

Title

Perceptions of Civil Liberties in Israel and New Hampshire

Research Question

The primary question that my research aims to address is the following:

- What are the perceptions of civil liberties at the University of Haifa and the University of New Hampshire?

Additional questions that seek to be addressed are the following:

- Is there a relationship between age, national origin, gender, and socio-economic status and the perception of civil liberties at the University of Haifa and the University of New Hampshire?
- Can it be determined that the general perception of civil liberties in Israel has changed since the study conducted in 1977?
- If possible to discover, does the system of judicial review influence the perception of civil liberties or did a change in perception necessitate the change in judicial review? In other words, are politics/law upstream from culture or the other way around?

Introduction and Literature Review

The purpose of this research is to quantify the perception of civil liberties of students of the University of Haifa in Israel and the students of the University of New Hampshire in New Hampshire to determine if the perception of civil liberties has radically changed in either location in the past 30 years.

- I hypothesize that due to the changes in Judicial Review in Israel in favor of standards of human dignity at the expense of civil liberties and the rather stable attitudes towards civil liberties of citizens of New Hampshire that the perceptions of students towards civil liberties in Israel will be drastically less supportive than in the pilot study of 1977 and that, comparatively, students of the University of New Hampshire will be much more supportive towards civil liberties than the students of the University of Haifa.

- According to prior data, the individual's political leanings, gender, and nation of origin will have a statistically significant influence on the results.

The greatest source of inspiration for this inquiry is the 1977 study conducted in Israel that sought to discover similar data. The study is entitled "Public Support for Civil Liberties in Israel" and the question pursued in this study was whether the "public opinion (in Israel) is supportive of and sensitive to issues involving civil liberties"(Simon 1977).

The body of subjects was 540 Israelis ranging from education backgrounds from 8th grade to college educated. The primary materials were orientated towards surveying, hence, paper with the appropriate content was all that was required. The researchers broke down the participants by age, sex, nationality (since it varies greatly in Israel, especially at the time), and political affiliation, all so that it could be measured if these had any statistical significance.

Overall it was determined that Israelis are very supportive of civil liberties.

Additionally there has been a substantial shift in the standard of judicial review in Israel from civil liberties to human dignity. According to the scholarly article "Dignity-The Enemy From Within", "Human dignity also serves as a robust constitutional right in... Israel...Normally this focus recognizes and implements Kantian ethics, which leads to the restriction of speech". It would be interesting to see if this reality has any broad effects on the outcome of the study.

Methods

Design

- Survey provided for the participants to answer in paper format or digital format.

- Survey will consist of some confounding factors that will be adjusted for such as age, gender, political affiliation, race, nation of origin, socioeconomic status, level of education (for themselves and their parents) and defining personality traits.
- The rest of the survey will consist of assessing the participant's attitude towards civil liberties.

Participants

- Minimum of 40-100 participants in Israel as well as 40-100 participants in New Hampshire.
- The participants will be randomly selected in accordance to whoever volunteers to take the survey.

Materials

- The survey will utilize the Five-point Likert Scale which will consist of: Strongly agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. "Strongly Disagree" = 1 point, "Disagree" = 2 points, "undecided" = 3 points, "Agree" = 4 points, and "Strongly Agree" = 5 points.
- A higher number denotes a stronger support of civil liberties.

Procedure

- The data will be gathered in areas in which a large amount of students congregate.
- In order to qualify to take the survey, the student simply needs to be enrolled in the respective institution in which the research team is situated.

Expected Results

I predict that my findings will yield that the favorability towards civil liberties is diminished among the student body of the University of Haifa in favor of the notion of

human dignity and that the student body of University of New Hampshire will have a very favorable view towards civil liberties.

•If these results materialize, I will notify several think tanks that exist to serve maintaining an understanding of civil liberties all over the world such as Freedom House, the CATO Institute, and others.

I also predict that the positive or negative perception of civil liberties will be closely correlated with nation origin, political alignment, and gender. In the past, men lean more positive than women, people from North America and Europe lean more positive than people from everywhere else, and people that are of the left-wing persuasion lean more positive than people that are of the right-wing persuasion. I expect for these results to be replicated in both regions.

Significance

An informed understanding of civil liberties in any given region, helps researchers comprehend the nature of the political society in which the research was conducted. I believe that Israel and New Hampshire, due to their history and culture, serve as prime case studies for researchers to observe civil liberties' role within civil society.

References

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