

# What causes people to believe conspiracy theories?

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Throughout his works, which follow the sociological thinking of Max Weber, Raymond Boudon has repeatedly shown that the causes of our actions are to be found in the reasons that we have for undertaking them, reasons which we consider to be valid. In relation to beliefs, this means that ‘when a belief is embraced by an individual, it is because there are strong reasons for that belief to be held’ (Boudon, 2003: 63). This approach from a standpoint of ‘general rational explanation’ seems to be more productive than one which attempts an explanation of belief based on psychological factors such as credulity, ignorance or fanaticism, or indeed on determinants such as gender, age or socio-economic status. It, therefore, becomes a question of identifying the more or less explicit a priori assumptions, conjectures and reasoning, which are the ‘good reasons’ individuals have for forming beliefs and which give sense to even the strangest ideas in the minds of those who believe them.

This approach can easily be applied to belief in conspiracy theories: some individuals do have ‘good reasons’ to believe the ideas of conspiracy theorists and we cannot necessarily say that those who adhere to such theories suffer from paranoia, fanaticism or holding irrational views of the world.

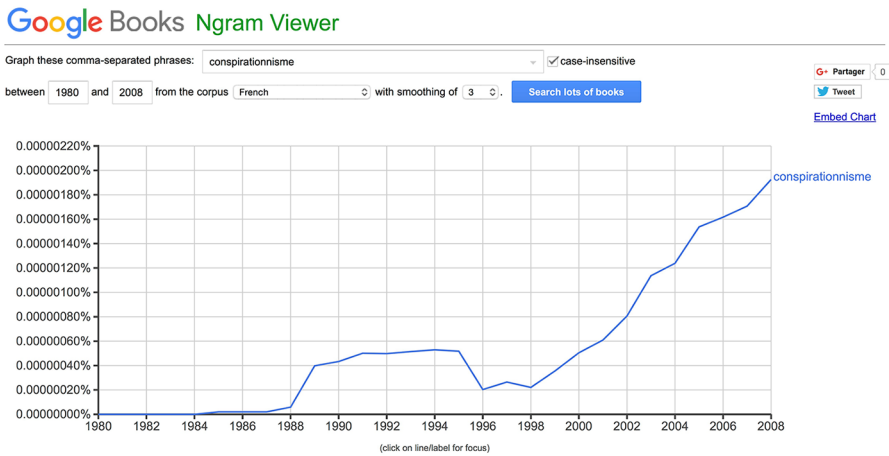
Today, belief in conspiracy theories is a very widespread phenomenon. Published works dealing with conspiracies and conspiracy theories are becoming more and more numerous. A search using Google’s Ngram tool, which returns the number of uses of a word in the corpus of Google Books, shows that usage of the term ‘conspirationnisme’ in French first occurred in 1988, and that from 1998 to 2008, its use in French language works increased by a factor of nine (Figure 1). The term ‘conspiracy theories’ is now used very frequently in the media in relation to many events; hence, how can this growth in the attention given to conspiracism be explained? In this article, I attempt to identify the ‘good reasons for the beliefs’ of conspiracy theorists. I will distinguish between general cultural causes, which foster openness to conspiracy theorist ideas in general, and more specific causes, notably ideological ones, which explain the belief of some individuals in one particular conspiracy theory rather than another.

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**Figure 1.** Use of the term ‘conspirationnisme’ in the corpus of Google Books, 1980–2008.

Source: [books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=conspirat.ionnisme&year\\_start=1980&year\\_end=2008&corpus=19&smoothing=3&share=&direct\\_url=t1%3B%2Cconspirationnisme%3B%2Cc0](https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=conspirat.ionnisme&year_start=1980&year_end=2008&corpus=19&smoothing=3&share=&direct_url=t1%3B%2Cconspirationnisme%3B%2Cc0)

## General cultural causes: loss of trust

The main cultural cause for the increase in belief in conspiracy theories is the general loss of trust that is observable in contemporary societies. This lack of trust is the fundamental key to understanding belief in conspiracy theories. Numerous sociologists have shown that trust is essential to the functioning of social life, and that without it societies could not exist. Thus, Niklas Luhmann writes (1979: 56):

...the supports of trust are mainly found in opportunities for effective communication: in the possibility of exchanging money for things of real and lasting value, in the possibility of reaching a definite agreement on the kinds of statement in which truth is demanded, in the possibility of activating the means of coercion which belong to the state on the basis of set rules.

In the face of the anxiety and fear aroused by the impossibility of controlling all events and checking all facts, trust allows us to accept risks and uncertainties and plays the role, according to Luhmann, of a ‘mechanism for the reduction of social complexity’ (the subtitle of his work). Luhmann then shows that distrust is not the opposite of trust: psychologically, an individual cannot remain in a permanent state of nervousness and anxiety. Distrustful individuals must, therefore, find strategies to reduce the complexity of their situation.

Consequently, distrust also achieves a simplification, an often drastic simplification. A person who distrusts both needs more information and at the same time has confidence in a narrower and narrower range of sources. He becomes *more* dependent on *less* information (Luhmann, 1979: 72).

There is no better way to describe the state of mind of conspiracists, one which consists precisely in questioning the ‘official truth’, in amplifying the amount of information in circulation relating to complex events and then in providing a simple explanation for, and a single cause of, these events.

For the last 30 years, many research programmes and published works in the social sciences have dealt with the subject of social trust, for the very reason that it is in crisis. Polling organisations

have established 'trust barometers', especially with regard to trust in the media and for trust in politicians.<sup>1</sup> Without going into details of the annual fluctuations, in France, the overall results are overwhelming (Opinion Way, 2010–2015). In an answer to a question about their current state of mind, participants in the survey all mentioned the same three factors, although not necessarily in the following order: 'distrust', a 'feeling of gloom' and 'mental weariness'. 'Distrust' was mentioned by about 30% of participants compared with the 13% who mentioned 'trust'. Only one-third of French people believe that 'you can trust most people', compared with about 70% who state that 'you can never be too careful when dealing with others'. In his aptly entitled work *Eloge de la confiance* (In Praise of Trust), Watier (2008) reminds us of the essential part played by trust in economic, political and social relationships. The consequences of the absence of trust are 'distrust of information about the world and others and a radical denial of background evidence, which make mutual communication and comprehension impossible' (Watier, 2008: 134). Terms which are the very opposite of trust – lies, manipulation, dissimulation and secretiveness – are the very ones used by conspiracy theorists in the name of defending the truth.

This loss of trust has seriously affected the standing of many authorities traditionally relied upon as the source of truthful and reliable information.

### *Loss of trust in experts*

The spectacle of 'experts in dispute with each other' diminishes public confidence in experts because they no longer know whom to trust, whether these disputes occur in courts of law or during controversies over environmental and food safety risks, for example, the successive, contradictory statements about the harmful or beneficial effects of salt, sugar, meat, and so on, on the human diet. At best, experts are seen as having knowledge that is not indisputably established. At worst, they are considered to be liars purely defending their own interests.

### *Loss of trust in scientists*

One would think that science, which is based on empirical evidence, would be inherently convincing, and therefore indisputably worthy of people's confidence and trust. The reliability of its sources, its evidence, its observations and experiments and the reputation of institutions and researchers are, in fact, intrinsic reasons for confidence and trust in science (Watier, 2008). However, this confidence is being eroded, on the one hand by cases of pseudo-science, rigged experiments or quite simply doubt about the validity of results, and on the other hand (and in a more fundamental way), because today we know that scientific knowledge develops quickly and is always provisional. Unlike the positivist scientists of the 19th century, for whom knowledge was absolute, today's researchers are more cautious and talk about explanatory hypotheses rather than certainties. This provides the general public with a basis for all sorts of alternative hypotheses, including extreme ones: all knowledge is viewed as being of equal merit. Paradoxically, this relativism results less in scepticism than in support for ideas which dispute the validity of accepted knowledge; for example, on this basis, creationists demand that creationism be taught on an equal footing with the theory of evolution in schools. Conspiracy theorists are also rushing into this breach.

### *Loss of trust in teachers*

As Watier (2008: 66) has also demonstrated, the relationship between teachers and pupils is based on confidence in two things: the teacher's confidence in the knowledge that he is imparting and the pupil's confidence in the teacher. The former is undermined by the relativism of knowledge and the

latter is being gradually eroded as other sources of knowledge, notably the media and the internet, become available to everyone.

### *Loss of trust in politics and politicians*

First and foremost, there is a distrust of the State: in 2013, 75% of French people did not have confidence in the State's ability to solve the problems facing the country (Opinion Way, 2010–2015). Secondly, there is a distrust of and lack of confidence in the political process: in answer to the question, 'When you think of politics, can you tell me what you feel first?', the most frequent response over the last 5 years has been 'distrust' (about 39%), followed by 'disgust' (between 23% and 33%) and then 'interest' and 'boredom' at about 15% each. Fifty-eight per cent of those questioned stated that they did not have 'confidence in either the right or the left to govern the country'. Eighty-five per cent thought that politicians were barely or not at all concerned about people's thoughts and opinions. Lastly, 77% thought that as a general rule, French parliamentarians and political leaders are corrupt. Such belief that 'all politicians are corrupt', on which all kinds of populist ideas – and conspiracy theories – are borne along, is, therefore, clearly a commonly held opinion. The loss of confidence in politicians has been increased by the numerous proven cases of lying to the public: Nixon and Watergate, Clinton and the Lewinsky affair, the concealment of Mitterrand's cancer, Bush and the supposed weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, the Cahuzac affair and so on. As is the case with rumours, reports of these real events can make fake reports look plausible: the existence of real computer viruses makes rumours of pseudo-viruses seem believable. In the context of this article, real cases of dishonesty can make the alleged lies which conspiracists claim to expose seem probable.

Distrust of politicians is particularly noticeable in the increased rate of abstentions from voting in elections, and opinion polls show that belief in conspiracy theories is very prevalent among non-voters (Parienté, 2013).

We saw earlier that the use of the French term 'conspirationnisme' first occurred in France in 1988. It is perhaps no coincidence that this was the year, according to journalist Michèle Cotta, which was marked by the 'triumph of politics based on personalities and not policy'.<sup>2</sup> According to her analysis, the confrontation between François Mitterrand and Jacques Chirac, who had governed together under a power-sharing arrangement since 1986, introduced the politics of personality in place of policy-based politics, while the Front National continued to reiterate that all politicians in the 'system' were interchangeable. This 'triumph of personality politics' gave rise to the environment in which belief in conspiracy theories could flourish: these theories substituted those who pulled the political strings openly with other hidden figures who operated in secret.

### *Loss of trust in the media*

French people have limited confidence in the media (Sofres, 2016). Although slightly more than 50% of people surveyed think that the information reported in the media (newspapers, radio, television) is accurate, about 40% think that such reports are misrepresented or untrue. The media are suspected of bias, misrepresentation and of manipulating opinion. Almost 60% of French people think that journalists are not immune to pressure from those in power, from political parties and from commercial interests. In this too, real cases foster belief in theories: fake interviews aired live on television, misrepresentation of the facts (even if involuntarily) such as in the media coverage of the 'Timisoara massacres' or false news invented by journalists<sup>3</sup> all contribute to this effect. Even if opinion polls in mainland France do show an increase in confidence in the media over the last few years, the media appear at the bottom of the table of trust in different organisations and at the same

level as political parties and unions, while hospitals, small and medium enterprises (SME) and the army appear at the top of the table (Opinion Way, 2010–2015).

With the growth of the internet, belief in conspiracy theories has gained a technological footing. The web aligns perfectly with current post-modernist relativism by placing all ideas – true, false or doubtful – on the same footing. It has become a formidable means of spreading conspiracy theories and a powerful platform for leading conspiracy theorists. Even beyond that, it ensures the advancement of false or doubtful ideas. Sociologist Gérald Bronner (2011) reports that in a Google search on debated subjects, sites used by conspiracists appear higher on the list of resulting hits than sites used by sceptics. It is, therefore, easy to understand the receptivity of young people to conspiracy theories since, on the one hand, they think that the knowledge taught in schools is not necessarily unquestionable and, on the other, that the internet, which they use extensively, provides them with alternative and sometimes more compelling alternatives.

Why are conspiracy theories so popular and widely believed in the United States? In his thesis on Americans' engagement with conspiracy theories, Giry (2014) proposes several explanations based on United States' cultural traditions. The tradition of individualism fosters an attitude of suspicion towards the State. This tradition had its roots in the colonists' struggle against the British rule during the War of Independence and continued – through the epic conquest of the West – in the desire of citizens not to depend on public institutions to defend their lives and property. The issue of gun ownership in the United States – brought back into the spotlight with each university campus massacre – goes back to this individualist culture which suspects the State of wishing to impinge upon personal liberty. Similarly, the majority of Americans are opposed to government intervention in their daily lives, an opposition which gives rise to strong resistance to any Social Security policies. An anti-intellectual attitude, fostered by strong religious observance, favours faith over reason and leads to distrust of the 'egg-heads' who make things 'confused' and 'lead us away from the truth'. The pervasiveness of secret societies, numerous in the United States, familiarises the public with the idea of occult groups. Finally, we should mention freedom of speech: the first amendment of the United States' Constitution guarantees an almost total freedom of speech, allowing every individual the right to express and promote any idea, even the most extreme or unlikely. Since the reduction in the threat of communism, Americans have become fearful of internal conspiracies and the supposed plots of the elite (Campion-Vincent, 2005), which are believed to be hatched in clubs such as the *Skull and Bones* or *Bohemian Grove* or even by consortia of armament manufacturers.

We must emphasise the role of mass culture in the creation of a psychological climate which favours belief in conspiracy theories. The emergence of the new literary genre of the detective novel in the 20th century, inspired by the activities of intelligence services during the two world wars and the Cold War, developed a habit of distrust and suspicion in the general public (Watier, 2008: 60). For the last 20 years, the mass culture of North America – which has since spread throughout the world – has widely exploited the idea of conspiracies in, for example, TV series such as the *X-Files* (1993–2002) or best-selling novels such as the *Da Vinci Code* (2003).

### **Specific causes: the effect of ideologies**

Different conspiracy theories attract varying levels of audience. Fifty-one per cent of Americans think that there was a conspiracy behind the assassination of President Kennedy,<sup>4</sup> 36% think that the American government did not intervene to prevent, or even directly organised, the 11 September attacks,<sup>5</sup> and 6% think that American astronauts never landed on the moon.<sup>6</sup> Belief in these theories also varies according to social group and region. There are specific reasons for adherence to various particular conspiracy theories, in the same way that rumours are more readily believed by

**Table 1.**

Age (years)	'It was the Americans themselves who arranged for the organisation of the attacks on 11 Sep 2001' (%)
15–24	20
25–34	13
35–49	10
50–64	9
65 or older	8
Overall	11

Source: Sofres (2008).

individuals for whom these confirm their pre-existing ideas, beliefs and prejudices. It is to this that the psycho-sociologist Rouquette (1990) refers with his term *implication* (involvement), the mechanism which is at the heart of the phenomenon of rumour and which explains why individuals believe them and disseminate them.

There is no specific sociological profile for a believer in conspiracy theories. The classic factors (gender, age, etc.), even though they sometimes correlate with beliefs or practices, are actually consequences, dependent and non-independent variables, of ideological factors or the degree of 'involvement'.

Belief in conspiracy theories is barely affected by the individual's gender. However, it is notable that a significant number of women participate in citizen journalism movements. For example – and this is entirely understandable – the *Jersey Widows*, whose husbands were killed in the 11 September attacks, were very active in demanding that all the facts about these events be made public. As for the leaders of conspiracy theory movements, they are almost always men, mirroring the standard gender representation in politics.

On the question of age, opinion polls – at least in France – seem to show that, the older a person is, the lesser he or she tends to agree with conspiracy theories. A poll conducted by Sofres in 2008 showed that 11% of French people think that it was Americans themselves who organised the 11 September attacks, but these results vary enormously according to age (Table 1).

The younger the person, the more likely he or she is to believe conspiracy theories about 11 September. Young people's openness to conspiracy theory ideas has recently been highlighted by several articles in the press, one of which was entitled, rather humorously, 'The Baccalaureate, conspiracy option' (*Le Monde*, 20 April 2014). Teachers reported on the questions asked by pupils about the 11 September attacks, the Holocaust, and so on and noted the pupils' dissatisfaction with the answers given and reactions such as 'Sir, you only say that because you are an Illuminati!'.

Educational achievement level seems to play a role in this: a low level (junior secondary) tends to leave pupils indifferent to conspiracy theories, a medium level (higher secondary) tends to mean pupils are attracted to conspiracy theories, but a tertiary level reduces this attraction. It is interesting to note that the variation in the effect of education is also seen relative to belief in the paranormal (UFO - Unidentified Flying Objects, the yeti, extraterrestrials) (Renard, 2011: 173–189).

The single, clearly confirmed result of all studies (into belief in conspiracy theories) is that there is a strong correlation between belief in conspiracy theories and an adherence to extremist political positions, whether on the far right or far left (Inglehart, 1987). One survey (Parienté, 2013) asked participants for their opinion of the following statement: 'It isn't the government which governs France. We don't really know who pulls the strings'. Table 2 shows the percentages of those who were totally or moderately in agreement with this statement.

**Table 2.**

Marine Le Pen voters	72%
Abstentions	58%
Jean-Luc Mélenchon voters	56%
François Bayrou voters	45%
Eva Joly voters	44%
Nicolas Sarkozy voters	42%
François Hollande voters	35%
Overall	51%

Source: Parienté (2013).

The highest number of participants agreeing with a conspiracy theorist view were voters who supported Marine Le Pen (far right; 72%) and Jean-Luc Mélenchon (far left; 56%). The lower number of extreme left voters than those of the extreme right who held conspiracy theory beliefs can be explained by a thrust within certain left-wing groups to warn their activists against espousing the simplistic explanations of conspiracy theories. They maintain that conspiracy theories accuse particular individuals or groups of being behind certain prominent events, while their view is that it is the system itself which is responsible. Thus, an article on the anarchist–communist movement website, ‘Alternative libertaire’, in 2009 denounced belief in conspiracy theories as a ‘new socialism of the fool’ (the former ‘socialism of the fool’ having been the radical anti-Semitism of the 19th century).<sup>7</sup> We also note the high percentage of believers in conspiracy theories represented by those who abstain from voting, a percentage which confirms the studies on the distrust of politicians.

It is interesting to examine the views of the different voting sectors on the groups which are supposed to ‘pull the strings’. Table 3 confirms the fact that belief in conspiracy theories is most common among extreme right voters; this was observed as long as 55 years ago by Hofstadter (1965). Whatever the conspiracist statement put to them, voters for Marine Le Pen were much more likely to believe it than the average respondent. However, adherence to conspiracy theories was also present among extreme left voters. Supporters of Jean-Luc Mélenchon distrusted the activity of the Freemasons and the role of international finance. On the other hand, in response to the other statements, they matched the average response. Abstainers, as was to be expected given their scepticism about the amount of influence voters have on politicians, distrusted both those they saw as manipulators from within France (the Freemasons) and from outside.

In each of the groups of voters apart from the far left and far right groups, only one conspiracist statement scored higher than the average, but that statement varied according to political outlook: voters on the (moderate) right (Sarkozy supporters) distrusted the media, while voters on the (moderate) left (Hollande), in the centre (Bayrou) and for the Greens (Joly) expressed clear antipathy towards international finance. It is worth noting that these non-extremist voters did not agree with traditional conspiracy theories such as the power of secret societies or foreign manipulation.

It is easy to see how political orientation affects preference for each conspiracy theory. Thus, more voters from the extreme left (17%) and the moderate left (14%) than the moderate right (7%) and the extreme right (9% for Front National) agreed with the theory that Americans themselves were behind the 11 September attacks (Sofres, 2008). This can be explained by the French left’s strong opposition to George W Bush. Conversely, the idea that ‘some religious groups manipulate events from behind the scenes’ resonated more with extreme right (33% of Marine Le Pen supporters) – because of their Islamophobia and also, no doubt, because of their anti-Semitism – than voters from the moderate left (15%) and the extreme left (18% of Jean-Luc Mélenchon voters).

**Table 3.**

Statement	Agreement with the statement (%) according to vote cast in the 2012 presidential election							Overall (%)
	MLP	JLM	A	FH	NS	FB	EJ	
Secret groups such as the Freemasons manipulate events behind the scenes	37	31	28	24	24	21	17	27
Some religious groups manipulate events behind the scenes	33	18	20	15	20	20	4	20
Other countries try to dominate us	61	43	48	36	40	35	33	44
Major television channels and the press manipulate events behind the scenes	54	44	44	37	49	44	37	45
International finance rules the world	81	83	70	79	74	80	86	77

Source: Opinion Way (2010-2015).

MLP: Marine Le Pen; JLM: Jean-Luc Mélenchon; A: abstentions; FH: François Hollande; NS: Nicolas Sarkozy; FB: François Bayrou; EJ: Éva Joly.

At the time of the Dominique Strauss-Kahn sex scandal following an event in the Sofitel hotel in New York, a poll taken on 17 May 2011, 3 days after the incident and even before the French politician had been remanded in custody, showed that 57% of French people believed there was a conspiracy behind this event. This percentage was as high as 70% among socialist voters,<sup>8</sup> a sign of the shock felt by leftist sympathisers in the face of what was seen as a political catastrophe, Dominique Strauss-Kahn having been considered a potentially successful candidate in the next presidential election.

The same selectivity between conspiracy theories according to political ideology can be observed in other countries. In the United States, Democrats and African-Americans – purely and simply because they were anti-Bush – were more likely than other voters to believe that George W Bush knew in advance about the September 11 attacks. Equally, Republican voters were more likely than others to believe that Barack Obama hid details about his past, simply because they were opposed to his policies.<sup>9</sup> In Russia under the Putin regime, anti-Americanism is as strong as during the Cold War and rumours about the United States are rife. Many Russians believe the conspiracy theory according to which the American moon landings were a fake, to the point where a Russian billionaire, fascinated by the conquest of space, has promised a reward of 1 million roubles to anyone who can provide evidence of American landings on the moon.<sup>10</sup> In Russia and in anti-American countries of the Middle East, people readily believe that the Americans created the AIDS virus in the laboratory, and that the use of secret weapons was the cause of the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 and the Haiti earthquake in 2010. It is also known that, in countries where an ‘anti-Zionist’ struggle is promoted, there is an increase in the number of adherents to the myth of a Jewish world conspiracy (Taguieff, 2006: 179–191).

### **Conclusion: belief in conspiracy theories, a form of superstition**

It is becoming evident that there is a parallel between belief in conspiracy theories and adherence to superstition. In the section of *Conjectures and Refutations* in which he discusses belief in conspiracy theories, epistemologist Karl Popper suggests that blaming social events on secret groups



is the typical result of the secularization of religious superstitions. The belief in the Homeric gods whose conspiracies were responsible for the vicissitudes of the Trojan War is gone. But the place of the gods on Homer's Olympus is now taken by the Learned Elders of Zion, or by the monopolists, or the capitalists, or the imperialists

(1969: 341). Defined as the belief in luck and in bad luck (Renard, 1987), superstition reflects a feeling of lack of control over events: luck and bad luck are beyond our control and can be blamed for events over which individuals have no control. This is why superstition is particularly prevalent in social groups which are at risk from natural events (peasants, sailors) or from events of human agency (soldiers in time of war, artists and politicians subject to the highs and lows of popularity). As the human mind is not comfortable blaming things on chance or on a complex set of causes, the notions of luck and bad luck allow for a simple and acceptable response. The results of an Opinion Way survey showed that about 60% of those questioned thought that they had control over the course of their life. But put another way, it means 40% think that external forces control their existence (Opinion Way, 2010–2015). Superstition and belief in conspiracy theories flourish as a consequence of this sentiment. Belief in conspiracy theories is to major events what superstition is to daily life: an abandonment of belief in free will, a step which favours belief in occult forces able to manipulate and transcend us. Conspiracy theories, like superstitions, provide simple explanations by assigning the blame to unique causes beyond our control, and thus remove any individual responsibility from us. For, even though believers in conspiracy theories speak out about the conspirators who they believe operate from the shadows, they are still fatalistic about the possibility of countering the overwhelming power that the conspirators are thought to wield.

Translated from the French by Mandy Hewett

## Notes

1. For example, in France, 'the media confidence barometer', published by TNX-Sofres since 1987, and the 'political confidence barometer' published by Opinion Way Centre de recherches politiques de Sciences Po/Political Research Centre at the Paris Institute of Political Studies (CEVIPOF) since 2009.
2. See Bertrand Delais' televised documentary 'Présidentielles 1988, l'élection des illusions perdues?', 2014, 60 min.
3. [francetvinfo.fr/economie/medias/soupconne-d-avoir-ecrit-de-faux-reportages-un-journaliste-canadien-est-suspendu\\_919205.html](http://francetvinfo.fr/economie/medias/soupconne-d-avoir-ecrit-de-faux-reportages-un-journaliste-canadien-est-suspendu_919205.html)
4. [huffingtonpost.com/2013/11/03/jfk-assassination-conspiracy\\_n\\_4208374.html](http://huffingtonpost.com/2013/11/03/jfk-assassination-conspiracy_n_4208374.html)
5. [web.archive.org/web/20060805052538/www.scrippsnews.com/911poll](http://web.archive.org/web/20060805052538/www.scrippsnews.com/911poll)
6. [gallup.com/poll/3712/Landing-Man-Moon-Publics-View.aspx](http://gallup.com/poll/3712/Landing-Man-Moon-Publics-View.aspx)
7. [alternativelibertaire.org/?Dossier-Conspirationnisme-le](http://alternativelibertaire.org/?Dossier-Conspirationnisme-le)
8. [20minutes.fr/elections/725690-20110517-majorite-francais-dsk-victime-complot](http://20minutes.fr/elections/725690-20110517-majorite-francais-dsk-victime-complot)
9. [publicmind.fdu.edu/2013/outthere](http://publicmind.fdu.edu/2013/outthere), cited by Giry (2014: 1)
10. [themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russian-space-enthusiast-raises-1-million-rubles-to-prove-us-moon-landing/537264.html?utm\\_source=email\\_tmt-editorial&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=55-issue-2015-10-07&utm\\_content=title\\_1](http://themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russian-space-enthusiast-raises-1-million-rubles-to-prove-us-moon-landing/537264.html?utm_source=email_tmt-editorial&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=55-issue-2015-10-07&utm_content=title_1)

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