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Essayist claiming climate “consensus” may face dismissal for “professional discourtesy” to a researcher

Naomi Oreskes, a historian at the University of California, San Diego, may face dismissal after a researcher’s complaint to Chancellor Marye Anne Fox that Oreskes had not read a draft paper by him before thrice accusing him of “misrepresentation”.

In 2004 Oreskes, in a *Science* essay, said none of 928 abstracts of science papers on “global climate change” published between 1993 and 2003 denied the “consensus” that most recent warming was manmade.

After Oreskes’ widely-publicized statement this week that Dr. Klaus-Martin Schulte, a surgeon and researcher at King’s College Hospital, London, misrepresented her, he complains she had not read his paper, demands an apology for professional discourtesy, and says her 2004 essay was “unscientifically apocalyptic”.

Schulte found that several of 539 papers dated 2004 to early 2007 explicitly reject the “consensus”. Fewer than half endorse it even implicitly. Just one says climate change may prove “catastrophic” –

- “If unanimity existed in the peer-reviewed literature between 1993 and 2003 – which I have reason to doubt – it certainly no longer exists today.”
- “The statement says ‘very few papers analyzed said anything explicit at all about the consensus position.’ In remarkable contrast ... Oreskes’ 2004 essay says, ‘Of all the papers, 75% ... either explicitly or implicitly accept[ed] the consensus view.’”
- “The statement’s declaration that the starting-point for Oreskes’ research was that ‘we realized that the basic issue was settled’ would, if true, cast considerable doubt upon the impartiality and reliability of her research.”
- “The statement’s admission that all papers on ... impacts and mitigation were counted as accepting the consensus also raises serious questions as to the appropriateness of Oreskes’ methodology: for it is perfectly possible, for example, to insure against a risk without believing that the risk is at all likely to become a reality.”

- “A substantial proportion of the scientific papers ... reviewed by Oreskes do not provide any direct internal evidence whatsoever that their authors accept the consensus as she chose to define it.”
- “Oreskes’ original conclusion that 75% of the papers ... accepted that ‘consensus’ seems to me, with respect, to be little better than guesswork inspired by wishful thinking on the basis of a previously-unstated, now-declared preconception that the ‘basic issue’ is ‘settled’”.

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