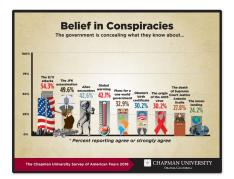
Conspiracy Theories

Too Many Connections



George Matthews, Plymouth State University $2020 \label{eq:2020}$

The Puzzle of Conspiracy Theories



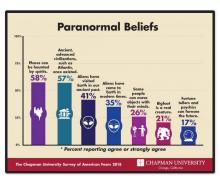
 $\circ\,$ They enjoy widespread and growing support and yet have little evidence in favor of them.

The Puzzle of Conspiracy Theories



 $\circ\,$ 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.



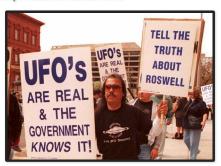
Approaches to Conspiracy Thinking

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



 $\circ\,$ Someone is to blame and we can thus do something about our predicament.

Elements of Conspiracy Thinking

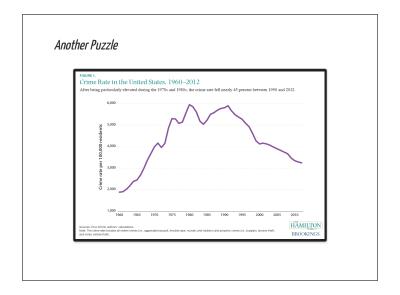


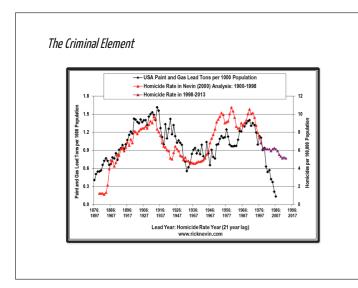
 Symbolic connnections, hidden meanings, deep significance of events, invisible agents – these ideas resonate with magical thinking and come naturally to us.

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.







Find out more

Wikipedia's List of Conspiracy Theories Conspiracy Theories Cannot Be Stopped Conspiracy Theories are Dangerous

The Secret History of Lead

