

Interactive comment on “Agnotology: learning from mistakes” by R. E. Benestad et al.

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I think that Hanekamp and we are on completely different wavelengths. One quote from his comment is: *“Accordingly, the argument, as clearly implied by Benestad et al., that some theories in some scientific fields surely must be beyond serious dispute is simply and demonstrably false”*. This position is an imagination of Hanekamp’s, and not one that we support. Please let us keep to the paper and skip all the off-topic arguments.

The selection chosen in our paper reflect the debate, and we challenged Hanekamp to cite some papers he thought deserve to be included. He has not offered any new cases. Now he does not even know what he meant by asymmetry, and I’m also starting to wonder what he was talking about.

It is difficult to grasp Hanekamp’s point on *“critical errors in reasoning and logic”* - does he refer to the specific cases? Or the description of the situation? Perhaps the term

C322

agnotology? Or learning from mistakes? Replication, based on disclosed computer code?

Hanekamp makes a point about logical reasoning, and then makes an association between our paper and Trofim Lysenko and others – at this point, his own logic fails. Associations does not necessarily imply logical connections. It’s a weak argument.

Neither our paper nor our view is about *“repression of competing ideas”* - we want to examine the controversies and replicate the work in order to understand why there are different views. He also presumes that a scientific consensus is based on non-epistemic nature, yet fails to appreciate the fact that we do offer the source code of our cases, so that others can replicate. We do argue that openness and replication is the key to avoid such situations.

When it comes to “pig-headed” scientists, I admit that is a personal observation. The point is, we do not censure anybody and are not in position to do so. So why does Hanekamp worry? Again, his logic fails. He is accusing us of “communities hindering developing scientific insights” when in fact we are trying to do the opposite.

Our paper is not about discussing whether the consensus is correct, but to try to understand why there are controversies and different conclusions drawn about some central questions. Hanekamp gets hung up about non-epistemic drivers such as power, money, recognition. He may know more about this than me, seeing that a google search on him gives:

<http://www.zoominfo.com/p/Jaap-Hanekamp/11461458>

http://www.climatewiki.org/wiki/Heidelberg_Appeal

Apparently, Heidelberg Appeal no longer exists, but there is a new one called “the Green Audit Institution” (difficult to translate “Groene Rekenkamer”):

<http://www.groenerekenkamer.com/node/877>

C323

I think that this discussion leads nowhere, and we will disagree with Habnekamp. Hence, we should keep to the replicable science, and Hanekamp should urge both sides to disclose their methods and data so that anybody can replicate their work.

Interactive comment on Earth Syst. Dynam. Discuss., 4, 451, 2013.