

False thinking and climate change

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Abstract:

Climate affects practically every person today. In open societies, lay people's thinking is crucial in determining what people privately and politically do with the climate change. It is a complex phenomenon, but the ultimate explanation for it is what people do and this depends on how they think. Therefore, it makes sense to study how people think on climate change.

Climate change is complex phenomenon and human thinking is not free from errors. Human mental contents can be false and information processing fallacious. Consequently, what they make are errors. Yet, the role of human thinking is seldom discussed as one of the root sources of climate change. However, we argue and illustrate how human thinking and mental contents concerning the climate change can be investigated by using concepts and methods of content-based cognitive scientific analysis of human information processing.

For example, analysis of social media discussions show that argumentation fallacies are common and claims easily oversimplifying. People's postings can be illogical and based on false or inadequate information. The arguments on climate change tend to confirm person's existing beliefs and match to their interests. Thinking is also easily biased by unconscious hopes and fears that motivate people to think and act in certain ways. Wrong actions, or in other times the inability to act, have caused severe problems in local and global levels. Thus, we can claim that a class of root causes for climate change can be found in the illusory and risky way people think about climate issues as their thinking guides human activity.

Keywords: Climate change, Content-based cognitive science, Thought risks