

**ENGAGING WITH CONSPIRACY THEORIES, FOSTERING  
DEMOCRACY: DYNAMICS, DRIVERS, AND DEFENCES**

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**PROGRAMME**

**April 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026 | Charles University, Prague**

**Organised by TaCT-FoRSED and Charles University**

**9<sup>th</sup> April**

**8:30 onwards REGISTRATION**

**(Hall in front of the Conference Rooms)**

**GREEN ROOM**

**9:00-9:30 Welcome Speech and Presentation of the Project**  
(Charles University Representative and Representative of the Project)

**9:30-10:00 KEYNOTE 1**

*Conspiracy Theory and Democracy*  
Michael Butter, Universität Tübingen, Germany

**10:15-10:45 KEYNOTE 2**

*Consequences of Conspiracy Theories*  
Karen Douglas, University of Kent, United Kingdom

**COFFEE BREAK**

**11:00 – 12:00 PANEL 1 – CONSPIRACIST IDEOLOGIES AND RESILIENCE  
OF DEMOCRACIES**

**Chair: Petr Janeček**

*Democracy Between Resilience and Self-efficacy – Conspiracist Ideologies as a Challenge to Political Education*

Oliver Hidalgo - Stefan Christoph  
(Universität Passau, Germany)

*Manipulating Conspiracy Traits: Identifying the Most Democratically Harmful Components of Conspiratorial Narratives*

Carol Galais, Marc Guinjoan and Alejandro Fernández  
(Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain)

*Liberation through Conspiracy. Conspiracy Thinking and the Disdain for Democracy in East Germany and in Ourselves*

Falk Rößler  
(Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Germany)

**12:00-13:00 LUNCH BREAK**

**13:00-14:00 PANEL 3 – COUNTERING CONSPIRACY THEORIES  
IN DEMOCRACIES**

**Chair: Kristína Šefčíková**

*The State of the Art in countering Conspiracies: proven and potential Pathways.*

Sebastian Schwarzweller  
(University of Passau, Germany)

*Conspiracy Theories in Immediate Social Environments – Effects on Partnership, Parenthood and Friendship*

Georg Gläser and Gudrun Hentges  
(University of Cologne, Germany)

*Fragile semi-peripheries: From Suitcase Science to Suitcase Conspiracy Theories*

Andrzej W. Nowak  
(Adam Mickiewicz University, Lodź, Poland)

**COFFEE BREAK**

**14:15-15:15 PANEL 5 – DEFINITION AND CLASSIFICATION OF CONSPIRACY THEORIES**

**Chair: Leonardo Schiocchet**

*Conspiracy Narratives as a Type of Social Myth*

Radek Chlup

(Charles University, Prague, Czechia)

*From Rumour to Vernacular Mythology: Comparison of Typology of Conspiracy Theories by Ethnology and Political Science*

Petr Janeček

(Charles University, Prague, Czechia)

*“Do I Believe?”: Three Aspects of “Belief” in Conspiracy Theories*

Abraham Maurer and Matyáš Lednický

(Charles University, Prague, Czechia)

**C247 ROOM**

**11:00-12:00 PANEL 2 – CONSPIRACY THEORIES, POLICE AND CRIME**

**Chair: TBD**

*Can Contact Improve Police–Citizen Relations? Effects on Police Conspiracy Beliefs and Violence Toward the Police*

Daniel Jolley, Matthew King-Parker, Christina Conolly, Eleanor Farmer, and Martha Seeney  
(University of Nottingham, University of Lincoln, UK)

*Understanding Police Distrust: The Impact of Conspiracy Mentality and Belief in a Dangerous World*

Aileen Krumma

(Center for Criminological Research Saxony, Germany)

*Conspiratorial Reasoning and Narrative Closure in Everyday Explanations of Crime*

Aaron Bielejewski

(Center for Criminological Research Saxony, Germany)

**12:00-13:00 LUNCH BREAK**

**13:00-14:00 PANEL 4 - INTERVENTION, LEGITIMACY AND CONSPIRELIGION**

**Chair: Patrick Urlbauer**

*Instruments available to democratic states for combating disinformation in the public sphere in the age of artificial intelligence*

Tomáš Kolomazník

(Metropolitan University Prague, Czechia)

*From Distrust to Community: Legitimacy, Skepticism, and Ritual in Conspiracy Theory Networks*

Nik Turšič and Natalija Tanić

(University of Ljubljana, Slovenia)

*Conspirituality – Conspireligion? Entanglements Between Conspiracy Belief, Religiosity, and Esotericism*

Verena Schneider

(Leipzig University, Germany)

**COFFEE BREAK**

**14:15-15:15 – PANEL 6 – CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND GLOBAL ISSUES**

**Chair: TBD**

*From Fake News to Conspiracy Narratives: Digital Disinformation and the Strain on Democratic Resilience*

Ann-Katrin Voit

(FOM University for Applied Science, Essen, Germany)

*Who (still) laughs at conspiracy theorists?*

Katerina Hatzikidi

(University of Tübingen, Germany)

*Decolonizing Epistemic Injustice: Conspiracy Theories, Vernacular Geopolitics, and the Weaponization of the North/South Divide in the Gaza War*

Fatima Ezzahra Abid

(Mohammed V University, Rabat, Morocco)

**COFFEE BREAK**

**15:30-16:30 – PANEL 7 – FANDOMS, IDENTITIES AND NARRATIVES**

**Chair: Leonardo Schiocchet**

*From Ideology to Imitation: The “Great Replacement” Narrative and the Transnational Fandom of Right-Wing Terrorism*

Kristin Weber

(Center for Criminological Research Saxony, Germany)

*Cultural Narratives, Identity and Power. Conspiracy Theories and Gender*

Gonzalo Soltero

(National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico)

**17:00 GUIDED TOUR: CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND PRAGUE**

**10<sup>th</sup> April**

**GREEN ROOM**

**9:30-10:00 KEYNOTE 3**

*Too bad: On the affinity between dystopianism and conspiracism*  
Eva Hausteiner, University of Bonn, Germany

**10:15-10:45 KEYNOTE 4**

*'To see is to believe': the visual communication of conspiracy ideation*  
Andreas Önefors, Linnaeus University, Sweden

**COFFEE BREAK**

**11:00 – 12:00 PANEL 8 – COMPARATIVE APPROACHES TO CONSPIRACY THEORIES**

**Chair: Kristína Šefčíková**

*First Results from Comparative Analysis: Factors Inhibiting and Promoting Conspiracism Across Europe*

Stefan Christoph  
(Universität Passau, Germany)

*Conspiracy Regimes: A Comparative Study of the Correlates of Conspiracy Beliefs Across Europe*

Marta Antonova  
(University of Bern, Switzerland)

*The role of women in conspiracy narratives and corresponding movements according to worldwide research findings – A systematic review*

Elisabeth Faria Lopes, Dr. Lisa Tölle, Georg Gläser, Dr. Franka Metzner  
(University of Cologne, Germany)

**12:00-13:00 LUNCH BREAK**

**13:00-14:00 PANEL 10 – ELEMENTS OF PSEUDO-SCIENCE AND CONSPIRACY THEORIES WITHIN IDENTITY POLITICS AND THEORIES**

**Chair: Carol Galais**

*Criteria for Pseudo-Science and Conspiracy Theories within the Social Sciences*  
Jan Eufinger (Fern Universität in Hagen, Germany)

*The discourse on abolitionism as an example for pseudo-science*  
Thomas Land (Max Weber Kolleg Erfurt, Germany)

*Intersectional social theory and conspiracy thinking*  
Robin Forstehäusler (Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg, Germany)

**COFFEE BREAK**

**14:15-15:15 PANEL 12 - SPECIFIC TOPICS REGARDING CONSPIRACY THEORIES**

**Chair: Stefan Christoph**

*The Democratic Cost of Conspiracy Thinking: Evidence for a Conspiracy-Juror Bias*  
Iwan Dinnick (presenter), Daniel Jolley, Lee Curley  
(University of Nottingham, Glasgow Caledonian University, UK)

*The Euphemisms, Experts, and Half-Truths Legitimizing Satanic Ritual Abuse Conspiracy Theories*  
Mariëlle Hesselink  
(Heidelberg University, Germany)

*Climate controversy and the politics of meaning: The cultural work behind climate counternarratives*  
Lara de Poorter  
(University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

**COFFEE BREAK**

**15:30-17:00 ROUNDTABLE ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL LEARNED SOCIETY**

**17:00-17:30 CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE**

**C247 ROOM**

**11:00-12:00 PANEL 9 – NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CASE STUDIES 1**

**Chair: TBD**

*Dealing With Distrust: How the Mainstream Media Respond to Conspiracy Theories*

Jaron Harambam

(University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

*Childhood adversity, COVID-19 conspiracy beliefs and the authoritarian syndrome:  
Modelling pathways to radicalization and right-wing extremism in Austria*

Alexander Yendell and Michelle C. Schweitzer

(Leipzig University, Germany)

*Motivation, positionality, and recommendations in the accounts of truth-defenders in Bulgaria*

Shaban Darakchi

(Slovak Academy of Sciences/Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Slovakia – Bulgaria)

**12:00-13:00 LUNCH BREAK**

**13:00-14:00 PANEL 11 – NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CASE STUDIES 2**

**Chair: Stefan Christoph**

*(Un)Intended Effects: The Consequences of Dutch Disinformation Interventions*

Emma van der Tak

(University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

*Demography-Based Conspiracy Narratives and the Politics of Distrust in Authoritarian Russia*

Andrei Prudnikov

(University of Lisbon, Portugal)

*Ichor (ΙΧΩΡ): Myth, Blood, and the Making of Conspiratorial Nationalistic theories in  
Contemporary Greece*

Aphrodite- Lidia Nounanaki

(Academy of Athens, Greece)