

## Factsheet about conspiracy theory

Tendency to attribute any (dramatic) event to a conspiracy hidden in secret by a person or a group.

Conspiracy rhetoric is usually based on five points<sup>1</sup>:

1. Denying the complexity of the reality;
2. Establishing artificial correlations
3. Eliminating truths that cannot be included in the theory;
4. Establishing a mythical structure of history;
5. Over-interpreting the signs of conspiracy.

This type of reasoning is based on four fundamental principles, on which researchers agree:

- Nothing happens randomly. If a famous person dies in an accident, this accident has been caused; if an earthquake devastated Haiti in January 2010, it is because the Americans had it triggered by one of their secret organizations, the HAARP.
- Everything that happens is the result of hidden wills. According to a message published on the Net, on April 22, 2012, "Mohammed Merah was a secret agent who was sacrificed so that Nicolas Sarkozy is re-elected".
- Nothing is as it seems. Heads of state announce what they have decided? Illusion: they seem to govern, but decisions are made by others (bankers, freemasons...) who pull the strings of these puppets.
- Everything is bound, but in an occult way. In the early 1950s, Senator Joseph McCarthy succeeded in sharing with many Americans his anti-communist obsession, which led him to see a communist plot against the American people everywhere. Even the fluoridation of water was presented as part of this plot to weaken the people.

To these four basic principles, one can add a fifth, of more recent appearance: "Everything must be carefully scrutinized by criticism. "A method applied by contemporary conspiracists: in their books, on their websites, they accumulate the proofs of the conspiracies they denounce. But their approach, which they call scientific, suffers from a fundamental defect: the conspiracy denounced is posited as a certain fact that the collection of evidence serves only to support. Facts that do not fit the stated thesis are ignored, those who contradict it are denied, the others are interpreted in the intended sense.

*Source:*

*Pierre-André Taguieff, Court traité de complotologie, Mille et une nuits, 2013.*

## Difficulty to disproof conspiracy theory

According to Pierre-André Taguieff, conspiracy reasoning gives rise to an unnecessary debate because conspiracy theory does not lend itself to refutation: *“the imaginary of the conspiracy is insatiable, and the thesis of the conspiracy is irrefutable: the naively advanced proofs that a plot*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://seriously.com>

*does not exist are transformed into as many proofs as there are*". For Gérald Bronner, the conspiracyists "*ape the methodical thought, but are impervious to contradiction*".

The conspiracy theory can approach the hypercritical method: the one who practices it will rely on the points that appear to validate his theory or contradict the adverse explanation to rule out any counter-argumentation. There is also a reversal of the burden of the proof: people who admit the current explanation have to show that there was no conspiracy, and the arguments used may be regarded as additional manipulations. The prior certainty of the existence of a conspiracy involves the analysis of all information and facts through the prism of this conspiracy theory. This cognitive bias is termed hypothesis confirmation bias. Furthermore, due to a lack of distinction between the exploited data and their relationship, the mere fact that authentic data are "inserted into the frame" of the conspiracy theory may wrongly validate the frame itself. The evocation of a conspiracy can thus lead to the narrowing of the universe of analysis of a fact, since this fact will only be related to other facts derived from theory. The conspiracy theory is thus justified by itself, discrediting the adversary; it is therefore not refutable and has nothing scientific in it.

Conspiracy is above all a particular logic by which data are articulated. Now, we can treat of authentic events without guaranteeing the veracity of the logic by which they are linked together. Indeed, apart from the a priori sources that are credible but ultimately unverifiable, the data used by conspiracy theories can be derived from both false and authentic sources. Conspiracy can thus rely on "verifiable" documentation that is open to the public, while providing a fanciful interpretation of the data.

*Source [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Th%C3%A9orie\\_du\\_complot](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Th%C3%A9orie_du_complot)*