DO WE HAVE A RIGHT?

Politics, Europe and Study Abroad
...AN APOLOGIA

As opposed to an apology...
T/F – A politically conservative student from North America is less apt to benefit from study abroad in Europe (or anywhere else) than a liberal/progressive one.

T/F- It is more difficult for me to help a politically conservative student negotiate the cross-cultural challenges of study abroad.
Comparing US and Europe 15 years ago
Can we talk about politics as politics?
πολιτεία
Erroneus is the one in the middle...
Two Americas: culture or politics?

From Wikipedia
Red State v Blue State Culture
Student abroad as “fish out of water”
Are all good artists on the Left?
Politics as a problem to be overcome.
From the Forum’s Call for Proposals

How can international educators express a shared culture that is at once the foundation of accumulated history and cultural knowledge and at the same time changes as each nation responds to current issues? (my italics)
Can we talk about politics as politics?

- To each other in the IE profession?
- To each other in the field?
- To our students?
- More broadly, in HE as academics?
Are we already kind of talking about politics?

**Intercultural Conflict Style**

- A culture group’s preferred manner for dealing with disagreements and communicating emotion
Me-search in International Education
Me-search in International Education
Academic aspirations...
A complex affair...
In Spain we have lots of politics...
...but no government.
Politics as a threat to be avoided.
Our students’ apolitical map of Europe
“A belief that one's history contains nothing good or worthwhile leads either to utopian dreams of a new beginning, or a failure to resist those utopian dreams: in other words to fanaticism or apathy. Fanaticism is resentment in search of power; consumerism is apathy in search of happiness.”

T. Dalrymple, *The New Vichy Syndrome*
TED is a global community, welcoming people from every discipline and culture who seek a deeper understanding of the world. We believe passionately in the power of ideas to change attitudes, lives and, ultimately, the world.
Our moral matrix: we’re not blank slates

1. Harm/ care
2. Fairness/ reciprocity
3. In-group/ loyalty
4. Authority / respect
5. Purity / sanctity
The “political coaching” paradigm
Krugman: “bad analogy”

And it’s not just the fact that you can choose your ideology, but not your race.
John Jost, Psychology Prof. at NYU
“First, there is a great deal of empirical evidence indicating that conservatives are in fact less open to change, novelty, and complexity and are more likely to perceive the world as a dangerous place than liberals” (Carney et al., 2008; Gerber et al., 2010; Jost et al., 2003).
Haidt versus Jost

**Moral Foundations Theory**
- Morals bind/blind
- We lose when all parties aren’t at the table
- We can learn to better control our beliefs—equalizer metaphor

**Systems Justification Theory**
- We’re less rational than we think
- Haidt is less a scientist when inserting his values to seek “balance”
- Perceived charge of ideological bias
Politicizing science

Secrets of the right-wing brain: New study proves it — conservatives see a different, hostile world

Chris Mooney
JUL 15, 2016 6:00 AM

Scientists Are Beginning to Figure Out Why Conservatives Are...Conservative

Ten years ago, it was wildly controversial to talk about psychological differences between liberals and conservatives. Today, it's becoming hard not to.

Chris Mooney
JUL 15, 2016 6:00 AM

Phony WMD, Benghazi, birthers, truthers -- turns out there's a scientific explanation for deniers and Tea Partiers

Paul Rosenberg
TUESDAY, JUL 29, 2014 10:31 PM EEST

TOPICS: CLIMATE CHANGE, CONSERVATIVES, EDITOR'S PICKS, GAZA, RIGHT WING, TEA PARTY, UKRAINE, POLITICS NEWS
Why doesn’t the Right just concede?

There is by now evidence from a variety of laboratories around the world using a variety of methodological techniques leading to the virtually inescapable conclusion that the cognitive-motivational styles of leftists and rightists are quite different. This research consistently finds that conservatism is positively associated with heightened epistemic concerns for order, structure, closure, certainty, consistency, simplicity, and familiarity, as well as existential concerns such as perceptions of danger, sensitivity to threat, and death anxiety.
Politics as a behavioral science

- We humans are intuitive, not rational—justification of belief is ex post facto
- Cognitive-motivational styles of left- and right-leaning people differ significantly
- Conservatives operate more centers of moral reasoning than liberals
- Conservatives are better at predicting the moral judgments of liberals and than liberals are at predicting the moral judgments of conservatives and moderates.
GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP?
“States whose authority is constitutionally limited to ruling by law are very imperfect instruments for the immense task of rationally redistributing the planet’s wealth and rectifying the attitudes on which injustice is founded.”

K. Minogue, Politics: A Very Short Intro
Implications for study abroad?

- Political leaning is in-born. Republicans study abroad too.
- Many (most) other democracies are split along L/R.
- Racial politics aren’t easily transferable across borders.
- Some cultures/nations are more conservative, but don’t they all contain Liberals and Conservatives?
- Why is there no “campus rape culture” in European higher education? And so little ADHD in Euro-kids? No trigger warnings in European classrooms?
Possible IE research directions?

- Can study abroad give students skills that help them “cross cultures” back in a politically polarized USA?
- Are our political opponents “like” a foreign culture to us?
- Can Haidt’s moral matrix complicate our views of other countries or in-groups?
- Are batteries like IDI/BEVI compatible with soc. sci. research about moral reasoning and political leaning?
You may call me a dreamer, but
ANECHOU KAI APECHOU

—EPICTETUS

(Bear and forbear...)

(Paraphr: Bear and forbear...)