Chapter 3

Political values

Authors and Contributors

Johan Edelheim; Marion Joppe; Joan Flaherty; Jaume Guia; Stefanie Benjamin; Tazim Jamal; Miranda Peterson; Maja Turnšek

Abstract

We are political beings, our behaviours shaped by values connected to our political beliefs. As tourism teachers and researchers, we need to be aware of these values because their influence extends beyond our lives, into the lives of students we interact with in the classroom; researchers we connect with through our publications; and, ultimately, the nature and impact of tourism. Various factors determine political values, but all are linked by one theme: if unexamined, they can lead to "disvalues", negatively affecting the marginalised of our communities, including Indigenous populations. That's why we need to address them in our classrooms.

Key words

Homo politicus, political correctness, populism, nationalism, colonialism, worldviews

Objectives

This chapter provides readers with insights and engagement activities to help students

1. Determine why people could be called Homo politicus rather than Homo sapiens
2. Discuss the connection between democracy and political correctness; and the advantages as well as disadvantages of the latter in a democracy
3. Appraise why populism is gaining momentum in modern societies but why it does not offer substantive promise for the future
4. Examine connections among nationalism, colonialism and tourism.
5. Understand how worldviews influence political values

Introduction

Political values might sound like something solely restricted to politics and politicians, but all of us are political beings in our daily lives and actions. Sometimes our political values are explicitly expressed, such as through memberships in political parties or engagement for or against certain causes. But sometimes these values are expressed

more subtly, such as through clicking the *like*-button in social media to express support or participating in boycotts of certain products or services to express disagreement with what they represent. Teaching and research are inherently political because they reflect our decisions on what to include and what to exclude from the material we present to students in our classes and to colleagues across the world reading our peer-reviewed articles. Naturally, we strive for impartiality, aiming to be as objective as our topic requires us to be. A moment's reflection on our teaching and research might reveal that we are applying this objective approach to promoting specific political agendas in our classes and in our publications – thus confirming that we are, indeed, political beings (Homo politicus). Being aware of this aspect of our identity can make us stronger teachers and researchers, which is one reason PhD candidates are asked about the epistemological and ontological positioning of their dissertations, and our suggestion is that these should also highlight candidates' axiological positioning in the future.

This chapter looks at how political values at all levels (local, regional, national and global) are strongly connected to tourism flows, trends and developments. Politicians have a role here: to promote the place they represent, while enhancing the lives of the people they represent (or, at least, that is their role in theory). We therefore investigate how some bases of democracy, liberalism, party politics, populism, and nationalism have an impact on how we teach and learn tourism. We also query the impact of political correctness on political values and on what we choose to say (or not say) to our students, both in and outside the classroom.

Homo politicus

Human beings are *political beings,* a fact made evident through our *explicit* and *implicit* actions, as described above. And underlying those actions are political values. When we go about our daily lives, selecting products and services that we consume, we are constantly valuing; and the choice not to consume something is as much a value-directed action as to consume something. Boycotts are well-defined examples of this. We learn why a company or an entire nation is "bad" according to somebody we respect or trust, and we follow their lead in not consuming products and services from that entity. However, we have also the responsibility to be aware of what we do consume because every act of consumption is simultaneously a political act of accepting the premises by which that consumption is made possible.

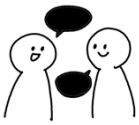
Let us take a simple example: we want to buy a new shirt and go shopping. We find a shirt we like at a fast-fashion shop: it is fashionable and cheap, so we buy it. Now, we have in this act accepted everything that is related to how that shirt is produced, transported and marketed. The fibres to make the shirt might come from fossil fuels, the primary contributor to climate change; the dyes to make the colours might be environmental toxins, killing local nature where it is produced; the workers who make the shirt might be underpaid, or they might even be forced to do the work as prisoners

or refugees; and the profit made from the sale of the shirt might end up in a tax shelter, no part of it contributing to the greater good of the community. We used fast-fashion here, but it is simply an example – and not an exceptional one, at that. We could have used any brand, of any product or any service to illustrate our point, including those in the tourism industry. Indeed, selecting to go on holiday somewhere is just as much a political act as all other consumption. We are not just Homo sapiens – thinking beings – but equally Homo politicus – political beings.

The idea of Homo politicus is therefore an extension of *social reality,* which is examined in Chapter 5 on Social Values. Both themes examine how actions reflect *norms* in our societies. Consequently, buying a cheap shirt or going on holiday to a nation led by a military leader who throws opposition politicians and union-leaders in prison might be perfectly normal behaviour. Judging by our spending habits and vacation preferences, we are no different from our friends and relatives, Quite the contrary. Insofar as we follow the norms in our societies, we function well in the given roles of our social realities.

However, that does not take away our responsibility as political beings.

Although some might not be comfortable with our earlier assertion, it bears repeating: each academic is, in essence, a political being. Therefore, each act we commit is a political act insofar as it accepts or rejects a range of other acts. This statement sets the foundation for Greenwood's (previously Gruenewald) ethos of critical pedagogy, where he quotes Giroux (1988): "educators and students should become 'transformative intellectuals' […] capable of identifying and redressing the world's injustices" (Greenwood, 2003, p. 4). To do otherwise – that is, to know about an injustice and decide not to address it – makes us, in essence, complicit to the injustice.



Conversation Starter

Your students might disagree that we are all political beings, so in order to test the premises of this argument, ask them to give examples of any open and public act they may make (i.e., an act that carries no social or legal censure) that in no way whatsoever forces them to accept norms in society or has a political dimension to it. As your students soon will discover, this is almost an impossibility.

Discussing whether certain destinations should be boycotted because of human rights or animal welfare abuses can make for a lively debate about the pros and cons of such action and exposes students at the same time to countries with which they might be less familiar. The discussion might also expose students to a perspective they may not have previously considered: their own complicity, potential or real, in perpetuating these abuses. Human rights and animal welfare violations can stem not just from the destination itself, but also from the behaviour of tourists visiting the destination. In this case, the discussion might also revolve around the right of certain destinations to impose stricter control over tourism behaviour. Good candidates for the discussion could be Muslim countries where tourists dress and behave in a manner blatantly

disrespectful of their host communities' beliefs and customs; destinations considered sacred by the local population that are desecrated by tourists whose behaviour is openly irreverent (e.g., swearing, loud voices, photographing people at prayer); colonial settler countries where Indigenous populations are expected to conform to western sensibilities around animal hunts; and Morocco and its occupation of the Western Sahara which has forced many of the Sahrawi people into refugee camps and is the object of the activity below. Students can also be asked to make their own list of countries with offensive practices they are aware of – and come to their own conclusions about whether their home countries should be included on that list. This discussion would also bring in ethical values and a reflection on the economic pain imposed on the destination's population.

Activity

In his teaching case "*Tourism to promote political responsibility*", Jaume Guia takes the notion of tourism as a political act to an extreme. The case presents a course involving a field trip to an actual refugee camp where students are challenged to rethink the consideration and care for host communities which is often romanticised and, at most, moralistic but not political. He suggests that, as a consequence, even with the best "moral" intentions, tourism loses its potential for curbing structural injustices, and visitors return home happy to have improved their skills, thus reinforcing the neoliberal system at the base of the structural injustices.

The Internet also abounds with pictures and videos of holidaymakers on the beach completely unfazed by refugees and migrants making their way ashore, after an arduous and hazardous journey to escape horrific conditions. Do an online search of videos that present the above scenario. YouTube is a good source. Could this be an alternative exercise to get students thinking about the incongruency of pleasure versus desperation – and the political values underlying this juxtaposition.

Political correctness

Political correctness is embedded with values that teachers must openly address. Democracy is often seen as the preferred political system in nations that respect universal values and human rights. Like so many other words, democracy is related to politics in Western languages, borrowed from the original Greek words *demos* (people) and *kratos* (to rule). Those two words give us an insight into what democracy is meant to be. If we live in a democracy, we live in a nation where the people (of that nation) rule over how the nation should be governed (or that is, at least, the intention).

A democratic nation should give all its citizen equal and fair opportunities to be and become whatever they choose to. Free speech is one part of democracy, ensuring that people's opinions are not censored, even if those opinions do not appease the people in power. As always, freedom comes with responsibility: to be free to express one's opinions, one should simultaneously make sure that these opinions are in the interest of the overall good. Freedom is by nature axiological, and the three layers of the axiological hierarchy can be seen where talks and ideologies that are proclaimed

belong to systemic values. The actions taken to enhance people's living are extrinsic values, and the actual effect on living beings relates to intrinsic values. If somebody is using their right to free speech to destroy and hurt others, then it is a disvalue, and should be stopped. This intervention is not a limitation of free speech in an axiological meaning, but rather the fulfilment of common good.

Another part of living in a democracy, related to the disvalue of misusing free speech, is that one should not be afraid of being discriminated against for belonging to a less powerful or minority group. No ideology, action or speech can justify discrimination of less powerful individuals or groups, based on political opinion, age, physical or mental state, ethnicity, social standing, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, or any other possible non-mainstream grouping.

The wish not to express, intentionally or unintentionally, discriminatory views toward a minority leads to another issue: political correctness.

Political correctness, sometimes abbreviated as PC, is an openly stated goal at most educational institutions, reflected in, for example, anti-harassment measures or ethics approvals of research projects. However, it is also a covert social norm that anyone should know how to navigate within the context in which they act. The overt measures are helpful for all involved as they clearly describe social expectations that aim to create a fair and democratic environment where no one has anything to fear from others' actions. Politically correct statements are, or at least should be, respectful. They should not take for granted any one group's privilege, but rather act inclusively to incorporate all. It is thereby politically correct not to make sexist remarks, joke about stereotypes, or show disrespect toward any individual or group that in any way might be regarded as not having the same privileges as the speaker.

At the same time, political correctness is not unproblematic (Ely et al., 2006). It is often accompanied by an assumed moralistic superiority on the part of those upholding political correctness toward those they perceive as trespassing set rules (Fox, 2018). An excellent parody of the downsides of political correctness can be seen in the American animated TV series *South Park* from season 19 onwards, when the new principal of the elementary school is introduced, "PC Principal", followed by the vice-principal "Strong Woman" and their children, jointly referred to as "PC Babies". The writers use these characters as ironic portrayals of the hypocrisy that can lurk beneath the surface of political correctness. The PC Babies, for example, cry at the most minute reference that can be (mis) interpreted as politically incorrect. Their extreme sensitivity and expectation of being treated with "kid gloves" is used to poke fun at the so called "snowflake generation"

(Abrahams & Brooks, 2019). More seriously, it is also used to warn about the folly of political correctness taken to extremes.

This lesson takes us back to teaching tourism in our present classrooms. On the one hand, we have the responsibility to raise socially, culturally and politically uncomfortable matters; on the other hand, we also have the responsibility not to offend our students. Fox (2018) makes excellent arguments for how universities are part of the problem in creating rules aimed at curbing "hate-speech". These rules, however well-intentioned, impose layers of censorship that reduce students' ability to listen to diverse viewpoints. (This topic is examined further in the chapter, under *populism*)

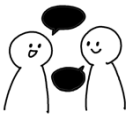
In sum, free speech, political correctness, anti-discrimination measures and democratic processes all have an axiological communal good at heart, yet their mutations and misuse are clear examples of disvalues. In many instances, this dichotomy is illustrated in a struggle between generations. For example, in an effort to support the values associated with political correctness, younger generations may too easily dismiss or even mock what they perceive as the overly conservative views of their elders. Other examples of this dichotomy result from a kind of communal amnesia brought on by ever faster cycles of information spread that might not be epistemological in nature, but rather based on emotion. Concepts like "cancel culture", "intersectionality", or "trigger warnings" (Wyatt, 2016), relate to this debate. All have been used, in many cases incorrectly, by social elites and conservative forces to challenge justified critiques of their positions and practices. The first one, "cancel culture" is described by Clark (2020) as "an expression of agency, a choice to withdraw one's attention from someone or something whose values, (in)action, or speech are so offensive, one no longer wishes to grace them with their presence, time, and money" (Clark, 2020, p. 88). Now, "cancelling" or withdrawing one's attention to a person, cause or business may be a rational and justified course of action – but not when it is prompted by a mob mentality. Fox (2018) uses the example of a Labour supporting drag queen, Vanity von Glow, who after performing at an event also attended by right-wing speakers found herself "cancelled" by her own community, and declared "guilty by association" (Fox, 2018: 4). Thus, what Vanity said at the event was not taken in consideration, but rather that she performed at an event alongside people with different opinions to her and her community.

Thus, even with the best intentions, any rules and norms that are "imposed" can always prompt counter arguments by those positioned on the other side. The result is then a conversational combat, where rational arguments often cannot compete with emotional positions. In other words, the dominant logic is dialectics. Posthumanist positions, drawn from Deleuze's philosophy and made explicit by Braidotti (2019), break away from dialectics and embrace an affirmative ethics of difference and production of the new – instead of the negative ethics of sameness and the defence of the old, the original (which does not exist because of the implicit infinite regress).

Therefore, censure is a problem here, and political correctness is essential, but perhaps it does not have to be "normative" in a universalistic sense. Perhaps political

correctness could be an individual and situated responsibility (i.e., a responsibility of all individuals), which would require a capacity for attentiveness and attunement that the current pedagogies definitely do not develop.

The point we want to make here is that it is important to be aware of these pitfalls and to actively consider them in one's own teaching practice. It is worthwhile not only to follow the debates on pertinent issues through media and discussion groups, but also to create one's own axiological position, for a clearer understanding of where one's values reside in these matters. It is easy to laugh at silly antics in satires such as South Park, but it is also very important to locate one's own privileged position, and make sure that one does not moralise away valid statements of grief by people in less powerful positions.



Conversation starter

Fox (2018) quotes research that states that 74% of respondents who are 16-26 years old feel that they are psychologically damaged by being referred to as "Snowflakes". Ask half the class to take a position supporting this notion, and the other half to take a position against it.

This exercise could also be linked to Maja Turnšek's *"Combating negative prejudice against young people"*.

Activity

In her teaching case *"Yes-And: How to create a brave space by incorporating improvisational theatre games",* Stefanie *Benjamin* presents improvisation (improv) as a way of getting beyond locked positions and parties who do not want to hear opposing views. Improv is a communal art form that requires spontaneity, offers generous mutual support, and forces participants to get out of their heads and access deeper parts of themselves to help them manage change. Stefanie shows us how we can use improv to take the focus off ourselves and suspend personal judgement.

Populism, political platforms and ideologies

In a growing number of nations, people with limited political experience – and, in some cases, no experience at all in party politics – are holding high level political positions. The rise of "non-political politicians" can be traced to media and to changes in our societies. As discussed in Chapter 5 on Social Values, these changes have been gradual, but are now accelerating, which leaves people in a state of uncertainty as they struggle to navigate their changed societal structures.

Our societies have held onto remnants of earlier societal structures that have no reason for being maintained. Some of these are now targeted for a rapid change. For example, being present at a physical location called "work" for eight hours per day is a remnant of Society 3.0 that is often unnecessary even in Society 4.0. If a person's job is to process information on a computer, on their own, then why would that person have to

perform the work in a certain place at a certain time? As long as a task gets done within the required time, then it should not really matter precisely when or where it is performed. Or does it? Right now, as we are writing this book, COVID-19 is bringing these questions to the forefront, prompting changes to the old conventions. Consequently, many employers are allowing non-contact employees to work from home, which leads to speculation on whether this practice will continue post pandemic, as we move toward Society 5.0. Microsoft, Google, and Twitter, amongst others, have already announced that remote work will be a long-term business strategy for them – a strategy that imposes a radical change into people's lives.

The connection between these kinds of changes and populism, political platforms and ideologies may be subtle, but it is real.

In times of change and uncertainty, such as in the above example, people worry about how their lives will be affected. And one reaction to worry is anger. After all, the changes might threaten the way of life that an individual has chosen and become used to. In fact, the changes might not include that individual at all, obscuring the clear future they had planned for themselves. One way to escape all this worry and anger is to embrace an affirmative ethics, which brings hope for the perpetual return to the different (instead of the same). However, humanist and modernist politics (also the liberal democracies that we live in), with their rootedness on norms, essences and foundationalism, fail to advance this. Consequently, the fear and anger persist. If a politician, or an opinion-leader, at this stage suggests that the reason for the threatening change is easily eradicated and thus the status quo restored, then it might be tempting to believe that person. Judging by recent history, these opinion leaders do not even need a reasonable plan to implement their proposed changes. They simply have to focus on the changes and on the uncertainty, worry and anger that these changes have created.

As part of that strategy, ultra conservative politicians and populists often target political correctness and its different dimensions, such as anti-discrimination policies and "trigger warnings", which attempt to change unfair structural positions. Instead of taking the critique to heart, the populist movement distorts the critique into an assault on common values, whereby they present themselves as defenders of the common good – all while rejecting attempts at larger equality.

When political leaders position themselves as representing "ordinary people" who are seen as "good" in juxtaposition to "the elite" who are somehow corrupt or self-serving, they are appealing to those citizens who see themselves as ignored in the midst of societal change or even victimized by the change. These leaders speak to their fears and general opposition to liberal pluralism. In additional, populists often see themselves as true patriots and tend to hold fundamentalist religious beliefs that they wish to see imposed on all aspects of society.

Populism has also led to a time of *post-truth*, where arguments are not supported with

data and reason, but rather with emotions. For instance, we saw much anger expressed during the pandemic at having to wear masks ostensibly because it infringes on the freedom of individuals. Indeed, these emotively backed arguments are often presented as conservative values but are actually their opposite. Here the systemic value of freedom is put against the extrinsic value of care for others. Populist politics do not strive for clearly defined goals as values do. Rather, they act as anti-opinions, being against anything that does not serve their restrictive agenda.

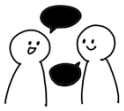
A tremendous responsibility lies with us, as educators, to introduce our students to politics and political values. The goal here is not to subjectively push our students to accept only our opinions, but rather to explain how different political platforms function, and to encourage students to examine what the different political parties in their societies stand for. Tourism is often seen as a relatively apolitical act and sector – especially so by the business communities that want to highlight travel and leisure as "breaks" from regular society. However, as discussed above, acts are always political, and it is of essence for students to understand what role they themselves play in the larger picture.

As also discussed in Chapter 8 on Ethics, trust in politicians is very low all over the world – a sad fact since many of us personally know people who engage in politics for the good of their communities. Their integrity and belief in their abilities to make a positive difference is admirable, and it is therefore very concerning that the common picture of somebody engaged in politics is, in many cases, quite negative. Media has a role in this: storylines are often more enticing when they are be built around failure and deception than around success and promises kept. Although most professional journalists aim to be objective and factually accurate, all media are biased. However, some media channels are more openly supportive of certain positions and more blatantly dismissive of the opposition. Each individual also bears a responsibility for this bias. We tend to seek out in the media those opinions and values that we agree with, while opposing opinions are rejected or silenced in one's mind.

The importance of staying neutral as teachers and allowing for differences to be aired and debated in our classrooms is critical. It would be easy to invite only politicians that we agree with into our classrooms, but by doing so we would, in essence, be contributing to the distrust in politics at large. Instead, by giving students the power to interrogate ideologies behind different political views, we help transform students into independent thinkers. Certainly, this would be an excellent opportunity to teach affirmative ethics (and politics), instead of perpetuating the failed dialectical logic that dominates and completely permeates our current ideologies (when it comes to party politics, liberal democracies and populism alike). Only the concept of radical democracy opens a way toward affirmative ethics and toward a real "political" responsibility of each individual. At most, the current ideologies will foster "moralisms" and therefore will reinforce depoliticisation and dialectics.

Ideologies are, in Harari's phrasing, "the stories we choose to believe and tell one

another" (Harari, 2014, p. 27), and that each listener or reader either accepts or rejects. Dominant ideologies seem logical to all who accept them. Otherwise, they wouldn't be commonly accepted. But no ideology is more than a systemic value. It expresses ideas and wishes for a common good, but it is never more than the words and ideas that it entails. The actions that come out of different ideologies are extrinsic values. Extrinsic values, such as environmental or social activism, are the ones we should give our students an opportunity to question, so that they understand how the actions resulting from those values affect so many living things.



Conversation starter

The story of Canada's worst ever outbreak of E. coli contamination in a small rural town and the attempt by the government to restore people's faith in the quality of the drinking water had the unintended consequence of shutting down many small businesses that were engaged in tourism activities to supplement their main source of income. This story is captured in Marion Joppe's *"Unintended consequences of policy implementation"*.

Activity

Ahead of a local or national election in the region where you are active, invite representatives from different political parties to present the impact of their policies on, for example, inbound and outbound tourism, or any other issue being dealt with in your courses. Give clear guidelines for how long you want each representative to talk, and what issues you want them to focus on.

It is generally good to discuss these matters in class before having the guests, so that students come prepared to ask questions and actively probe the different representatives on how their positions will differently affect the students' future lives and careers.

Nationalism and other stories we tell ourselves

The above sub-heading is deeply engrained in our collective imagination, and strongly entangled with tourism. Our reference to "collective imagination" is borrowed from Benedict Anderson's (1991) work on nationalism. He shows that all modern nation-states have relatively short histories, but all share a common feature: they lay claim to historical antecedents that are jointly presented as a logical entity called the "nation". Tangible elements (e.g., flags, stamps, currency) or intangible features (e.g., anthems, landscapes, art) are jointly presented as representing a unity. Nationalism is a result of nation-building, an exaggeration of certain features claimed to be distinct and specific, much in the same way tourist destinations present themselves to potential tourists. (The problem with this is presented below). Nations around the world all have their own myths and stories that collectively function as the "glue" for large communities to feel a sense of harmony and cohesiveness, but also a certain superiority to other nations. Politicians are naturally strong proponents of the idea of a nation, and many are proudly nationalistic.

Through their shared pride, people are happy to work for the common good, sacrificing small parts of their well-being and, in emergencies, perhaps even their own lives, to protect their nation's ideals and values. There are, however, downsides to nationalism. A sense of unity does not allow for discord, and people of alternative viewpoints can therefore be shunned. Nationalism might be used unscrupulously by some people who advance their own interests under the guise of nationalism.

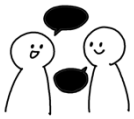
Tourism can have a negative role to play in this, as well. Tourism branding is used by countries as a strategy for their nationalistic strength, and most travellers fall into that trap (or they are fine with it in the first place), thus reinforcing the perpetuation of "the same". This is particularly seen in the romanticizing forces that some visitors put into the visited societies, which like all others are in constant change, but have to remain (or pretend to remain) as tourism likes it, so that the tourists can be satisfied. A lot of community-based tourism is based on this argument and as a result culture is commodified, which is problematic. Even more problematic, however, is that the commodification of culture reinforces depoliticisation.

National and Indigenous minorities are relevant here because through tourism they may have some recognition, which in centralistic and conservative states is a good thing. (Otherwise, they would be silenced and, to borrow from a term used earlier, cancelled-out. But this recognition also "folklorises" the national minority, which at most gets locked as a "differential folklore' within the "sacred" unity of the nation-state, thus violating blatantly the right of minorities for self-determination. Most constitutions do not allow for the self-determination of minorities. This is against human rights, but nobody cares. The rule of law seems to be a superior (divine?) value, and everybody (including the vast majority of travellers, who are not attentive to these matters) seems to accept it. Why, for instance, do tourists not use the name of the minority nation region or land when they refer to their destination, instead of using the ubiquitous "legal" names of the current nation-states. Many scholars committed to ethics in tourism also fail to be attentive to this. By reproducing the words of the dominant framework, we are also acting politically and reinforcing the institutional (unjust?) status quo.

A nationalist from any nation would probably strongly oppose these views, and claim that they, in their specific nation, represent something special, which we (as outsiders to their unity) cannot understand.

The point of bringing nationalism as a political value into this chapter is to highlight that it is a construct just as society and ideologies are constructs. Nationalistic values are always hard to argue against. The moment a person attempts to unravel a claim, they can be accused of being unpatriotic and, therefore, an enemy of the nation. The same is true for religions, and any other communal beliefs that people adhere to. Finally, nationalism is connected to both *colonialism*, and *post-colonialism*. According to Anderson (1991) the latter even accounts for the emergence of nationalism. The basic idea of colonialism, that any one nation should have the right to impose, for its

own benefit, its rule, values and power on another nation, and at the cost of that ruled nation, comes from the ideas of *culture* and its accompanying sense of superiority that are examined in Chapter 6. Tourism could essentially be considered a continuation of the same, though now cloaked in the guise of leisure and pleasure. For an extension of this argument, see Edelheim (2015).



Conversation starter

Think of two specific national features of a nation that you feel affinity with. How do those features define you, and how are they so specific to your nation that no outsider would be able to understand them?