variables in order to see if they are indeed the main variables that affect the reluctance and appreciation levels.

Jews and non-Jews

Table 4 summarizes the data concerning the main variables by dividing them into Jews (N=299) and non-Jews (N=6).⁹ In our sample there is a very small group of non-Jewish students, which makes it hard to reach any wide conclusions concerning them. However, there are clear differences between Jews and non-Jews concerning their teachers' political orientation; teachers are perceived by non-Jews as being more right-leaning, while, as

⁸ Considering these variables, the most statistically significant differences are between the left group and the other two groups (LSD post-hoc test $< .05$). However, the differences between the center group and the right group in these variables are not significant.

⁹ These can be further divided into two male and three female Muslims and one female Christian.

Religion	Student Political Orientation	Teachers Political Orientation	PIG	PIG - Absolute Measure	Political Indoctrination	Student's Reluctance	Student's Teachers Appreciation
Jew	5.16	2.84	2.32	2.67	2.30	2.26	3.89
Non-Jew	2.17	5.50	-3.33	3.33	2.68	3.08	4.11
Anova P value	.001**	.000***	.000***	.440	.298	.089	.415

Table 4. Differences in the main research variables, by religion

Legend: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$.

expected, they define themselves as being more left-leaning than Jewish students, although the differences in the main variables between the two groups is not statistically significant, it will later be shown that introducing this as a “dummy variable” into the regression model has considerable implications.

So far we have presented the initial findings of the questionnaires; we shall now turn to use a multivariate regression in order to test the study’s hypotheses, before doing so, we will first examine the outcomes of different correlations between the study’s main variables in order to show that the correlations between them are not spurious.

Correlations

As expected, there is a substantial positive correlation between the absolute PIG variable and the political indoctrination level (Pearson=.314, $p < .001$).¹⁰ It can be assumed that the correlation between the two is spurious and is caused by the student's political orientation's influence upon the two variables. However, controlling for the student's political orientation variable decreases the correlation only by approximately 20%, leaving it still significant (Pearson=.257, $p < .001$) and hence not spurious.

¹⁰ Henceforth, whenever the PIG variable is mentioned, it is the absolute PIG variable that is referred to.

Additionally, the correlation between the political indoctrination variable and reluctance level is both positive and substantial (Pearson=.643, $p<.001$), and it decreases only slightly when controlling for the student's political orientation and PIG variables (Pearson=.599, $p<.001$). The correlation between the level of political indoctrination and the appreciation level is a substantial negative one (Pearson=-.416, $p<.001$) and it weakens only slightly when controlling for the political orientation of the student and PIG variables (Pearson=-.394, $p<.001$). Therefore, in accordance with our hypotheses, the correlations between the level of political indoctrination and dependent variables are not spurious.

Multivariate analysis

In order to verify our hypotheses, we first need to find a correlation between the PIG and political indoctrination by using OLS multivariate regressions. After this is accomplished we will try to find a correlation between the political indoctrination variable and the two dependent variables using the same method. Thus, we will start by examining what variables affect the political indoctrination level.

Table 5 displays two models. In the first it can be seen that the students' political orientation variable is significant and affects the level of political indoctrination. In the second model we added the PIG variable, which practically eliminates the effect of the student's political orientation. In accordance with our expectations, the PIG variable has a substantial effect on the level of political indoctrination. *Ceteris paribus*, one standard deviation above the average of the PIG variable leads to a result of 2.57 in the level of political indoctrination, and one standard deviation beneath it leads to a result of 2.09.

	Model 1 – Basic	Model 2 - With PIG
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
	(<i>SE</i>)	(<i>SE</i>)
Generalized Trust (Average)	-.041 (.028)	-.025 (.028)
Year of Study	.458*** (.081)	.408*** (.081)
Student Political Orientation (Left-Right)	.072** (.025)	-.004 (.032)
PIG		.116*** (.032)
Constant	.227 (1.219)	-.083 (1.195)
<i>R</i> ²	.198	.237

Table 5. Determinants of the 'Political Indoctrination' Variable¹¹

Legend: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$.

In a somewhat surprising manner, the student's study year at the university is significant in both models, and affects the political indoctrination variable even *more* than the student's political orientation (in the first model) and the PIG (in the second one).¹² It can be said that students in later years feel that most of their teachers are trying harder to influence their political positions. *Ceteris paribus*, in the second model the average level of political indoctrination for a first year student is 2.11, and 2.52 for a student in his second year. This finding will receive its due attention in the discussion part of this paper.

¹¹ For reasons of convenience, from all models the variables of age, sex, average grade, socio-economic status and religious devoutness level have been left out, since they have been found to be insignificant.

¹² In the first model, Beta of the Year of Study variable is .350 while the Beta of the Student Political Orientation variable is only .197. In the second model, the Beta of the Year of Study variable is .311 while the Beta of the Student Political Orientation variable is only .298.

Hence, it seems that the first phase of our hypotheses is established. Even when controlling for other variables, the PIG substantially affects the student's perceived level of indoctrination. We shall now turn to examine which variables explain the dependent variables and whether the level of political indoctrination does indeed affect them.

In table 6 there are three different models which examine the reluctance level of the student. The first model includes different control variables and also the PIG. As can be seen, the PIG variable is significant. The second model also includes the mediating variable- the level of political indoctrination. As can be seen, adding this variable eliminates the effect of the PIG, while the political indoctrination variable is both highly significant and substantially influential.¹³ This establishes a certain aspect of our first hypothesis, as it is found that the level of political indoctrination has a substantial effect on the reluctance level of the student, when controlling for other variables.

It is evident that political indoctrination adds much to the explanatory force of the model, as the explained variance percentage is almost double the first model ($R^2=.470$). Also, this is the only variable that has a significant effect on the reluctance level of the student; when all other variables are set to their averages, a change in political indoctrination leads to a significant change in the reluctance level. One standard deviation beneath the variable average leads to a result of 1.60 in the reluctance level (on a 1-5 scale) and one standard deviation above it leads to a result of 2.93.¹⁴

¹³ $t=10.635$; $Beta=.553$

¹⁴ In appendix no. 2 it is possible to see the effect of the political indoctrination variable on the reluctance level, when all other variables are held constant, according to the maximal range of opportunity in the political indoctrination variable (1-5).

	Model 1 - With PIG	Model 2 - With Political Indoctrination	Model 3 – With Religion Dummy
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
	(<i>SE</i>)	(<i>SE</i>)	(<i>SE</i>)
Generalized Trust (Average)	-.093* (.040)	-.068 (.035)	-.053 (.035)
Year of Study	.489*** (.117)	.168 (.112)	.159 (.137)
Student Political Orientation (Left-Right)	.060 (.046)	.058 (.040)	.094* (.043)
PIG	.143** (.046)	.031 (.041)	.011 (.042)
Political Indoctrination (Average)		.825*** (.078)	.795*** (.079)
Religion Dummy (Non-Jews)			1.267** (.491)
Constant	.931 (1.711)	.835 (1.487)	-1.535 (1.740)
<i>R</i> ²	.241	.470	.476

Table 6. Three models for testing of dependent variable No. 1¹⁵

Legend: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$.

Although the number of non-Jewish students is significantly smaller, adding the dummy variable of religion yields interesting findings in the third model. First of all, when controlling for this variable, the students' political orientation becomes significant. *Ceteris paribus*, the most right-leaning student is reluctant to express his opinions in about .75 more units in the reluctance level than the most left-leaning student (a 2.63 average as opposed to 1.88, on a 1-5 scale). In effect, this means that even when controlling for political indoctrination, right-leaning students are more reluctant to express their political opinions than left-leaning students. Also, it can be seen that, *ceteris paribus*, the average non-Jewish student is reluctant to express his opinions in about 1.25

¹⁵ See footnote no. 11.

units more than his Jewish classmate (a 2.24 average as opposed to 3.50). These aspects will be discussed, albeit the small amount of non-Jewish students.

In table 7 there are three models that examine the appreciation level. The first model includes various control variables and the PIG variable. In a somewhat surprising finding, the PIG does not affect the level of appreciation, whilst the student's political orientation is significant. This contradicts Kelly-Woessner and Woessners' (2006) finding that PIG *does* affect teacher appreciation. However, adding the dummy variable of religion to this model eliminates the students' political orientation effect.¹⁶

The second model includes the level of political indoctrination. As the table shows, this variable has a considerable effect on the level of appreciation although it has a lesser effect on the reluctance level.¹⁷ When all other variables are set to their averages, a change in the political indoctrination variable leads to a substantial change in the level of appreciation; one standard deviation above the variables' average leads to a result of 3.60 in the level of appreciation, while one standard deviation below the variable average leads to a result of 4.12.¹⁸

In the second model it can be shown that adding the political indoctrination variable did not eliminate the students' political orientation variable effect on the level of appreciation. However, as noted above and as seen in the third model, adding the dummy variable of religion, despite the small number of non-Jewish students, leaves the students'

¹⁶ This model is not included here; we also deal with this dummy variable in the third model of table no. 7.

¹⁷ $t=-6.596$; Beta $=-.392$.

¹⁸ In appendix no. 3 it is possible to see the effect of political indoctrination on the appreciation level, when all other variables are held constant, according to the maximal range of opportunity in the political indoctrination variable (1-5).

	Model 1 - With PIG	Model 2 - With Political Indoctrination	Model 3 – With Religion Dummy
	<i>b</i> (<i>SE</i>)	<i>b</i> (<i>SE</i>)	<i>b</i> (<i>SE</i>)
Generalized Trust - Average	.119*** (.023)	.109*** (.022)	.112*** (.022)
Year of Study	-.217** (.068)	-.082 (.067)	-.112 (.068)
Student political Orientation (Left-Right)	-.055* (.027)	-.058* (.025)	-.031 (.246)
PIG	-.012 (.026)	.028 (.026)	.004 (.027)
Political Indoctrination - Average		-.325*** (.049)	-.309*** (.050)
Religion Dummy (Non-Jews)			.700* (.313)
Constant	5.563*** (.995)	5.518*** (.952)	4.111*** (1.108)
<i>R</i> ²	.180	.298	.302

Table 7. Three models for testing of dependent variable No. 2¹⁹

Legend: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$.

political orientation insignificant. Also, ceteris paribus, the average non-Jewish student appreciates his teachers by 0.7 units more than his Jewish classmate.

The generalized trust variable has a substantial contribution to the different models. As we expected, the higher the general trust the individual student holds, the more he is inclined to appreciate his teachers. According to the third model, one standard deviation above the generalized trust variables' average leads to a result of 4.04 in the level of appreciation, while one standard deviation beneath the average leads to a result of 3.67.²⁰

¹⁹ See footnote no. 11.

²⁰ In appendix no. 4 it is possible to see the impact of generalized trust variable on the reluctance level, when all other variables are held constant, according to the maximal range of opportunity in the generalized trust variable (0-10).

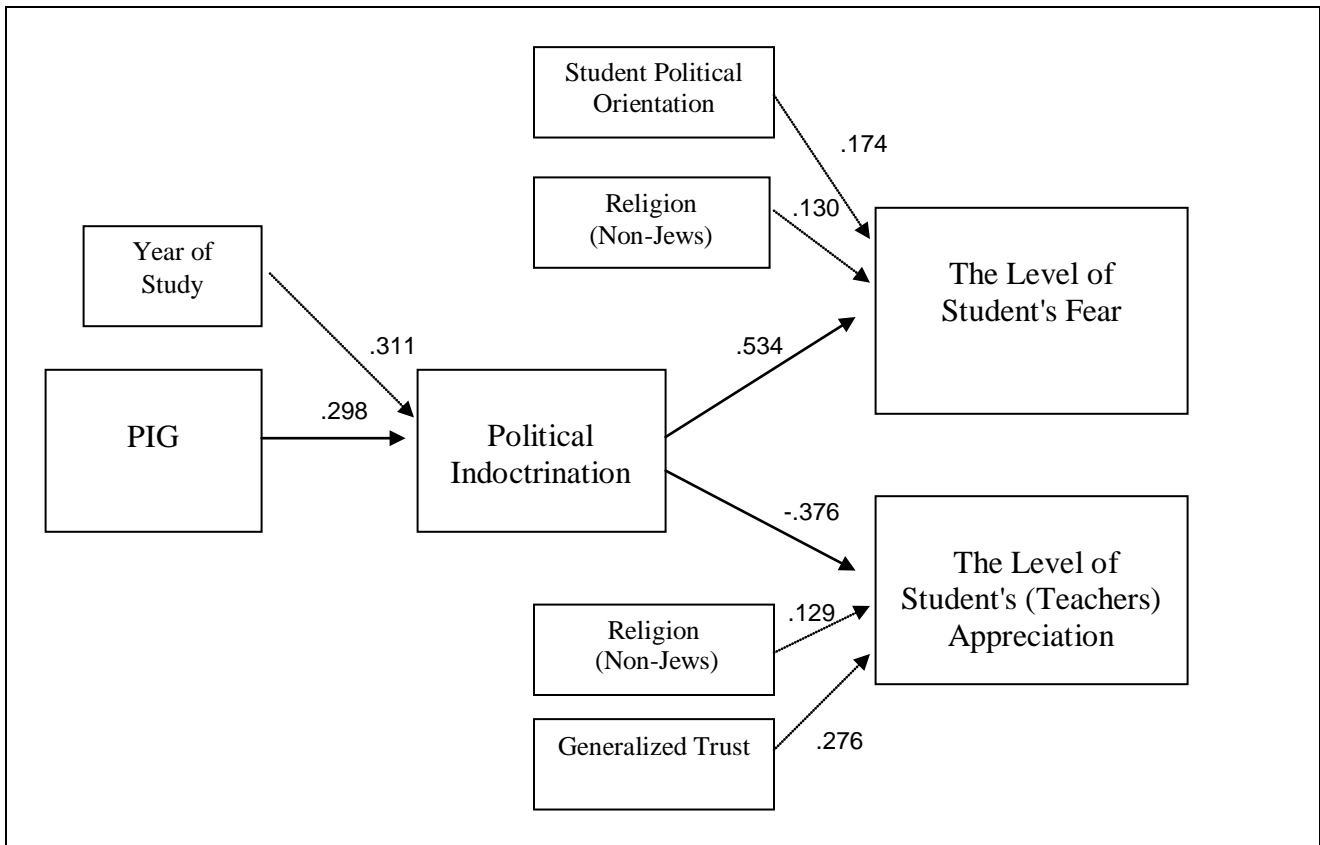


Figure 2. The research variables' and additional variables' actual influence. The numbers represent the standardized coefficients of each variable.²¹

To summarize the results, the diagram in Figure 2 shows the standardized coefficients of the different variables which make up the hypotheses of our study, along with the other variables that also affect the political indoctrination and dependent variables. As the diagram shows, the models results reinforce both our hypotheses; the PIG considerably affects political indoctrination which, in turn, substantially affects the dependent variables, albeit in slightly different ways. Notwithstanding, it is found that there are other variables that also affect the level of political indoctrination and the dependent variables. These findings will be discussed in the final part of this paper.

²¹ The full lines represent the effects of the main research variables', while the dotted lines represent the effects of other variables that had significant effect.

Discussion

The study we have conducted has supplied us with an abundance of findings, some quite surprising, which we believe deserve some elaboration. We will now turn to explain our main findings and suggest how we think that further research in this field may be improved. We would like to start out by pointing to a reservation that we have regarding our research results; this study was conducted only in one university, with the selected sample not necessarily being a good representative of other departments, faculties or even universities for that matter. Having said that, we ask that our results should be treated as part of an initial research in the field, one that will hopefully be fully developed in the future, where only rigorous and extensive research will be able to show if our findings do indeed reflect the atmospheres in social science and humanity faculties in Israel and the rest of the world.

We believe that our study also adds some important insights into the understanding of the psycho-social processes that take place in classrooms, where teachers with authority and power engage in politically charged topics. We find a clear picture arising from our findings; when a student feels that his political positions are subjected to influence attempts, his learning experience is compromised. Once again, while the scope of this study is too limited to reach a completely satisfying conclusion, the need to examine the ways to deal with the subject of political indoctrination, which has such a substantial effect on those who participated in this study, is evident. Fisler and Foubert's (2006) tentative suggestions that include, inter alia, an increase in university transparency and discussions about the values that the educational institution should

adopt, seem to be a step in the right direction, although we believe that at any rate, this issue deserves the attention and clear policy it entails.

We also consider very seriously the finding that the political orientation of the student affects his reluctance to express his opinions. Since this effect is apparent even when controlling for the political indoctrination variable based on classroom occurrences, it can be presumed to arise from right-leaning students' fear of the "leftist" academia, regardless of the teachers' actual discourse in the classroom. When we formulated our first hypothesis we assumed that only *after* the student was exposed to his teacher's political orientation, he would come to experience him as someone with a political, rather than educational, agenda, which in turn will affect the student's reluctance to speak out his mind. It is possible that there is a common perception amongst right-leaning students that they should beware of expressing their political stances in courses, one that arises from those who claim that there are left-leaning teachers who try to indoctrinate (ימיני 2010 ; אמ תרצו 2010,) a perception that exists even if these students were *not* actually exposed to contradicting political opinions from their teachers during class.

Other findings that we would like to address regard that, as we expected, generalized trust substantially affects the student's appreciation of his teachers. Uslaner explains that trust is founded on "some sort of belief in the goodwill of the other" (2002: 18). In this light it seems plausible to ask how come generalized trust did not affect the reluctance level. It seems that the answer can be found in Uslaner's explanation that while certain events do affect our level of generalized trust, most of the time our own personal experience has little to none influence on the amount of trust we bestow upon strangers (Ibid: 4, 34).

Another variable is the number of years the student has already spent at the university, which was found to affect the level of political indoctrination. The more time a student has spent at the university, the higher the chances are that he would attribute propagandist intentions to his teachers. A plausible explanation for this would be that students in their first year tend to view their teachers as being extremely impressive, and therefore will be less likely to attribute negative qualities to them. Obviously, more research on this subject is needed.

Finally, although the number of non-Jewish students is very small, it is our opinion that the finding that non-Jewish students are more reluctant to express their political stances than their Jewish classmates deserves further research. Because these students also appreciate their teachers more than the Jewish students, one can speculate then that the teachers are *not* the reason why non-Jewish students are reluctant to express their political opinions, but again, further research is needed.

In conclusion, for the first time in Israel, we have attempted to examine, whether there is a correlation between the political orientations of students and how much they feel free to express their political opinions, and if this also affects how much they appreciate their teachers. And while we do have our reservations regarding the validity of our findings, nevertheless, we still feel that we have managed to direct some attention to the subject, and at the very least, suggest that the subject is worth further research.

Appendix no. 1 – The questionnaire: ²²

סקר טיב הלימודים והמרצים בפקולטות למדעי החברה והרוח

סטודנט/ית נכבד/ת, שלום.

סקר זה נוגע בעמדות לגבי הלימודים בחוג למדע המדינה, ובעמדות לגבי טיב ההוראה של המרצים בחוג למדע המדינה. ממצאי מחקר זה יסייעו לנו להעריך את שביעות הרצון של הסטודנטים מאיכות הלימודים בחוג לימוד זה ומאיכות ההוראה של המרצים בחוג זה. זו הסיבה שחשוב שתענה/י על שאלות אלו ברצינות. בנוסף, ברצוננו להדגיש כי תשובותיך יישארו אנונימיות וישמשו לניתוחים סטטיסטיים בלבד.

* שים/י לב! בכל פעם שתופיע המילה "מרצים" במהלך הראיון, הכוונה היא אך ורק לחברי הסגל הבכיר ולא לעוזרי ההוראה.
* השאלות בסקר מנוסחות בלשון זכר, אך הן מיועדות לשני המינים.

באיזו מידה תרמו לימודיך בחוג למדע המדינה להעשרת ידיעותיך ולהבנת תהליכים שונים בתחום מחקר זה?
ציין את תשובותיך באמצעות סולם מ-1 עד 5, כאשר "1" פירושו לא תרם כלל ו-"5" תרם במידה רבה מאד. השאר הן דרגות ביניים.

	במידה רבה מאד	במידה רבה	במידה מסויימת	במידה מועטה	ככל לא
	5	4	3	2	1
1					
2					
3					
4					

באיזו מידה אתה מסכים או לא מסכים להיגזים הבאים לגבי המרצים בחוג למדע המדינה

	מסכים בהחלט	מסכים	ככה ככה	לא מסכים	בהחלט לא מסכים
	5	4	3	2	1
5					
6					
7					

חוה את דעתך בנוגע למשפטים הבאים:

באיזו מידה, לדעתך, מרבית המרצים המלמדים אותך בחוג למדע המדינה

	במידה רבה מאד	במידה רבה	במידה מסויימת	במידה מועטה	ככל לא
	5	4	3	2	1
8					
9					
10					
11					

ביטוי עמדות פוליטיות במהלך הלימודים בחוג למדע המדינה

	במידה רבה מאד	במידה רבה	במידה בינונית	במידה מועטה	כלל לא
--	---------------	-----------	---------------	-------------	--------

²² This questionnaire was distributed in the political science department. Similar questionnaires were distributed in the two other faculty departments, with changes only in the departments names

1	2	3	4	5	במהלך לימודי בחוג זה חששתי לבטא את עמדותיי האישיות בנושאים פוליטיים שונים במהלך חלק מהשיעורים	12
1	2	3	4	5	במהלך לימודי בחוג זה חששתי לבטא את עמדותיי האישיות בנושאים פוליטיים שונים במהלך כתיבת חלק מהעבודות או המבחנים	13
באיזו מידה אתה מסכים עם ההיגדים הבאים:						
בהחלט לא מסכים	לא מסכים	ככה ככה	מסכים	מסכים בהחלט		
1	2	3	4	5	ישנם סטודנטים בחוג למדע המדינה אשר חוששים לבטא את עמדותיהם בנושאים פוליטיים שונים במהלך שיעור	14
1	2	3	4	5	ישנם סטודנטים בחוג למדע המדינה אשר חוששים לבטא את עמדותיהם בנושאים פוליטיים שונים במהלך כתיבת עבודה או מבחן	15
1	2	3	4	5	מרבית המרצים המלמדים אותי בחוג למדע המדינה מעריכים יותר סטודנטים המביעים עמדות הדומות לעמדותיהם הפוליטיות	16
1	2	3	4	5	מרבית המרצים המלמדים אותי בחוג למדע המדינה נותנים ציונים גבוהים יותר למי שמביע עמדות הדומות לעמדותיהם הפוליטיות	17

18. מדברים כיום הרבה על שמאל וימין בפוליטיקה. היכן היית ממקם את מרבית המרצים בחוג למדע המדינה ברצף של "שמאל-ימין"?

תן את תשובתך בסולם מ-1 עד 9 כאשר 1 משמעותו שמאל, 9 משמעותו ימין ו-5 הוא נקודת האמצע (מרכז)

שמאל	מרכז	ימין
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9		

כעת ברצוננו לשאול אותך מספר שאלות נוספות:

19) באופן כללי, האם היית אומר שניתן לבטוח במרבית האנשים, או שצריך להיות זהיר מאוד ביחס לאנשים? אנא דרג את תשובתך מ-0 עד 10, כאשר 0 מציין שצריך להיות זהיר מאוד ביחס לאנשים, ו-10 מציין שניתן לבטוח במרבית האנשים.

צריך להיזהר ביחס לאנשים	ניתן לבטוח במרבית האנשים
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	

20) באופן כללי, האם היית אומר שמרבית האנשים היו מנסים לנצל אותך אם הייתה להם ההזדמנות לכך, או שהם היו מנסים להיות הגונים? אנא דרג את תשובתך מ-0 עד 10, כאשר 0 מציין שמרבית האנשים היו מנסים לנצל אותך, ו-10 מציין שהם היו מנסים להיות הגונים.

מרבית אנשים היו מנסים לנצל אותך	הם היו מנסים להיות הגונים
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	

21) באופן כללי, האם היית אומר שמרבית הזמן, אנשים מנסים לסייע לאחרים, או שהם בעיקר דואגים לעצמם? אנא דרג את תשובתך מ-0 עד 10, כאשר 0 מציין שאנשים בעיקר דואגים לעצמם, ו-10 מציין שאנשים מנסים לסייע לאחרים.

אנשים בעיקר דואגים לעצמם	אנשים מנסים לסייע לאחרים
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	

22. מהו גילך: _____

23. מין: 1. זכר 2. נקבה

24. באיזו מידה אתה נוהג לשמור על המסורת הדתית?

1. אני שומר על המסורת על כל דקדוקיה 2. אני שומר במידה רבה על המסורת

3. אני שומר במקצת על המסורת 4. אינני שומר כלל על המסורת

25-26. באיזו ארץ נולדת? אם יליד הארץ: באיזו ארץ נולד אביך?

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1 צפון אפריקה | 7 יליד הארץ והאב יליד הארץ |
| 2 אסיה | 8 יליד הארץ האב יליד צפון אפריקה |
| 3 מזרח אירופה | 9 יליד הארץ האב יליד אסיה |
| 4 מערב ומרכז אירופה | 10 יליד הארץ האב יליד מזרח אירופה |
| 5 אמריקה/אוסטרליה/דר"אפ | 11 יליד הארץ האב יליד מערב או מרכז אירופה |
| 6 דרום אמריקה | 12 יליד הארץ האב אמריקה, אוסטרליה, דר"אפ |
| | 13 יליד הארץ האב דרום אמריקה |

* אם נולדת בארץ – ראה עמודה משמאל

27. דת: 1. יהודי 2. מוסלמי 3. נוצרי 4. דרוזי

28. שנת לימוד נוכחית באוניברסיטה (לא כולל מכינה): _____

29. מדברים כיום הרבה על שמאל וימין בפוליטיקה. היכן היית ממוקם את עצמך ברצף של "שמאל-ימין"?
תן את תשובתך בסולם מ-1 עד 9 כאשר 1 משמעותו שמאל, 9 משמעותו ימין ו-5 הוא נקודת האמצע (מרכז)

שמאל	מרכז	ימין
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9		

30. לו הבחירות לכנסת היו נערכות היום, עבור איזו רשימה היית מצביע?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 קדימה | 8 התנועה החדשה – מרצ | 15 ישראל חזקה (אפרים סנה) |
| 2 הליכוד | 9 האיחוד הלאומי | 16 דע"מ |
| 3 העבודה | 10 התנועה הירוקה - מימד | 17 בל"ד |
| 4 ישראל ביתנו | 11 הירוקים | 18 רע"מ-תע"ל |
| 5 הבית היהודי + מפד"ל החדשה | 12 עלה ירוק | 19 חדי"ש |
| 6 יהדות התורה | 13 גיל (הגמלאים) | 95 אחר (פרט) |

7 ש"ס 14 צומת 96 פתק לבן

31. ציוניך בחוג למדע המדינה ביחס למוצע:

ממוצע הציונים המשוער בחוג למדע המדינה הינו כ-82. עד כמה, מהו ממוצע הציונים שלך בחוג למדע המדינה ביחס למוצע זה:

1. הרבה מתחת למוצע זה 2. מעט מתחת למוצע זה 3. סביבות ממוצע זה

4. מעט מעל למוצע זה 5. הרבה מעל למוצע זה

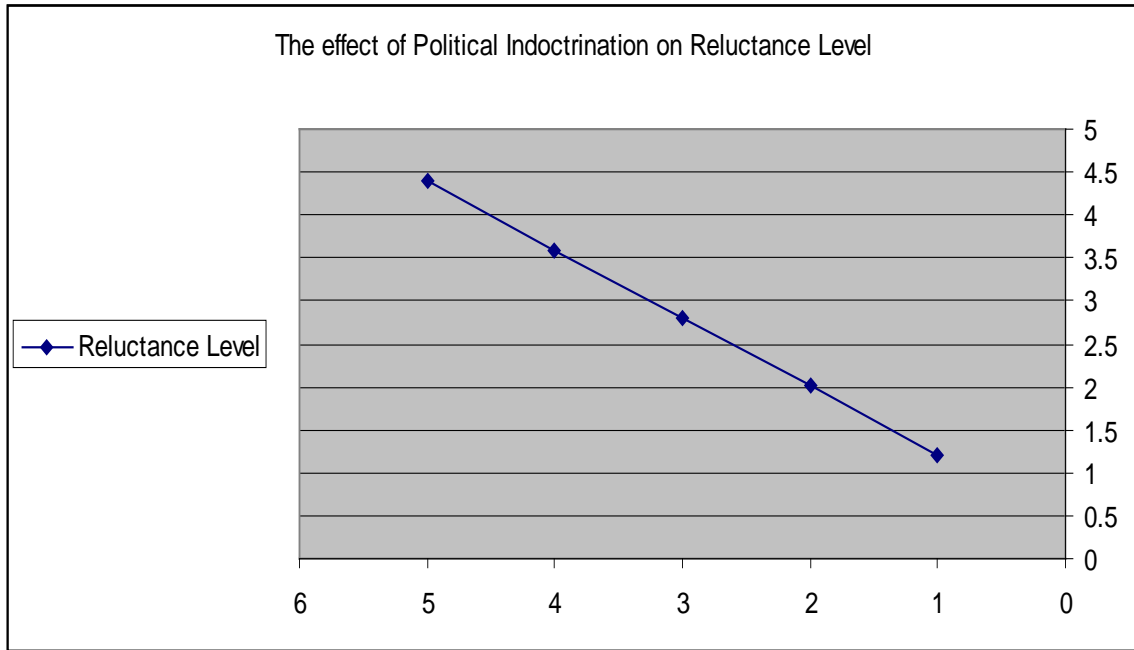
32. ציוניך בחוג למדע המדינה:

מהו ממוצע הציונים שלך בחוג למדע המדינה עד כמה: _____

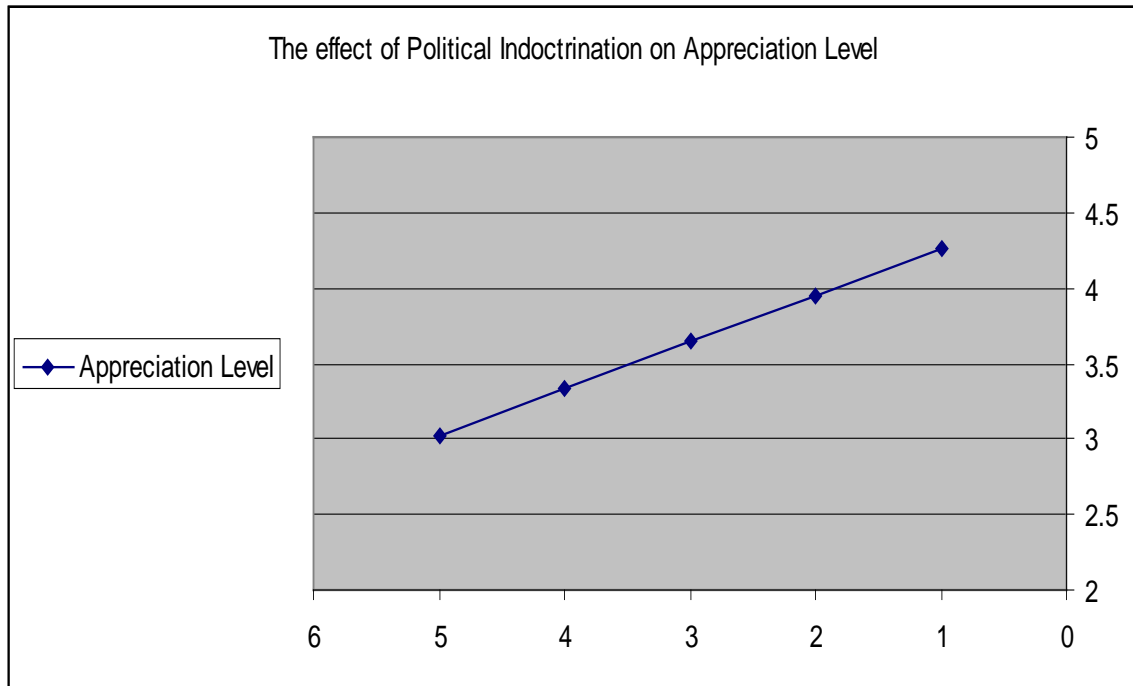
33. מהו מספר החדרים בבית הורידך (כולל סלון): _____

34. מהו מספר האחים והאחיות שלך: _____

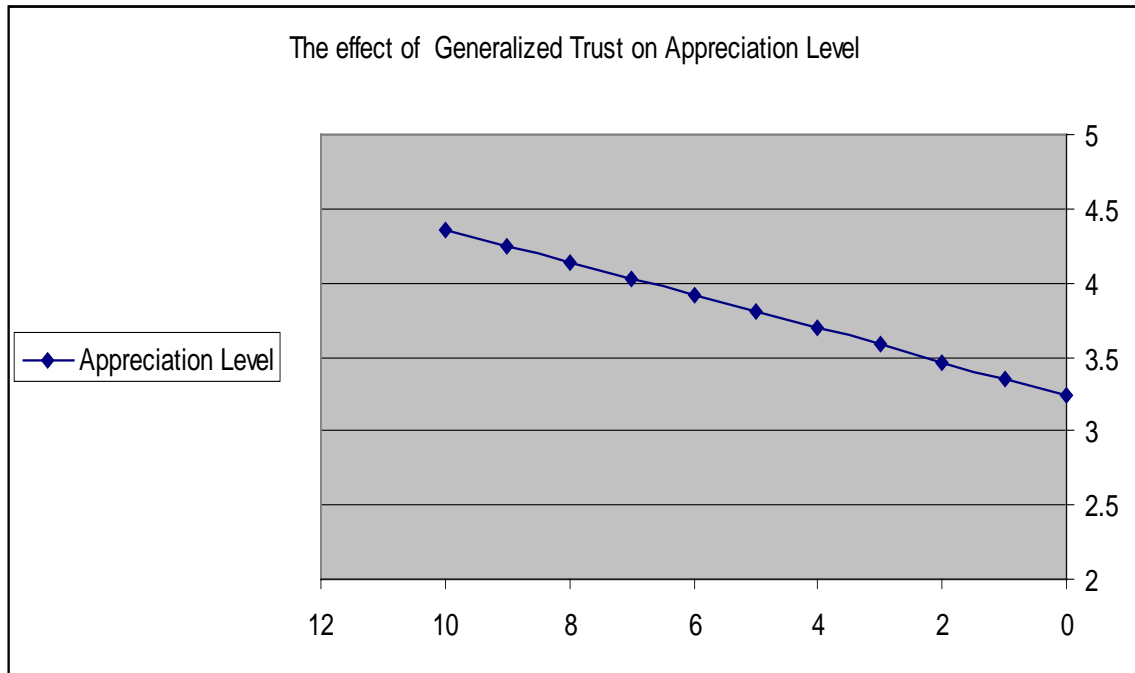
Appendix no. 2 - The effect of Political Indoctrination on reluctance Level:



Appendix no. 3 - The effect of Political Indoctrination on Appreciation Level



Appendix no. 4 - The effect of Generalized Trust on Appreciation Level



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