

# Mainstream Media's Schizophrenic Attitude Towards "Conspiracy Theories"

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[Sott](#)

Region: [USA](#)

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Late February the Finnish publication [Iltalehti](#) published a sensational news headline about conspiracy theories:

*Now it is proven: conspiracy theorists are fools living in a bubble*

*The internet is the information highway for both good and bad, because on the net all content is equal and trustworthy content competes for attention among all kinds of misinformation. Among other things, conspiracy theories and the peddling alternative media, are spread widely within the depths of the net.*

*Rumors, propaganda, and other net-loopers have become such a serious problem, that the [World Economic Forum](#), committed to monitoring the state of the world, named it as one of modern societies greatest threats alongside terrorism and cyber crime.*

This *Iltalehti* article refers to an article written in English on [Vice Motherboard](#) that itself refers to the Italian study at [PLOS One](#).

*Iltalehti's* first comment suggests that only the content of mainstream media represents absolutely trustworthy information, while again alternative media's "conspiracy theories" are rumor, propaganda and misinformation. Conspiracies are something like mystical fairy tales, believed only by mentally unstable persons. This kind of black-and-white thinking is typical of the [authoritarian personality type](#), who relates to social authorities in the same naive way small children relate to their own parents.

The second comment is very worrisome. It was not long ago when the attitude towards conspiracy theories was mainly mocking. Now they are perceived as a national threat and they are compared to terrorism and Nazism: [France has already set a dangerous precedent](#) by beginning to block web sites which in the opinion of the government, publish conspiracy theories and other "dangerous thoughts". Arthur Schopenhauer stated that truth goes through three phases: First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident. It seems we are in stage two at the moment.

The *Iltalehti* news story further commented on this Italian research, in which alternative media was assessed for its "conspiracy theory" behaviors on social media:

The result was not flattering from the conspiracy theorists' point of view. Italians said that of the conspiracy site visitors over 90 percent like, comment, and spread only alternative media contents, and nothing else. According to the researchers, conspiracy theorists live in their own bubble and almost never

interact with content outside of their own circle.

It is difficult to make far-reaching conclusions from a research based on Facebook Likes and comments. The research monitored only numbers but not the content. The research included a similar isolated group, which followed science news and commented a little bit more on alternative news than vice versa. Still, because the content was not examined, this group's interaction could have mainly been conspiracy theory "debunking." If they had bothered to assess - or been capable of assessing - the content, they'd have quickly realized their proposition was a farce. 'Alternative' articles are substantially based on the content published in mainstream articles *plus* other details left out that provide all-important context. In other words, alternative content serves to reveal that it is the mainstream articles that are encased within a closed-loop of information, or, to use their term, 'in a bubble'.

Which of us is not healthy?

As a matter of fact, [Verkkomedia referred to an earlier study](#), (for reference, the English article it referred to is at [New studies: 'Conspiracy theorists' sane; government dupes crazy, hostile.](#)) in which the content of discussions was compared. The interactions between conspiracist and conventional commenters were evaluated:

According to the researchers' data, comments that doubt official truths were noticeably more common: "Of the 2174 comments collected, 1459 were coded as conspiracist and 715 as conventionalist." Among people who comment on news articles, those who disbelieve government accounts of such events as 9/11 and the JFK assassination outnumber believers by more than two to one. That means it is the pro-conspiracy commenters who are expressing what is now the conventional wisdom, while the anti-conspiracy commenters are becoming a small, beleaguered minority.

The anti-conspiracy commenters often displayed greater anger than conspiracy commenters. Conventional commenters were "significantly more hostile than pro-conspiracy commenters". The researchers also point out evidence of intellectuals' hostility towards pro-conspiracy explanations, by labeling conspiracy theorists as paranoid or mentally ill in some manner.

In contrast to the commenters who support the official truths, commenters who support conspiracy theories do not promote their own nor a specific theory for an event, but rather demonstrate that the official account is false. Anti-conspiracy commenters instead bring forward more of their own explanations rather than argue against conspiracy explanations. In the light of this research, the stereotype of a hostile fanatic stuck to his own truth more accurately describes believers in official truths than conspiracy theorists.

On this basis, we can conclude that a critically thinking "conspiracy theorist" must be psychologically healthier than authoritarian people. Perhaps the most typical example of a discussion wherein the differences between the comments by conspiracists and conventionalists are evident, are the problems associated with the WTC attack, where the official narrative is actually quite a high-flying conspiracy theory. As the research demonstrated, most of the opinions that favor the official narrative rely upon aggressive *ad hominem* arguments, rather than analyzing the evidence itself and understanding the big picture.

## What Is the Main Use of the Term Conspiracy?

What is meant exactly by a 'conspiracy theorist'? Mainstream media has built a straw man, in which all exceptional understandings of the truth are merged together: if, for example, you doubt the official story about John F. Kennedy's assassination (like 61% of Americans do), then you also believe that Bill Clinton is an alien, man has not walked on the moon, Elvis lives, and the holocaust did not happen. It goes without saying that seeing a "conspiracy" in every happening without critical thinking and evaluation is just as stupid as a naive and uncritical attitude towards all official information.

In practice, anyone who suspects or begins to speculate about the course of events without absolute certainty is a 'conspiracy theorist'. For example police investigators who look into a person's death are 'conspiracy theorists'. They must weigh the different options between unintentional injury and intentional homicide.

Did you not ever as a child experience a sudden strange doubt on Christmas eve, when your father always had to go to the store/neighbor's/cellar just before Santa Claus arrived? If so, then you were also a conspiracy theorist! So it is that some people, even as adults, still believe in the limitless benevolence of authorities, much like a small child believes in Santa Claus.



Mainstream media straw man: if you doubt the official story about John F. Kennedy's assassination (like 61% of Americans do), then you also believe that Bill Clinton is an alien, man has not walked on the moon, Elvis lives and the holocaust did not happen.

One function of the conspiracy term is for mainstream media to limit the contents of public discussion: there are known borders that cannot be crossed, unless one wishes to attain the status of *persona non grata*. The term is used by those in power to denigrate critical people. Notice the schizophrenic way the media deals with conspiracies related to Russia and [Putin](#), where we see all kinds of false [rumors](#) and conspiracy theories being spread without restraint. The year-long hardcore anti-Putin campaign in the mainstream media recently culminated in my country with hysteria that it is 'to be invaded next'. Was this inspired just by incredible stupidity, or was this completely intentional propaganda? Such a question isn't even on the radar for authoritarian followers and mainstream media lackeys. They are so hopelessly inured to the system that their minds are, in effect, minds given to them by 'The Authorities'.

## Conspiracies are Inherent to the Social System

Many of society's structures are by nature prone to conspiracies: there is a clear hierarchy in which the flow of information is restricted. Historian Richard M. Dolan commented in his book [\*UFOs and the National Security State: Chronology of a Coverup, 1941-1973\*](#):

[Conspiracy Theory.] The very label serves as an automatic dismissal, as though no one ever acts in secret. Let us bring some perspective and common sense to this issue. The United States comprises large organizations - corporations, bureaucracies, "interest groups," and the like - which are conspiratorial by nature. That is, they are hierarchical, their important decisions are made in secret by a few key decision-makers, and they are not above lying about their activities. Such is the nature of organizational behavior. "Conspiracy," in this key sense, is a way of life around the globe.

Dolan continues:

Nearly everything of significance undertaken by America's military and intelligence community in the past half-century has occurred in secrecy. The undertaking to build an atomic weapon, better known as the Manhattan Project, remains the great model for all subsequent activities. For more than two years, not a single member of Congress even knew about it although its final cost exceeded two billion dollars.

During and after the Second World War, other important projects, such as the development of biological weapons, the importation of Nazi scientists, terminal mind-control experiments, nationwide interception of mail and cable transmissions of an unwitting populace, infiltration of the media and universities, secret coups, secret wars, and assassinations all took place far removed not only from the American public, but from most members of Congress and a few presidents.

Indeed, several of the most powerful intelligence agencies were themselves established in secrecy, unknown by the public or Congress for many years.

Joint Chiefs of Staff Commander of the Special Forces and Air Force Colonel L. Fletcher Prouty highlighted the role of intelligence services in the book [\*The Secret Team\*](#):

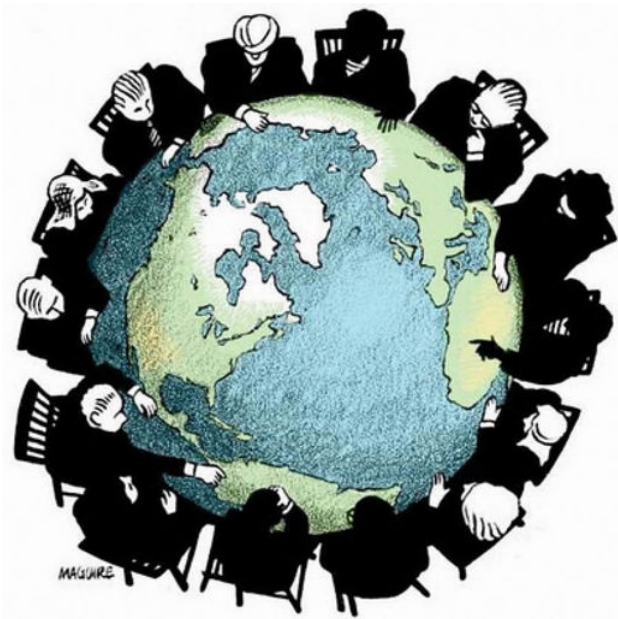
The most remarkable development in the management of America's relations with other countries during the quarter-century since the end of World War II has been the assumption of more and more control over military, financial and diplomatic operations at home and abroad by men whose activities are secret, whose budget is secret, whose very identities as often as not are secret - in short, by a Secret Team whose actions only those implicated in them are in a position to monitor and to understand.

Also John F. Kennedy stated in 1961, in the speech, 'The President and The Press', about this conspiracy:

It is a system which has conscripted vast human and material resources into the building of a tightly knit, highly efficient machine that combines military, diplomatic, intelligence, economic, scientific and political operations. Its preparations are concealed, not published. Its mistakes are buried, not

headlined. Its dissenters are silenced, not praised. No expenditure is questioned, no rumor is printed, no secret is revealed.

In other words, the world is full of a variety of interconnected networked organizations that are able to operate in absolute secrecy, and are not accountable to anyone, and what's more; everyone implicitly agrees to this state of affairs. Worldwide, large corporations make decisions behind closed doors, politicians and lobbyists negotiate contracts hidden from the public, intelligent agencies cover their operations under the veil of 'plausible deniability', and all of these players are in constant interaction with each other, to some degree or another. Sometimes the borders between organized crime and official authority disappear and it becomes impossible to tell where official policies begin and organized crime ends. The higher up the hierarchy individuals and groups are, the more freedom they have to exceed the limits of legality and act with impunity.



#### A Few Examples of Actual Conspiracies

Here are a few examples from recent history of intelligence services' covert operations and projects that have been on the dark side of both morality and legality:

- [Operation Ajax](#): Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister [Mohammed Mossadegh was overthrown by the CIA and MI6 in 1953](#). Mossadegh had begun to nationalize Iran's oil reserves, which endangered Western oil companies' position in the region. The operation was done purely for geopolitical reasons. An illegal coup d'état was carried out within an independent country for its resources and for weakening its political position. [Does this sound familiar?](#)
- [Project MK-ULTRA](#): The CIA's secret program was designed to investigate hypnosis, interrogation and brainwashing techniques. The program began in the early 1950's, it was officially discontinued in the late 1960's. Among other things, the subjects were drugged and given electric shocks along with repeated suggestions, which sought to break down one's personality and then build it again. Subjects were selected without their consent, and they were held in isolation for months. [Does this sound familiar?](#)
- [Operation Northwoods](#): This 1962 plan of the CIA remained secret until 1997. Its purpose was to shift public opinion of the nation to support an occupation of



Cuba. Blowing up of US planes was one method among others that were planned. President Kennedy prevented the realization of this plan in the end. The purpose of the operation was to perform a terrorist strike under a false flag so another nation could be blamed. [Does this sound familiar?](#)

- [Operation Gladio](#): After World War II the Allies set up secret stay behind-troops in Europe in case of Soviet occupation. In 1990 Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti admitted the existence of the secret armies, which led to revelations in other countries. The troops had been used in making bombings, assassinations, coups, torture, and propaganda. The extreme right was harnessed to commit terrorist attacks which were blamed on the extreme left. This aided in vectoring the general opinion to perceiving different groups as a threat while maintaining their own dominance within these countries. [Does this sound familiar?](#)

The list is very long and we would run out of room very quickly if we tried to go through every one. You can read more about known conspiracies - that is, conspiracies that are recognised as such by 'conventionalists' - in this [article](#).



© Government Archives. Face page, Operation Northwoods memo.

## Formal and Informal Culture

Richard Dolan talks about 'formal' and 'informal' culture in his [book](#). Sometimes topics that were previously taboo become part of 'formal' culture. For example, today, according to the official culture promulgated in many Western countries, saturated fat causes heart disease, whereas in [Sweden, it does not](#). The conventional history of the First World War says that it was Germany's fault, but it has now been [established through excellent research](#) - though not yet incorporated into formal culture - that a secret Anglo-American elite plotted the 'war to end all wars'.

For the moment, according to the official culture, conspiracies are acceptable only as historical curiosities. They just do not happen today, except in the case of Russia, North

Korea, the vast majority of South American or Middle Eastern countries, which conspire from time to time to thwart Western interests! So again, paradoxically, it is considered to be a given that, in the event of conflict, these countries' governments are always the lying party, and only a 'conspiracy theorist', or a very naive person, believes otherwise. Further, according to the official culture, conspiracies in the West today are possible, or perhaps probable, at the individual level (murders or other crimes), and to some extent in companies, but definitely not among those who have real political influence.

So, as an example, when we observe the largest Finnish newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*, which, like major newspapers in many Western countries, acts much like a guardian of the formal culture, we see that it sums up this idea well: If you see it likely that the oil price collapse is the result of commercial warfare against Russia, then you also belong in the same category as those who believe that Ville Niinistö [Finnish Green League Party politician] is to blame for climate change, or that Sarah Palin developed the Internet to destroy the human race. Thus the paper's leading intellectuals - the guardians of official culture in Finland - have spoken.

Sott Editors recommend to all readers that you continually exercise and maintain your most important attribute: thinking. Be critical of both mainstream media as well as alternative media. It is worthwhile to still remember which of these two forums hold more power over public opinion and therefore take this fact into consideration.

Whenever we move into political issues, is it not so that the mainstream media becomes extremely one-sided and prejudiced? When do we ever read from the pages of any country's major newspaper, like Finland's *Helsinki Sanomat*, about the history of Operation Gladio? When does any major newspaper offer analyses of the Western countries' illegal coups? Spying on their own citizens? Assassinations? Torture? How about an examination of the post-Second World War military operations conducted by the United States that have killed an [estimated 20-30 million people](#)?

Do we even hear the very recent [plea for help from Eastern Ukraine](#): how drunk Kiev soldiers drove an armored vehicle over a mother and her two daughters, after which Kiev suppressed the protests and riots wherein the residents demanded justice?

Don't hold your breath waiting for official recognition; *be* the media you wish to see in the world!

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