

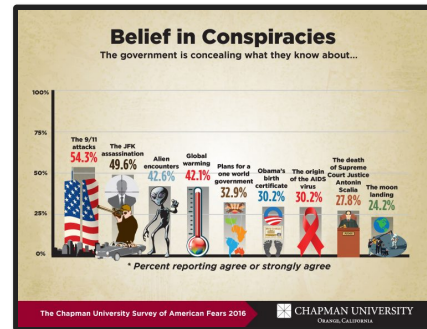
Conspiracy Theories

Too Many Connections



George Matthews, Plymouth State University
2020

The Puzzle of Conspiracy Theories



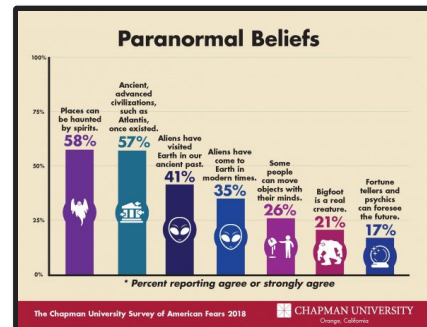
- They enjoy widespread and growing support and yet have little evidence in favor of them.

The Puzzle of Conspiracy Theories



- They are predictable in their emergence in times of crisis and great social stress.

The Puzzle of Conspiracy Theories



- They are individually easy to debunk or disprove, even as they seem impossible to combat on a wider scale.

The Puzzle of Conspiracy Theories



- They are dangerous since they amplify inter-group hostility, encourage violence and subvert efforts to deal with social problems.

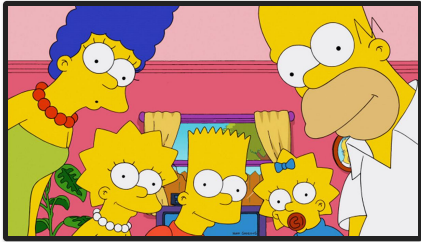
Approaches to Conspiracy Thinking

1. Accept them.



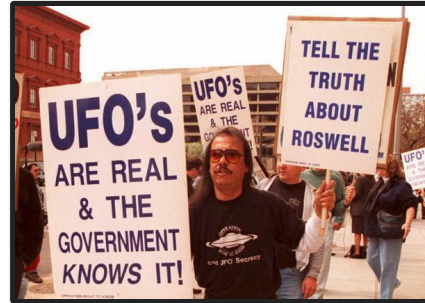
Approaches to Conspiracy Thinking

2. Debunk them one at a time.



Approaches to Conspiracy Thinking

3. Accept relativism about them.



Approaches to Conspiracy Thinking

4. Try to explain them.



Elements of Conspiracy Thinking



- Search for control and meaning in a world out of control and confusing.

Elements of Conspiracy Thinking



- Someone is to blame and we can thus do something about our predicament.

Elements of Conspiracy Thinking



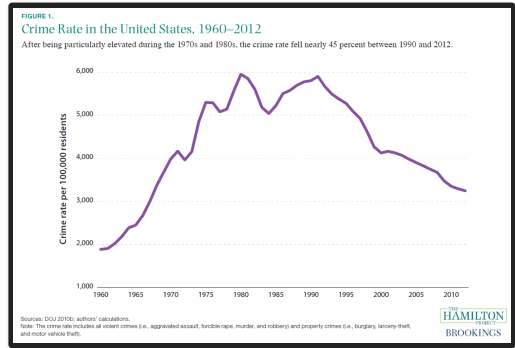
- Symbolic connections, hidden meanings, deep significance of events, invisible agents – these ideas resonate with magical thinking and come naturally to us.

Elements of Conspiracy Thinking

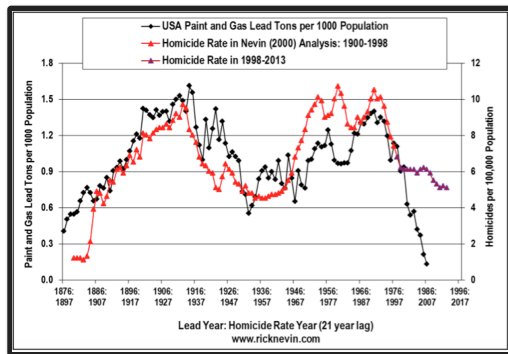


- Common narrative: there is a nefarious plot, organized by a secret elite, which most people don't see or suspect, but I have figured it out and now they are trying to kill me.

Another Puzzle



The Criminal Element



Find out more

- Wikipedia's List of Conspiracy Theories
- Conspiracy Theories Cannot Be Stopped
- Conspiracy Theories are Dangerous
- The Secret History of Lead



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