

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

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Charles University

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 REGISTRATION - Hall in front of the Conference Rooms

### WELCOME AND KEYNOTES

GREEN ROOM

9:00-9:10

**Welcome from the Charles University**

Václav Cvrček, Vice-Dean for Research, Faculty of Arts

GREEN ROOM

9:10-9:30

**Presentation of the Project TaCT-FoRSED**

Oliver Hidalgo, Principal Investigator, Universität Passau, Germany

GREEN ROOM

9:30-10:00

***Conspiracy Theory and Democracy***

Michael Butter, Universität Tübingen, Germany

10:15-10:45

***Consequences of Conspiracy Theories***

Karen Douglas, University of Kent, United Kingdom

10:45-11:00

COFFEE BREAK



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## 11:00-12:00 PARALLEL PANEL SESSIONS

### PANEL 1

*CONSPIRACIST IDEOLOGIES AND  
RESILIENCE OF DEMOCRACIES*

**11:00-12:00 GREEN ROOM**

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)

### PANEL 2

*CONSPIRACY THEORIES,  
POLICE AND CRIME*

**11:00-12:00 C247 ROOM**

Chair: Leonardo Schiocchet

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

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



  
**Charles  
University**

## 13:00-14:00 PARALLEL PANEL SESSIONS

### PANEL 3

#### COUNTERING CONSPIRACY THEORIES IN DEMOCRACIES

13:00-14:00, GREEN ROOM

Chair: Kristína Šefčíková

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

Falk Rößler

(Friedrich Schiller University Jena, 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, Poznań, Poland)

### PANEL 4

#### INTERVENTION, LEGITIMACY AND CONSPIRELIGION

13:00-14:00, C247 ROOM

Chair: Leonardo Schiocchet

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

Tomáš Kolomazník

(Metropolitan University Prague, Czechia)

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

Verena Schneider

(Leipzig University, Germany)

14:00-14:15

COFFEE BREAK



## 14:15-15:30 PARALLEL PANEL SESSIONS

### PANEL 5

#### DEFINITION AND CLASSIFICATION OF CONSPIRACY THEORIES

14:15 – 15:30, GREEN ROOM

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)

### PANEL 6

#### CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND GLOBAL ISSUES

14:15 – 15:30, C247 ROOM

Chair: Oliver Hidalgo

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

Gonzalo Soltero

(National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico)

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

Ann-Katrin Voit

(FOM University for Applied Science, Essen, Germany)

15:30

COFFEE BREAK

17:00

GUIDED TOUR: CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND PRAGUE



  
Charles  
University

10<sup>th</sup> April

## KEYNOTES

GREEN ROOM

9:30-10:00

*Too bad: On the affinity between dystopianism and conspiracism*

Eva Hausteiner, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany

GREEN ROOM

10:15-10:45

*'To see is to believe': the visual communication of conspiracy ideation*

Andreas Önnefors, Linnaeus University, Sweden

10:45-11:00

COFFEE BREAK

## 11:00-12:00 PARALLEL PANEL SESSIONS

### PANEL 7

COMPARATIVE APPROACHES TO CONSPIRACY THEORIES

11:00 – 12:00, GREEN ROOM

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)

### PANEL 8

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CASE STUDIES 1

11:00-12:00, C247 ROOM

Chair: Patrick Urlbauer

***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 PARALLEL PANEL SESSIONS**

**PANEL 9**

*ELEMENTS OF PSEUDO-SCIENCE AND CONSPIRACY THEORIES WITHIN IDENTITY POLITICS AND THEORIES*

**13:00 – 14:00, GREEN ROOM**

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 Forstenhäusler

(Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg, Germany)

**PANEL 10**

*NATIONAL AND REGIONAL*

*CASE STUDIES 2*

**13:00-14:00, C247 ROOM**

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)

14:00-14:15

COFFEE BREAK



**PANEL 11**

*SPECIFIC TOPICS REGARDING CONSPIRACY THEORIES*

**14:15-15:15, GREEN ROOM**

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)

**GREEN  
ROOM**

**15:15-17:00**

**ROUNDTABLE ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL  
LEARNED SOCIETY**

**17:00**

**CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE**

