

The Conspiracy Theory Conspiracy

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Introduction

It has come to my attention during recent years that there has been an increase in the number of news broadcasts and media articles discussing the influx of conspiracy theories. Concurrently, it appears as though the phrase “conspiracy theory” has lost its meaning as it has now become associated with delusion and paranoia. Although this is not a new topic of contention, it is worth analyzing due to how the perceived definition of a conspiracy theory has changed over time and how this is affecting public receptivity of issues that are serious enough to warrant a thorough investigation. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a conspiracy theory is the “belief that some covert but influential organization is responsible for an unexplained event.”¹ The Merriam-Webster dictionary seems to offer a more specific definition where it states that it is “a theory that explains an event or set of circumstances as the result of a secret plot by usually powerful conspirators”.² As can be observed, the official definitions do not suggest that such theories are usually promoted by individuals who are delusional or paranoid. Yet, I have found that the phrase is being used by individuals and entities in positions of authority as a method of countering criticism from people that are perceived by them to be a threat to social order. After having examined thousands of commentary opinions from numerous media sources, and combined these with research that analyzes the causes of the world’s problems, I can say with confidence that this is no coincidence. Through the use of evidence and logic, I will attempt to prove that public opinion is directly and indirectly being engineered to advance the agenda of a powerful elite. It is my hope that this will help the reader understand the main reasons as to why conspiracy theories exist, and why there are great efforts being made to denounce them, hence the title of this article.

Research and Analysis

In the analysis of human behavior, it has been found that conspiracy theories may have originated as an adaptive mechanism, which served to protect individuals against powerful and potentially dangerous alliances.³ In evolutionary theory, this is based upon three main components: pattern recognition, agency detection and threat management. The recognition of seemingly interrelated causes allowed humans to make rough predictions about the consequences of their actions, and to adapt according to the respective situation. The detection of agency is related to the understanding of the motives of other humans. Thus, feelings of empathy are shared with people who contribute toward mutual needs and desires. When the opposite is perceived to be taking place, especially if it results from an alliance of individuals, then feelings of hostility come into being. As useful as these evolutionary mechanisms have been in protecting individuals from harm, they may have also caused some individuals to believe in conspiracies, even when in reality there were none. Some of the consequences of this would have been social exclusion and the harming of innocent people. However, the likelihood of such events taking place is dependent upon the situation, as suggested previously. For example, the harming of innocent people may only occur if the conspiracy theorist becomes emotionally aggressive and causes physical or psychological harm to others. Likewise, the same in principle can be said when an individual fails to detect an existing conspiracy. For example, not recognizing a conspiracy when in fact there is one present, can lead to major harm for the targeted individual(s). In summation, most people are likely to either wrongfully detect a conspiracy, or fail to detect a conspiracy when there is one in reality. Thus, only a minority of people are likely to detect a conspiracy correctly.

The quantity of information that has become publicly available in the 21st century has no precedent in history. The arrival of the internet has permitted individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds to make their opinions heard publicly. The video

hosting and sharing website, YouTube, is arguably the most prolific on the internet. Because of its user-friendly interface and high traffic rate, it has enabled certain individuals to use it as a platform for popularizing conspiracy-related topics. During recent times especially, it has been noticed that such topics have risen sharply, partly due to a documentary called “Conspiracy Theories with Shane Dawson”.⁴ The producer of the documentary, whose professional name is situated at the end of the video title, has been criticized for a number of reasons. One of those is due to how he has managed to attract young people into subscribing to his channel. Over the past few years he had promoted controversial views relating to: the 9/11 event, the Flat Earth theory and a host of other topics. These events occurred at a time when YouTube had been placing more effort into reducing the number of videos that recommended conspiracy-related topics to viewers. The organization’s intention was, and still is, to reduce the quantity of “borderline content and content that could misinform users in harmful ways.”⁵ What this statement suggests is that there is a significant percentage of people that lack critical thinking skills. When this is coupled with a dogmatic mindset, it is certainly possible that it would lead to the harming of innocent people. This issue was confronted more than five years ago when the British Broadcasting Corporation published a news article in 2013 under the title of “Are Conspiracy Theories Destroying Democracy?”⁶ The article’s editor, Brian Wheeler, who is a senior political reporter for the same organization stated that the world was living in a golden age for conspiracy theories. Once again, part of the reason why so many people believe in them is because the theories appear to confirm what they had supposedly known all along. This is also known as confirmation bias, which is one of the many biases such theorists appear to have in common. One individual in particular who is aware of these, is Michael Shermer. He is a renowned science writer and is the founding publisher of the magazine called Skeptic. He has published at least five books which were featured on the New York Times bestsellers list and presented two TED talks which were voted in the top 100.⁷ In a short article that is titled “Conspiracy Theories”, Michael Shermer and Pat Linse describe how such theories come into existence and why people

believe in them.⁸ Although the first half of their article deals with concepts that have already been described in this article, the second half contains some bits of information that are worth considering. For example, the authors have found that in general, the more educated people are, the less likely they are to believe in conspiracy theories. In the seventh section of their article, they list ten characteristics which conspiracy theories may be comprised of. Subsequently, it is explained that the likelihood of a theory being false rises in accordance to the number of those characteristics. Should the reader wish to learn more, then I would recommend they read the subsequent sections as they present some concepts that have not been covered in this article. When analyzing conspiracy theories, it is important to know which parts of a theory to accept, and which parts to reject. If we take the case of the Flat Earth theory, there are few, if any pieces of evidence that point toward there being a conspiracy. As such, there is no apparent reason as to how the establishment would benefit by lying to the public about the Earth's true shape. There are masses of unedited photographs that disprove the theory, such as the one that was taken from a Soyuz spacecraft in 2018, which also depicts the International Space Station.⁹ Further, all it takes to dismantle the theory is a basic understanding of astronomy, geometry and physics. Up until now, the evidence that I have shown doesn't seem to give away any ulterior motives, whereby people are dissuaded from asking questions about highly important issues. There are two main reasons for this. The first reason, is to show how conspiracy theories are commonly perceived. The second reason, is that I deliberately omitted to present the evidence there is for a hidden agenda, to show how established news organizations, politicians and a whole host of other figures are doing the same thing.

Contrary to what has been discussed, the real threat to democracy is not the spreading of conspiracy theories. Previously, I suggested that a number of establishment entities are complicit in omitting information that is of great importance to the public. This is significant, because the information that is

presented by them is largely reflected by the belief systems of the societies that consume that information. Hence, if there is an individual or entity that promotes ideas that are controversial, according to the values of a society, then its ideas may be ridiculed. In more extreme cases, if the individual or entity cannot be convinced to change their own beliefs by the respective society, then they are likely to be condemned outright. In sociological terms this is known as stigmatization.¹⁰ What happens though when influential organizations commit such attacks? The late researcher Eustace Mullins, who was a protégé of the poet Ezra Pound, published a document which outlines a long list of abuses that were carried out against him by a number of organizations, one of which is the Anti-Defamation League of B’Nai B’Rith.¹¹ These crimes had arisen after he had published his book *The Secrets of the Federal Reserve*, which exposed the covert and private origins of the central bank of the United States of America. In addition, there are a number of legal actions which are detailed in the document, showing how he had attempted to preserve his rights, often in vain due to the corruption of the legal and political system of the country. Further, the same book that had been distributed in Germany in 1955, of which there were at least 10,000 in number, were ordered to be burned by the then U.S. High Commissioner of Germany and his assistant. This is why the author in the past had mentioned this event a number of times, due to its significance. More recently, a number of public figures have been banned by Facebook, which is the largest social media company in the world. This occurred after they had voiced opinions that were considered as dangerous, on the ground that they promoted violence and hatred.¹² Among the individuals that are no longer able to use the company’s services are Alex Jones, owner of the media outlet Infowars, Louis Farrakhan, leader of the political movement group Nation of Islam, and Milo Yiannopoulos, a public speaker and writer. It is interesting to note that all three figures come from a politically conservative background. During a U.S. senate hearing, there have been allegations that the social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter, were acting unfairly toward conservative groups. One of the senators cited that there is a growing proportion of people believing there is an ongoing campaign

of suppression of conservative opinions.¹³ Although representatives of those companies denied that there was any political bias, they did affirm that their systems could make mistakes, occasionally. Yet, this can hardly be a mistake because the example I have mentioned is but one of the many, which becomes evident when one takes the time to conduct an internet search. Similarly, David Icke who has achieved international recognition for his promotion of conspiracy theories has been recently banned from touring in Australia by the country's immigration minister.¹⁴ There were concerns by some individuals that he may cause social instability due to the radical nature of his theories. Further examples of individuals who have been stigmatized, albeit to a lesser extent are those of Dr. Henry Makow and Dr. Tim Ball. The former individual was a professor of English literature and an author, who is the owner and editor of a website that is named after him. Dr. Makow concentrates on the subject of feminism; more precisely, he exposes the communist origins of the ideology and expands on how this is influencing the feminist movement today. The latter individual is a now-retired climatologist who also owns and runs a website that is named after him, where he posts articles related to the corruption and politicization of climate science. Both of the above-mentioned individuals have been described in a derogatory manner by some websites, one of which calls itself RationalWiki. A cursory examination of the website's articles on the two individuals will reveal that the information it presents is anything but rational, especially when one takes the time to analyze it. The wiki article for Henry Makow makes the following statement "Henry Makow, PhD (b. 1949) is what you get when you cross a men's rights activist with paranoid conspiracy theorist and an Anti-Semite."¹⁵ In a similar manner, the wiki article for Dr. Ball claims that "Timothy Francis 'Tim' Ball is a credential-fudging denialist crank."¹⁶ In both cases, the articles offer no evidence that challenges the authors' arguments. Further, they are laden with value judgments. This shows that there is an attempt to persuade the readers that the researchers are somehow insane, even though this is never adequately explained or supported by valid evidence. For example, the article for Dr. Ball, bearing in mind that he used to be a climatologist

by profession, makes the ridiculous claim that he is a global warming denier! After having taken the time to examine some of the material presented by the two authors, I can say that I have found their work to be quite revealing, despite having found some minor errors in their logic. Let me emphasize that websites such as *RationalWiki* are not the kind where the reader can hope to find much information that is not ideologically driven. This is especially true of its articles that seem to be dedicated toward the discrediting and ridiculing of conspiracy theories and their proponents. This is something the readers shall notice for themselves if they decide to read some of those articles, where some conspiracy theorists are described as either cranks, kooks, or nuts. As a reminder, this kind of language is normally used by individuals or entities that are subtly trying to communicate to the readers that they want them to believe in what they are saying. I shall not go into the details, because as I have suggested in the introduction of this article, the main objective is to show how public opinion is being engineered to believe that conspiracy theories are the concoction of an insane group of people. So far, I have explained that conspiracy theories have been correctly identified by some researchers, which is known due to the aggressive behavior displayed by some entities of the establishment. After all, if they had nothing to fear then why would they have put so much effort into silencing, ridiculing or casting out individuals who have been asking serious questions about serious issues?

The rise in popularity of the phrase “conspiracy theory” can be traced back to 1967 when a document called *Countering Criticism of the Warren Report* was published by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).¹⁷ Although it isn’t possible to prove this directly, it must be considered as to how the usage of the phrase has risen substantially since the release of the document. From what I have found, the document has been widely cited by researchers who assert that there was a deliberate attempt to curtail criticism of the official investigation into the assassination of the former American president, John F. Kennedy. Indeed, the

dispatch recommends that media institutions avoid discussing the ordeal unless the topic is brought up by happenchance. It even goes as far as recommending propaganda techniques for preventing the circulation of conspiracy related claims abroad, as well as for refuting critics of the Warren Commission. For instance, it is explained “The aim of this dispatch is to provide material for countering and discrediting the claims of the conspiracy theorists so as to inhibit the circulation of such claims in other countries.”¹⁸ Whatever the reasons may be for the assassination of the former American president, it is clear that the CIA as well as other agencies have something to hide. The techniques that were used to influence public opinion are in essence the same as those that have been used in military warfare for undermining enemy objectives. A textbook published by the U.S Air Force’s center for professional military education describes what is formally known as “psychological operations”. On page 52 of the textbook, it defines it as such:

It involves formulation, conceptualization, implementation, and evaluation of government-to-government and government-to-people persuasion. It is a planned use of human actions to influence the attitudes of populations that are important to national objectives.¹⁹

This description reveals the implications that such operations can have on the state of societies. Interestingly, shortly afterwards, the authors felt it necessary to reassure the readers that the federal government of the U.S. does not use such techniques for influencing its populace.²⁰ Supposing their assertion is true, then this would indicate that the federal government does at least cooperate with intelligence agencies in framing public perception of national and international affairs. Whether this is due to innocent or willful ignorance, however, that is another question. Nevertheless, it is known that the CIA is independent for the most part, which means it generally does not need executive approval for its operations.²¹ Even though it is subject to oversight by congress, the degree to which operations are reviewed and how they are allowed to proceed is dependent upon the members of

congress, as well as how widespread the media coverage is of the congressional hearings. When relating this to the agency's 1967 document it becomes increasingly obvious as to how its psychological operations program could have come to pass. This is in spite of it containing a number of tactics that are questionable, even if they are intended to promote what is commonly dubbed as "national security". Let me remind the readers that the ability to freely express one's informed opinion is one of the many vital components of a well-functioning society. The former American president himself recognized this when he declared, "We are not afraid to entrust the American people with unpleasant facts, foreign ideas, alien philosophies, and competitive values. For a nation that is afraid to let its people judge the truth and falsehood in an open market is a nation that is afraid of its people."²² This segment was part of a speech given by the president on U.S. soil, just one year before he was assassinated. I shall let the reader contemplate on the irony of this, because this is also part of the reason why the president's death has led to the rise of so many conspiracy theories over the years.

As I have suggested previously, conspiracy theories are far from being a new phenomenon, and they are not entirely unreasonable either. In fact, the reason they exist is that some individuals have correctly identified that there are certain entities who are responsible for a number of major events, all in order to advance their own agendas and to prevent themselves from being exposed while doing so. As such, large sums of money have been required which means that these entities are exceptionally wealthy. A case example of this has been brought forth by John Robison at the end of the 18th century when he exposed the corrupt and deceitful practices of the Order of the Illuminati. He explained that most of the social problems that were witnessed in Europe at the time were not caused by the actions of the poor, but rather, were caused by the actions of a wealthy elite. On page 32 of his book, it reads:

Grasping at every mean of gratification, they are inattentive to the rights of inferiors whom they despise, and, despising, oppress. Perhaps their own superiority has been acquired by injustice. Perhaps most sovereignties have been acquired by oppression. Princes and Rulers are but men; as such, they abuse many of their greatest blessings.²³

Ever since his findings were published, it seems little has changed. More than two hundred years later, David Rockefeller, the grandson of John D. Rockefeller, published his autobiography, *Memoirs*. The book contains several statements that have been widely quoted by conspiracy researchers due to their revealing nature. One example of such a statement that is found on page 405 reads as such:

Some even believe we are part of a secret cabal working against the best interests of the United States, characterizing my family and me as “internationalists” and of conspiring with others around the world to build a more integrated global political and economic structure – one world, if you will. If that’s the charge, I stand guilty, and I am proud of it.²⁴

Indeed, this quotation can be found under the section where an association is made between populist ideologies and paranoia. As that is the case, then this would mean that under the opinion of the self-admitted globalist, these conspiracy researchers are both hypercritical and paranoid themselves. To some extent, this is true. After all, as he explains, there has been much material progress around the globe, partly because of his actions, and those of his family. For example, one of the reasons it has been possible for them to share this quotation and make it visible among the billions of people who use the internet, is mainly because of oil. Therefore, it is not the material progress that is problematic, but rather, it is the way in which it is being carried out. What this suggests is that societies across the globe are being led toward a future that is largely predetermined by the conspirators themselves. By extension, this raises the question of how the future might unfold and what it will entail. Although this is a debatable subject, given the context, there are signs that the globalist movement will result in a New World Order. This is a phrase that is

often used by conspiracy researchers to describe the emergence of a totalitarian form of government that is global in scale and scope, whereby the people are covertly subdued through physical and psychological means. Although it may be farfetched to believe in such a concept, the evidence does confirm that democracy is under threat, that is, if it ever even existed in the first place. Thus, it may be surmised that the state of the world is presently situated somewhere in between these two dichotomies. The question that remains is, toward which of these directions will the world move?

Conclusion

As I have argued extensively throughout this article, conspiracy theories are not entirely unreasonable and neither are they entirely the product of paranoid and delusional people. On the contrary, as I have shown, a number of individuals have been forced to deal with psychological aggression, stemming from their research that had exposed corrupt practices taking place in the upper echelons of the social structure. Toward the latter portion of the article, I have shown as to how the CIA has intentionally used psychological techniques for reducing or halting criticism of its investigation into the assassination of the former American president. Since then the same techniques have been used by news broadcasters and other establishment figures to dissuade the public from believing in certain conspiracy theories. Yet, as I have explained using a quotation from the autobiography of a self-admitted conspirator, there certainly is a conspiracy that appears to be global in scale. Even though there has been much scientific and technological progress, partly due to the actions of these conspirators, what is problematic is the way in which the changes have taken place. Therefore, it is the attitude of the conspirators that is wrong, on the basis that they are imposing their wills upon a majority population without their direct consent. Unless something is done to tackle this issue, then there can be little doubt that the world will find itself looking more like the dystopia as depicted in George Orwell's novel, *1984*. Therefore, I urge everyone

to practice skepticism whenever they see something labelled as a conspiracy theory and that they follow-up by researching it for themselves.

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