

'Post-truth anthropology---published in Anthropology Today'

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A [guest editorial on 'Post-truth anthropology'](#) that I wrote for *Anthropology Today* is out today. ~~It's paywalled, I'm happy to send the text on request if you can't access it.~~ Edit: it has now been made open access for a period of 6 months — if it's paywalled again by the time you read this and you can't access it but want a copy, comment on this post and I'll send it to you.

Abstract

Countless commentators have announced the advent of the post-truth era, but while everyone seems to be talking about it, there is little agreement about what it really means. This article argues that anthropology can make an important and distinctive contribution to understanding post-truth by treating it ethnographically. Commonly proposed explanations for post-truth include changes in political culture, in the structure of information in the digital age and universal cognitive weaknesses that limit people's capacity for critical thought. While all these are likely important factors, they do not account for the role of culture in creating and sustaining post-truth. In fact, it is likely that culture, especially in the form of metacognition, or thought about thought, plays an important role by providing knowledge practices, techniques for allocating attention, and especially competing theories of truth. Ethnographic methods provide anthropologists with a distinctive window on post-truth cultures of metacognition.

Source: [Post-truth anthropology – Mair – 2017 – Anthropology Today](#)