

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

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This article promises to make a valuable contribution to the connections between climate change denialism and nationalism, but does need some significant work. Here are some key areas where it might be developed:

- I think it needs a more sure-footed approach to post-truth. I think it would be useful if the author was actually less sure (ironically) about the origins of post-truth, but better at describing its contemporary effects. The material on tobacco provides its own undermining context here for the article, for example, as the tobacco debate takes post-truth to a time before the 1980s and the origin point suggested in the article. I think the point the author made about other authors connecting post-truth with power is actually a suitable framework here - and some recent Foucauldian work on regimes of 'post-truth' may help tie this together. In this regard too, the connections post-truth has with covid, vaccine-hesitancy, and concepts such as 'evolution' and the culture-war style public debates that centre around events before, during and after such moments as the Scopes Monkey Trial - all point to post-truth's origin as being quite complex and in need of more analysis by us all. (I could go back to Copernicus on this afterall).
- Aspects that tend to mark out the contemporary effects of post-truth are done better in this paper - but the extent to which Trump, Johnson, Erdogan, Putin, Duterte and so on have benefitted from post-truth (well at least in the short-term) perhaps distinguish this from the time of Nixon. The social media contribution is better covered in this paper, but I do agree with one other reviewer I glanced at who suggested keeping fake news and post-truth as separate concepts.
- I think there is some theoretical work needed on the nature of science itself too. Science is no paradise epistemologically - no safe zone for us to retreat too - in the face of post-truth. What I mean by this is that many of the working class sympathy for post-truth messages comes from the way in which 'scientific' messages have actually impacted many of those working class supporters of nationalist politicians. Neoliberal economic messages and associated forms of globalisation have been framed in 'scientific' terms and subsequently resulted in manufacturing jobs leaving their communities. This of course occurs in a wider set of questions about the way 'science' has given us such wonders as Agent Orange, Nuclear energy, genetic modification and so much of the technology that now undermines the wellbeing of those left to pick up the pieces from globalisation.
- Now, don't get me wrong, I think that science is not a relativist or failed discourse. What I am suggesting is that it has its own political and values base, which needs to be factored in here as we think about what a healthy democratic nexus might be in response to post-truth and nationalism. Bruno Latour has written about this in a volume with Clive Hamilton about the Anthropocene.
- On a smaller point, the dismissing of postmodernism - and the obvious modernism sought as the answer via science -

is a broader concern for this paper too.

- In brief to finish off:
 - Take out the Zoopolis stuff
 - Focus on the links between nationalism and climate change in relation to the 'evolving' understanding being developed about post-truth - which would keep the analysis of post-truth as a theoretical frame up top - when it has a habit of interrupting the good links being made about nationalism and climate denial too.
 - I'm not convinced that nationalism is a direct opposite of science - for the reasons that there is a complexity in both that such a black:white dichotomy misses.