Political Communication Apprehension in an Era of Activism: A Survey of Thai Undergraduates

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	ABSTRACT With student activism on the rise in Thailand, deep divisions have formed both at home and school. This study places the modern Thai student in context with a review of the Thai national character and a look at repression and demonization of student activists over the past century. 175 first- and second-year undergraduates at a high-ranking university in Thailand were administered the Personal Report of Political Communication Apprehension (PRPCA). Results show that students exhibit a moderate degree of Political Communication Apprehension. Results of this study can aid in determining the extent to which instructors wish to engage students in political classroom discussions. **Keywords**: political communication apprehension, student activism

Introduction

Political knowledge consists of an understanding of how governments function and what they do. As many of the most critical problems in society are attributed to their politics, the role of the university as an agent of political socialization should not be overlooked. In Thailand, however, recent history has shown that universities have failed to provide the

support or guarantee the safety for open political discussion. Since 2020, Thai students have found themselves targets of repression online, in society, and in the classroom (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

This study aims to determine whether political communication apprehension exists among first- and second-year Thai undergraduates at a high-ranking university in Thailand. To do this, we will present a review of the Thai national character through Hofstede's (1980) Power Distance Index and Komin's (1991) study of national characteristics, followed by an overview of Thai political history over the past century with a focus on student activism and ways in which it has been dealt with by the ruling parties. This will be presented alongside a discussion of Political Communication Apprehension in the belief that the extent to which the Thai student chooses to engage in political classroom discussions can only be understood by placing them in the appropriate modern–day context.

Political Realities

Instability over the past two decades in Thailand's private and public sectors have impacted education in ways both directly and indirectly. Overshadowing this volatility, however, is the wave of student activism that has swept the country. Student-led protests, rallies, and demonstrations, once unimaginable in Thai society, have become commonplace over the past decade, and student demands for the reform of long-established institutions have resulted in unprecedented displays of defiance. At the very least, these events show that the new generation of Thai have developed a more modern attitude towards tradition and authority and are fiercely determined to have a voice in both their own future as well as that of their country.

It comes as no surprise that these events have resulted in societal divisions between children and parents, students and teachers, and educational institutions and the Thai government. Since 2015, independent groups have reported over 100 incidences of students being intimidated by schools and teachers after coming out to protest the government (Mala, 2020). With critics and activists facing prosecution, self-censorship has become an inevitable, unspoken rule in society.

Research Aims

It is from these developments that this research into political communication apprehension among first year Thai university students has been undertaken. In light of the precarious political situation as well as recent upheavals in society, the following hypotheses is proposed:

H1: First- and second-year Thai university students will exhibit high levels of Political Communication Apprehension.

This research is based on the idea that as members of Thai society, Thai students hold political beliefs among other individuals who may hold opposing beliefs, in an environment that may not be conducive to the expression of those beliefs. The possibility of being asked to vocally express these beliefs may act as a catalyst for anxiety. To the researcher's knowledge, there has not been a study that investigates Thai students' Political Communication Apprehension. As openly discussing political issues is an essential part of a divided society, these matters cannot be avoided. It is only through awareness of the degree of student apprehension regarding the discussion of politics in the classroom that teachers can approach sensitive matters in a way that makes students feel comfortable expressing their ideas and opinions without fear of reprisal.

Background

To better place the subjects of this study in context, it will be helpful to provide an overview of the culture and politics of Thailand as they relate to education, or more specifically, the background of the modern Thai student who is being asked to orally participate in the classroom.

The Culture of Thailand

Culture provides members of its respective society with an implicit knowledge of how to behave in various contexts and how to interpret others' behavior in these situations. To provide a background of Thai students' perceptions of classroom participation and speaking, it is necessary to give a brief overview of Thai culture, and the implicit behaviors that guide its members.

In Hofstede's (1980) system for quantifying and comparing cultures, six dimensions were identified that reflected different countries' values. These dimensions consist of Power Distance, or how cultures expect or accept power to be distributed equally, Individualism, in which concern is placed on the accomplishment of the individual, Masculinity, which places importance on work related goals and assertiveness, Uncertainty Avoidance, or the degree of discomfort or uncertainty in unexpected situations, and Time Orientation, which measures thrift and perseverance over fulfilling social obligations, and a recent addition to the model, Indulgence, or the extent to which people try to control their impulses and desires (Hofstede Insights, 2022). The index ratings of Thailand are indicated in the figure below:

Figure 1

Thailand's Index Ratings (Adapted from Hofstede Insights, 2022)
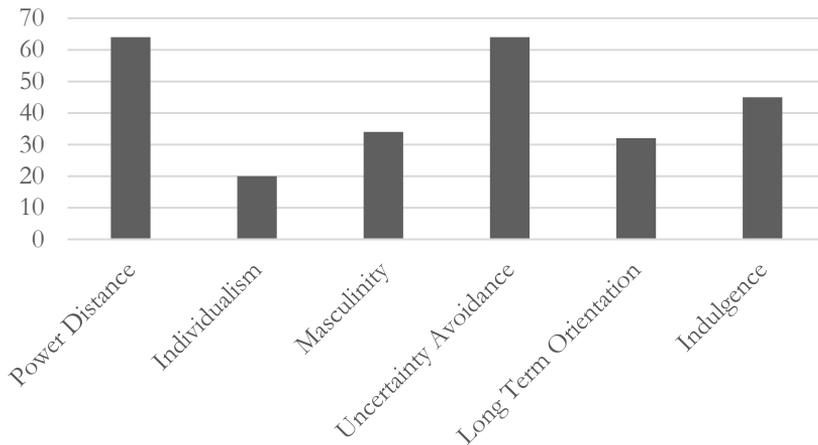
From these scores, we can see that Thailand scores high on Power Distance (64), indicative of a society in which inequalities are accepted and loyalty, respect and deference for superiors are given in return for protection and guidance. The low score of Individualism (20) reflects people's self-image defined by a "we" rather than an "I." This means there is a strong loyalty to the member group, with individuals assuming responsibility for other group members. In order to maintain the integrity of the group, Thai are non-confrontational as an offense may lead to a loss of face. The low Masculinity score (34) indicates less assertiveness and competitiveness in society, and the high score for Uncertainty (64) shows a preference for avoiding the unexpected and an avoidance of change unless it proves to be beneficial to the group. The low score for Time Orientation (32) reflects a respect for tradition and the moderate score for Indulgence (45) marks this as the only dimension in which a preference cannot be determined.

Komin (1991) provides further insights in a study regarding the behaviors and value patterns of the Thai national character. The system is composed of nine clusters arranged by their significance in the Thai cognitive system. That is to say, the higher position of the attribute indicates a greater chance of it being activated to direct action. According to Komin, Thailand's national character may be summarized as face-saving and grateful, maintaining "other-directed" relations, situationally flexible, religious, superstitious, placing importance on form over content, collaborative and kind, and measuring success through social recognition rather than achievement.

Komin further noted that individualism implies a loose social framework whose members place emphasis on the care and protection of themselves and their immediate family. Collectivism is marked by a tight social framework, in which people expect others within the in-group to provide care and protection to the group members. The framework of Thai society is undeniably collectivist.

Politics and Repression

Turning now to a view of the modern Thai student through a historical lens, it must be noted that Thailand's political environment has been in a state of almost continuous instability since it's transition to a constitutional monarchy in 1932. Over the years, frequent coups d'état based on a lack of competence by the civilian government as well as legitimacy granted by the King have determined the outcome of power struggles rather than political systems and party politics. These power struggles are mirrored in the constitutions which undergo abolishment and rewrites according to whoever is in power.

Following a 1958 coup d'état, a "Thai-style democracy" *(prachathippatai baeb thai)* emerged which is often seen by political researchers as a bureaucratic authoritarianism. In this system, "Western" concepts of rights, freedoms, and accountability assumed a secondary importance to stability and security and a "traditional" social order was established in which everyone was expected to know their place (Ferrara, 2015).

Beginning in the late sixties and extending all the way into the nineties, Thailand experienced an increase in political participation and demonstrations involving students, leftists, and working-class members of society. Each surge in political participation was met however by a military-led and monarchy-endorsed coup. Thai nationalism, economic development, and increasing mystification of the King were used to justify brutal repression of democratization and helped sustain the Thai "social cage" to resist agents of change. Those who threatened the established order were considered 'unThai' and became targets for demonization and violent treatment (Sripokangkul et al., 2020).

Violence by the Thai regime was used in 1973 when troops opened fire on demonstrators showing support for pro-democracy students and again in 1976, when two students were garroted and hung, allegedly by police, resulting in the Thammasat University massacre two weeks later when at least 46 students were killed by soldiers, police, and right-wing mobs. The following decades have seen violence break out from recurring political conflicts against those seen as "less than Thai" particularly in 1992, 2006, 2010, and 2014.

The Red Shirt Movement and Student Protests

Following the outcome of a 2006 coup d'état that ousted then-prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra from office, the social movement known as "The Red Shirts" generated a momentum of class warfare never before seen in Thailand. The movement was formed primarily of the urban and rural poor who sought democratic institutional change and an end to the "quiet dictatorship" that enforced lèse-majesté laws, overturned election results, influenced the courts, and backed mob violence to silence oppression (Ungpakorn, 2009). Army crackdowns on the protesters resulted in more than 90 deaths among the Red Shirt members, ten dead police officers, and around 2,400 injured as well as several areas of Bangkok and a number of provincial capitals torched. In response, all Red Shirt media outlets were closed, tens of thousands of web pages blocked, a state of emergency was decreed, and more than 200 political opponents were imprisoned under the lèse-majesté laws (Hewison, 2012).

In 2014, a coup d'état was launched by the Royal Thai Armed Forces under the leadership of General Prayut Chan-o-cha, establishing a junta called the National Council for Peace and Order to govern the nation. In 2020, following the dissolution new generation party which represented democratic ideals that challenged military rule called the Future Forward Party, a series of student-led protests broke out, mostly in Bangkok, but soon spread to the provinces. Facilitated by Twitter and other social media platforms, the protests grew in size and scope, with daily acts of insubordination in schools and the flashing of the three-fingered "Hunger Games" salute during morning anthems. While the dissolution of the Future Forward Party was one of the primary motivators for the students' anger, protests and flash mobs soon emerged inspired by hashtags critical of the educational system, the government, and the monarchy (Sinpeng, 2021).

Mass protests involving more than 10,000 participants took place in August and September of 2020, with new demands for human rights and democracy. In October, the government declared a "Severe State of Emergency" which banned gatherings of five or more. Defying the bans, protesters were met with water cannons and tear gas fired upon them by riot police. During this time, the Thai Lawyers for Human Rights reported a total of 103 harassment incidents against students across the country with at least four high school students charged with illegal assembly (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

By 2022, protests had largely disappeared due to the climate of fear and persecution brought on by government suppression of news outlets and

websites, systematic surveillance, harassment, and the arrest of protest leaders (Dela Cruz et al., 2022).

Dehumanization and Demonization

In Thailand, demonization is a common occurrence in which the ruling regime acts with the intention of instilling feelings of disgust among Thais toward opposing parties to normalize hatred against 'others' (Sripokangul et al., 2020).

Throughout the mid-seventies, right-wing organizations labeled the student movement as "anarchist," "evil," "un-Thai," and hostile to the three pillars of Thai national identity, "nation, religion and the monarchy," (Kongkirati, 2006, p. 20). This demonization continued in the conflicts between 2005 and 2010 in which The Red Shirts came to be defined as "*kwai daeng,*" or "red buffalo" a derogatory slang for "stupid," and the opposing Yellow Shirts labeled *"salim"* which implied royal fanaticism and urban snobbery.

In the protests of 2020, a new term emerged to describe individuals perceived to be against the national values of nation, religion and the monarchy, *"chung chart,"* literally "nation haters." More than a simple invective dreamt up to criticize the latest wave of protests, the term echoes a narrative that stretches back for generations.*

Good People, Bad People

In a speech by the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej in December 1969, the then monarch said: "In national administration, there are both good and bad people. Nobody can make everybody good. To maintain peace in the country, we cannot make everybody good, but we can support good people. We must let good people rule and control bad people, so they have no power" ("Military strips Thaksin", 2019). On the evening before the general election of March 24, 2019, King, Maha Vajiralongkorn, repeated this position by emphasizing the need to support "goodness, so that good people govern the country and restraining bad people from having power in order not to create confusion" (Prachatai, 2019).

As Prachatai writers note, the term "good people" is hardly neutral in Thai politics. It was voiced most notably by General Prem Tinsulanonda (1920–2019) who acted as the former unofficial Prime Minister and top advisor to the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej. In a speech at the Naval Academy prior to the 2006 coup, Prem defined "good people" as having ethics and morals and "bad people" as those who don't (Mydans, 2019). The terminology was echoed throughout the years, most recently in 2019 by top

military brass who stressed that their main concern was to bring "good people" to govern the country ("Military strips Thaksin", 2019).

As Taylor (2021) states, Thailand is a country to be ruled by a relatively small interest group of elites and the middle class, aka the "good people."

> "Good people" are those who are loyal to the monarchy, implying also that they are 'moral people'. This leads to means justification, such that acts of violence undertaken by the military regime against opposition are transformed into 'good' because they are done for the 'best' of reasons – loyalty to the crown
>
> (Taylor, 2021, p. 257).

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Communication Apprehension

Communication apprehension is a measure of an individual's fear of, or anxiety associated with the act of actual or anticipated communication with another (McCroskey, 1977). It arises from the fear or tension when speaking with other individuals in various situations such as face-to-face conversations, oral presentations, or participating in a group discussion or meeting. Those with high levels of communication apprehension are less likely to participate in classroom discussions or engage in activities in which speaking is anticipated or required. These fears have been shown to be neither irrational nor unwarranted as classroom communication is often related to fulfilling the requirements of an assignment and open to evaluation both socially and academically, leading to the fear of a possible failure or negative labeling (Bourhis et al., 2006). Additionally, communication apprehension can be trait-based or situational, meaning that it can be general or related to certain topics, speaking formats, or audiences (Cole & McCroskey, 2003).

Political Communication Apprehension

Political discussion lies at the heart of democracy. It is hardly surprising, in the midst of recent global conflagrations and worldwide disputes fueled by a 24-hour news cycle, that a political offshoot of McCroskey's concept of communication apprehension has emerged. Political

communication apprehension exists as "the fear or anxiety associated with real or anticipated communication about politics with another person or persons" (Jones-Carmack, 2019, p. 75). While there has not been an extensive amount of research directly aimed at determining political communication apprehension, there have been related investigations. In some early studies of political behavior, a differentiation was established between two types of cross-pressures, namely issue cross-pressures and social cross-pressures (Therriault et al., 2011). While political debates represent conflicts between opposing moral outlooks, issue cross-pressures derive from holding issue-specific positions that conflict with the leading political party. Social cross-pressures meanwhile, emerge from social networks or surroundings. Thus, the less an individual diverges from the positions of the ruling political party or their societal groups, the less cross-pressures they will experience. In other words, if following the party lines or groupthink mentality relieves these cross-pressures, abstaining from political discussions will also serve as a method of reduction in certain contexts.

Political Communication Apprehension in Thailand

As there has been no previous studies regarding political apprehension, this study has been conducted to bridge the gap in research as to the existence and or level of Political Communication Apprehension among undergraduate Thai students.

Methodology

Researchers have yet to develop a scale that directly measures political communication apprehension. While previous studies have measured political tolerance and civil discourse (Froese et al., 2008) and political incivility (Stryker et al., 2016) their focus on other aspects of communication renders them insufficient for our purposes here. In a study by Hansen (2021), factors of political apprehension were determined using the PRCA-24, as well as versions of the Willingness to Self-Censor (Hayes et al., 2005), Internal Political Efficacy (Morrell, 2005), Need for Cognition (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982; Cacioppo et al., 1996), and the Michigan/National Election Studies (NES) measurement of Political Party Attachment. In addition, the researcher constructed a series of political communication apprehension questions inspired by the PRCA-24 (Hansen, 2021).

For this study, an adapted version (referred to henceforth as the PRPCA (Personal Report of Political Apprehension), largely based upon Hansen's version will be used. Students are given a series of twenty-four statements and asked to rate them on a 5-point Likert Scale. Statements

include "I would feel comfortable participating in a political discussion with a group of classmates who held various political views," "I dislike getting involved in political discussions with classmates because it could ruin our relationships with one another," "Having political discussions outside of class is easier than having political discussions with classmates," and so on. Three questions were omitted, and some words were changed for the sake of clarity, relevance, and appropriateness in the context of the Thai classroom. For both questionnaires, the individual items were translated into Thai and checked by a Thai professor to ensure there was no confusion among the participants.

Participants

This research used convenience sampling in recruiting 175 undergraduate students at a high-ranking university in Thailand. The participants in the study were first- and second-year students. These students were utilized as they came from all over Thailand as well as from various social classes so that results could be applied to a larger population. Additionally, while still in their formulative university years, students came from a variety of majors. This aided in avoiding potential bias resulting from specific fields of study. That is to say, students who have opted to study Political Science may have a lower PCA than those pursuing a path in Journalism. The slight variation in years of study also helps to overcome other factors that may affect the results such as perceived preparedness or shyness. Prior to this, the nature of the study was explained, and cooperation was requested. It was made clear that participation was optional, and all responses would remain anonymous and confidential.

Procedure

To test hypothesis 1, the PRPCA was administered as a Google Form during semester 1 of academic year 2022 to 175 students. Following the data collection, it was found that questionnaires were returned from for a return rate of 94.28%.

Results

Scores range from 24 – 120 points. According to McCroskey (1984), PRCA-24 scores of 72 and above indicate that one is more apprehensive about communication than the average person, while scores above 85 indicate a very high level of trait-like communication apprehension. Scores below 59 indicate a very low level of apprehension and extreme scores (below 59 or above 85) are abnormal. Equal measurements can be applied to the PRPCA.

As shown in Table 1, the overall mean score of total PCA was 66 which indicates a moderate level of Political Communication Apprehension.

Table 1

Total PCA

	N	*Min*	*Max*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Variance*	*Apprehension Level*
PCA	165	36	83	66	8.98	80.75	Moderate

Discussion

Results of the surveys show a moderate score of PCA. This reveals that it is of less significance than expected, thus disproving hypothesis 1. Based on the researcher's experiences, as well as the work of previous researchers, there are three significant observations that can be drawn from these results.

The first is in respect to the students. As we have seen from Hofstede's Power Distance Index and Komin's study of the Thai national character, the Thai are loyal to group members, face-saving, and flexible, and will go out of their way to avoid confrontations as well as the "unexpected." It is thus entirely within character to place the immediate group – the class – over groups which may hold unknown and potentially divisive political ideologies of their own. This "don't ask, don't tell" policy" contributes to the overall harmony of the classroom.

Secondly, the role of the teachers cannot be discounted. In classes taught by the researcher, discussion of political views, government policies, or rights of the individual are not required for assignments or essays. Issues are presented in a general, global sense and students are able to fulfil the requirements of the course without venturing into political territory. Again, a harmony of the class overrides potential disruption caused by perceived divisions.

Finally, there is the nature of the university in which this study took place. As the Thammasat Bangkok campus is known as the site of the 1973 uprising and 1976 massacre, the much larger Pathum Thani campus has given birth to modern-day protest leaders and served as a rally point for several large-scale protests, some of which have occurred in defiance of government bans (Daorueng, 2021). In response, the University Council both affirmed the constitutional monarchy and showed support for student expression (Thammasat Sustainability, 2021). Given this support, students of

Thammasat may feel a greater freedom of speech than at universities with policies aimed at curbing these rights.

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Studies

While a lack of previous studies regarding Political Communication Apprehension are a limitation of this study, it has opened the door to further research on the subject. As our knowledge grows, data collection may be expanded over a semester, or several semesters in conjunction with frequent discussions on current political topics to gauge apprehension levels among students. Furthermore, studies at several universities and a larger sample size may provide a clearer view of disparity or equivalence.

Conclusion

This study has shown the existence of a moderate level of Political Communication among a sample of 165 first- and second-year undergraduate Thai students at a high-ranking Thai university. As in many other parts of the world, the nation of Thailand is at a crossroads regarding its future. Although the current government faces an all-time low in approval ratings following the Covid-19 crisis, an opinion poll conducted by the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA) revealed a plurality (36.54 percent) of the 2,504 respondents saying that there was no suitable individual for the role of prime minister ("Most people", 2021). While there is no easy solution to Thailand's problems, its crisis of leadership can only continue to diminish the nation's standing both regionally and globally (Sanglee, 2022). In this light, perhaps it is not only apprehension of PCA that must be addressed, but also a negligence among educators when it comes to challenging students with meaningful political discussions.

About the Author

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Appendix A
Personal Report of Political Communication Apprehension (m=33)

1. I would feel comfortable participating in a political discussion with a group of people who share my political views.	(1) Strongly Agree	53
	(2) Agree	66
	(3) Neutral	35
	(4) Disagree	10
	(5) Strongly Disagree	1
	SD	**24.68**
2. Taking part in a political discussion with a group of classmates would be enjoyable.	(1) Strongly Agree	48
	(2) Agree	84
	(3) Neutral	25
	(4) Disagree	7
	(5) Strongly Disagree	1
	SD	**30.29**
3. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when having a political discussion with someone with different political views than my own.	(1) Strongly Agree	14
	(2) Agree	36
	(3) Neutral	47
	(4) Disagree	55
	(5) Strongly Disagree	13
	SD	**17.02**
4. I would feel comfortable participating in a political discussion with a group of classmates who held various political views.	(1) Strongly Agree	55
	(2) Agree	72
	(3) Neutral	32
	(4) Disagree	5
	(5) Strongly Disagree	1
	SD	**27.6**
5. When I am participating in a political discussion, I get so nervous that I forget pieces of evidence that support my view.	(1) Strongly Agree	11
	(2) Agree	42
	(3) Neutral	56
	(4) Disagree	41

	(5) Strongly Disagree	15
	SD	**17.21**
6. I would feel comfortable participating in a political discussion with a group of people even if I did not know which political opinions they held.	(1) Strongly Agree	29
	(2) Agree	63
	(3) Neutral	48
	(4) Disagree	19
	(5) Strongly Disagree	6
	SD	**20.32**
7. I would not feel comfortable participating in a political discussion with a classmate that that shares my political views.	(1) Strongly Agree	10
	(2) Agree	8
	(3) Neutral	50
	(4) Disagree	63
	(5) Strongly Disagree	24
	SD	**21.92**
8. Because conflict can occur in political discussions, they make me nervous.	(1) Strongly Agree	32
	(2) Agree	59
	(3) Neutral	31
	(4) Disagree	32
	(5) Strongly Disagree	11
	SD	**15.27**
9. Contributing to political discussions is difficult for me.	(1) Strongly Agree	18
	(2) Agree	45
	(3) Neutral	49
	(4) Disagree	37
	(5) Strongly Disagree	16
	SD	**13.63**
10. I would feel comfortable participating in a political discussion with a group of classmates who have diverse political beliefs.	(1) Strongly Agree	42
	(2) Agree	75
	(3) Neutral	37
	(4) Disagree	10

	(5) Strongly Disagree	1
	SD	**26.13**
11. Whether I share my political opinions during a discussion depends on the topic we are discussing.	(1) Strongly Agree	45
	(2) Agree	83
	(3) Neutral	26
	(4) Disagree	8
	(5) Strongly Disagree	3
	SD	
12. I dislike getting involved in political discussions with classmates because it could ruin our relationships with one another.	(1) Strongly Agree	12
	(2) Agree	37
	(3) Neutral	40
	(4) Disagree	48
	(5) Strongly Disagree	28
	SD	**29.04**
13. I would feel comfortable participating in a political discussion with a classmate even if I didn't know their political opinions.	(1) Strongly Agree	32
	(2) Agree	59
	(3) Neutral	53
	(4) Disagree	18
	(5) Strongly Disagree	3
	SD	**20.98**
14. Having discussions about politics with people with different political opinions than my own does not intimidate me.	(1) Strongly Agree	32
	(2) Agree	71
	(3) Neutral	33
	(4) Disagree	20
	(5) Strongly Disagree	9
	SD	**20.92**
15. Certain parts of my body feel tense when people start talking about politics and expect me to contribute.	(1) Strongly Agree	14
	(2) Agree	37
	(3) Neutral	46
	(4) Disagree	37

	(5) Strongly Disagree	31
	SD	**10.63**
16. Discussing politics makes me uncomfortable, regardless of who it is with.	(1) Strongly Agree	10
	(2) Agree	24
	(3) Neutral	39
	(4) Disagree	50
	(5) Strongly Disagree	42
	SD	**14.25**
17. It is easier to have political discussions with family than friends.	(1) Strongly Agree	15
	(2) Agree	21
	(3) Neutral	33
	(4) Disagree	39
	(5) Strongly Disagree	57
	SD	**14.69**
18. It is easier to have political discussions with my friends than my family.	(1) Strongly Agree	64
	(2) Agree	49
	(3) Neutral	29
	(4) Disagree	18
	(5) Strongly Disagree	5
	SD	
19. Having political discussions outside of class is easier than having political discussions with classmates.	(1) Strongly Agree	20
	(2) Agree	42
	(3) Neutral	59
	(4) Disagree	27
	(5) Strongly Disagree	17
	SD	**21.17**
20. Participating in political discussions with classmates is nerve-wracking.	(1) Strongly Agree	8
	(2) Agree	30
	(3) Neutral	43
	(4) Disagree	50

	(5) Strongly Disagree	34
	SD	
21. I would feel uncomfortable participating in a political discussion with a classmate who has different political beliefs from my own.	(1) Strongly Agree	10
	(2) Agree	33
	(3) Neutral	45
	(4) Disagree	49
	(5) Strongly Disagree	28
	SD	**14.31**
22. I would feel comfortable participating in a political discussion with a classmate who has the same political beliefs as me.	(1) Strongly Agree	45
	(2) Agree	82
	(3) Neutral	30
	(4) Disagree	4
	(5) Strongly Disagree	4
	SD	**29.10**
23. I would feel uncomfortable participating in a political discussion with a group of classmates who have different political beliefs from mine.	(1) Strongly Agree	8
	(2) Agree	38
	(3) Neutral	42
	(4) Disagree	48
	(5) Strongly Disagree	29
	SD	**13.94**
24. Participating in political discussions with classmates is nerve-wracking.	(1) Strongly Agree	28
	(2) Agree	39
	(3) Neutral	44
	(4) Disagree	35
	(5) Strongly Disagree	19
	SD	**8.74**