

# Truth or Democracy?

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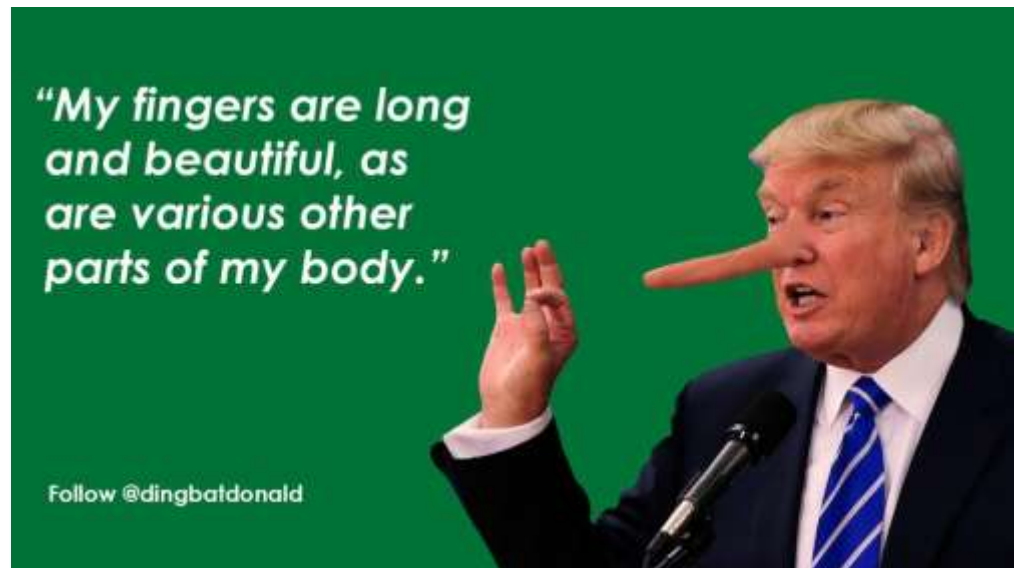


President-elect



President-elect

President  
Pinocchio





*Sean Spicer* – press secretary:  
“President Trump's inaugural ceremony has drawn the largest audience to ever witness an inauguration – period.”



*Kellyanne Conway* – counselor:  
"Our press secretary, Sean Spicer, gave **alternative facts** to [these claims], but the point remains that..."

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/video/2017/jan/22/kellyanne-conway-trump-press-secretary-alternative-facts-video>



*Chuck Todd* – interviewer:  
"Wait a minute. Alternative facts? ... Alternative facts are not facts. They're **falsehoods**", brute lies.



"**Post-truth** describes a situation in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief”.

Telling examples: presidential elections USA and Brexit





## The most suggested solution...



fact-checkers



...doesn't work – neither for science, nor for politics. Since...

# SCIENCE

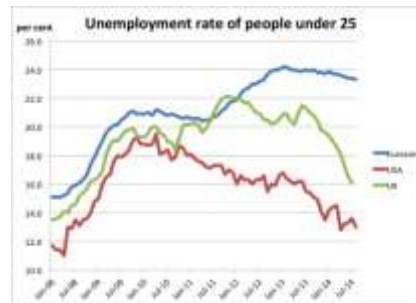
- Facts don't speak for themselves, but need proof

Even numbers during inaugurations



- Facts need interpretation

e.g. unemployment rates  
lab results



- Facts not only represent reality, but also create reality

e.g. DSM-5





# POLITICS

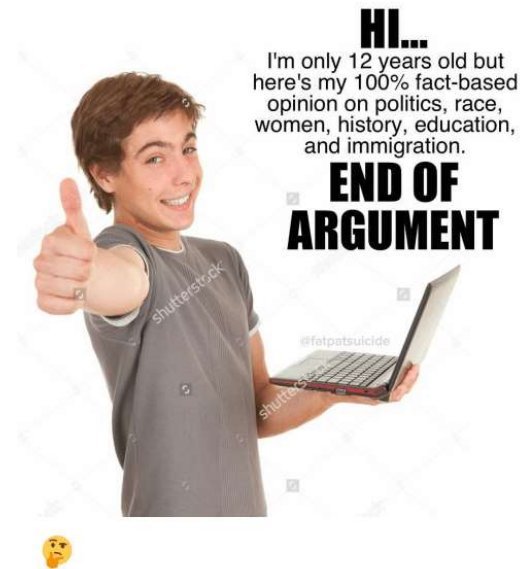
- Politics is more than facts; also values, emotions, experiences.

See the Brexit campaign



- Facts often are used as conversation-killers

science based policy =  
technocracy = eliminating politics  
and democracy



# So, better than fact-checkers: acknowledge the intimate relations between Science & Politics.

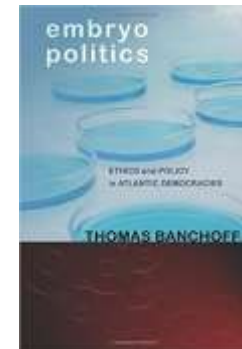


See, for example:

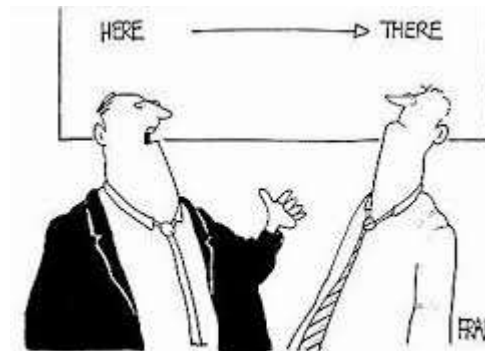
- Climate change  
E.g. IPCC



- Medical science & technology  
E.g. prenatal diagnostics



- Economic models



"It's a simple model... but it works for me..."

WODC?!



## Philosophical questions:

Given, we live in a society, imbued with science and technology –  
i.e. a *knowledge society*, a *technological culture*:

- How **science and politics** are / should be related?
- Is science independent, objective, neutral?  
Or is science “politics, pursued by other means”?
- Where science ends, and politics begins?
- Should policy decisions be based on scientific knowledge?  
Or on political ideals? Or on a mix of both?
- What are the implications for the relation between scientific experts,  
politicians, and citizens/laymen?  
Who is allowed to talk about what?
- What about the role of media?  
Journalists, spin-doctors, consultants, etc.



# Truth?



**Yes, but not without Democracy**