

Souvenir Z: Understanding Tribal Warfare

We began this tour asking: Is there an overarching philosophy that “matches contemporary attitudes”? More important is changing attitudes. Not to encourage a switch of tribes, or even a tribal truce, but something more modest and actually achievable: to understand and get beyond the tribal warfare. To understand them, at minimum, requires grasping how the goals of probabilism differ from those of probativeness. This leads to a way of changing contemporary attitudes that is bolder and more challenging. Snapshots from the error statistical lens let you see how frequentist methods supply tools for controlling and assessing how well or poorly warranted claims are. All of the links, from data generation to modeling, to statistical inference and from there to substantive research claims, fall into place within this statistical philosophy. If this is close to being a useful way to interpret a cluster of methods, then the change in contemporary attitudes is radical: it has never been explicitly unveiled. Our journey was restricted to simple examples because those are the ones fought over in decades of statistical battles. Much more work is needed. Those grappling with applied problems are best suited to develop these ideas, and see where they may lead. I never promised, when you bought your ticket for this passage, to go beyond showing that viewing statistics as severe testing will let you get beyond the statistics wars.