

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

John Agnew¹

¹ University of California, Los Angeles

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I appreciate the general argument very much. I would just mention two points. The first is the longstanding suspicion in the US, and other places too, of scientific or "disinterested" knowledge, some of which is the genuine result of industrial campaigns to cover up such things as the fact that smoking contributes significantly to the probability of lung cancer. This helped to set the scene for the exponential growth of skepticism about scientific claims. During the recent pandemic we have seen this skepticism directed at vaccines and public health measures at the same time that internet savants were sponsoring magic cures such as horse dewormer. In the US, Fox News was a major channel for this sort of disinformation. Second, and specifically in relation to the topic of climate change, the connection to nationalism could be strengthened by clarifying how much nationalism is based around territorially-defined populations whose identities require that they are distinctive from others. The obsession with territorial sovereignty follows from this and undoubtedly plays a role in both limiting political horizons and discounting the need to cooperate with other countries in dealing with planetary problems such as climate change.