

Review of: "When did post-truth begin? From climate change denial to war-mongering nationalism"

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The issue analyzed in the article is highly relevant because it is related to the future of democracy in a society threatened by the spread of fake news. Some years ago Walter Lippmann warned us in *Liberty and the News* that "the fundamental problem of democracy [is] the care of the sources of opinion. Everything else depends on this. Without defense against propaganda, without guidelines for evidence, without criteria for what is relevant, the living matter of popular decision is exposed to all prejudices and to be exploited without limits".

The author places the origin of the post-truth era in two phenomena: climate denialism, responsible for the failure of the 2009 Climate Summit in Copenhagen, and warmongering nationalism, feeded by the agendas of the extreme right. And all this, in a context in which the deregulation of media contributes to the multiplication of falsehoods. This becomes the theoretical core of this text.

However, it can be considered that the post-truth era has a decisive antecedent, which the author barely mentions briefly at the end of the text: the campaign carried out for years by the tobacco industry with paid scientists to combat the evidence of the lethality of tobacco. Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway in *Merchants of Doubt* explain how tactics devised by scientists at the Tobacco Industry Research Committee (TIRC) served to cast public doubt on the strong scientific evidence of the health consequences of smoking. It is in this controversy that the start of the post-truth phenomenon can be situated in contemporary terms.

This attack on scientific truth by the tobacco industry was aided by two unique elements. On the one hand, the discredit of the experts, to which the banality of debates on television has contributed significantly, giving equal credit to the opinions of scientists and the conspiracy commentators. On the other hand, the success in academic fields of postmodern thought (authors such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Richard Rorty or Bruno Latour), which has relativized the existence of objective truths and proposes to speak of narratives or conflicting perspectives. The debunking of experts and the contestation of scientific truth deserves to be treated in more depth and Lee McIntyre's book *Post-Truth* is a good reference.

The text needs a detailed revision to eliminate some repetitions and reorder its content. Some of the sections - for example, in which the ideas of Kymlicka and Donaldson on animal rights are mentioned - seem alien to the proposed topic, they blur the discussion and the article would be better if they were eliminated.

Finally, the section of the conclusions must be significantly reconsidered, since it is practically limited to repeating the

statements that already appear in the Introduction.