

Conspiracy of Silence

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The expression conspiracy of silence, or culture of silence, relates to a condition or matter which is known to exist, but by tacit communal unspoken consensus is not talked about or acknowledged. Commonly such matters are considered culturally shameful. Taboo subjects may be indirectly discussed via the use of politically correct code words, or euphemisms.

Examples of conspiracies of silence

The following are examples which at various times have been the subject of a culture (or conspiracy) of silence:

Acknowledgement of war crimes

Breaches of human rights, such as vanishing persons and torture

Social conditions - gang crime, drugs or other unlawful or disparaged activity. Omertà, the Cosa Nostra (Mafia) cultural code of Sicily, is a significant example of an entire culture built upon silence. Stop Snitchin' is a recent example.

Personal problems - for example the increasing alcoholism of a significant individual in some context may become the subject of a culture of silence, whereby attention is averted by the relevant group.

Conditions considered shameful by the culture at large - for example erectile dysfunction and yeast infections

Child abuse in the Church or in social services accommodation.

Affairs

Institutional Racism

Avoidance of recognition of some problem in order to officially bury (hide) a possible problem and thus avoid accusations, investigations or liability.

Between 1972 and 1994, members of the Charlestown community in Massachusetts were unwilling to share information that would facilitate homicide investigations because of their reliance on vigilante justice, fear of retaliation by criminals, and anti-police sentiment according to the Dept. of Justice.

A number of controversial matters are considered by some to be buried under a refusal to discuss, or not treated with appropriate seriousness, similar to a conspiracy of silence. Examples include UFOs, assassinations, military incidents, and more generally, various events where it is felt by a significant minority that the truth has been covered up. A proven example is the Watergate cover-up of the early 1970s, exposed by The Washington Post and The New York Times.

On 22 November 2006, Italian writer Antonio Socci claimed in his *Il Quarto Segreto di Fatima* ("The Fourth Secret of Fatima") that the Holy See has, in spite of its statements to the contrary, not released the Third Secret of Fatima.

Effects of a conspiracy of silence

A conspiracy of silence in some field, has effects at many levels:

Those who are directly suffering, or causing others to suffer, perpetuate their cycle of harm and suffering.

Those who have suffered have their suffering extended by having their condition ignored or minimized, and are not considered seriously or redressed appropriately.

Lessons that might be learned for future are not learned.

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