

52nd IAA HISTORY OF ASTRONAUTICS SYMPOSIUM (E4)

"Can you believe they put a man on the moon?" (3B)

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WHY SOME PEOPLE JUST WON'T BELIEVE IT? SOCIO-CULTURAL ORIGINS OF MOON
LANDING CONSPIRACY THEORIES.**Abstract**

The Apollo 11 and subsequent lunar landings were some of the greatest, if not the greatest achievements in aeronautics history – in the words of Neil Armstrong, they were indeed a “one giant leap for mankind”. However, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, there persists a sizeable minority of people who do not believe that lunar landings actually took place and subscribe to the so called “Moon landing conspiracy theories”. Several different types of such conspiracy theories exist – from the most common one, which simply claims that no man has ever visited Moon and that Moon landings were filmed in Hollywood, to other, more complex versions, which claim that astronauts have landed on the Moon, but saw “something”, which, in turn, forced USA government to hide all evidence and create a hoax. The goal of this paper is to discuss the possible social and cultural reasons that enable the birth, spread and popularity of these conspiracy theories. The structure and usage of Moon landing conspiracy theory narratives is analyzed. Furthermore, several groups whose members frequently subscribe to Moon landing conspiracy theories (such as communists, libertarian fringe, UFO enthusiasts and others) are discussed.